

Town aims to increase curbside composting program

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

Natick's Director of Sustainability says, "Food isn't trash, we should treat it differently."

That's the simple philosophy behind Natick's recent drive to increase its curbside composting program.

Wilson-Martin is seeking to bring the number of participating households to 1,500 this year. That would mean adding another 200 in 2025.

Toward that end, she's quick to point out that composting is a form of financial and lifestyle frugality. By weight, about 40 percent of what goes into residential trash is food waste, said Wilson-Martin.

That's a hefty portion of the nearly 1,000 pounds of trash each household throws away each year. As a community, that comes to about 5,800 tons of trash per year. And as Natick pays for removal and processing of its trash on a per ton basis, the benefit of cutting food waste out of that calculus becomes clear.

Curbside composting is a tool that could cut those numbers by



Separating food from trash.

nearly half.

Food waste in household trash receptacles attracts all kinds of insects, and generates an interesting bouquet of odors as days of the week wear on. A separate bin for that waste means "true trash," as Wilson-Martin calls it, won't wear out its welcome so soon.

Free of food waste, indoor

trash bins can go without changing twice as long, sometimes longer. Substituting squishing down our trash for schlepping it out weekly to the sidewalk sounds even better when factoring in the financial savings. Fewer trips

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Marathoner Eric Rodden to run for Spark Kindness

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

It's "not over yet," said Eric Rodden, "but so far so good."

That's the bittersweet state of affairs when we're going the distance in any endeavor. For two Massachusetts runners, it's meant training for this year's Boston Marathon.

A 26.2-mile run is a long haul for anyone, but especially so for someone who took up the sport about a year ago.

"I'm new to the running community," said Rodden, who adopted the pastime as part of a New Year's resolution. In that short running career, he's finished a few half-marathons.

To keep motivated and educated in the sport, he joined "Evolution Road Runners," a club based in North Attleboro, where he resides. "To have that support. Any advice I can pick up."

Rodden's training regimen has included between 40 and 45 miles per week, and his goal is to finish the big Boston race in

under four hours. At the start of last month, he'd run 22 miles in one go.

Now in his 52nd year, he's also accumulated a collection of minor injuries as those miles have piled up.

In addition to getting all that distance underfoot, Rodden has been raising funds for "Spark Kindness," a nonprofit group that his run will benefit. That local organization was founded in 2010 to combat online bullying, and has since broadened the scope of its services.

"I know what they do for kids," said Rodden, who has two of his own. "I kind of know that environment, what they go through."

He was inspired also by his son Griffin, who ran the Boston Marathon last year on behalf of Spark Kindness. Natick and the nonprofit have partnered in past years to raise funds and aware-

MARATHON

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COMPOSTING

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down the driveway to toss it curbside means fewer dollars regularly spent on those baby blue bags.



Black Earth turns it into compost for your garden

Participants “report that they don’t have to throw away as much trash each week,” said Wilson-Martin. “It’s still a great way to reduce the amount of trash you’re sending to the incinera-

tor.” That’s fewer things going up in smoke.

“There’s a better way of dealing with food waste than burning it,” adding composting is a way to give a portion of that waste “a second life.”

Growing curbside composting, it turns out, can also grow your garden. For customers who want it, Black Earth rewards residents with a bag of nutrient-rich compost. Aspiring gardeners and those with a well-worn green thumb can put this soil supplement to good use.

Compost from Black Earth has undoubtedly contributed to many a household garden. It’s also found its way into Natick’s “Tiny Forest” project and a pollinator garden on the grounds of The Sons of Italy.

Participants in the program receive an annual coupon for their share of compost, but anyone is free to purchase the soil supplement locally. Bacon Street Farms is one nearby purveyor of the plant-friendly product.

Curbside composters can also

buy the specialized bags required for the bins there, and at Natick’s Roche Brothers. The bags are sold at cost, and the price for participating in the program is just under \$115 per year. If the town reaches its goal of 1,500 participants, that rate will drop to a smidge under \$100.

As an added incentive, Natick is offering free bins for new subscribers. The receptacles resemble the familiar two-wheeled recycling bins, but are about one-third the size. Some residents still have their original bins from when the program launched a few years ago. The design has since changed, and Wilson-Martin said early adopters often regard their older containers as a badge of honor.

Natick’s composting efforts stem from a 2016 state-funded pilot program. But when participation grew beyond the confines of the town’s capacity, Natick partnered with Black Earth to give the curbside concept more room to flourish.

“We had such demand for the program,” said Wilson-Martin. “They are processing our food scraps pretty locally.”

Success of that effort might have something to do with its

Curbside Composting

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user-friendly nature. Natick’s composting program isn’t picky. Forget about picking through your food, trying to discern composting compatibility. Items like meat, dairy and napkins are welcome fodder for the mix.

“There’s really so much you can compost.”

If residents stop participating in the program, added Wil-

son-Martin, it’s reliably for an understandable reason.

“People really love curbside composting. The main reason people leave [the program] is that they’re moving out of town.”

For more information on the program, visit www.natickma.gov/1828/Food-Waste.



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MARATHON

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ness for the group via the marathon.

Rodden plans to run the big race with his niece, Kaylee



Eric Rodden after the Newport Half-Marathon in October 2024. Courtesy photo

Wampler, who selected Brigham and Women’s Hospital as the beneficiary of her run. Participants running on behalf of non-profits must raise about \$7,500 to qualify for a spot in the Boston Marathon.

As of the middle of last month, he’d already garnered over \$7,000 toward that total.

Working toward his monetary and mileage goals has been great motivation, but Rodden said he’s found the running itself rewarding. It’s more about the journey, as they say, than the destination.

“I work at a desk,” he said. “I’m stir crazy by the end of the day.”

To break things up and reset, his habit has been to don his running shoes, and log some miles during lunch breaks. Working out of a home office as he does, has made that routine practical.

“Running has been a great outlet for me.”

For Richard Boucher of Uxbridge, that fire in the belly for running was also kindled relatively recently.

“I was kind of late to the game,” said the 54-year-old.

He’d never run for considerable distances prior to 2016, the

year he joined Evolution Road Runners.

“They suck you right in,” he said. “It makes it easier when you have a lot of people supporting you.”

Since then, Boucher has completed several marathons, including the Hartford, Conn., edition, his first. This will be his second Boston Marathon, whose weather he said makes the run “always a wild card.”

MARATHON

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Check our website for the most up-to-date information and to register for programs: <https://baconfreelibrary.org>

Children's Programs

All Together Preschool Storytime -- Mondays and Tuesdays @ 10am -- Join us for stories and songs! We'll be outdoors, weather permitting. Bring along a blanket to get comfy.

Note: if the weather is wet or below 55 degrees, we'll move this storytime indoors. The historic nature of our building limits accessibility. This program is also offered in an accessible location at the Morse Institute Library (check their website for dates, times, and more information).

Baby Time -- Wednesdays @

10am -- Stories, bounces, and songs for babies 0-24 months and their grownups! The historic nature of our building limits accessibility. This program is also offered in an accessible location at the Morse Institute Library (check their website for dates, times, and more information).

Jammin with You -- Fridays, April 4th & 18th @ 10:30am -- Be prepared to laugh, dance, sing, and jam your way through 30 minutes of non-stop family fun! We'll be outdoors, weather permitting. Bring along a blanket to get comfy. Note: if the weather is wet or below 55 degrees, this program will be relocated or rescheduled. **Registration is required.

Adult Programs

Local Farms (Metrowest) -- Produce, Meats, & Dairy (virtual program) -- Monday, April 7th @ 7pm on Zoom -- Join the growing number of people who are buying their produce, meat, and dairy products from local farms. Working with Ashland's Town Sustainability Coordinator, Samantha Riley, we'll have a panel of farmers who will help us understand the benefits of shopping for locally grown foods AND give us suggestions for reputable

growers in our area. Register to receive the Zoom link.

Lost Treasures of the Titanic with Art Historian Mallory Mortillaro (virtual program) -- Thursday, April 10th @ 6pm on Zoom -- For over a century, the world has been intrigued by the story of the Titanic. When tragedy struck on April 14, 1912, in addition to the incredible loss of life, a nearly incalculable amount of goods plummeted into the ocean, never to be seen again. This lecture takes a closer look at and tells the stories of some of the more interesting and valuable treasures lost on that fateful night. Register to receive the Zoom link.

Francais a la bibliotheque -- Saturday, April 12th @ 10am -- Vous parlez français? un peu, beaucoup, pas de problèmes. Venez nous rejoindre pour parler ou pour écouter.

Composting 101 (virtual program) -- Tuesday, April 15th @ 5:30pm on Zoom -- Join the Bacon Free Library and Blackstone Valley Veggie Gardens to learn the basics of composting. Did you know you can recycle all your kitchen scraps and yard waste and turn it into beneficial

food for your plants? We've got it all covered from the "how to" to the "how much." Register to receive the Zoom link.

No More Curse! A History of the Red Sox with Author/Historian David Kruh (virtual program) -- Monday, April 28th @ 7pm on Zoom -- Based on his research for his musical, The Curse is Reversed!, David takes us to the roots of Boston baseball, when, just like today, the team captured the hearts of the people of Boston. We will look back at the real story behind Harry Frazee and his sale of slugger Babe Ruth. Relive the (sometimes frustrating) saga of the Boston Red Sox and their ultimately successful struggle for a World Series championship. Register to receive the Zoom link.

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

April 3rd: Mistress of the Art of Death by Ariana Franklin

History Book Club -- second Thursday of the month @ 11am

on Zoom

April 10th: The Cause: The American Revolution and its discontents by Joseph J. Ellis

Environmental Book Club -- third Tuesday of the month @ 7pm on Zoom

April 15th: Total Garbage: how we can fix our waste and heal our world by Edward Humes

Tuesday Book Club -- fourth Tuesday of the month @ 6:30pm at the library

April 22nd: The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Nonfiction Book Club -- fourth Saturday of the month @ 10am on Zoom

April 26th: Thunderstruck by Erik Larson

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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The Short Term Rental Report

How to Maximize your Beach Vacation Rental Income in a Constantly Shifting Market



Dave Menapace, President

Cape Cod's vacation rental market has grown more competitive, with rising guest expectations. Listing a home for summer no longer guarantees high bookings. To maximize revenue and occupancy, property owners must adapt! Implementing the strategies below will keep your rental highly profitable as we head into the summer!

1. Embrace Flexible Lengths of Stay

Gone are the days when week-long stays were the standard. Today's travelers are looking for flexibility! Adjusting minimum night requirements based on demand can help fill gaps in your calendar. Midweek stays, long weekends, and shorter trips during shoulder seasons attract a wider range of guests, ensuring higher occupancy rates and increased income!

2. Adopt Dynamic Pricing Models

Setting the right price is key to maximizing rental revenue. Hotels and airlines use dynamic pricing, and vacation rental owners should too. Platforms like Airbnb, VRBO, and third-party tools adjust rates in real-time based on market trends, competition, and seasonality. This ensures you maximize earnings during peak times while securing bookings in slower periods.

3. Expand Your Marketing Reach

Being visible on multiple platforms significantly increases your chances of securing bookings. Listing on Airbnb, VRBO, Google Vacations, and Booking.com broadens your exposure. Additionally, having a direct booking website can reduce reliance on third-party platforms and save on commission fees!

4. Invest in High-Quality Photography & Staging

First impressions matter, and stunning, magazine-quality photos can make all the difference. Professional images that highlight your property's best features—whether it's a waterfront view, a cozy firepit, or a charming Cape Cod-style interior—will make your listing stand out. Proper staging, including décor that aligns with guest interests, further enhances the appeal and leads to higher booking rates.

5. Enhance Outdoor Amenities

Cape Cod's natural beauty makes outdoor living spaces a major selling point! Providing a firepit for cozy gatherings, an outdoor shower for post-beach rinses, and seating areas can greatly enhance your home's appeal. One of the best investments? A hot tub!! Properties with hot tubs consistently secure year-round weekend bookings, often adding upwards of \$50,000 in additional annual revenue!

6. Make Your Property Pet-Friendly

A growing number of travelers are unwilling to leave their furry friends behind. By allowing dogs, you open your home to a larger pool of potential guests. Pet-friendly rentals tend to see higher occupancy rates and can command premium pricing. Providing pet amenities like dog beds, bowls, and a designated outdoor area further enhances the experience.

Stay Ahead of the Market

The Cape Cod vacation rental market is becoming increasingly competitive, but implementing these strategies will help you stay ahead! By embracing flexibility, optimizing pricing, investing in marketing, and enhancing guest experiences, your vacation home can continue to generate strong revenue year after year. Adjusting to changing trends and guest expectations is the key to long-term success in this ever-evolving market.

This article was brought to you by Dave Menapace, a thought leader in short term rentals and President of The 5 Star Co-Host, LLC (www.5strcohost.com) in Holliston, MA. The 5 Star Co-Host is a leading vacation rental management company in New England.

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Local students selected to University of Minnesota Twin Cities Dean's List

Natick residents Clara Duckworth and Addison Neill have been named to the 2024 fall semester Dean's List at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities.

To qualify for the Dean's List, a student must complete 12 or more letter-graded credits while attaining a 3.66 grade

point average.

Duckworth is a freshman in the College of Liberal Arts; and Neill is a freshman in the College of Education/Human Development.

Submitted by the University of Minnesota Twin Cities

MARATHON

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Like his running mate Rodden, Boucher also designated Spark Kindness as the beneficiary for his marathon.

"That one resonated with me a lot," said Boucher, who has four children of his own. "They really work with the kids. To kind of deal with the teenage years."

To inspire and spur runners on, Spark Kindness will host a sign-making party at Paper Festa, located at 1 Main Street in

Natick. The event will be held the morning of April 12th, from 9 a.m. to noon. The site of the event sits at the historical marathon's 10-mile mark as the race passes through Natick.

Boucher was also closing in on his fundraising goal as of mid-March, at a time when his running regimen was racking up about 50 miles per week. The

Boston Marathon is Monday, April 21, and Boucher said his longer training runs would soon become scarce as the big day drew closer.

"A couple more 20-milers and we'll start tapering."

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

BY CHRISTIE VOGT
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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

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

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



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Schadler says the company has an environmentally friendly approach to disposal in which it recycles items when possible, properly disposes of non-recyclables and resells many items at the Schadlers' secondhand store, Resellables. "We opened that store in Bellingham because we hated to see things thrown away," Schadler says. "We have four kids and sustainability is extremely important to us."

During the business's early days, Schadler provided junk removal on nights and weekends when he wasn't busy working at

Business spotlight

a machine shop. Eventually, the business grew into a full-time endeavor, and the Schadlers invested back into the company with new equipment and techniques. "When I first started, for example, we didn't have any tarps. I'm driving around and things are flying out of my truck," Schadler laughs. "I'm like, 'Oh my god, I need a tarp.'"

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



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

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

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

As for Natick in particular, the Schadlers say they are proud to have many repeat customers and friends in the area. Christine was

born in Natick, and Jason grew up next door in Framingham and spent much of his youth in Natick. "We also enjoy bringing our little girls to the mall there," Christine says. "Our 8-year-old calls it 'the best mall in the whole world.'"

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

To receive a free junk removal estimate, call 774-287-1133 or visit affordablejunkremoval.com.

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Natick Residents in Weston Friendly Society's 'Into the Woods'

Two Natick residents will take the stage April 5-12 in Weston Friendly Society's Into the Woods. Becca Mayersohn plays multiple roles (Cinderella's Mother, the Giant and Snow White) and Rachel Sheldon plays the steward who works for the royal family.

The plot is centered around a baker and his wife and their wish for a child and imagines what might happen if Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood and others crossed paths with one another in the woods.

The 1988 Tony Award winner for Best Original Score and Best Book, Into the Woods has twice

been revived on Broadway and turned into a 2014 film starring Meryl Streep. With a book by James Lapine and music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, it features such songs as "Agony," "No One Is Alone" and "Children Will Listen."

"Everything these fairy tale characters want could be something that any one of us would want—a child, money, love, to be seen," director Anthony Masciaglioli said. "We then see that there are consequences for attaining their wishes and they need to learn how to build a community from those consequences and

even question the choices they made along the way."

Into the Woods will be performed at the Weston Town Hall on April 5, 6, 11 and 12. There are 7:30 p.m. performances on April 5, 11 and 12 and 2 p.m. matinees on April 6 and 12. Tickets are on sale at www.westonfriendly.org. Reserved seats are available for \$28 for adults and \$25 for seniors and students. For more information, email westonfriendlyociety@gmail.com.

Formed in 1885, the Weston Friendly Society is the second oldest theatre group in the United States.

Elevate Your Outdoor Experience with Stucchi Landscape & Design



BY JENNIFER RUSSO

Many of us have been to places that give us that feeling of having been transported into another world. Whether it be sitting in an Adirondack chair on a patio somewhere on the Cape with a view of the ocean, or a mosaic-tiled garden space with water fountains in Europe, or a famed tiki-inspired restaurant in Key West – walking into a space that enables the mind to retreat into relaxation is always a welcome and memorable experience.

Imagine having that feeling all the time, without leaving your own backyard. Known for their custom landscape designs and exceptional attention to detail, Stucchi Landscape & Design makes any vision you have for your outdoor space a possibility. Looking for an intricate, multi-seasonal garden design or an outdoor kitchen and entertainment space that is the talk of the town? Stucchi helps home and business owners turn their landscapes into enviable masterpieces.

“When someone purchases a home, they usually have a strong idea of how they want to use it, and we love transforming the space for them to be able to do that – making it a perfect fit for their family for the next 5-10 years or longer. Every space can be a unique reflection of the owner’s personality and lifestyle. We work hard to understand what it is someone is looking for so that we can get it exactly right,” says owner Jim Stucchi.

Everything is considered to the last specification - from the design and layout of patios, walkways, lighting, and pools to lawn installations, fertilization programs, horticulture-pointed maintenance, and proper drainage. Stucchi leaves no stone unturned and builds strong relationships with his clients so that he can take an integrated approach that results in the highest caliber of work.

“One of my all time favorite projects was for a wonderful family in Hopkinton. Their beautiful home is set into a

Business spotlight

heavily wooded hillside that is a truly unique and purpose-built landscape. Each space offers its own feel and personality while also contributing to the whole. The client, who has a passion for art, requested that we design the property to highlight some of her favorite collected pieces,” shares Stucchi.

Along with that came an additional heartfelt request – to incorporate together all elevations of the gardens with wheelchair accessible paths so that her son would be able to freely experience the gardens as well.

“Designing the space needed to carefully take into consideration moving through varied hillside locations on the property. These particular passageways had to be dimensionally specific, including functional ramps for at least nine months of the year. Within the masonry walls and garden terraces we created niche areas for locally and nationally sourced art pieces that had been curated over years of the family travels. The goal was to showcase the art in a way that paid respect to the piece but also allowed it to seamlessly blend into the individual garden space as well. It was completely custom down to the last detail.”

Clients have been so happy with the work that they are often repeat customers. For example, if an outdoor play space has outlived its use as children have grown, a family may opt to transform that space into a patio or kitchen, a greenhouse/garden, or a pool area. Whatever the need may be, Stucchi is ready to help ensure that it is done beautifully and fits perfectly with the rest of the space. The intention is to elevate the property, in an approachable and unpretentious way.

Landscape design can increase a home’s value up to 25%, enhancing both curb appeal and



the general functionality of the property. Extended living space with patios and decks, attractive plants, lighting, luxury features, irrigation and pergolas all have a high return on investment.

“We understand that our work is a personal and inspired investment in our clients’ property and we take that very seriously. Each family we work for is unique and we listen carefully to what they are hoping to achieve with their space. The majority of our endeavors are phased out over a 1-3 year period. For that reason, we utilize a very thoughtful and forward-thinking approach toward implementing our projects, all of which begin with a proper site analysis. We consider all of the functional

elements such as drainage, sun orientation, infrastructure needs, privacy, and noise reduction,” Stucchi says.

“It’s important to not only consider the components that bring ornamental value, but also the unseen critical pieces that will make the finished project a true success years down the road. By carefully folding together the designed ingredients with the craftsmanship of our installation teams we elevate the beauty and functionality of the home for the families we work with.”

With over 25 years of landscape design experience built on a foundation of trust and integrity, Jim not only serves his customers but also supports the

communities he works in. Jim is a longstanding board member for the Metrowest YMCA, a current member of the Keefe Technical High School Landscape/Horticulture Advisory Board and has served as President of the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association.

Stucchi Landscape & Design is based in Holliston and offers services all around New England. Projects are customized to a client’s goals, timeline and budget. To learn more or to begin bringing your creative outdoor vision to life, book a consultation by reaching out to info@stucchilandscape.com or calling 774-233-2151.

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Business Spotlight: Nina Sable Discusses the Current Market and New Buyer Agreement Impacts



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

By JENNIFER RUSSO

Though buyer agreements have always existed, late last year a mandate went into effect that requires home buyers to sign the

Sable Homes Metro-West Business spotlight

buyer agreement contract with their agent before that agent can begin showing them any prospective properties. This agreement helps new homebuyers understand fully the relationship with the agent and the services they will provide, as well as their compensation for providing those services. It protects the home buyer and agent by establishing very clear expectations right away.

“It’s important to understand that the compensation for agents is negotiable on both sides,” shares Nina Sable.

“While the buyer can be responsible for their real estate agent’s commission, at times the seller has it negotiated into the deal. Negotiations with sellers to cover these costs is a common occurrence and helps to lower a prospective home buyer’s out-of-pocket expense.”

Nina shares that for a seller, the best strategy is for them to pay full commission, however, discussing other arrangements that include contingencies can also be mutually beneficial.

Contingencies can be worked into offers, such as adding money toward appraisal of the home if the house doesn’t appraise, waiving a home inspection, or having a flexible timeline. Building a budget around these things helps to protect against risks.

She strongly recommends initially meeting with the agent at the office, because while buyers can still attend open houses, it

can get incredibly stressful without understanding the process or once bidding begins. Meeting with the agent first and having a clear picture of the market and how they can help meet your needs is key.

“We are in a hot market again, so buyers can expect that when they bid on a home that there will be anywhere from 5-20 offers in play. There are also a lot of investors right now, even though rates are still on the high side, so it’s really important to plan ahead,” says Nina.

“This is also a great time for absentee homeowners or those who are looking to downsize to sell their properties and get the highest return, and we would love to work with you to make that happen,” Nina shares.

With three agents that have backgrounds in various specialties such as senior services, media relations, and working with Span-

ish-speaking clients, Nina and her team are ready to make the process as simple as possible for both buyers and sellers.

“For us, it is about you. We work with people, not houses. We strongly believe in supporting your vision for what you want to achieve, and we customize every service as much as possible,” says Nina.

Are you looking to downsize or sell your home, purchase a home for yourself, or invest in a property? Contact Nina and her team for a consultation to discuss the market, best practices, and how they can help navigate it with you. For more information, contact Nina Sable at 508-733-8935, nina.sable@raveis.com or visit their website at www.sablesellshomes.com

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Grant will fund new public EV charging stations

The Town of Natick recently received a grant from MassE-VIP to install new public EV

charging stations throughout the community. This grant will replace and/or

expand EV charging stations in the following public parking lots:

- Pond St (increasing to 4 ports)
- Police/Fire (increasing to 6 ports)
- Community Senior Center (2 ports)
- Cole Center (2 ports)
- East School (2 ports)
- JJ Lane (2 ports)
- Dug Pond (2 ports)

have retractable cords, and will require users to pay when they charge. User fees will help cover the cost of electricity and maintaining the stations moving forward, which will help make this program more sustainable long-term.

Town officials say the new stations should be installed this spring. Town officials say they hope to add stations at the high school and rail trail parking lots.

All new stations will be Autel 50AMP Level II stations (faster than the existing stations), will

Source: Town of Natick

Need a break from depressing news?

If you want to help people affected by today’s natural and political climates, UU Wellesley Hills has a positive approach.

Our robust social justice programs provide opportunities to make a concrete difference in people’s lives. Our programs help homeless people, refugees, LGBTQ youth, and people with food insecurity, and address racial and environmental issues.

All of our weekly plate collections go to charities and partners that we support in these areas.

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Come fight for goodness with us during these trying times. Come make a difference.

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 309 Washington Street, Wellesley
<https://www.uuwellesleyhills.org>

Natick Spring Annual Town Meeting is April 22

The Town of Natick’s 2025 Spring Annual Town Meeting (SATM) will begin on Tues., April 22, at 7:30 p.m. at the Kennedy Middle School Auditorium, 165 Mill Street.

The warrant includes 25 articles related to regular town business and finances, personnel

and collective bargaining, an increase in the Senior/Veteran’s work program, zoning bylaw amendments, and more.

The full warrant is available at bit.ly/NatickSATMwarrant2025.

Your Money, Your Independence

Portfolios Care About Asset Allocation, Not Your Emotions.



Glenn Brown, CFP

Investing is a journey with greed, fear and uncertainty creating market fluctuations and volatility to portfolio values. While the cause always changes, one thing remains constant - portfolios don't care about your emotions.

Sounds harsh? Maybe.

Consider the last time your investments performed based on how you feel? This isn't the chicken or the egg. Investments don't react based on how you feel, they react to your actions and choice of asset allocation or lack thereof.

What is Asset Allocation?

Asset allocation is a foundational strategy of dividing an investment portfolio across different domestic and international asset classes—such as stocks, bonds,

real estate, hard assets, and cash equivalents—to balance risk/reward and reduce volatility. This allows investors to participate in returns over time by staying invested throughout market, macroeconomic and geopolitical cycles.

This Time is Different!

Really? Let's take a trip down memory lane the past 25 years.

Recall Y2K, Four Horsemen, Dot.com Bubble, 9/11 Recession, Iraq, No Income Verification Mortgages, \$150 Oil, Housing Bubble, Financial Crisis, 0.1% Cash, Great Recession, Quantitative Easing (QE), Flash Crash, QE2, Debt Ceiling, Government Shutdown, Greece, Taper Tantrum, QE3 - Shock & Awe, FANG, Brexit, 2016 Election, Tax Cuts, China Trade War, 9 Fed Rate Hikes, COVID Shutdown, 3X Stimulus, 9% Inflation, Ukraine, 10 Fed Rate Hikes, 2022 Non-Recession, Magnificent 7, Trump II. Throughout all these events, asset allocation ensures not all investments in a portfolio are moving in unison.

Asset allocation is not influenced by emotions; it is a strategically, diversified portfolio spread across different asset classes to help smooth out market fluctuations and reduce overall risk. For example, if stocks are down, then bonds or real estate or gold may be performing well to help offset.

MAPC scholarship deadline April 18

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council is offering a new scholarship to a high school senior, in the Greater Boston region, who is interested in the field of planning.

The \$1,000 "Planning Our Communities: Reimagining the Region" scholarship can be used at a college or university of the recipient's choice.

Graduating high school seniors from a secondary school from Natick, or any of the 101 cities and towns in the Greater Boston region (see full list at bit.ly/MAPCScholarship), who are committed to advancing a more equitable, sustainable, collaborative, and climate-friendly region

through studies in the fields of Climate; Community Engagement; Community, Housing, and Economic Development; Environmental Protection; Geographic Information System (GIS) and Spatial Analysis; Inclusive Mobility and Transportation; Municipal Governance; Planning; Public Health; Public Policy; and/or Sustainable Development and Preservation.

The deadline to apply is April 18, 2025.

For more information, including the application and guidelines, visit bit.ly/MAPCScholarship.

S&P 500 Index ≠ Asset Allocation.

Many believe investing in the S&P 500 index is the same asset allocation. It's not.

Being broadly diversified across U.S. large companies represents one asset class. Due to an average annualized return of ~13.9% over the past 15 years, recency bias has investors "setting it and forgetting it".

Asset Allocation at Work.

Most under age 45 (and some older) don't recall "The Lost Decade" when the S&P 500 index total return including dividends from 2000-2010 was -9.1%. Correct, \$1 million invested on Y2K was ~\$910,000 ten years later.

Elsewhere from 2000-2010, positive returns and outperformance was captured in index funds of developed international stocks, emerging market stocks, U.S. small cap stocks, U.S. high-yield bonds, U.S. REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts), commodities, gold, cash and U.S. bonds.

Speaking of the U.S. Aggregate Bond index, \$1 million invested became ~\$1,840,000. Because of this divergence, the S&P 500 index didn't catch up to the U.S. Aggregate Bond index until 2017, or 17 years later. If you're in the distribution stage of your life (i.e. retirement), that's not good.

Asset allocation models vary and ideally are based on timelines for the need of funds in a financial plan, not your age. How one invests a Roth IRA, Traditional IRA or taxable brokerage account could be different and should align with "when" and "how much" the plan projects to draw from each account.

Ignore at Your Own Risk.

When investors ignore asset allocation, they risk making decisions based on emotion. During market highs, greed sells lagging asset classes. During downturns, fear sells into panic without a plan back into the long-term strategy. These emotional responses create market timing and remove your foundation.

So remember, during times like these, your portfolio cares about asset allocation — a foundational strategy to help you manage risk, smooth out market volatility, and stay on track to meet timelines of your financial goals.

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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At its 2024 walk, Family Promise Metrowest raised more than \$100,000 to support families in the community. Source: Family Promise Metrowest

Family Promise Northwest to hold Walk to End Homelessness

Join us on Sun., May 4, and be part of a powerful afternoon that will make a difference in our community. Together, we can raise funds and awareness to fight homelessness and support those in need.

Event Details:

- Where: Natick High School, 15 West Street, Natick, MA 01760
- When: Check-in & activities begin at noon – and best of all, all activities (food, music, and fun) are free!

Why Your Participation Matters: In 2024, FPM supported 148 families, a significant in-

crease from the 110 families served in 2023. As housing costs continue to rise across Massachusetts, our state now has the highest proportion of children experiencing homelessness in the entire country.

How to Register:

- Visit bit.ly/FamilyPromiseWalk2025
- When registering, make sure to uncheck the box to cover processing fees—it will be covered!
- Register before April 1st to ensure you receive your preferred shirt size.
- After you register you will receive an email to set up an individual fundraising page and you

can create a team page and encourage your friends and family to join or donate.

By walking with us, you help generate resources and bring hope to families in need. Together, we can make a difference.

Can't join us for the Walk? You can still support FPM with a donation today. With each gift, you help us build hope—hope for parents working toward financial independence, hope for children who deserve a stable home, and hope for a future where every family has the opportunity to thrive.

Have questions? Reach out to Shannon at shannon@familypromisemetrowest.org

Mass Audubon State-wide Volunteer Day

On Sat., April 26, Mass Audubon will host our annual Statewide Volunteer Day with opportunities to get involved across the state, including Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary and online.

Give back to the sanctuaries that you love and the wildlife that they support by working on community clean-up projects. Resurface trails, clean up trash and debris, help with trail maintenance, remove invasive plants, install new trail signage and bridges, trim trees, and more.

Statewide Volunteer Day has projects for everyone across the state that are accommodating,

and inclusive to volunteers with a broad range of abilities. For a full list, visit bit.ly/MassAudubonVolunteerDay2025.

Once the rakes and gloves get put away, explore the sanctuary, take in its natural beauty, observe wildlife, and see the impact of your work in action!

If you can't make it to a sanctuary for Statewide Volunteer Day, you can still support Mass Audubon's efforts from home by writing a letter to your legislator. For details, visit bit.ly/MassAudubonLetterWriting.

Source: www.massaudubon.org

Connect and Serve: Rail Trail Clean Up on May 4

All ages are welcome! Connect and serve with SPARK Kindness, Keep Natick Beautiful, Natick AMVETS Post 79, and the Natick Rotary Club at our community clean-up to improve the natural environment along the Cochituate Rail Trail in the area of AMVETS, from Rt. 9 to Rt. 30. Help with trail and shoreline clean-up! Connect with neighbors, enjoy nature, and help us take care of this special place for recreation, right in our own backyard. Register to join the fun!

When: The event is May 4 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Meeting Location: Natick

AMVETS Post 79, 79 Superior Drive, Natick (parking available for this special event in the AMVETS lot) Drive, bike, scooter, or walk to join us!

What to wear: Comfortable clothes for clean-up activities. Feel free to bring gloves. All other supplies will be provided.

Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/9t3bd5nSqATu-3Lix5>

Questions: Feel free to contact Elizabeth Greer at enlangreer@sparkkindness.org.

We hope to see you there! Thank you!



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Time for some financial spring cleaning



Gary Shilman, Financial Advisor

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Spring is here — which means it's once again time to wash the windows, organize your cabinets and steam your carpets. This year, in addition to tidying up around your house, why not also consider some financial spring cleaning?

Here are some suggestions to consider:

- **“De-clutter” your investment portfolio.** When you

embark on your home cleaning mission, you might notice that you have redundancies — three blenders, two vacuum cleaners, and so on. Similarly, you might find duplications in your investment portfolio, perhaps in the form of multiple, near-identical stocks or mutual funds. If so, then it might be worthwhile to consider selling some of these investments and using the proceeds to boost your portfolio in other areas in which you may be lacking.

- **Cut back on “overgrown” investments.** Now that winter is over and you're venturing outside more, you may notice some overgrown shrubbery or some tree branches that need pruning. And while it may sound counterintuitive, you might also have some investments that have grown too big for your needs. For example, you might own some growth-oriented investments whose value has increased so much that they now take up

a larger percentage of your portfolio — and carry a higher degree of risk — than you originally intended. If that's the case, you might be better off by selling some of these investments and purchasing others to help bring your investment mix back to its desired alignment.

- **Dust off your investment strategy.** With more sunlight now pouring in your house, you might notice that the corners of your walls and ceiling may need a good dusting. And as you continually work to strengthen your financial foundation, you may need to dust off your investment strategy, especially if you've recently experienced changes in your life, such as a marriage, addition of children, new job, and so on. And as you move closer to retirement, you may also need to adjust your strategy in some ways. For one thing, you might want to adopt a more conservative investment

approach in the years immediately preceding your retirement, though you'll still need to have some growth potential in your portfolio to help keep you ahead of inflation.

- **Protect yourself from financial dangers.** As you go about your household spring cleaning, you may find actual physical dangers that need to be removed or stored more safely, such as sharp objects or broken tools. And as you navigate daily life, you may also find threats to your financial safety — the need for an expensive home improvement, or a major car repair or an unexpectedly large medical bill. If you don't have the money available to pay these expenses, you might be forced to dip into your retirement accounts or run up your credit card or take out a high-rate loan. To protect yourself from having to make these moves, you may want to maintain an emergency fund containing

several months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid account, separate from those you use for your daily living expenses.

Of course, some of these moves can take some time — but by getting started on them soon, you can help put your financial house in better shape by the time the next spring-cleaning rolls around.

Contact Gary Shilman to discuss your financial needs, wants, and wishes.

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Natick Resident Emily Sarazin to Run 129th Boston Marathon for Community Foundation for MetroWest

Natick resident Emily Sarazin will be hitting the pavement on Monday, April 21, 2025, as she takes on the iconic 129th Boston Marathon, to support the Community Foundation for MetroWest (CFMW).

A lifelong athlete, Emily's passion for running blossomed after a successful career in competitive soccer. Transitioning from half marathons to the full 26.2 miles, Emily's first marathon in Ottawa, Canada, in 2014, was a landmark event, culminating in a proposal from her now-husband, Brennan.

Emily and Brennan have made their home in Natick, raising their sons, Cooper (7) and Mason (5), and fostering a family culture that embraces the joy and discipline of running. "I love the influence my running/training has on my sons," Emily shares. "Mason

and Cooper have both already said they want to run the Boston Marathon one day (and they were both upset when I told them they'd have to wait until they turn 18!)."

Choosing CFMW as her charity partner was a natural fit for Emily, who deeply values the organization's commitment to addressing the needs of the local community. "I love that the local community benefits, and I admire how the Foundation's team understands the community's current and greatest needs," Emily explained. "The Foundation truly brings the 'it takes a village' concept to life, and I believe that building up the community will positively impact everyone."

The CFMW's Youth in Philanthropy program particularly resonates with Emily, reflecting on her own formative



experiences in community service. "I was able to participate in several community

service opportunities growing up, which helped mold my perspective, and I hope my kids can take part in something similar," she said.

As she diligently trains and fundraises, Emily expresses her gratitude for the overwhelming support she has received. "It's incredible to see people come together in such a positive way!" she says.

The Community Foundation for MetroWest is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all who live and work in the region by

connecting philanthropic resources with community needs. Natick residents and community members are encouraged to support Emily's marathon and the impactful work of the Community Foundation for MetroWest.

To learn more about how you can support Emily and the work of the Foundation, please visit her fundraising page: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/emilysarazin>

About the Community Foundation for MetroWest:

In 1995, the Community Foundation for MetroWest became the trusted philanthropic partner for individuals, families, nonprofits, and businesses in the region who are driven to enhance the quality of life for all in MetroWest. For thirty years, the Foundation has developed extensive Action Projects (including Equity in Education, Housing and Homelessness Prevention, Workforce Development and Arts & Culture) and awarded more than \$37 million in grants to charitable organizations. The Foundation currently stewards more than \$33 million in charitable assets for current needs and future impact. To learn more about the Foundation's commitment to improved quality of life in MetroWest, visit community-foundationmw.org or call (508) 647-2260.

Nipmuc Territory Land Acknowledgement Ceremony on April 12

The Hopkinton Center for the Arts (HCA) and the Town of Hopkinton invite families to join a special land acknowledgement ceremony with us and the Nipmuc Tribe on April 12th at 1:00 PM. The event will be held at 98 Hayden Rowe Street in Hopkinton and is a wonder-

ful opportunity for families to come together to honor and learn about Hopkinton's indigenous history. The Natick Nipmuc Tribe will be organizing music, storytelling, an exciting drum performance, and more.

Kelly Grill, Executive Director of HCA, shared, "This

event allows us to acknowledge the land's original Nipmuc heritage while bringing the community together to explore the tribe's traditions. We are also very thankful to the Town of Hopkinton for their amazing support in making this event possible.

The ceremony is planned to take place outside in HCA's amphitheater, but if the weather doesn't cooperate, it will move indoors to the HCA performance space. It's completely free and welcomes people of all ages.

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Project Just Because fundraiser on April 12

Project Just Because helps families in need with food, clothing, cancer items, toiletries, diapers, school supplies, birthday gifts for children, holiday gifts, and so much more. We help families restart their lives who have been victims of domestic abuse,

fires, floods, and other natural disasters. We have over 950 families visit us each week, many from Natick and surrounding areas.

Please come support us at our biggest fundraiser of the year on April 12th at Anthony's on the Green in Holliston. The auction

night will have over 60 auction items, appetizers, music, cash bar, and surprises. To purchase tickets, visit

<https://secure.frontstream.com/spring-spectacular-2025>

Pet of the Month

Luna, a sleek, playful, affectionate companion

Luna is a beautiful, sleek one-year-old who was surrendered to MWHHS and is now looking for her forever home. This affectionate girl loves lap time and will happily claim any lap she deems worthy, purring up a storm as she settles in.

Luna is also full of playful energy! She'll chase wand toys with enthusiasm and has a special love for shoelaces. One of her favorite games? Crunchie fetch! She'll watch intently, panther-like, as you prepare to fling a treat across the floor—then pounce and retrieve it. She also enjoys her daily brushing and takes mealtime very seriously.

Because Luna is an energetic young cat, she sometimes gets overstimulated and prefers to keep playtime and petting time separate. She may mistake hands or feet for toys, so interactive play with proper toys is best. If she feels ignored, she might give

a small warning bite to remind you she's there and ready for attention. However, she's easily redirected, and once you learn her



body language (like a twitching tail or a pause in purring), it's easy to understand her needs.

Luna would thrive in a home with cat-savvy adults who are home often and can provide the attention she craves. With the right understanding and play rou-

tine, she will continue blossoming into the affectionate, fun-loving companion she's meant to be.

Could Luna be your perfect match? She's ready to steal your heart (and your lap)!

As we are closed to the public, adoptions are by appointment only. If you have an interest in meeting Luna, please use this link to find additional information about her. You can also see all our currently available Adoptable Cats here, and fill out our online adoption application:

<https://metrowesthumanesociety.org/adoptable-cats/>

We will review all applications and make appointments for those applicants we feel would provide a good and loving home.

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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Natick firefighters graduate from Firefighting Academy

In February, State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine and Massachusetts Firefighting Academy leadership announced the graduation of 33 firefighters from the 50-day Career Recruit Firefighting Training Program.

Graduates included Jacob Opela and Harrison Goldsmith with the Natick Fire Department.

“Massachusetts firefighters are on the frontlines protecting their communities every day, and today’s graduates are needed now

more than ever,” said State Fire Marshal Davine. “The hundreds of hours of foundational training they’ve received will provide them with the physical, mental, and technical skills to perform their jobs effectively and safely.”

“Massachusetts Firefighting Academy instructors draw on decades of experience in the fire service to train new recruits,” said Massachusetts Firefighting Academy Deputy Director Dennis A. Ball. “Through consistent class-

room instruction and practical exercises, today’s graduates have developed the tools they’ll need to work seamlessly with veteran firefighters in their home departments and in neighboring communities as mutual aid.”

The graduating firefighters of Class #327 represent the fire departments of Acton, Arlington, Ashland, Burlington, Dracut, Fall River, Holden, Littleton, Lowell, Melrose, Methuen, Milford, Natick, Plainville, Watertown, Westborough, and Wilmington.

The Richard N. Bangs Outstanding Student Award, which is presented to one recruit in each graduating career recruit training class, was presented to Firefighter Michael Bodio of the Milford Fire Department. The award is named for the longtime chair of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council and reflects the recruit’s academic and practical skills, testing, and evaluations over the course of the 10-week program.

Basic Firefighter Skills

Students receive classroom training in all basic firefighter skills. They practice first under non-fire conditions and then



Massachusetts Firefighting Academy
Career Recruit Class #328 Graduation • March 7, 2025

Jacob Opela and Harrison Goldsmith of the Natick Fire Department are recent graduates of the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. Source: Massachusetts Department of Fire Services

during controlled fire conditions. To graduate, students must demonstrate proficiency in life safety, search and rescue, ladder operations, water supply, pump operation, and fire attack. Fire attack operations range from mailbox fires to multiple-floor or multiple-room structural fires. Upon successful completion of the Career Recruit Program, all

students have met the national standards of NFPA 1001, Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications, and are certified to the levels of Firefighter I/II and Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations by the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, which is accredited by the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

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Youth Public Safety Academy registration now open

Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian is pleased to announce registration is now open for the 2025 Youth Public Safety Academy (YPSA).

YPSA is an educational and affordable summer program that is open to all children ages

a designated bus stop, but they will be picked up and dropped off at these locations.

2025 Bus stop locations will be in the following communities (those marked with a “/” will have a joint bus stop):



Join us for FREE Healthy Kids Day!
Saturday, April 26
9 AM - 1 PM
Outdoor Center

the METROWEST YMCA SUMMER CAMPS
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LEARN MORE



WEEK 1
 July 7 - July 11
 Chelmsford
 Lowell
 Tewksbury
 Wilmington

WEEK 2
 July 14 - July 18
 Burlington
 Lexington
 Newton/Waltham
 Tyngsborough

WEEK 3
 July 21 - July 25
 Acton/Boxborough/Maynard
 Hudson
 Malden
 Stoneham/Wakefield

WEEK 4
 July 28 - August 1
 Bedford
 Belmont/Watertown
 Billerica
 Marlborough

WEEK 5
 August 4 - August 8
 Arlington
 Framingham/Natick
 Medford
 Woburn

8-12 who live in Middlesex County. Learn more at bit.ly/MiddlesexYPSAvideo. Older children also have the opportunity to participate as a Counselor-in-Training.

Held at the Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) Training Academy in Chelmsford, YPSA is comprised of five, one-week camps.

Registration is \$100 per child (per week) and includes transportation to and from designated bus stops; daily breakfast, lunch and snacks; and a graduation ceremony held each Friday. Cadets from Billerica and Chelmsford will be dropped off and picked up at the MSO Training Academy.

Participants are not required to reside in communities with

- July 7 – 11: Chelmsford, Lowell, Tewksbury & Wilmington
- July 14 – 18: Burlington, Lexington, Newton/Waltham & Tyngsborough
- July 21 – 25: Acton/Boxborough/Maynard, Hudson, Malden, Stoneham/Wakefield
- July 28 – Aug. 1: Bedford, Belmont/Watertown, Billerica & Marlborough
- Aug. 4 – 8: Arlington, Framingham/Natick, Medford & Woburn

To register, please visit www.middlesexsheriff.org.



UPCOMING EVENTS

JOIN US!

Limited space available. Call us to RSVP.

WED 4/2 | 2-4 PM
A Fancy Mixology Event
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WED 5/7 | 2-4 PM
Buzz and Bloom
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Sports

NHS Boys Lacrosse Team Could Have A Special Year

BY KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Nate Kittler knows a thing or two about lacrosse.

The 52-year-old Kittler not only is beginning his 24th year as Natick High's varsity head coach, he's also the only head coach the program has ever had.

The Redhawks started competing as a varsity lacrosse team in 2001 and since that time Kittler has guided Natick to 15 state tournament appearances. The deepest playoff run his forces achieved was in 2021 when they lost in the quarterfinals to Boston College High.

A native of Natick, Kittler no doubt would like to direct the Redhawks past the quarterfinals and see what's in store for his players in the Final Four. He's not predicting that situation, but it remains a definite possibility based on the strengths of his 2025 squad which opened its season hosting Wayland on March 29 after Local Town Pages' deadline.

"We've got lots of experience with 14 returning players from last year," he said. "We also have depth, athleticism, and a high lacrosse IQ. The boys are coachable, their attitudes are positive and they're a close-knit group. Another key is they're mentally tough."

Kittler's goals for the season offer hints that this could be a special season.

"We want to be better on the last day of the season than we were on the first day," he said. "We also want to win the Bay State Conference title and advance as deep as possible in the state tournament. If we maintain the right attitude and teammates look out for one another, we will have success. We also need to get comfortable being uncomfortable."

The following is a thumbnail look at the players who form the Redhawks' nucleus with comments from Kittler.



Natick High's captains flank coach Nate Kittler. They are, from left, Evan Hyman, Alex Peck, Alex Masterangelo, Ben Vose, and Donny Guglielmucci. Courtesy photo

Ben Vose: A senior captain, he's a big, tough, and skilled defender with a high lacrosse IQ. He fractured his fibula during hockey season and has worked hard to be ready for the season. A second-team BSC all-star, Ben marks our opponents' best attackmen.

Alex Masterangelo: A senior captain, he's a very athletic and tough-as-nails defender. He's very coachable and has a great sense of the field.

Alex Peck: A senior captain, he also was a captain on the hockey team. An attackman, he was a first-team BSC all-star last year, scoring 51 goals and compiling 24 assists. A very shifty player who has a great shot. He's got a superb mindset for all sports.

Donnie Guglielmucci: A senior captain, he's a fast and aggressive midfielder who can

outrun opponents and play solid defense. A great communicator, we're looking for him to have a standout season.

Evan Hyman: A senior captain, he's only played lacrosse for three seasons. A second-team BSC goalie last year, he had a .667 save percentage. Great leader and communicator.

Levi Gagnon: A junior midfielder, he was a first-time BSC all-star last year. Levi is fast, shifty, tough and has a high-level lacrosse IQ. Had 30 goals and 15 assists last season. Hustles all over the field and can find the back of the net.

Josh London: He's a big left-handed attackman who scored 32 goals last year. He loves the game and is going to have a great junior season.

Ryan Cochrane: A senior midfielder, he's very coach-

able and hustles intensely. I'm looking for him to step up this spring.

Liam O'Shaughnessey: A senior midfielder, Liam is very athletic. He has the potential to be an explosive player.

Gavin Hamel: A senior defender, he's fast, tough, and able to get around the field. His ability has improved tremendously.

Luca Cardolaccia: A senior midfielder, he's been a defensive middle for us but we're hoping he can play a role in our offense. Luca is fast and determined.

Tate Cogliano: A senior faceoff specialist, Tate is our locker-room guy. We're hoping he has a great season on faceoffs. A captain in ice hockey.

Dylan Cohen: A senior midfielder, he will become a great asset when he puts all the pieces together.

Jack MacDonald: A senior midfielder, Jack is a two-way competitor who plays tough defense and can be an offensive threat at times.

Aiden Danty: A senior goalie, Aiden is a team player. He started playing goalie last year because there was a shortage at that position. Did a great job and we're looking for even more this spring.

Kittler has a trio of capable assistants that include John Larkin (javyee coach and varsity aide) and varsity assistants Bruce Channechuk and Gene Zanella. "We're fortunate to have them," Kittler said. "Bruce played on three national title teams at Johns Hopkins. And, it's good to have alumni and opposing coaches join our staff."

Kittler relies on a coaching philosophy that focuses on potential and enjoyment. "I strive to make sure our players reach their potential and have fun in their athletic journey," he said. "When that occurs, winning will be the by-product. It's also important to build a family atmosphere and camaraderie."

Kittler also labels the lacrosse field as "an extension of the classroom." He knows valuable life lessons can be learned there.

"Sports teach kids to overcome adversity and be resilient," he said. "Players also can learn how to lead, how to become quality teammates and to be accountable."

No matter how each season unfolds, Kittler always aims to develop "good people."

"It's important that our players become good citizens," he said. "And, we strive to make sure our players respect their school, their teammates, the community and the game. Good people make good Redhawks."

The 2025 boys lacrosse team at NHS has the potential to achieve great things.

The Charles River Chorale Celebrates 40 Years of Music with Magical Spring Concert

The Charles River Chorale is excited to present its Spring Concert, *If You Can Dream It, You Can Do It: 40 Years of Making Music Magical*, on May 3rd at 5:00 PM at the Medway High School Auditorium. This special event marks the chorale's 40th anniversary, celebrating four decades of community and song.

Under the direction of Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, the 100-member chorale will perform a powerful mix of Disney classics, traditional choral pieces, and pop songs that highlight the themes of hope, dreams, and the power of believing.

The concert will also feature Grammy-nominated Recording Artist and NBC's The Voice Finalist Michelle Brooks-Thompson, whose soulful renditions will elevate the evening, and a performance by the Children's Choir, adding a vibrant, intergenera-

tional touch.

"This concert celebrates 40 years of sharing the power of music with our community," said Nelson-Oneschuk. "We're thrilled to mark this milestone with a performance that highlights the strength of hopes and dreams."

For more information and ticket details, visit our link: <https://www.charlesriverchorale.com/tickets> or access the QR code provided.



EMASS Senior Softball League seeks players for 2025 season

Form lasting friendships, enjoy balanced competition

Eastern Massachusetts Senior Softball (EMASS) is opening its annual registration campaign for men and women softball players age 50 and older. With almost 500 members, the league attracts players from towns across Eastern Massachusetts with games played primarily in Wayland, Medfield, and Framingham. The EMASS season runs from late April through late September, including playoffs. Interested players can register for the EMASS 2025 season at <https://e-mass.org/current-programs>.

EMASS has six divisions that accommodate a range of skill levels, two of which play on Saturday mornings and four on weekday mornings. EMASS has many seniors in their fifties and sixties who can still hit a ball over a 300-foot fence, run down a deep drive in the outfield, or turn a double-play in the in-

field. There are other divisions in which players whose talents may have diminished over time can enjoy playing with similarly skilled friends.

"We are a group of folks who



recognize how lucky we are to be able to play a game we love at the age we have attained and at a level that matches our abilities," said Steve Bober, Commissioner of EMASS.

"I joined EMASS when I retired and didn't know a single person," offered Joe Groden, an EMASS Division coordinator.

"Six years later, the best thing about being part of this community has been the number of friends I've made. This is truly the essence of the experience."

Division Coordinator Mike Mauceri added, "These friendships can expand, providing opportunities like playing in tournaments or going to Cuba to play in a friendship series. Whether you just want an outlet for fun and exercise or to build new friendships, there's something for everyone."

EMASS adds about 60 new players each year. "We shuffle up team rosters every year in all divisions to enhance connections across our large softball-loving community," said Division Coordinator Rich Goldberg. "Our members enjoy competing with and against their friends."

EMASS players cherish their weekly double-headers and

SOFTBALL

on page 2

SUMMER GUIDE!



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SOFTBALL*continued from page 17*

three-hour escape to the ball-field. "Aches and pains are easily tolerated when offset by the joy of playing and competing with friends," said Walker Royce. "And, at a cost of roughly \$5 per game, there's no better value for healthy recreation."

For more information about EMASS Senior Softball League, visit www.e-mass.org

About EMASS Senior Softball League

EMASS was founded in 1995 and offers active seniors of all skill levels a safe, well-organized opportunity to play competitive slow-pitch softball. Players can

sign up for a division featuring players with similar abilities. With two Saturday divisions and four weekday divisions, players can play at a level most comfortable for them. All divisions play a double-header each week and many members play on different teams in multiple divisions.

Walk'n Mass 10k, 5k, soup social on April 5

On Saturday, April 5, the Walk 'n Mass Volkssport Club invites walkers to complete a 5km (3.1 mile) or 10km (6.2 mile) walk route in Holliston. This is a walk-at-your-own pace, just-for-fun event "in your own backyard."

The start point is the First Congregational Church, 725 Washington Street, Holliston. Registration for the 10km walking event is from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and registration for the 5km walking event is 10:15 to 11 a.m. The walk times are staggered so that walkers will finish shortly before noon when the soups are served.

The participation fee is \$4 per person.

The 5km and 10km walk routes are mostly on paved surfaces with a few slight inclines suitable for baby strollers, but difficult for wheelchairs due to some missing curb cuts.

The 10km walk comprises two loops. The first loop is the 5km route which traverses the downtown venturing into the Mudville neighborhood, a tribute to Casey At The Bat and Rita's Labyrinth. Walkers will head to Arch Street, walking under a 1-arch railroad bridge (listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the smallest railroad bridge in the world). Weather and trail conditions per-

mitting, walkers will head up to the Upper Charles Rail Trail and walk over the renovated 8-Arch Bridge/Bogastow Brook Viaduct, originally built in 1846 by the Boston and Worcester Railroad over the brook.

The second loop of the 10k route includes two gentle hills and is on paved surfaces. The route travels through the Thomas Hollis Historic District with stately antique colonial homes dating to the early 19th century.

Walkers are invited to join fellow walkers for Walk'n Mass's Soup Social which kicks off our walking season. If you would like to contribute an appetizer, soup, bread or dessert please notify the contact person Beate Hait. No nuts please as the facility is nut-free.

Volkssporting events sponsored by Walk 'n Mass Volkssport Club promote fun, fitness and friendship through non-competitive walking and biking to the public. There is also an achievement awards program through the AVA: America's Walking Club (ava.org).

For further information contact Beate at (774) 292-9098 or beateh1@aol.com. Additional information at www.walknmass.org for this event and others.

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Spark Kindness to celebrate 15 years on April 8

Spark Kindness will hold a 15th Birthday Benefit Celebration on April 8 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at The Garden at Elm Bank, Hunnewell Building, in Wellesley.

For more information and tickets, visit <https://givebutter.com/c/spark15>

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Real Estate Corner

Recent Natick Home Sales

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The 4-bed 2-bath 1,694-square-foot house at 6 Jefferson Street in Natick recently sold for \$890,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

Date	Natick	Amount
03/21/2025	8 Fox Hill Drive	\$1,080,000
03/21/2025	23 Reynolds Avenue	\$810,000
03/20/2025	4 Post Oak Lane #21	\$325,000
03/14/2025	1 Brook Street	\$1,860,000
03/14/2025	11 Curve Street	\$875,000
03/10/2025	6 Malden Street	\$1,200,000
03/10/2025	22 Western Avenue	\$575,000
03/07/2025	6 Jefferson Street	\$890,000
03/06/2025	33 Rockland Street	\$1,950,000
03/06/2025	29 Farwell Street	\$1,600,000
03/05/2025	17 Morgan Drive #305	\$795,000
03/05/2025	24 Plain Street #B	\$1,200,000
03/03/2025	8 Walkup Court	\$815,000
03/03/2025	2 Pitts Street	\$1,240,000
02/28/2025	53 Park Avenue	\$950,000
02/28/2025	7 Grace Circle	\$1,620,000
02/28/2025	28 Stacey Street #A	\$1,350,000
02/28/2025	37 Morse Street #B	\$1,250,000
02/27/2025	34 Hemlock Drive	\$791,000
02/27/2025	86 North Avenue	\$965,000
02/27/2025	5 Thoreau Court #13	\$367,000
02/26/2025	15 Morgan Drive #106	\$699,000
02/25/2025	17 Hudson Street	\$1,380,000
02/24/2025	3 Parker Court	\$1,050,000
02/21/2025	40 Nouvelle Way #N551	\$815,000
02/21/2025	12 Lincoln Street #2	\$1,030,000
02/20/2025	84 Evergreen Road	\$1,050,000

Source: zillow.com Compiled: Local Town Pages

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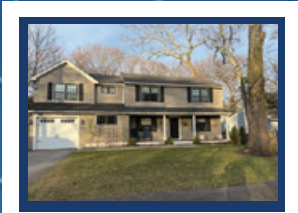
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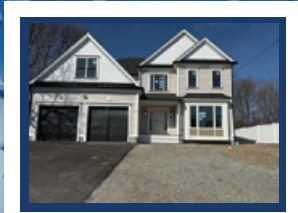
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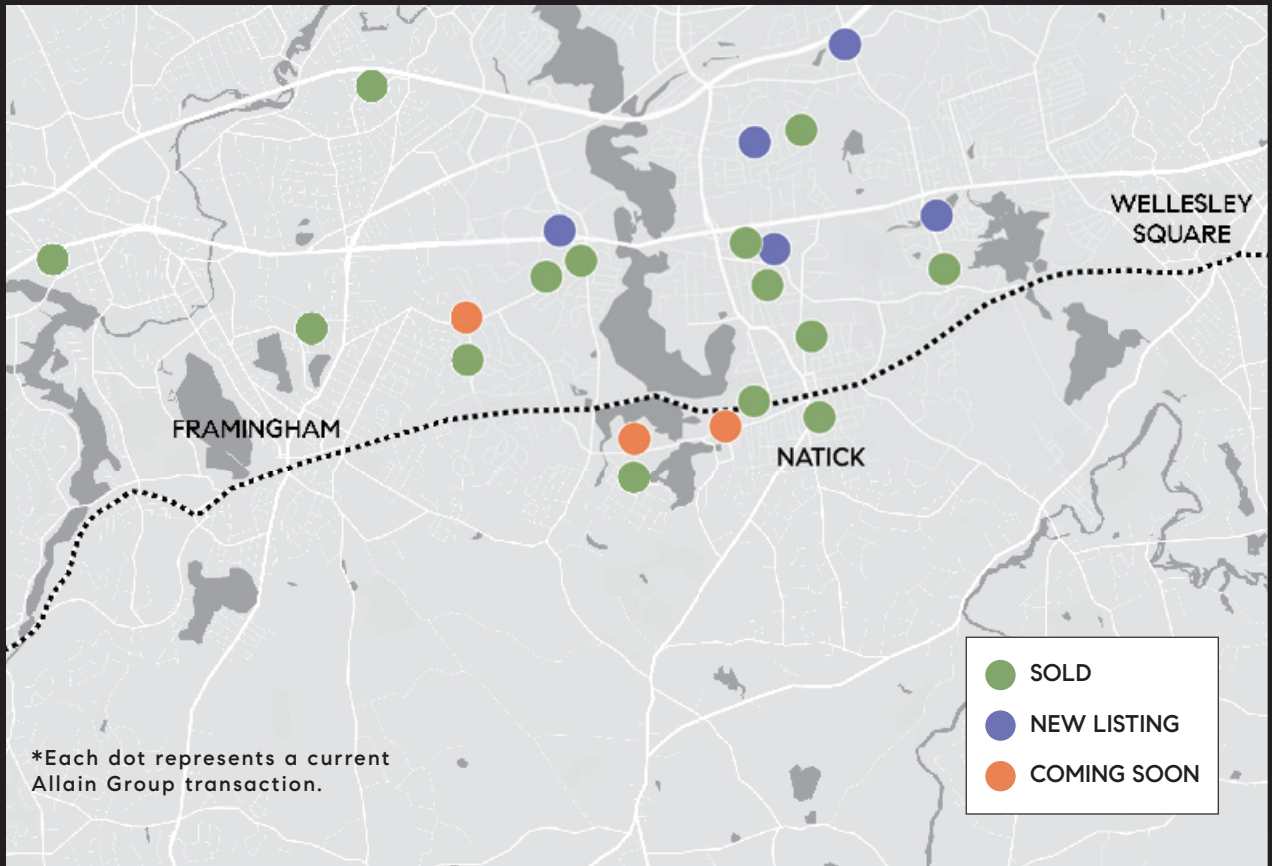


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