

Local Harvest

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

Much of July felt like midday heat of a summer afternoon, and the first week of August arrived as a cool evening's respite. Those early days of last month brought sunny (if sometimes smoky) skies, and temperatures ranged in the 70s.

A crew of teenage staff had been laboring under the swelter of summer's first half at Natick Community Organic Farm, and August's opening teased a milder month.

"The heat and humidity has been quite something," said Nicky Wilson. She is Assistant Director of Internal Operations at the farm, and has been coaching and mentoring the young workers at NCOF.

The summer program invites teens to learn and participate in agricultural trades, get



a taste of what's involved in growing and caring for what goes on our plates. The program's mission is summed up in its tagline: "A summer of work; a lifetime of learning."

The work involves maintaining farm infrastructure

throughout summer, such as tending to animal enclosures and fencing, splitting wood and landscaping.

The NCOF also hosts a

HARVEST
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NHS Boys Soccer Squad Sets Lofty Goals



Coach Dan Joseph, third from left, and his captains, from left, Luca Tavilla, Luke Dougherty, and Brady Dubshter.

BY KEN HAMWAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Dan Joseph wants to keep the momentum mounting after becoming the boys varsity soccer coach last year at Natick High.

The Natick native led the Red-


hawks to a regular-season record of 10-4-3 and a No. 7 ranking in the Division 1 power ratings. And, when the playoffs got underway, his squad downed Somerville

SOCCER
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Save the Dates!

Natick Open Studios Weekend Returns October 18 -19

The Natick Art Association will continue its fall open studios tradition, announcing October 18 and 19 as this year's event weekend. Open Studios will take place from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. both days. The event offers the public the chance to meet artists working in Natick at locations across town. Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about a variety of artistic processes and to purchase artwork directly from the artists.

Over 60 artists presently comprise the Natick Art Association. This year's open studios participants include painters, printmakers, sculptors, potters, jewelry makers, fiber artists, photographers, and mixed media creatives.

Studio locations include group sites such as the 3 Adams Street Studios and the 43 Main Street Studios in Natick center as well as solo studio locations, such as painter Ryan Black's studio on Union Street in South Natick



and ceramic artist Suzanne Stumpf's Barn Showroom on Farwell Street. Traditionally held on the third weekend in October,

this year's event marks the 23 Natick Artists Open Studios.

In addition to viewing and discussing art with the artists,

attendees will be able to see live demonstrations at some locations and to enjoy refreshments while mingling with the artists and

other visitors.

For more information, visit <https://www.natickartassociation.org/>

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Year-to-Date Comparison • 2024 vs 2025

CLOSED UNITS (SOLD)			MEDIAN SALE PRICE		
2024	2025	↑	2024	2025	↑
160	179	+11.9%	\$980K	\$1.1M	+12.2%
APPROXIMATE MONTHS SUPPLY OF INVENTORY			MEDIAN SALE PRICE / SQ FT		
2024	2025	↓	2024	2025	↑
2	1.6	-21.5%	\$462	\$467	+1.3%
MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET			MEDIAN LIST PRICE		
2024	2025	↑	2024	2025	↑
13	16	+23.1%	\$910K	\$1.07M	+17%
MEDIAN DAYS TO OFFER			MEDIAN SALES PRICE AS % OF LIST PRICE		
2024	2025	→	2024	2025	↑
6	6	0%	100.1%	100.6%	+0.5%

Data Source: MLS PIN • 2025 vs. 2024 As of August 7, 2025

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Natick resident named patient partner for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund's 'A Chance for Kids & Families' fundraiser

Charlie Bernath, 3, patient partner for the Jimmy Fund's 'A Chance for Kids & Families' becomes honorary Burger King® team member at the Framingham, location for a day

Charlie Bernath, a 3-year-old Natick resident and patient at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Jimmy Fund Clinic, has been named a patient partner for the Jimmy Fund's 2025 "A Chance for Kids & Families" fundraising campaign. Customers who visit a participating Burger King®, The Paper Store®, or Uncharted location from now through August 31, as well as customers who visited a participating Valvoline Instant Oil Change location between July 13 and August 2, have helped defy cancer by making a donation at checkout to support cancer care and research at Dana-Farber. They also receive a coupon from the retailer to be used at a subsequent visit to thank them for supporting this important cause.

The Jimmy Fund's patient partner program honors patients who are treated at Dana-Farber, highlighting their stories of strength, perseverance, and hope. To celebrate Charlie's participation, Burger King included her as an honorary team member at their Framingham, Mass. location. She served customers, met the staff, and enjoyed a cheeseburger, one of her favor-

ite meals, with her mom, Ashley, and sister, Lucy.

Charlie was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) in April 2024, just two months after her second birthday. Today, Charlie is doing well and continues chemotherapy to prevent any future cancer recurrence. She recently started playing soccer and is looking forward to school in the fall.

More than 160 Burger King restaurants, over 90 The Paper Store or Uncharted locations, and 64 Valvoline Instant Oil Change locations are participating in the 2025 "A Chance for Kids & Families" program.

Since 2000, the Jimmy Fund's "A Chance for Kids & Families" fundraiser has raised more than \$15 million, directly supporting pediatric and adult patient care and cancer research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Dana-Farber aims to prevent, treat, and defy cancer by accelerating revolutionary science, extraordinary care, and exceptional expertise. The funds raised through this initiative help ensure that all patients receive the critical treatment and support they need at Dana-Farber.



Charlie Bernath, 3, of Natick, with her family on July 31, 2025. Charlie is a patient partner for the Jimmy Fund's "A Chance for Kids & Families" fundraising campaign this summer. As part of the program, Charlie was invited to be an honorary team member for the day at Burger King's Framingham, Mass. restaurant.



Charlie Bernath, 3, was invited to be an honorary team member for the day at Burger King's Framingham, Mass. restaurant after being selected as the patient partner for the Jimmy Fund's "A Chance for Kids & Families" fundraising campaign this summer. She enjoyed her favorite food, a cheeseburger.



On July 31, 2025, Charlie Bernath, 3, became a Burger King team member for the day at their Framingham, Mass. location. Charlie is a patient partner for the Jimmy Fund's "A Chance for Kids & Families" fundraising campaign, which is made possible thanks to participating Burger King, The Paper Store, Uncharted, and Valvoline Instant Oil Change locations.

For more information about the Jimmy Fund or "A Chance for Kids & Families" campaign or to find a participating Burger King, The Paper Store, Uncharted, or Valvoline Instant Oil Change location, visit JimmyFund.org/Shop.

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SOCCER

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and Boston College High before losing, 1-0, in the Elite Eight to Newton North.

The 30-year-old coach, who obviously did a standout job in his rookie season, isn't shying away from setting lofty goals for his second campaign. One of his objectives for his 2025 contingent is to qualify for the tourney again and go deeper than last year. That sure sounds like his expectations include the Final Four or the Division 1 State final. And, it also sounds like the 2013 Natick High grad isn't expecting any sophomore jinx.

"We had 12 seniors on last year's team and our two captains — Matty Gordon (midfielder) and Devin Owens (defender) — were Bay State Conference all-stars and Eastern Mass. All-stars," Joseph noted. "Matty also

was chosen to the All-State team. We had a talented group."

The team strengths of his current group are admirable and provide lots of fuel for Joseph's optimism.

"We have 11 returnees and nine of them got playing time last year," he said. "We're younger than last year's team but we've got depth, our team skills are solid, we're athletic, our soccer IQs are high, we have speed and our players are very coachable."

Joseph, who competed in soccer, indoor track and volleyball at NHS, set three goals for his second season.

"We want to be more consistent," he said. "When we lost last year, the players didn't wipe the slate clean, allowing the loss to linger. We want to focus more on one game at a time, then move on. Another goal is to build team chemistry early. Consistency and team chemistry are the keys to advancing in the playoffs. All our objectives are realistic because we've got lots of returning veterans who know what it takes to win and have had success in the tourney."

A trio of talented captains gives the Redhawks quality leadership. They include seniors Luke Dougherty (forward), Brady Dubeshter (fullback) and junior Luca Tavilla (midfielder).

"Luke is a supportive captain

who's disciplined, skilled, has a high soccer IQ and lives and breathes soccer," Joseph emphasized. "Utilizing a strong left foot, he's been in our top three in scoring for the last two seasons. Brady has a motor that never stops. He fights through adversity, he's quick and has very good skills. Tenacious on defense, there's no hesitation on his moves. Luca is a natural leader, a good communicator who's always composed. He's got excellent skills, he's effective in transition and his field vision is the best on our team."

Senior goalie Jack Stephens was a Natick reserve last year but Joseph says "he's vastly improved and he's ready."

"Jack is well-prepared," Joseph offered. "His reaction time is excellent, he blocks shots effectively, and his field vision is superb. He knows where the ball is going."

Two senior forwards who can be counted on for offense are Austin Dubeshter and Owen Ford.

"Austin isn't a captain but his skills are excellent and he leads by example," Joseph noted. "A left-footed competitor, he's a good goal-scorer. He's got a high soccer IQ, he's smooth and deliberate. Owen is about 6-2 and his strong body enables him to display will-power and helps him get into scoring position."

Three midfielders will play key

roles because Natick's offense is designed to go through the midfield. They include junior Cole Boggis and seniors Kal Masse and Ethan Rivera.

"Cole leads by example and players gravitate towards him," Joseph said. "He's skilled, quick, and mentally and physically tough. Kal is a gritty player who's got great field vision. His passing is crisp and accurate. Ethan is dynamic and versatile, able to play any position. A coachable and flexible competitor, he's got speed and quickness and has a high soccer IQ"

Although Joseph was still assessing his roster at *Local Town Pages'* deadline, four newcomers could be in the mix as the season moves along. They include senior Gavin Waddle (defender) and juniors Sam Fishman (defender), Nate Kingscote (midfielder) and Devin Irwin (midfielder).

"I'm confident they'll get playing time," Joseph said, "and I know they'll be ready when the opportunity arises. They're strong, skilled and eager to contribute."

All the players will get their chance to demonstrate their talents when Natick hosts Milton on Sept. 3 in its season opener.

After graduating from Natick High, Joseph enrolled at Fairfield University where he played volleyball for four years and

majoring in political science and history. A captain in volleyball as a senior, he also was a New England Collegiate League all-star.

Joseph, who has a masters degree from Boston College in education, has been on the Natick High faculty for seven years, teaching history and philosophy.

His athletic philosophy focuses on developing character, building team chemistry, and making sure his players reach their potential. "If those things are in place, then winning will follow," he said.

Life lessons can be learned in sports and Joseph lists several that he believes can be valuable after high school. "Overcoming adversity and developing resilience are important," he noted. "And, sports can also teach how to be a quality leader and a good teammate. Other key lessons are setting goals and a willingness to be accountable."

Joseph has enthusiasm and energy and his Redhawks' on-field style will reflect those attributes. They'll focus on their offense going through the midfielders. "We'll be deliberate, we want to control the pace, and we'll strive to maintain possession as we advance the ball," the coach said.

What Dan Joseph also wants is a continuance of the momentum his squad created during last year's playoffs.

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The Short Term Rental Report

Your Photos Made a Promise. Here's How to Keep It.

**Dave Menapace, President**

In the battle between hotels and vacation rentals, consistency is the winning move. Here's how to deliver an experience that lives up to your listing and keeps guests coming back.

Hotels have a secret weapon: consistency. No matter where you check in, the bed feels familiar, the towels are fluffy, and you never have to hunt for the extra roll of toilet paper. Vacation

rentals, on the other hand, can be magical, but sometimes they gamble with guest expectations. One home is stunning, stocked, and spotless. The next might leave guests longing for the predictability of a hotel. In today's competitive market, closing that consistency gap is the key to keeping guests coming back.

The short-term rental boom during COVID created an influx of new hosts. At the time, travelers were not picky. They were simply happy to get away. Now in 2025, guests have choices. Lots of them. Demand has leveled, budgets are tighter, and guests are more discerning. A beautiful set of photos might win the booking, but if the in-person experience falls short, your five-star dreams can quickly fade.

The good news is that it is not rocket science to deliver a hotel-level experience while keeping the personality and charm

that make vacation homes so appealing. Here are four quick wins that can transform a home from "just another rental" into a guest favorite:

1. Upgrade the Basics.

Stop thinking of your vacation home as a place for hand-me-down furniture. Guests expect the same quality they have at home or better. Invest in sturdy bed frames, plush mattresses, matching nightstands, and well-made couches. Skip the random thrift store décor. Instead, design with purpose, blending comfort with style so every room feels intentional.

2. Master the Art of the Photo.

Your photos are your storefront. Work with a photographer who understands short-term rentals, not just real estate. Stage every room with the lights on,

beds perfectly made, and key amenities front and center. Show the coffee setup, the outdoor firepit, or the game room exactly as guests will enjoy them. Great staging equals more bookings.

3. Audit the Guest Experience.

Before you launch or relaunch, invite friends or family to stay and critique everything. Can they find the silverware without opening eight drawers? Is there a full set of pots and pans? Are the TV instructions easy to follow? Treat their feedback like gold. Eliminate the friction points and make every interaction with the home effortless.

4. Create a "No Guesswork" Stay.

Hotels thrive because guests never have to guess. Replicate that. Stock extra paper products in plain sight.

Label switches, remotes, and shelves. Provide a simple house manual and a QR code for appliance instructions. The more intuitive your home is, the more relaxed and happy your guests will be.

Consistency is not about making your home look like every other property on the market. It is about keeping your promises. When your photos reflect reality, when every detail works seamlessly, and when guests feel cared for from booking to checkout, you do not just compete with hotels, you beat them at their own game.

Dave Menapace, President
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Bacon Free Library September 2025

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Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. with extended hours on Tuesday until 7 p.m. and Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

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 at 10 a.m.

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).

Lapsit Storytime - Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

Stories, bounces, and songs for babies 0-24 months and their grownups! This program is held 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).

Jammin with You - Fridays, Sept. 5 & 19 at 10:30 a.m.

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, this program will be rescheduled.

ALL AGES PROGRAMS

Art Display: Robin Baratz Oil Paintings - Aug. 28 through Oct. 9

Robin Baratz creates oil paintings that depict her instinctive connection to natural land and water and to the people. You can also enjoy this collection of oil paintings at The Center for Arts in Natick (TCAN) during the month of November.

Instrument Petting Zoo - Saturday, Sept. 6 at 11 a.m.

urday, Sept. 6 at 11 a.m.

The BFL is partnering with Bach to Rock (B2R) in Wellesley to bring you this instrument petting zoo. B2R will bring a variety of musical instruments to the BFL for 60 minutes of instrument exploration to give people of all ages a chance to learn about instruments and experience playing them. This event will be held outdoors at our picnic table. Please stop by to try out an instrument, or two, that you're curious about. No registration required.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Author Heather Wolf Discusses the Colors of Birds -- Beauty and/or Evolutionary Advantage? - Virtual program, Monday, Sept. 8 at 7 p.m. on Zoom

Join Heather Wolf, author of *Find More Birds* and *Birding at the Bridge*, as she shares her beautiful images of colorful birds. We'll discuss the birds, their colors, and the purpose of their colorful feathers, as well as evolutionary advantages they may have be-

cause of their plumage. Register for the Zoom link.

Whole Grains for Everyday with the Empty Nest Kitchen - Virtual program - Tuesday, Sept. 9 at 7 p.m. on Zoom

Whole grains are simple to incorporate into your dinners if you know the tips and tricks to coax out maximum flavor. We'll be preparing farro bowls and fall harvest quinoa. Register for the Zoom link.

Exposure - a streaming documentary film

A Muslim chaplain, a French biologist, a Qatari princess, and eight other women pull 120-pound sledges across the fast-disappearing Arctic sea ice to become the last-ever team to reach the North Pole. This film will be available to stream from Sept. 12 through Sept. 26. Register for access to the film.

Cooking Demo with Heidi McIndoo: Sloppy Joes and Deep Dish Cookie Pie - Virtual program, Monday, Sept. 22 at 7 p.m. on Zoom

Just in time for the fall, learn how to make some yummy comfort food! Dietitian and chef Heidi McIndoo will walk us through making sloppy Joes and deep dish cookie pies. The recipes will be sent out prior to the program so you can cook along in real time, if you'd like. Register for the Zoom link.

Who Really Wrote Shakespeare? With Author and Historian David Kruh - Virtual program, Monday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m. on Zoom

Who really penned all the works attributed to Shakespeare? Hear the story of one man's search for the "real" author and how - in a stunning piece of historical irony-that search played a role in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Register for the Zoom link.

The Politics of Chocolate with Cocoa Beantown - Virtual program, Tuesday Sept. 30 at 7 p.m. on Zoom

It's hard not to smile when there's chocolate around, but behind the deep, rich taste, there's a whole world of serious -and fascinating- issues. Dive into the world of chocolate, exploring its entanglements with child labor; its aspirations with women-owned cooperatives and the Fair Trade movement; and its intrigues, including corporate espionage. Register for the Zoom link.

ADULT BOOK & FILM CLUBS

Registration required for all clubs; please visit our website for details <https://baconfreelibrary.org/clubs-programs/>

Mystery Book Club - Thursday, Sept. 4 at 1 p.m. on Zoom: *The Queens of Crime* by Marie Benedict

History Book Club - Thursday, Sept. 11 at 11 a.m. on Zoom: *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

Tuesday Book Club - Tuesday, Sept. 23 at 6:30 p.m. at the library: *North Woods* by Daniel Mason

Nonfiction Book Club - Saturday, Sept. 27 at 10 a.m. on Zoom: *Reading with Patrick* by Michelle Kuo

Cinephile Mondays - last Monday of the month at 4 p.m. 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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Gary Shilman, Financial Advisor

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Planning for your child's education can feel overwhelming, but a 529 education savings plan offers a powerful way to build a financial foundation for their educational future.

One in 4 parents currently invests in a 529 plan, according to 2025 research by Edward Jones and Morning Consult. Perhaps it's because of the tax benefits — earnings are generally tax free if the money is used for qualified educational expenses. Or perhaps it's because of their flexibility.

Types of education. While most people know 529 plans can help cover college and university tuition, these versatile accounts can also pay tuition for vocational and trade schools, making them suitable for students pursuing careers in skilled trades like plumbing, electrical work or culinary arts. Additionally, some apprenticeship programs qualify for these funds. And even K-12 tuition expenses are covered, up to \$10,000 per year for private, public and religious elementary and secondary schools.

Beyond tuition. Withdrawals from a 529 plan can move beyond tuition and cover the cost of room and board for students enrolled at least half-time. They can help pay for books, computers and qualified educational supplies. And a big surprise for some: A 529 plan can help with student loan repayment up to \$10,000 per beneficiary.

Who can contribute. Fortunately, 529 plans welcome contributions from anyone — parents, grandparents, other family and friends. Contributions are

treated as gifts to the beneficiary, so most contributors will want to stay within the annual non-taxable gifting limit (which for 2025 is \$19,000 for individuals or \$38,000 for married couples filing jointly).

Interestingly, 1 in 5 parents would prefer for their child to receive 529 contributions as gifts from loved ones, making these accounts perfect for birthdays, holidays and other special occasions.

Multiple children. If you have multiple children, you have options in how you structure your 529 savings. You can maintain separate accounts for each child or use one account for all your children.

Unused funds. You may be concerned about what happens if your child doesn't use all the money. Fortunately, these accounts offer numerous penalty-free options. You can easily change the beneficiary to another qualifying family member, including siblings, nieces, nephews, grandchildren or even yourself as the account owner.

You can also roll funds to another family member's existing 529 plan. If your child receives a scholarship, you can withdraw up to the scholarship amount without penalty (though you'll pay income tax on a portion of the money). The IRS allows an option to roll up to \$35,000 into a Roth IRA for the beneficiary if certain requirements are met. You should consult with your tax advisor on this 529/Roth IRA rollover issue.

State options. It's important to note that 529 plans vary from state to state, and you're not limited to your home state's plan. However, it's smart to examine your home state's offerings first, as many provide special incentives like tax breaks for residents.

When comparing plans, consider factors such as tax benefits, fees, investment options and ease of use. A good financial advisor can help you navigate these choices and identify the plan that makes the most sense for your family's specific situation and goals.

529 education savings plans offer flexibility and tax advantages that help make them an excellent tool for education planning. With their expanded uses and multiple options for unused funds, they can help provide families with both security and adaptability in preparing for their children's educational futures.

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

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HARVEST
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two-year apprenticeship program for teens, where students learn to plan, problem solve, and manage life on the farm. This is a year-round experience for up to eight students, who work on site after school and during breaks in their academic year.

To support the summer teen work crew (TWC) and apprenticeship initiatives, the farm hosts a Harvest Dinner at summer's end. The event raises funds for the programs, and raises the profile of the nonprofit NCOF.

"We can only hire a certain number of teens based on the fundraising that we do," said Wilson, adding that there are often more applicants for the programs than available slots.

The annual Harvest Dinner is an occasion to celebrate the work and produce of the NCOF, while ensuring resources that the next year's roster of teens will require.

"It's our biggest fundraiser," said Wilson.

Harvest time has held a sometimes-spiritual and celebratory place in civilizations since the advent of agriculture. With favorable luck and weather, towns and villages would reap what crops they'd sown.

In certain climates, they'd bank



the better part of that bounty to last the community through winter, spring and summer – hoping that harvest would sustain them until the next. The yield of local agricultural produce from year to year was the equivalent of living paycheck to paycheck, and that dynamic had persisted for most of humanity's existence. That subsistence way of life still persists for many people today.

We grab a bag of rice from supermarket shelves, one that's been replenished as if by magic the next time we go food shopping. It's too easy to take for granted how novel and new this food system is in the long narrative of human history.

It's hearty grist for gratitude.

The Harvest Dinner is designed to pay homage to that

spirit of community. And to perpetuate it. It's a symbol of the Natick Community Organic Farm's mission over its many decades.

The dinner is held outdoors as in days of old, now under electric lights and moonlight where candles and torches once made do. The event hosts up to 140 attendees. While the seats are limited, the farm accepts donations on a rolling basis throughout the year.

"It's really beautiful," said Wilson. "We do try to hold it outdoors under the stars."

That wasn't always so. Now in its 24th year, NCOF's Harvest Dinner used to be hosted at other venues, indoors. But sometimes, genius dwells in simplicity and the obvious. In 2022, someone suggested the farm host the Harvest Dinner itself, and that's been the default ever since.

"It was amazing and magical," said Wilson of that first Harvest Dinner on the farm's home turf. "And so we're going to keep doing it."

And as is tradition, the community will show up to lend its talents and resources to the celebration.

"Bully Boy Distillers" of Boston will be on hand to mix cus-



tom cocktails. "Renée's Kitchen" of Natick, and Wellesley's "Juniper" will provide food and preparation for the event. "The Hyve" will offer appetizers.

New York's "Stoneledge Gardens" will prepare an edible gift to diners. Based in Massachusetts, "Twist Bakery" will be furnishing desserts. Beer will be provided by "Jack's Abby"

of Framingham. And Natick's "Cognex" has donated funds to bring the event to fruition.

In true Harvest Dinner fashion, produce from the NCOF will be a main ingredient of the celebration's cuisine.

"All of these have come from the community," said Wilson. "It's a real testament to all of that."

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Healey-Driscoll Administration Awards \$3.3 Million in Literacy Grants

Funding supports 25 districts to buy high quality instructional materials for grades 4-12

The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced that it is awarding \$3.3 million in Partnership for Reading Success – Massachusetts (PRISM) III literacy grants to 25 school districts and collaboratives. These grants will help school districts implement lasting improvements in English language arts and literacy instruction for grades 4–12 through the evaluation, selection and implementation of high-quality instructional materials.

“Massachusetts has the best education system in the country, but we know more needs to be done to ensure all of our students have the tools they need to be lifelong readers and learners,” said Governor Maura Healey. “Today’s grant awards are a key piece of our administration’s commitment to making sure our school districts have the resources and support they need to improve literacy among their students.”

“Ensuring every student has access to high-quality, evidence-based instruction in liter-

acy is essential for Massachusetts students and families,” said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. “Through PRISM III grants, we are providing more students the support they need to excel and thrive in the future.”

In the first year of PRISM III, grant recipients will engage in one of three tracks based on their readiness: preparing to evaluate and select materials, purchasing selected materials, or deepening implementation of materials already in use. All grantees will receive leadership coaching from a DESE-approved PRISM curriculum and instruction coach to analyze current curriculum and instruction systems and to support the establishment of a PRISM Curriculum Council. Recipients can also use the grant for professional learning and for substitute coverage or stipends to compensate educators for their time in support of grant activities.

“We know that there are students across all grade levels struggling to read. The

Healey-Driscoll Administration continues to maximize every opportunity to promote evidence-based literacy teaching and learning, from Literacy Launch to our new high dosage tutoring initiative. The PRISM III grants build on these efforts, investing in the literacy skills of older students,” said Education Secretary Dr. Patrick Tutwiler.

“The PRISM III grants are designed to help districts build sustainable structures to make lasting improvements in literacy success for secondary students,” said Pedro Martinez, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “This is an important investment in our secondary students.”

Literacy, particularly early literacy, is a priority for the administration. Governor Healey created Literacy Launch, a multiyear strategy to promote high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction so our youngest students can read and read well. Through her Fair Share supplemental budget, Governor

Healey also expanded high dosage early literacy tutoring to help students in kindergarten through third grade build foundational reading skills. This school year, 272 schools in Massachusetts will receive free, high-dosage early literacy tutoring.

The PRISM III grant recipients are:

- ACCEPT Educational Collaborative of Natick: \$54,900
- Attleboro Public School District: \$156,982
- Barnstable Public School District: \$21,000
- Billerica Public School District: \$357,050
- Bi-County Collaborative (BICO): \$127,500
- Boxford Public School District (in consortium with Topsfield): \$111,496
- Brookline Public School District: \$207,072
- Easthampton Public School District: \$66,500
- Everett Public School District: \$132,000
- Gateway Public School District: \$18,000

- Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School District: \$54,500
- Haverhill Public School District: \$197,000
- Hudson Public School District: \$57,681
- Lowell Public School District: \$549,500
- Mansfield Public School District: \$92,115
- Milford Public School District: \$96,245
- Nantucket Public School District: \$123,132
- New Salem-Wendell School District: \$83,022
- Northampton Public School District: \$18,000
- Sharon Public School District: \$126,316
- Somerville Public School District: \$338,000
- Spencer–East Brookfield School District: \$62,015
- Stoneham Public School District: \$57,195
- Uxbridge Public School District: \$189,530
- Ware Public School District: \$18,000

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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 spe-

cifically 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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Free Concert: Knock on Wood rocks out at Morse Library Sept. 4

Howie Newman and Joe Kessler, also known as Knock on Wood, are anything but a typical folk combo, performing funny original songs (suitable for all ages) as well as well-known rock covers. Their varied repertoire includes everything from Tom Petty to Buffalo Springfield to the Stray Cats.

No matter what they play, it features excellent musicianship, pleasing vocal harmonies and ... lots of fun.

Knock on Wood (howienewman.com/knockonwood) will be playing a free concert at Morse Institute Library, 14 East Central St., Natick, on Thursday, Sept. 4, from 7 - 8 p.m.

Registration is encouraged. Visit the library website (morseinstitute.libguides.com) and click on "Programs" to register. You can also call 508-647-6520.

This program is supported by a grant from the Natick Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Newman (guitar, harmonica, vocals) is the songwriter and his engaging manner, which includes G-rated comedy and lots of audience participation, has charmed audiences all over New England. Song topics include baseball, his wife's inability to parallel park and not-so-graceful-aging. There are



also heart-warming songs about his first grandchild and surviving the pandemic.

A former sportswriter for the Boston Globe, Patriot Ledger, Lowell Sun and other newspapers, he will also be performing one of his many baseball songs, which include "Why Did You Go, Johnny Damon?"

Kessler plays fiddle and mandolin with an energetic improvisational style that includes folk, rock, jazz and bluegrass. He has also toured extensively throughout the United States and

Canada as well as eight other countries, performing with Morphine, Jimmy Page and Robert Plant, the Boogaloo Swamis and many others.

"We're not the traditional guitar-and-fiddle duo," says Newman. "Joe and I like to keep things up-tempo, do some rock covers and get the audience involved. The idea is to play some great music and have fun."

For more information about Knock on Wood, including videos and music samples, visit howienewman.com/knockonwood.

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Navigating College Admissions with Financial Planning



Glenn Brown, CFP

The college admissions process can feel overwhelming for both students and parents.

From understanding early application options to maximizing financial aid and planning for expenses, every decision matters. Let's break down key aspects to help families make confident, informed choices.

Early Action vs. Early Decision

These two common early application paths are typically due around November 1, but they work very differently:

Early Action (EA): Students apply earlier and receive admissions decisions sooner, without any binding commitment. EA applicants can apply to multiple schools and compare offers before deciding.

Early Decision (ED): A binding commitment—if admitted, students must attend. ED can improve acceptance odds because schools see these applicants as highly motivated. However, families must request

merit aid at the time of application; later financial aid concerns can jeopardize an acceptance.

Maximizing Merit-Based Aid

Merit aid is awarded for academic, athletic, or artistic achievements rather than financial need. To improve chances:

Look Beyond Trophy Schools. Highly competitive universities offer little merit aid because of their abundant applicant pools. Instead, consider niche colleges or specialized programs where your student's strengths stand out.

Build Recruiter Relationships. Merit decisions often hinge on personal connections. Encourage students to reach out to local recruiters, share interests, and stay in touch. These relationships can lead to introductions with faculty and admissions staff. When students apply, they should express enthusiasm directly—making their case for both admission and merit support.

Let Students Lead. Recruiters prefer authentic student voices. Parents should support, but avoid writing, editing, or speaking on behalf of the student.

Making the Most of 529 Plans

A 529 plan offers tax-free growth and withdrawals when used for qualified education expenses. To use funds effectively:

Adjust Investments Over Time: As college approaches, consider shifting a portion of funds into more stable investments—such as bonds or money markets—to reduce volatility.

Stick to Qualified Expenses:

Withdrawals must cover costs like tuition, fees, books, and room and board. Non-qualified expenses can trigger taxes and penalties.

Understanding Loan Options

Loans can help bridge financial gaps, but terms vary widely.

Federal Student Loans: Typically lower interest rates and flexible repayment terms. Includes Direct Subsidized Loans (interest covered while in school) and Direct Unsubsidized Loans (interest accrues immediately).

Parent PLUS Loans: Federal loans taken by parents. They carry fixed interest rates and repayment flexibility, but parents assume the debt burden.

Private Loans: Offered by banks and lenders. Usually higher interest rates and fewer protections, making them a last resort.

Policy Update: Student Loan Reform

For the first time in years, Congress—not just executive

orders—has taken the lead on student loan reform.

The One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) changes the “blank-check” borrowing effect:

Parent PLUS Loans: Borrowing is now capped at \$20,000 per year and \$65,000 total for parents of undergraduates.

Graduate Loans: Master's/general graduate programs are now \$20,500 annually and \$100,000 lifetime, while professional programs (e.g., law, medicine) are \$50,000 per year and \$200,000 total.

Undergraduate Loans: Existing limits remain unchanged at \$12,500 annually and \$57,500 aggregate.

By placing borrowing caps, OBBB shifts responsibility back to universities to manage affordability, rather than allowing unlimited borrowing. It's a step toward addressing the root cause of rising education costs—not just the symptoms.

Final Thoughts

Families who plan ahead—

by understanding application strategies, targeting schools wisely, and exploring funding options—set themselves up for both financial stability and a smoother transition into college life. For tailored guidance, talk to your Certified Financial Planner.

The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

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UMass Amherst Announces Spring 2025 Grads

Approximately 5,000 students received bachelor's degrees in over 100 majors at the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Undergraduate Commencement on May 16, 2025 at the McGuirk Alumni Stadium.

Below is a list of students from your area that received a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst:

Ashland

- Gauri A Arvind
- Nicholas Alexander Bialzik
- Anders Sundin Brandt
- Sarah Elizabeth Chappelle
- Erica Lynn DeSiata
- Mary Elizabeth Esenther
- Christopher Josiah Faneuff
- Molly Murphy Fleming
- Erin Colleen Gore
- Tejas Krishnamurthi
- Peter Lukashev
- David Alexander Massa
- Joshua Arpithreddy Mekala
- Paige Hilton Nanatovich
- Algis Petlin
- Angelie Maria Rivera
- Kevin Rosoff
- Erica Allison Schultz
- Srihari Srivatsa
- Tin Vu

Keven Henrique Xavier Jr

Holliston

- Lyssa Maria Cunha
- Jiasiding Daiweisi
- Michaela Marie DeToma
- Adam Charles Houk
- Hisham S Hussain
- Amy Rose Joslin
- Katherine Elizabeth Leary
- Julianna Abigail Lotti
- Matthew Descan Perera
- Elexa Jordan Reiss
- Michael Luke Ringie
- Emily Nicole Rivera
- Caitlyn Michelle Sault
- Jack Nathaniel Seymour
- Rosa Concetta Stalzer
- David Touchette

Hopedale

- Christian Matthew Antonioli
- Isabella Paige Killarney
- Katherine Geraldine Mooney
- Jenna P Sacco
- Tyler Small

Natick

- Kenzo Garcia Alvarez
- Brian Cheung
- Daniel Choe
- Jacob Ido Cohen
- Kaitlyn Nicole Dempsey

- Alison Rita Fahy
- Jessica Flynn
- Angeli Simone Franz
- Max E Freedman
- Phillip Thomas Galligan
- Abigail Gloria Goth
- Elijah Jonah Grehn
- Samuel Robert Harrington
- Emma Joy Hoffman
- Andrew Kaye
- Jacob Patrick Kilroy
- Taylor Marie Kittler
- Ella Augusta Landman
- Jennifer Wai Yun Lee
- Robert T Lewandowski
- Marco Alexander Lopez
- Carly Rose McCarthy
- Katherine Muldoon
- Myshkin Francis Munson
- Jack Paul Murphy
- Nathaniel Justin O'Brien
- Connor E Olsen
- Kelly Pease
- Emma Christine Peck
- Liz Alejandra Rosas
- Maia Eleanor Shteyman
- Madeline Penelope Standwill
- Michael Henry Sudkin
- Lucy Louise Vician
- Jarod B Woo
- Tristan Mark Woods
- Jacob Andrew Zeliger
- Carly E Zirlen

Friends of Natick Trails 2025 Annual Meeting Registration



Please join us on Tuesday, Sept. 16 starting at 6:30 p.m. for the Friends of Natick Trails (FoNT) Annual Meeting at the Morse Institute Library, 14 East Central Street in Natick Center. Mix and mingle, learn about how to get involved with trail initiatives, and hear an inspiring keynote address. Please register.

We will have a brief business meeting to elect our new Board. Social time will be 6:30 - 7 p.m. Business meeting FoNT achievements and plans will be at 7 - 7:30 p.m. and keynote 7:30 - 8 p.m. We hope you will join us! Appetizers and beverages will be served. Thank you for registering to help us plan a fun event. We also welcome participation by groups and organizations involved with trails, parks and

open space; let us know at the registration page.

About FoNT

FoNT is a volunteer-driven organization with a mission to support and enhance trails in Natick, including the Cochituate Rail Trail. FoNT is governed by a Board of Directors. We welcome Members and volunteers to support and assist with our work. To learn more, please visit FriendsOfNatickTrails.org/about.

Our Mission

To promote outdoor recreation and alternative transportation within our community and to encourage and support collaboration within and between communities to ensure the safe enjoyment of the trail network for all users and neighbors.

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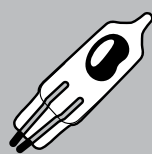
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Yankee Quilters Build Skill ... and Friendship

Donate Your Old Housewares, Books & Clothing/Textiles Aug. 11-Oct. 4

BY JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Batting. If you don't sew, you might not think much about it, but it's essential to making a quilt cozy and warm, and it can be costly for the volunteers who comprise Yankee Quilters, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization of quilters who make quilts to comfort cancer patients, veterans and others who need them. Starting August 11th through October 4th, 2025, the guild is asking you to clean out your closets and cupboards and donate your gently used textiles, household goods and books, so they can fundraise for batting, backing fabric, and guest lecturers. Specifically, the group is collecting:

- Clothes (in bags): men's, women's, & children's clothes, coats, shoes, scarves, handbags, wallets, fashion accessories, belts, backpacks, etc.
- Household Textiles (in bags): bedding, comforters, blankets, sheets, towels, linen, tablecloths, curtains, pillows, etc.
- Small Household Goods

(in small tightly packed boxes): kitchen items (such as pots/pans, dishes, silverware, glasses, serving pieces and hand-held appliances), home decorative items, knick-knacks, toys, games, and small electronics

- Books & Media (in separate boxes): paperback, hard cover - all genres - *no encyclopedias or textbooks

Yankee Quilters always welcomes new members, including beginners. The group meets on the second Tuesday of the month at Emma's Quilt Cupboard at 7 p.m. from September through June.

A quilting class at Emma's is where Paula Colleton, who has lived in Bellingham most of her life, first heard about the group in 2008. She's been quilting since 1976, as a young Mom who took an evening class with Gladys Glockner at Bellingham High School. "I was hooked," says Colleton, who also belongs to Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild, "I couldn't get into it fast enough.



Shown are members of the Yankee Quilters, which draws from area towns and is always welcoming new members. From Aug. 11 through Oct. 4, they will be holding a fundraiser, accepting donations of used wares and textiles.

It was love at first stitch." Glad she joined the "nice group of people" at Yankee Quilters, Colleton says, "I had no idea that the guilds did anything besides sew. I thought it was strictly a social thing, and it is, but each guild does so much more than get to-

gether and sew. They all have their own specific volunteerism."

Fellow member Cindy Lynch explains Yankee Quilters' Comfort Quilts was started by Joan Hallett, of Franklin, around 2000. These quilts are currently provided to cancer patients at

Dana Farber in Milford. Other quilts have gone to First Concern PRC in Marlborough, Quilts of Valor, and Wrap the World with

QUILTERS
continued on page 21

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Natick Sustainability Coordinator influenced Holliston's new Sustainability Coordinator

BY SUSAN MANNING
STAFF WRITER

Amelia Landau has hit the ground running in her new position as Holliston Sustainability Coordinator.

The Wellesley College graduate, said she developed a love for the profession while studying with Natick's sustainability coordinator, Jillian Wilson Martin.

"I fell in love with the profession studying with Wilson Martin, who's a rockstar in the field," she said.

Prior to this position, Landau worked as an assistant with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources' Green Communities division and partici-

pated in the process for funding statewide decarbonization.

She also designed lesson plans and educational materials for the EPA's Environmental Education program.

So what brought her to Holliston?

"After working at all 3 levels of US government, I found I loved municipalities the most, as I felt I had the most opportunities to liaise directly with residents and make a tangible impact on my community," said Landau.

And she already has ideas for how to make tangible impacts on the town.

"For years, residents have

advocated for sustainability measures that I now have the privilege to implement. Some of these initiatives I'm excited to pursue are creating a Swap Shop where residents can give away and pick up secondhand household items for free, installing electric HVAC and solar panels at Placentino Elementary and Adams Middle School, and combatting pollution and invasive species in Lake Winthrop," she said.

Part of her position, which is a shared one with the town of Sherborn, involves engaging residents.

"Not only do I consider reaching out to residents one of the most valuable, important, and fulfilling parts of my role, but my job would not be effective without public interest and support.

"Residents can follow the sustainability best practices highlighted on the town webpage, take our survey to give their input on the development of the town's new Climate Action Plan, and encourage their neighbors to participate in sustainable programs such as composting, recycling, Community Choice Power, and Mass Save home energy efficiency upgrades," she said.

For those who want to vol-



Amelia Landau planting trees for Natick residents a few years ago. Landau studied under Natick Sustainability Coordinator Jillian Wilson Martin and now holds a similar position in Holliston.

unteer, but feel like they're not going to make a difference, she has a message for you.

"If you are worried about human impact on the environment, but don't feel as though

your actions can make a difference, I once felt the same. But through education and community, I've learned just how much we can do to protect the environment in our own backyard!



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The Sponsors of Mass Save® Announce 2025-2027 Cohort of Community First Partners

Partnership connects homeowners, landlords, renters, and small businesses with energy efficiency and electrification solutions

The Sponsors of Mass Save are pleased to announce the 2025-2027 cohort of Community First Partners. 58 municipalities including Natick and community-based organizations will work with their local Mass Save Sponsor to provide energy efficiency solutions to residents and small businesses to reduce energy use and increase the comfort of homes and buildings.

The initiative leverages local knowledge and trusted relationships of municipalities and community-based organizations to increase participation in Mass Save energy efficiency programs. This initiative seeks to target renters, landlords, income-eligible households, language-isolated households, and small businesses in participat-

ing communities to ensure the benefits of energy efficiency are more equitably distributed, particularly among those who have been historically underserved.

As part of the proposed Massachusetts 2025-2027 Energy Efficiency and Decarbonization Plan, the Sponsors will enhance support and flexibility for Community First Partners, enabling them to tailor their outreach strategies more effectively, retain skilled staff and design marketing initiatives that resonate with their residents and small businesses owners. Additionally, the Sponsors will provide training for the lead vendors and energy advocates on small business incentives and opportunities to drive more small business energy assessments.

The 2025-2027 Community First Partners may receive:

- Up to \$85,500 per year to support an Energy Advocate*

- and local marketing efforts
- Comprehensive training on energy efficiency and electrification
- Support from energy efficiency and electrification experts
- Co-branded multilingual marketing materials
- Coaching and best practices to encourage program participation

*Energy Advocate may be full-time or part-time and the award amount will be adjusted accordingly.

“Through the Mass Save Community First Partnership, our goal is to make energy efficiency more accessible and affordable for all,” said Maggie Downey, Chief Administrative Officer at Cape Light Compact. “Partnering with municipalities and community-based organizations allows us to reach more renters, multilingual families, and income-eligible residents to offer real solutions that



lower energy use and support a cleaner community.

“Every Massachusetts resident deserves the opportunity to live in an energy efficient home and afford to do so,” said Stephanie Terach, Manager, Energy Efficiency & Customer Solutions at Liberty. “Our partnership with municipalities and community-based organizations through the Mass Save Community First Partnership helps ensure that renters, small businesses, and income-eligible residents can access powerful energy-saving solutions without barriers.”

In 2022-2024, Community First Partners received up to \$60,000 in funding annually for up to three years, as well as in-kind marketing and technical support. 52 communities benefited from local community-led outreach and the Community First Partners supporting those 52 communities helped achieve:

- 111k+ Home Energy Assessments
- 27.5k+ residential weatherization upgrades
- 35k+ home heating and cooling upgrades

Source: www.masssave.com

Garages
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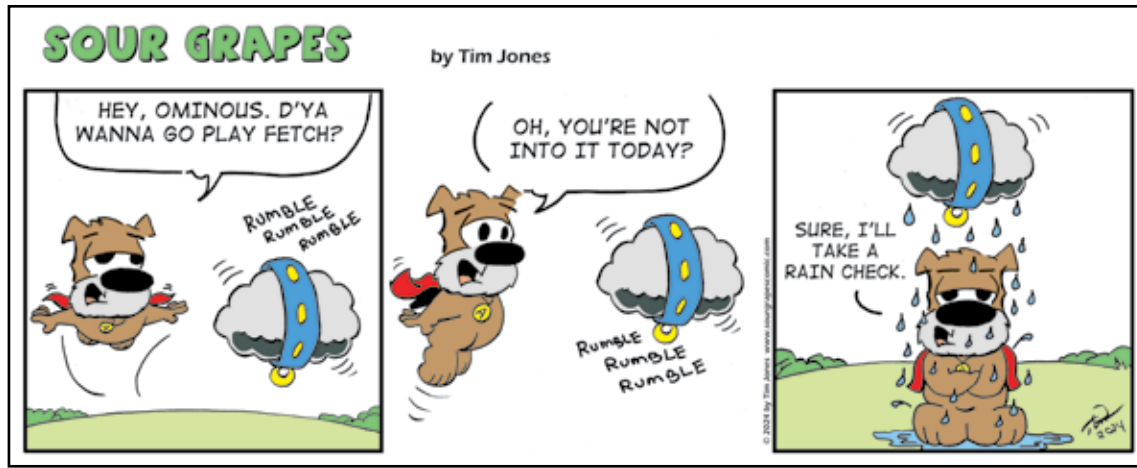
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- Excavation and Backfill with Existing Material
- Foundation with 4' Frost Wall Footings
- 4" Reinforced Concrete Floor
- 2" x 6" Construction
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Natick Center Porchfest Sept. 20

Natick Center Porchfest will take place on Saturday, Sept. 20 from 2 - 6 p.m. on the porches of generous hosts, who are sharing their porches and lawns with neighbors and the community around Natick Center! Rain date is the following day (Sept. 21) from 2 - 6 p.m.

Who's performing? Anyone who wants! We'll have lots of acts, from home grown to nationally-recognized, performing everything from Folk to Techno to Polka. We welcome non-musical performers as well. Check out our listings ahead of time to plan your route or start at your favorite performer and wander from there.

This event is free and open to the public. Natick Center Porchfest is family-friendly and features a wide variety of music so there's sure to be a band or performance that sparks your interest. Check out one band or twenty! Stay for 20 minutes or all afternoon!

An event map and schedule will be available on this site as we lead up to the event. Check our listings for the most up-to-date information, as new bands and porches are joining each day.

Feel free to bring your own food and beverages to each performance. If you need to pick up some snacks, please consider the local businesses spread throughout town. Just remember that each venue is someone's porch, so please be sure that you are respectful and clean up after yourself. However, Natick Center Porchfest does not have a contained festival area and will not be selling alcohol (or any food and drink). When in public, you are subject to the usual laws regarding alcohol consumption.

You can bring your dog anywhere you can usually, the rules are the same as they would be at any other time on the street or sidewalk. Please be aware and respectful of any homeowners' preferences while on their property as different hosts will likely have different preferences when it comes to dogs.

There is plenty of on-street parking in Natick Center. We also encourage walking and bik-

ing for those who are able—it's the best way to soak up as much music as possible!

No bathrooms will be provided. Please note that porch hosts will not provide restrooms either.

You won't need to bring much of anything to stroll around town and enjoy the music. However, if you are planning to settle in for particular a performance, you might bring chairs, a blanket to sit on, or a picnic lunch. Alternatively, if you are planning a schedule of concert hopping, you might want to bring your bike.

Organizers, performers, and porch hosts are all giving freely of their time and talents. Music Go Round will be giving gift certificates to ALL the bands performing. If you would like to support a band, you are welcome to make a donation.

If you have a band and want to play during Natick Center Porchfest, go to this website <https://natickporchfest.org/signup/band> and fill out the form.

If you have a porch near Natick Center and would like to host bands during Natick Center Porchfest, go to this website <https://natickporchfest.org/signup/porch> and fill out the form.

Check out the street list below to see which neighborhoods have been selected:

Area #1: Washington St., Walnut St., Harvard St., Franklin St., Florence St., David Drive.

Area #2: Grant St., Wilson St., Sheridan St., Sherman St., Avon St., Garfield St., Chester St., Morse St.

Area #3: Pond St., Maple St., Plain St., Park St., Western Ave., Floral Ave., Waban St.

Note: Additional Areas/Locations will be considered based on the volume of interest and availability of artists.

It is generously sponsored by Music Go Round Boston located on Rt. 9 in Natick.

Email us at natickporchfest@gmail.com for more information.

This event is organized by Natick Center Associates and a fantastic team of energetic community volunteers.

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Local Junior Golfer Competes in Optimist International Junior Golf Championship

MIAMI, Fla. – 600 top young golfers recently competed in the Optimist International Junior Golf Championship at Trump National Doral in Miami, Fla. The tournament brought together some of the world’s most talented young competitors, many of whom have the potential to become leading collegiate and professional golfers in the future.

Alex Bernier from Natick competed in the 12-13 age division in the championship on July 15 - 20 at the Blue Monster Course in Doral. Bernier placed 16th out of 98 golfers, shooting scores of 79,78 and 74 over the 3-day tournament.

The Optimist prides itself as an international event, with players representing 23 nations. Former champions and top finishers of the Optimist International Junior Golf Championship include PGA TOUR members Jonathan Byrd, Jason Day, Bill Haas, and Jeff Overton in addition to LPGA members Stacy Lewis, Brooke Pancake, Brittany Lincicome

and Lexi Thompson. A number of other well-known professional golfers have participated in Optimist-sponsored championship, including Ernie Els, Nancy Lopez, Davis Love III, Michelle McGann, Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods.

This golf resort is home to four uniquely designed golf courses, including one of golf’s most famous - The Blue Monster. With the most recent course transformations of the Red Tiger, Golden Palm and Silver Fox, Trump National Doral sets itself apart from all others by offering distinct and exciting Doral golf experiences all at one location.

Optimist International is one of the world’s largest service club organizations with more than 2,900 Optimist Clubs around the world dedicated to “Bringing Out the Best in Kids.” Optimists conduct positive service projects that reach more than 6 million young people each year. The Optimist Junior Golf program is one of the organization’s most prominent programs.



Scores, photos, news stories and tee times will be updated throughout the Optimist International Junior Golf Championship. Results

will be available under the tournament’s information at www.optimist.org/golf.

News items will also be included

on the Optimist Junior Golf Facebook page at www.facebook.com/optimist.golf and Twitter feed @OptimistGolf.

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CRT Extension to Natick Center - MBTA Station Coming Soon!



In the near future, the Co-chituate Rail Trail will extend 1/4 mile to the new Natick Center MBTA Station. We are planning an event to celebrate this wonderful new connection. For now, most of the MBTA station is open, with covered, lighted bike parking across from the Outdoor Store, and fully ac-

cessible platforms for commuter rail service between Boston and Worcester.

When the trail extension is open, it will include direct access to the outbound platform, with stairs, ramps and elevators to bring passengers to the inbound platform, as well as additional covered bike parking.

That is something to celebrate!

On Aug. 9, the first course of paving from Mechanic Street to the station was installed. Additional paving, landscaping, signage, pavement markings and safety features are still to come. This is still an active construction zone and is not yet open to the public.



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Natick Senior Center Ongoing Activities for Drop-ins

Pre-registration is not required for drop-in activities. Drop-in activities are free otherwise noted. Please check in

at the front desk.

The Community Senior Center is located at 117 East Central Street, Natick, MA 01760.

Hours are Monday - Wednesday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Thursday 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Visit online at

www.natickma.gov/786/Community-Senior-Center or call 508-647-6540 for more information.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:00am - 8:45am Walking in Gym	8:00am - 8:45am Walking in Gym	8:00am - 8:45am Walking in Gym	8:00am - 8:45am Walking in Gym	8:00am - 8:45am Walking in Gym
8:00am - 8:30pm Billiards	8:00am - 8:30pm Billiards	8:00am - 8:30pm Billiards	8:00am - 8:30pm Billiards	8:00am - 2:00pm Billiards
9:00am - 12:00pm Poker	9:00am - 12:00pm Canasta	9:00am - 12:00pm Mahjong	9:00am - 12:00pm Rummikub	9:00am - 12:00pm Cribbage
12:15pm - 1:00pm Walking in Gym	1:00pm - 4:00pm Mahjong	10:30am - 11:30am Chair Volleyball	10:00am - 12:00pm Portrait Painters	12:15pm - 1:15pm Open Gym Basketball
1:00pm - 4:00pm Pickleball*	1:00pm - 3:00pm Beaded Flower Class	1:00pm - 3:00pm Knitting & Crocheting	12:15pm - 1:00pm Walking in Gym	1:15pm - 2:15pm Walking in Gym
1:00pm - 4:00pm Bridge	3:00pm - 5:00pm Open Gym Basketball	1:00pm - 4:00pm Pickleball*	1:00pm - 3:00pm Quilting	SATURDAY
1:00pm - 4:00pm Scrabble		1:00pm - 4:00pm Poker	1:00pm - 4:00pm Ping Pong	8:30am - 12:30pm Billiards
1:00pm - 4:00pm Ping Pong			1:00pm - 4:00pm Mahjong	



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Sports

Local Basketball Standout and Sophomore Friar Joins Brand's Continued Support of College Athletics

WESTFORD, MA – 110 Grill®, the fastest growing allergy-friendly restaurant brand in New England, announced today a new NIL partnership with Providence College sophomore guard Ryan Mela, in collaboration with the Friar Family Collective. A native of Natick, Mass., Mela is the latest rising star to join 110 Grill's growing roster of athlete ambassadors in the Providence market.

This alliance follows in the footsteps of past partnerships with standout Friars Jayden Pierre (2024), Devin Carter (2023), and Jared Bynum (2022), and underscores the brand's commitment to uplifting young talent from the region.

"We're thrilled to welcome Ryan to the 110 Grill family," said Rob Luzzi, Senior Director of Marketing at RAventures.

"As a Massachusetts native and one of the most exciting new players to watch at Providence, Ryan represents the values of hard work, community, and excellence that we strive to embody. We can't wait to introduce him to our guests and Friars fans in Providence."

"Partnering with 110 Grill means a lot to me because it's a brand that values community, and that's something I've always tried to represent on and off the court," said Ryan Mela, sophomore guard at Providence College. "I'm excited to be part of their team and connect with fans in Providence this season."

Mela made an immediate impact during his freshman year at Providence, earning BIG EAST Freshman of the Week honors twice and a spot on the BIG EAST All-Fresh-



man Team. He posted standout performances throughout the 2024-25 season, including a 15-rebound game versus Butler and a double-double against Xavier. Prior to joining the Friars, Mela starred at The Newman School in Boston, where he averaged 19 points, 8.3 rebounds, 5.3 assists, and 3.3 steals per game and earned All-NEPSAC AAA First Team honors. A two-time MetroWest MVP at Natick High School,

he once scored a career-high 42 points in a single game and helped lead Middlesex Magic to a UAA Circuit Championship.

110 Grill's Providence location remains a popular destination for modern American cuisine, known for its expansive menu and commitment to allergy-friendly dining. With the flexibility to prepare the entire menu gluten-free, the restaurant is a favorite for locals, students, and visitors alike.

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QUILTERS
continued from page 13

Quilts, a group that began at the start of the Ukraine war and provided quilts to Ukrainian refugees in Poland.

“To us, it’s just a show of caring ,but for them, they’re very grateful,” adds Colleton.

“I personally love the group,” says Lynch, Yankee Quilters’ treasurer, whose mother, a Holliston resident, is a long-term member. Lynch travels a good distance from Monson to remain a part of the guild. “In a lot of ways they work together, they love to share. If one person is struggling with how to do something, there’s always somebody else that has done it prior and will share that information. In some ways, it’s a very diverse group in the sense that there are people who like doing things very structured, using patterns, and there are other people that take scraps and make it into some of the most gorgeous work out there,” Lynch says.

Sandie Husby, of Franklin, is one of those who likes to quilt from scraps. She has been quilt-

ing since 1986. A member of Yankee Quilters and purveyor of her own sewn work (The Lone Quilter), the Idaho native says, “I really enjoy the group. I get a kick out of them. Some of those women have known each other for 50 years, and they have stories.” She encourages beginners to experience how welcoming the group is. “Whatever your skill level is, whatever you can do, you come in ,and you can help. If you want to come and hear the speaker, great! If you want to come in and do the comfort quilts and iron, great!”

In addition to the second Tuesday of the month, some members also meet at Emma’s on Mondays, from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. to work on comfort quilts.

“That, right now, is our best option for people who are learning to sew, to help them,” says Cindy. On Tuesday afternoons, from 1:30-4 p.m., the group holds an open sewing circle at Christ the King Lutheran church in Holliston.

Members, says Cindy, whose husband finishes many of the comfort quilts with a long arm machine, “are there to have fun,

to enjoy what they’re doing, to pass it on to new people, to share their experiences. We are a low budget guild, so we look to each other’s knowledge for each of us to build our craft.”

The Yankee Quilters do some other fundraising, putting some of their creations in a consignment shop, Mermaid and the Mariner in Monson, as well as holding a “Staycation” four times a year at Christ the King in Holliston, a weekend that includes dinner Friday night, lunch and dinner Saturday, and bagels on Sunday. The cost is \$100 for members and \$125 for no-members, with the next scheduled for October 24-27, 2025.

Right now, if you would like to support the Yankee Quilters with donations of household items between August 11th and October 4th, contact Cindy at (508) 560-5846 or email yankeequilters11@gmail.com to arrange for pickup, or simply drop items off at the Community Collection Day, September 6, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Prime Storage, 302 Hartford Ave., Bellingham.

Harvest Fest Sept. 20 in Bellingham

Harvest Fest is making a comeback in Bellingham.

The event, a family-focused activity, is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 20, at Bellingham’s Town Common from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A rain date, if needed, is Sept. 27. The town’s two Baptist Churches — First Baptist Church and Bible Baptist Church — are organizing the day’s activities.

Harvest Fest began in 2017 and had a three-year run until Covid-19 forced the two churches to curtail the program. It’s being revived after a five-year absence.

For the youth, there will be pony rides, an obstacle course, gymnastic and karate exhibitions, and other exciting activities. A Christian concert is also scheduled.

Many vendors will be on hand to promote and sell their products. The churches are still seeking sponsors and vendors (fee for vendors is \$20). If interested contact Pastor Baron Rodrigues at 508 844-1843.

After expenses are paid (police detail, permits, entertainment costs, etc.), any funds remaining will go to area food pantries.

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Real Estate Corner

Transitioning into the Fall Market: A Strategic Time to Sell Your Home in Natick



John McHugh

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

As the summer months come to a close, the Natick real estate market is shifting gears, transitioning from the frenetic pace of summer to the more measured cadence of fall. This period of transition presents a unique opportunity for sellers, with a blend of favorable market conditions and motivated buyers.

Summer Market Recap

This spring and summer, Natick's real estate market was incredibly active, with many properties receiving offers quickly and well over the list price. Although July and August saw a slight slowdown as many New Englanders took their vacations, the market is now stabilizing, setting the stage for a strong fall season.

Current Market Snapshot

As of now, there are 38 single-family properties on the market in Natick, with 32 properties having accepted offers and 76 sold in the last two months. This data indicates a strong market with a good balance of supply and demand.

Advantages of Selling During the Transition

Less Competition. With the

summer rush winding down, there is less competition from other sellers, making it easier to stand out and attract potential buyers.

Motivated Buyers

Some missed out on the opportunity to purchase a home in the spring and summer months and are still interested in buying as the school year begins.

Market Trends to Keep in Mind

Housing Market Activity: compiling the last 3 months of single-family sales data in Natick, we see the median list price is \$1,206,138, and the median sale price is \$1,231,834. Homes are selling quickly, with an average of 15 days to receive and accept an offer and 28.5 days total on market. Well-priced homes are selling fast.

Buyer Demand

With interest rates and housing prices still relatively stable, many buyers are taking advantage of the current market conditions to make a purchase. According to Lesley Santini, Vice President of Mortgage Lending at Guaranteed Rate Affinity, "rates have gently declined in recent weeks to a nine-month low following a weak jobs report. Most forecasters expect 30-year fixed rates to stay in the mid 6% through this year. If you can make the numbers work today you may be able to lock in a home without competing against more buyers later when rates drop. A September Fed rate cut remains likely."

By listing your home during this transitional period, you can take advantage of the motivated buyer pool and favor-

able market conditions. With the right pricing and marketing strategy, you can sell your home quickly and for a great price!

Staying informed and adaptable is key to success in this dynamic market. Keep up-to-date with the latest market trends and statistics: it's always good to know the fair market value of your home. Reach out now for a complimentary pricing and market analysis.

John McHugh has been a Senior Agent with Coldwell Banker for 24 years. He can be contacted at JohnSellsNow@Gmail.com and 978.902.5646. Visit his website for homebuying/homeselling tips and to search all properties: John-McHughRealEstate.com.

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Real Estate Corner

Recent Natick Home Sales

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The 4-bed, 4-bath, 3,836-square-foot house at 2 Everett Terrace in Natick recently sold for \$1,575,000. Image credit: www.zillow.com

Date	Natick	Amount
08/15/2025	207 E Central Street	\$848,000
08/15/2025	12 Carlson Circle	\$950,000
08/15/2025	6 Concord Place	\$701,000
08/15/2025	9 Wyndemere Lane	\$2,550,000
08/15/2025	2 Everett Terrace	\$1,580,000
08/15/2025	121 N Main Street	\$623,100
08/14/2025	10 Tamarack Road	\$730,000
08/12/2025	34 Clubhouse Lane	\$915,000
08/11/2025	32 Charles Street	\$1,550,000
08/11/2025	76 Union Street	\$1,170,000
08/08/2025	4 Bear Hill Road	\$1,550,000
08/08/2025	25 Hearthstone Circle	\$940,000
08/08/2025	12 Bay State Road	\$693,600
08/08/2025	10 Brookdale Road	\$975,000
08/07/2025	6 Hickory Road	\$1,530,000
08/07/2025	185 Woodland Street	\$1,300,000
08/07/2025	18 Wayside Road	\$1,700,000
08/06/2025	20 Pitts Street	\$970,000
08/04/2025	14 Oakland Street	\$1,100,000
08/04/2025	6 Gilbert Road	\$929,000
08/04/2025	42 Washington Street	\$750,000
08/01/2025	58 N Main Street #202	\$699,900
08/01/2025	315 Bacon Street #1	\$750,000
07/31/2025	4 Cypress Road	\$645,000
07/31/2025	13 Greenwood Road	\$936,000
07/31/2025	14 Shady Oak Lane	\$790,000
07/31/2025	16 Virginia Road	\$650,000
07/31/2025	19 Village Hill Lane #3	\$390,000
07/31/2025	9 Oak Hill Road	\$1,660,000
07/30/2025	9 Cypress Road	\$655,000
07/30/2025	17 Appleton Road	\$1,600,000
07/30/2025	84 Park Avenue	\$842,250
07/30/2025	70 Rockland Street	\$1,350,000
07/29/2025	191 Speen Street	\$650,000
07/28/2025	49 Village Brook Lane #2	\$315,000
07/25/2025	1 Liberty Street	\$1,950,000
07/25/2025	133 Hartford Street	\$785,000
07/25/2025	13 East Street	\$1,100,000
07/24/2025	9 Stratford Road	\$790,000
07/24/2025	7 Langdon Road	\$1,110,000
07/23/2025	146 S Main Street	\$725,000
07/22/2025	12 Richard Road	\$1,100,000
07/21/2025	4 Yuba Place	\$1,520,000
07/18/2025	12 Speen Street	\$1,460,000
07/17/2025	110 E Central Street #9	\$695,000
07/17/2025	7 Merifield Lane	\$1,310,000
07/17/2025	7 Vermont Avenue	\$725,000
07/16/2025	106 North Avenue	\$765,000

Source: zillow.com Compiled: Local Town Pages

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