

Holliston localtownpages

Vol. 13 No. 11

Free to Every Home and Business Every Month

January 1, 2026

Holliston Town Manager Reflects on 2025, Looks Ahead to 2026

By J.D. O'GARA

With six months under his belt, Holliston Town Manager Frank Gervasio likes his new

job, and the former Assistant Town Manager of Medfield can't beat the commute – he's a Holliston resident, with a wife and three small children here

in town. Local Town Pages reached out to him to review what happened in the past year as well as what lies ahead for 2026.



One of Holliston's biggest accomplishments in 2025 was the completion of a 2 ½-year overhaul of the Woodland Street Dam and Bridge. Here, drone footage shows water being released by the temporary dam (shown at inset) once the dam reconstruction was complete. The \$3.6 million project cost taxpayers only about \$50K.

Woodland Street Dam and Bridge Project

"I think the biggest news would be the completion of the Woodland Street Dam and Bridge Project," says Gervasio, adding, "The bridge was shut down, road completely shut down for 2 ½ years. That was a \$3.6 million dollar project, and ultimately, the town's tax dollars will pay close to none of that, maybe \$50 thousand. (Thanks to) "our very diligent depart-

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Smith Pens New Chapter for Holliston Library

By JESS OMMEN

The Holliston Library is entering a period of transformation under the leadership of its newly appointed Director, Jeff Smith, who has brought a fresh vision and a renewed energy to the community's longtime institution.

Since stepping into the role in July, Smith has focused on expanding library services while preserving the charming atmosphere residents have come to expect. One of the most visible changes has been the launch of a redesigned website, making it easier for patrons to search the catalog, register for programs, and access digital resources from home.



Holliston's new Library Director, Jeff Smith, has focused on expanding library services while maintaining a small library charm. He will launch a community input survey on the library's website in coming weeks.

LIBRARY
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REFLECT

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ment heads and the DPW, working with our state legislators, Rep. James Arena-DeRosa and Senate President Spilka, we received a number of grants and state funding for the project.”

The Town Manager says that project’s proximity to the Holliston Rail Trail prompted a lot of buzz among residents. “Everyone was talking about it. We had a lot of people who every day would walk the Rail Trail and post pics.” Despite the mishap of a struck water line near the end of the project, “it opened right around Labor Day,” says Gervasio, “and it was a huge accomplishment.”

Selecting a New DPW Site

“Following a very thorough and healthy community dialogue, the Town has selected Arch Street as a site for our new DPW facility,” says Gervasio.

“This was a multi-year process where the town had gone out and tried to buy land and we had looked at existing town parcels. Following that due diligence, we heard a lot of community feedback to keep it at Arch Street.”

One constraint of that location is the size, and the town of Holliston is working with engineers to figure what is feasible. The Town hopes to consolidate the Water and Highway Divisions under the same roof, if feasible.

“Probably sometime in January, the Select Board will be hearing an update from Weston and Sampson, the engineers, and then we’ll have the goal of bringing the project to the May 2026 town meeting for approval,” he says.

Holliston High School Receives Invitation from MSBA

On Friday, Dec 12th, after seven years of the Holliston Select Board and School Committee trying, Holliston finally received an invitation from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to be placed in an Eligibility Period for a new Holliston High School building. During this 270-day period, the district must complete certain preliminary requirements

“This is a multi-year process,” says Gervasio. One of the first steps is the formation of School Building Committee, by July 31, 2026, and then, says the Town Manager, sometime in 2026 or even 2027 Holliston will need to vote on a feasibility study for the project.

Recreation Department Projects

Goodwill Park Project: That is on track to be completed in

March 2026,” says Gervasio, “We’ll have a new pavilion, new bathrooms, that type of stuff.”

Site of the former Flagg School: Over \$800K was directed to this project at last Town Meeting. “Starting in summer, we’ll start construction on a new basketball court, a walking track, outdoor classroom space and new parking for access to the site,” says Gervasio.

Bike Park on Woodland Street: The Select Board previously approved a concept for a bike park on Woodland Street with a pumptrack, a circular loop with rollers and berms that enable riders to ride without pedaling or pushing. “At this past Town Meeting, the Town put forth Community Preservation Funds for the engineering portion of that project,” says Gervasio. “Given the site’s proximity to wetlands, we need to better understand the impact there. This is a very important step to making that project a reality,” he adds.

Downtown Sewer

In November, the Sewer Commission received a \$1.5 million grant from the state in to fulfil the first step in bringing sewer,” says Gervasio, noting that the funds received fell short of the \$7 million requested. Still, the grant amount will allow the Town to “basically upgrade our existing wastewater treatment plant, which serves schools on Woodland.

The upgrade and design of the new infrastructure will give the plant the capacity to treat wastewater from the downtown district,” he says, “and from there we will ask for funds to actually construct the system. This is a really big goal of many in town, to diversify the types of

small businesses that can come and grow and stay in Holliston. Bringing businesses into town helps reduce the tax impact residents shoulder. We’re hopeful we can get through this first round of grant funding and be successful in our next grant application.”

Town Hall Digest

“The Select Board has been working on how to better communicate everything going in in an approachable way,” says Gervasio, adding many residents don’t have hours to invest in watching public meetings. Therefore, the Town is piloting a Town Hall Digest. For now, he says, “We’re just sticking with Select Board meetings, and we’re going to roll out additional ones as well, using AI to summarize the recordings of meetings and provide a paragraph of topics covered.” The digests of Monday Select Board meetings will roll out on the following Friday and will include dates and deadlines residents should know, as well as a link to the recording should anyone want to watch it.

Folks can sign up on the town website by enrolling in a Notify Me account.

So far, 2026 is shaping up to be a busy year, but Gervasio isn’t worried.

“We have a really great group of department heads and staff here in town that are very committed to what they do and very motivated. I’ve also met a lot of our very dedicated and motivated volunteers. Our town owes a great deal to them, says Gervasio, thrilled at his role, adding, “Holliston is a wonderful town, and I feel very fortunate to have been given this opportunity.”

New Members Welcome to Charles River Chorale Open Rehearsals in January

The Charles River Chorale will begin open rehearsals for its Spring 2026 season and is actively recruiting new members. Come and experience choral singing with a non-audition chorus. Our members come from throughout the MetroWest region and span all ages. All attest to the joy it brings them every week.

Under the leadership of our award-winning director, Ashley Nelson-Oneschuk, we would love to have you come see if this is for you. We meet every Tuesday through early May from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St. in Millis. Our spring concert is in early May. The first 3 rehearsals (1/20, 1/27 and 2/3) are open for new members without obligation.

We hope you can join us! To do so, you can either meet at the church for any of our open rehearsals or fill out our Sign-Up form (no obligation) using the following link: <https://forms.gle/mgnj9NCiRSLU-4jTG9>. The accompanying QR code can also be used.

We look forward to seeing you!



localtownpages

Published Monthly
Mailed FREE to the
Community of Holliston
Circulation: 5,967
households & businesses

Publisher
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Editor
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Send Editorial to:
editor@hollistontownnews.com

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Office Address
9 Industrial Road, Suite 107
Milford, MA 01757

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LIBRARY

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Inside the building, new and expanded programming reflects a broader vision for the library's role in the community. Expanded offerings include notary services, printing, and a brand-new Library of Things. Story times and family activities remain a cornerstone of library services, while new workshops and events encourage a love of lifelong learning for patrons of all ages.

Another area of focus has been placed on engaging teens, with the creation of a dedicated teen space designed for studying, collaborating, and relaxing. Enclosed by a glass wall and tucked between two bookshelves on the mezzanine level, the space offers teens a place to collaborate while minimizing disruptions to other parts of the library.

The newly designed Teen Zone reflects Smith's innovative approach and optimistic vision for the library's future—qualities that will serve the institution well as programming expands and physical space remains limited within the library walls.

Programs are currently operating out of the Gilman Room, which doubles as a children's play area that must be closed when programs are in session. Conference, meeting, and study rooms are extremely limited—one of each. And with nearly 200,000 items circulated this year, there isn't much room to compromise on shelf space.

"That's significant," says



One recent change at Holliston Public Library is the creation of a dedicated teen space, the Teen Zone, designed for studying, collaborating, and relaxing.

Smith, "We're not Wellesley or Newton, but we're not a small library." That, according to Smith, is the "sweet spot," allowing him to manage a diverse range of programming without compromising on the warmth that is characteristic to smaller libraries.

"Holliston is definitely a friendly town, and the library is part of that. You feel that when

you walk in," he says.

As community needs evolve, the library has become more than books. "It is a place to bring the community together," Smith says. Programs that encourage learning new skills, finding support, and connecting with one another will be essential in maintaining the library's role as a vital community hub in an increasingly digital world.

Holliston's library programming is funded largely by the Friends of the Library, along with grants, and in collaboration with groups like the Holliston Cultural Council, Holliston Youth and Family Services, and the Holliston Fire Department.

Recent programs have included a Local Author Night, featuring a panel of seven Massachusetts-based authors sharing their insights, sources of inspiration, and writing processes. Other popular programs have included a Memoir Writing Workshop and Roots of American Popular Music.

Upcoming programs include:

- New England Ghost Stories, January 20, 6:30-7:30 p.m.*
- Wine Glass Paint Night, January 26, 6-7:30 p.m.*

- Hip-Hop Popular Culture, February 4, 6-7:30 p.m.*
- Edgar Allen Poe Impersonator, February 6, 3:30-4:30 p.m.*

*Registration required.

Smith plans to issue a survey to the community in the coming weeks—responses will help guide him to build the library's latest Strategic Plan and address the issues that are most pressing to the community. To access the survey and to sign up for the latest programs, visit the Holliston Library website (www.hollistonlibrary.org) and follow Holliston Public Library on Facebook.

To support library programs, consider a Friends of Holliston membership for \$25 or you can donate directly by visiting the Holliston Library website and clicking on "Support HPL" in the top navigation bar.

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With Affordable Junk Removal, you can rent a dumpster or have their Junk Removal Professionals come to haul away items that have been gathering dust and taking up precious space. Setting a New Year’s resolution to clean up a neglected basement or attic is a great start. Sometimes the biggest challenge is not knowing where to begin with cleaning out your home and that is where Affordable can assist you .

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Business spotlight

Schadler explained. “And rest assured, we don’t just take everything to the landfill. We try and recycle as much as possible. Clothing and household items are donated to local organizations that help our friends and neighbors. That keeps them out of landfills, gives them a new life, and helps us keep our prices down. We’re always looking for ways to be more cost effective because customers appreciate our reasonable prices.”

Changes in legislation have made it increasingly more difficult to dispose of certain items, like mattresses, for example. It is a state law that most textiles and mattresses must be recycled. “Finding places to take mattresses is a challenge and the fees for disposal have gone through the roof,” said Schadler. Items like these carry a separate re-



cycling fee that the commercial transfer stations charge because of how labor intensive that recycling is. “People are usually shocked at the cost, and we find ourselves educating the customer as to why these fees exist. Here at Affordable, we view ourselves as an avenue our clients can turn to when they have these items and want them disposed of legally, safely and properly.”

Affordable has many repeat customers. “When people call, they reach me, not some automated corporate call center,” he said. “They know me and the crew and trust us. We do a great job and are fast, efficient, and reliable. We come when we say we will and if anything unexpected comes up, we communicate. We live here too, we are your friends and neighbors. We sponsor your

little league teams and run into you at the grocery store. We are your local guys.” A quick look at the many years of positive online reviews attests to this.

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Town of Holliston Posts Notice of 2026 Town Meeting

The Town of Holliston has posted that the 2026 Holliston

Annual Town Meeting will commence on Monday, May 11, 2026, at 7 p.m. in the Holliston High School Auditorium and will continue at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12, Wednesday, May 13th as required, or on such other dates as voted by the Town Meeting. In addition, the fall session of town meeting is scheduled to commence on Monday, October 19, 2026.

The Warrant for the May Town Meeting opened Monday, December 8, 2025 and will close on Monday, March 9, 2026, at 4 p.m.

Any questions about how to submit an Article for consideration should be directed to Frank Gervasio, Town Manager at Gervasiof@holliston.k12.ma.us or to the Town Clerk, Elizabeth Greendale at Greendalee@holliston.k12.ma.us. You can also call the Town Manager’s office at (508) 429-0608 for more information.

The Annual Town Election will take place on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m. at the Holliston High School gymnasium.

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Glenn Brown, CFP

Did you make New Year’s resolutions to improve your financial wellness in 2026?

The start of a new year invites reflection on what went well, what didn’t, and what to change.

Think back to 2025. Was it supposed to be the year you’d pay off all debts, max out savings, run a marathon, learn a new language, and still book that dream vacation—all before February?

Lasting financial change is difficult to achieve. Understanding why resolutions fail can help turn intentions into sustainable strategies.

1. Unrealistic Expectations

The most common reason resolutions fail is that goals don’t match reality.

For example, someone might plan to save half their income

while paying off long-standing loans, only to realize monthly expenses and unexpected bills make this unrealistic. Progress feels slow, leading to frustration and eventual abandonment.

Resolution: Break goals into smaller, achievable steps. For example, aim to reduce debt by 25% over six months. Celebrating incremental wins keeps motivation high, builds confidence, and reinforces the habit of financial discipline.

2. Lack of a Clear Plan

Vague goals such as “save more” or “get out of debt” offer little guidance. Goals like these are the financial equivalent of saying “eat healthier” without changing what’s in your fridge.

Rules and opportunities change yearly, so without a clear plan, it’s easy to miss important steps like evolving retirement contribution rules, tax planning opportunities, or other proactive financial strategies.

Resolution: Create a clear plan. Review monthly expenses, budget upcoming projects and aspirations, set up automatic transfers, and monitor progress.

3. Failure to Track Progress

Goals fade without structured review, even when apps are used to track spending. Many avoid holistic review until problems become too great to ignore.

Even small oversights like pausing emergency savings transfers, frequent DoorDashing restaurants a mile away, or buying from social media ads can derail intentions. It’s also important to evaluate actual income, since “spenders” believe their pay will match their top year, overlooking factors like unique company performance or equity grants.

Resolution: Schedule quarterly check-ins that leverage technology and constructive feedback. Celebrating milestones helps maintain motivation and reinforces strong financial habits.

4. Emotional Spending and Instant Gratification

Many struggle with impulse spending or seek instant gratification, especially after a stressful day. Afraid to look at your Amazon spending history? This behavior derails the best-laid plans.

Resolution: Identify triggers and implement strategies to delay or review purchase decisions. Create a spending prioritization strategy by identifying where you want to spend your money; this helps shift focus from immediate desires to long-term financial goals and encourages thoughtful, deliberate financial choices.

5. Lack of Accountability

Some thrive independently; others struggle without support. It’s easier to justify financial decisions when no one else is watching. Couples, friends, or professional advisors who provide accountability often help keep each other honest and motivated.

Resolution: Accountability goes beyond “no.” Sharing progress and receiving guidance builds confidence, strengthens financial habits, and motivates continued long-term efforts.

Quick Hits To Start 2026

401(k) Catch-Up Rules: Workers over 50 making over \$150,000 must direct catch-up contributions to Roth accounts, reducing traditional tax benefits.

Roth Conversions: Converting pre-tax accounts to Roth can be strategic but may trigger higher taxes if not timed carefully, so model in Q1.

Cash Reserves: With slower job growth in late 2025, increasing emergency savings can help avoid reliance on credit or early retirement withdrawals.

Final Thoughts

Financial resolutions can be powerful tools for long-term security but require more than wishful thinking.

Make 2026 the year to socialize your goals, set action steps, and partner with a Certified Financial Planner™ professional to turn intentions into lasting progress.

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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Celebrating with Santa, and Samples!

The Holliston Farmer's Market, hosted by non-profit licensed commercial kitchen space WSK, filled the halls of Holliston Mill Studios at 24 Water Street in Holliston during its Second Annual Holiday Market on December 13th. The event included a wreath sale by Holliston Pack 47, food vendors (with samples!) and holiday cocktails, local art and artisan wares, holiday hayrides courtesy of The Drake Company, and, of course, Santa Claus, straight from the North Pole. *Local Town Pages* snapped a few pics, shown here.



No lunch? No problem! Attendees were treated to a variety of delicious samples from local food purveyors.



The man of the season made a stop at the Holiday Market.



Tables with unique wares from local artisans lined the halls of Holliston Mill.



Yummy offerings even included Girl Scout cookies! From left, front row: Lyla Kaiser, Ellie Doukas, Lottie Ela. From left, back row: Pinar Kaiser and Brittany Ela.



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Town of Holliston Warns Resident of Email/Mailing Scam

The Town of Holliston has been made aware of an email/ mailing scam appearing to be coming from the Town of Holliston Zoning or Planning Boards requesting additional fee payments for upcoming Public Hearing permits. These emails and mailed notifications requesting additional fees are not legitimate or originating from the Town of Holliston.

The Town of Holliston Zoning and Planning Boards only accept checks or cash for fee payments and does NOT currently accept electronic or credit card payments so any correspondence asking for electronic payments for Public Hearing Permits is a

scam. The emails are also originating from an unofficial email (planning.townofholliston@usa.com) instead of the Town's official email accounts.

Unfortunately, around the Holidays, email scams increase so please protect yourself online by verifying email addresses and never send money from unsolicited emails. Lastly, reach out to the Town if you have questions about the authenticity of an email or mailing you receive appearing to come from the Town of Holliston. You can contact any Department using the "Contact" link on the Departments web page at <https://www.townof-holliston.us/>

Eagle Scout Project Taught this HS Senior to Overcome Challenges

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

High school senior Aabed Selva Vinothe, member of Holliston Scout Troop 76 since age 12, achieved the rank of Eagle Scout this past October. Having earned 21 Merit badges as well as First Class Rank, (mastery in outdoor skills), and Star Rank, (showing leadership, service and skill), Aabed might have thought he'd learned everything about managing an Eagle Scout project. What he learned, however, was to expect the unexpected.

"My Eagle Project was restoring an old volleyball court at Stoddard Park," says Vinothe, who noticed the second, overgrown court one day while playing at the adjacent court. After contacting Parks and Recreation and learning they wanted to revamp the court, he decided to take the renovation on.

The 17-year-old worked with his Scoutmaster, Edward Mitchell, his friend Chris' father, Dennis Payne, Mr. Kunal Anshu, and his own dad, Selva Vinothe Mahimaidas to devise a plan. His team also consisted of 8 or 9 fellow scouts, whom he led in the work.

The Scout had planned his team's first Eagle workday to tackle stubborn weeds with shovels and a weed wrench, mark the perimeter of the court, and, for older Scouts, to use power tools to cut back bushes to make way for benches they'd build. Rain poured down however, and Vinothe worried no helpers would come. Relief washed over him when "people actually started showing up with raincoats and rain tools. It was actually kind of wild," says Aabed.

Another problem? Turtles. "When we got to the field, there was a circular fence in the middle of the volleyball court area. A snapping turtle had laid her nest in the middle of the volleyball court. We had to work around it," says the Eagle Scout. Sadly, a predator would later clear up that problem for the Scouts.

Those cut branches from the bushes posed a problem, too. Someone decided to use them for firewood, leaving an ashy, burnt mess the boys also had to clean up.

Scoutmaster Ed Mitchell says Aabed "demonstrated leadership



Holliston Troop 76 Eagle Scout Aabed Selva Vinothe



Wildlife got in the way at one point, with a clutch of snapping turtle eggs in the middle of the planned court.

and real adaptability in the face of some unexpected challenges." He describes Aabed as one who "has repeatedly proven himself to be a diligent, thoughtful and hardworking scout, and a great asset to our troop."

After all of the obstacles were overcome, Aabed and his team, as well as his mom, set about the planned finish work, centering the volleyball court poles and building pressure-treated and stained benches for the court, which they completed in July.

Aabed's mom, Suja Antoniappa, is impressed with how far her son has grown as a Scout. Originally from India, she says she would have enrolled him in Cub Scouts had she known how much children "achieve and learn. It's truly amazing. It's really shaped him in ways I could

not imagine. I would highly recommend it to any parent." She and her husband watched Aabed learn responsibility, teamwork and how to adapt to different situations as he spent summer camps with the Mayflower Council and achieved Merit badges, his favorite having to do with technology.

Aabed, who also participates in Civil Air Patrol, is grateful for his experience as a Scout.

"(Civil Air Patrol) and Boy Scouts are the key programs that helped me develop my leadership skills," he says, "and I've really enjoyed going on trips and teaching new things to scouts."

As for the Eagle Rank, Aabed, who's looking at colleges with



Working in the rain was just one obstacle to renovating Stoddard Park's rundown volleyball court, but Scouts came prepared.

both business programs and Air Force ROTC, says, "I'm proud of my accomplishment. It was not very easy. There were many setbacks on the way of the project, but it really helped me a lot in terms of planning. Your plan won't always go the way you want it to—it will be a guide of

what you're trying to accomplish. When these setbacks do occur, it's how you process it and interpret them and come up with a solution, not giving up and persevering through that problem and eventually accomplishing that project."

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Holliston Historical Society 1st Holiday Door Décor Contest Winners Announced

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Holliston Historical Society's first annual Holliston Holiday Door Décor Contest committee met December 17, 2025, voting for its first, second, third, and honorable mentions. The group discussed successes with the contest's first run, as well as plans for improvement for next year, and, hopefully, many more years to come. Over two dozen entered the contest, which surpassed expectations.

"We were so thrilled with the community interest," says Sarah Amtower, of the Holliston Historical Society, who chaired the event. She pointed out the following feedback from entrants:

"What a wonderful program!! My household is very excited to get planning for this contest! Thank you for doing this activity!!"

"Thrilled about this new tradition in town! Thanks for organizing!"

"This is a very good idea. I hope this happens every year! We're proud of our old red house!"

Amtower notes, "The committee found voting VERY difficult. We made it as fair as possible: doors were ranked and assigned points with anonymous voting. Committee members were committed to fair judging, and everyone drove around town to view the homes in person and take photos. Along the way, we saw so many other fabulously decorated homes that we hope enter the competition next year!"

The committee thanks everyone who participated, including, especially, sponsors Debra's Flowers, Out Post Farm, and Aesop's Fable.

"Overall, we loved doing this," says Amtower. "The Historical Society is excited to support and share Holliston pride through this and other programs."

Visit the Holliston Historical Society's website, hollistonhistoricalsociety.org, to stay informed!



HHS Door Décor First Place 2025



HHS Door Decor Honorable Mention 2025



HHS Door Decor Second Place 2025



HHS Door Decor Third Place 2025

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AI in personal finance: The promise and the limits



Mark Freeman, CEPA

What AI can do for your wallet. From tracking every latte to forecasting next month's bills, AI-powered tools are making financial management more accessible than ever. Some apps categorize transactions automatically, while other platforms offer conversational financial advice through text messages. These tools can monitor your credit score, suggest budget adjustments and even negotiate lower bills on services like cable and internet.

AI doesn't know whether you value sustainable investing over maximum returns. It can't weigh the emotional complexity of saving for a child's education versus retiring early. When sudden illness strikes or a job change upends your plans, AI lacks the context and empathy to guide you through those human moments.

Technology can crunch numbers brilliantly, but it can't offer wisdom. It can't replace human judgment, experience or ethical reasoning. Robo-advisors' predetermined algorithms may not suit investors with complex financial needs like estate planning or comprehensive tax planning.

The human touch still matters. This is where human financial advisors remain indispensable. They provide what technology can't:

- **Long-term perspective:** Help you maintain focus when markets get volatile and emotions run high

- **Goal coordination:** Balance competing priorities, help partners merge their financial visions and remind you of goals you've tucked away and didn't know still mattered
- **Accountability:** Keep you on track with your financial strategy through life's inevitable changes
- **Emotional support:** Offer reassurance and wisdom during major financial decisions

Research validates it: Those who regularly work with a financial advisor and have a financial strategy are more likely to feel optimistic about their financial future than those who manage finances on their own, according to 2025 research from Edward Jones and Morning Consult.

Find the right balance. The future likely lies in a hybrid approach: combining data-driven AI insights with the human wisdom of a financial advisor who understands your values, priorities and life's inevitable curve-

balls. Think of AI as a powerful calculator and your financial advisor as the mathematician who knows which equations to use.

As these technologies evolve, the key is treating AI as a tool, not a guide.

Stay curious about what technology can do for your finances. Stay critical of its limitations. And remember: What matters most in your financial life is something only you can define.

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

Mark Freeman, CEPA
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
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Hopkinton, MA 508-293-4017
Mark.Freeman@edwardjones.com

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Provided by Edward Jones

Your smartphone buzzes with an alert: Your budgeting app has spotted an unusual spending pattern and suggests transferring \$50 from your savings account to your checking account. Later that day, a robo-advisor automatically rebalances your investment portfolio. Welcome to the age of artificial intelligence (AI) in personal finance, where technology is reshaping how we manage money.

The investing landscape has transformed as well. Robo-advisors use algorithms to build diversified portfolios, automatically rebalance holdings and apply strategies to minimize tax bills. Educational tools powered by AI can explain complex concepts through interactive games and simple question-and-answer formats, making financial literacy more accessible.

Where AI falls short. Here's what the algorithms can't do: understand what truly matters to you.







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HDAAC to Hold Stakeholders' Retreat Jan. 8

At *Local Town Pages*' press time, The Holliston Drug & Alcohol Awareness Coalition (HDAAC) were planning their annual stakeholders' retreat at Anthony on the Green, 212 Prentice St., Holliston, on Thursday, January 8th from 6-8 p.m., billing the retreat as THE key planning meeting for all HDAAC support-

ers in which HDAAC will map out next year's Action Plan. Although RSVP was due December 30, you can learn more by emailing Coalition Coordinator, Zoe Moreau at moreauz@holliston.k12.ma.us. To learn more about HDAAC, visit <https://hdaac.org>.

Transforming Potential into Purpose at Dean College

In the heart of Franklin, Dean College has been shaping futures for more than 160 years. Stroll across its compact, tree-lined campus and you'll see students headed to class, rehearsing in the theatre, or on their way to internships that put their classroom learning into action. For many, this is where raw potential is transformed into confidence, skill, and purpose.

"Every student walks onto Dean's campus with unique strengths and aspirations," says Dr. Scott Sibley, Provost. "Our role is to meet them where they are, challenge them, and guide them toward becoming confident, capable professionals."

That philosophy is woven into every aspect of the Dean experience. With just 1,200 full-time undergraduates, small class sizes make it easy for faculty to know students by name. Advisors tailor an academic plan to each individual's goals, while required internships ensure every graduate has a meaningful real-world

experience. Partnerships with organizations like Kraft Sports + Entertainment and the Franklin Performing Arts Company connect students directly to industry networks.

The results speak for themselves, with 96 percent of graduates employed or in graduate school within one year of earning their degree.

For recent graduate, Bree Gazeille '24, that attention made all the difference. "Thanks to the incredible support from Dean, I've surpassed my academic expectations and achieved more than I thought possible," she says. "Their guidance paved the way for two incredible internships, a job in my desired field post-graduation, and acceptance into grad school."

In a higher education landscape often defined by large lecture halls and anonymous crowds, Dean offers something refreshingly different with a close-knit community dedicated to helping students achieve their full poten-

tial. That kind of outcome is no accident. Alongside academic expertise, Dean students leave with the skills employers value most, including communication, collaboration, leadership, global awareness, and problem-solving. These abilities are practiced and refined through both coursework and campus life.

Performing Arts alumna, Gabrielle Fernandes credits Dean with giving her more than technical training. "Dean has been an integral part of my professional success," she says. "Through Dean, I have been able to grow my network by meeting and connecting with other alumni, which has led to jobs and bookings. Dean's tight-knit community really is a family."

For a growing number of students, Dean offers something rare in higher education: a place where talent is nurtured, ambition is matched with opportunity, and futures are built one experience at a time.

Have an Upcoming Event?
Do you have a concern about things Happening Around Town?

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It's Time to Register!

Visit dean.edu/summeratdean to learn more and register for Dean's 2026 Summer Programs.

Raydio's First Holiday Toy Drive Garner's Truckloads of Community Generosity

Milford, MA - Raydio is thrilled to announce the overwhelming success of its first-ever Holiday Toy Drive, held at the DoubleTree in Milford November 28-30. What began as a brand-new community initiative turned into a heartwarming display of generosity, as listeners and neighbors across the Greater Milford area came together to support local families during the holiday season.

Toys were distributed to four local organizations whose work directly impacts families in need: The Milford Youth Center, Santa's Porch, The Santa Foundation, Toys for Kids and Teens.

"We couldn't have asked for a better first year," said Ray Auger, founder and operator of Raydio. "Launching something new is always a leap of faith, but our community showed up in a huge way. Seeing each organization drive off with a truck loaded with toys was a powerful reminder of what this area is all about—heart, kindness, and looking out for one another."

Raydio extends sincere thanks to every listener, family, volunteer, and partner who contributed to making this inaugural drive a success.

For more information about Raydio's community initiatives, events, and partnerships, visit www.localraydio.com or contact localraydio@gmail.com.

Get Ready to Support Holliston Pantry Shelf at SOUPerbowl 2026!

Come out on a chilly day and have some warm soup, prepared by local restaurants, and the cost of your meal will be donated to the Holliston Pantry Shelf. The annual Holliston Pantry Shelf SOUPerbowl will take place the Friday evening before Superbowl Sunday, this year from 5-8 p.m. on Friday, February 6, 2026, at St. Mary's Church Hall, 8 Church Street, Holliston.

Try Seven Sensational Soups:

- Broccoli & Cheddar from Out Post Farm
- Butternut Squash from Bazel's
- Chicken Noodle from Superette
- Chili from the Holliston Lions Club
- Lobster & Corn Chowder from Prezoz
- Portuguese Sausage from Casey's
- And new TBD from Primavera

There are two categories of tickets:

General Admission Tickets (6-59) \$25 per ticket
Senior Tickets (60+) \$20 per ticket
Kids (5 & Under) FREE
<https://www.hollistonpantryshelf.org/store/tickets-cpe4h>

Family of 3 or more \$75
<https://www.hollistonpantryshelf.org/store/tickets-8zzdd-6dja4>

- Tickets are non-refundable
- All minors are required to have adult supervision

Call or text (774) 253-0694 with any ticketing questions or if you need help purchasing tickets.

The Holliston Pantry Shelf, located at 73 Charles Street, Holliston, is a 501(c)(3) organization that serves approximately 250 families. The Pantry Shelf receives no state or federal funding and is operated by a staff of over 100 volunteers. Shoppers



must fill out the census on a yearly basis.

All Holliston residents are welcome to use the Holliston Pantry Shelf. For more information on the Holliston Pantry Shelf, visit www.hollistonpantryshelf.org.



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Holliston 2025 Holiday Stroll a Success

Celebrate Holliston shared a thank you to Holliston residents and sponsors of the 2025 Holliston Holiday Stroll following the event on November 29, 2025. These photos and more were shared on the organization's Facebook page.

Major sponsors of the Stroll, which included trolleys, a chili contest, crafts for kids, deals at local businesses, beautifully decorated trees by community groups and a tree-lighting led by Holliston Lions at Blair Square and more, included:

Trolley Sponsors: Ahronian Landscaping, Authentic Auto Body, Fiske's General Store, Jack's Automotive, Kamataris Landscape & Lawn Care, and The Residence at Valley Farm

Garland Sponsors: BDR Automotive, Chesmore Funeral Home, Green Plumbing & Heating, Purely You Aesthetic Boutique, and The Marigold Project, Holliston

For a complete list of businesses that participated in the 2025 Holliston Holiday Stroll, visit <https://www.celebrateholliston.com/stroll.html>.

If you are interested in helping to work on this event for next year, reach out to Celebrate Holliston through their website at www.celebrateholliston.com.

Photos by Deb Mark.



LGBTQ+ Mythbusters: Real Talk about LGBTQ+ Identities January 7th

Diverse Holliston to Present Discussion at The Center

Have an Upcoming Event?
Do you have a concern about things Happening Around Town?

EMAIL: Editor@hollistontownnews.com
& LET US KNOW!



Diverse Holliston will present "LGBTQ+ Mythbusters: Real Talk About LGBTQ+ Identities" on January 7th, from 12:30-2 p.m. at "The Center," 150 Goulding St., Holliston.

Do you ever wonder what all these letters mean?

Does it seem like these letters and all the terms are always changing and it's impossible to keep up?

Join us for a safe space to learn everything you ever wanted to know but were afraid to ask.

Dr. Barbara Fritts, licensed clinical psychologist and specialist in LGBTQ+ issues, will guide us through a presentation of current terminology, clear up misunderstandings about the difference between gender vs. sex vs. sexual orientation, and explore the truth

behind the myths about this community. A group of LGBTQ+ panelists will also present their personal stories, and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

You will leave this presentation empowered with knowledge to bring back to your relationships and loved ones. You don't want to miss this one!

Holliston Scout Troop 76 Continues Tradition

Tree Pickup January 10, and 50th Anniversary Planning in Works

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

This month, as they have done for many years, Holliston Scout Troop 76 will travel to homes in Holliston to pick up used Christmas trees. Members of the Troop, chartered by Mt. Hollis Lodge (<https://mthollis.org>), where the Troop's weekly meetings are held, will pick up trees on Saturday, January 10, 2026. The annual fundraiser helps fund campouts, updating troop gear, helps scouts pay for summer camp, and supports community projects for the year.

"The Christmas tree pickup is Holliston Troop 76's biggest and only fundraiser. The troop has been doing it for the last 15 years," says Elina Zak Robinson, Troop 76 Committee Chair, adding, "We rent three UHauls and start the pick-up process across town at dawn. The Boy Scouts are driven around town with the UHauls in 'chaser cars' and do all the heavy lifting and dragging. The trees are taken to the Mar-



The scouts in Holliston Scout Troop 76 do all the heavy lifting in their annual Christmas tree pickup fundraiser. From the looks of this past event, they have some fun doing it. Photo by Elina Zak Robinson.



shall Street Recycling Center and to any locations that want trees for their goats. We do not pick up wreaths, because the wires in them are not recyclable. The cost for a tree pickup up this year is \$25."

If you would like to support the troop as well as responsibly recycle your tree, visit [https://tinyurl.com/Troop-](https://tinyurl.com/Troop-76Trees2026)

76Trees2026 to learn more or email troop76holliston@gmail.com.

Holliston Scout Troop 76 announced on Facebook in November that it will be planning a 50th anniversary event coming up in 2028. Scout leader Ed Mitchell noted he hopes to include many former scouts, former scoutmasters and former families of Troop

76 as possible, writing, "If you are an alumni in any capacity or want to see what we are up to as a troop, you can follow us on our public FB group (Troop 76 Holliston)

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1Cm2UV7N3y/?mibextid=wwXlfi>



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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

New-To-You Services to Love in 2026!

Hidden Gems at b.LUXE

BY GINA WOELFEL

Happy New Year, b.LUXE Beauties! As we step into 2026, we thought it was the perfect time to share some of our best-kept secrets! These four services are already on our menu but might have flown under your radar. Once our clients discover them, they can't stop raving about them, and we have a feeling you'll love them, too. So if one of your resolutions is to take better care of yourself or try something new this year, this is your sign to book one of these game-changers!

Scalp Spa: The Treatment Your Hair Has Been Begging For \$60

When's the last time you gave your scalp some real TLC? If you're like most people, you focus on your hair but forget about the foundation it grows from. Our Scalp Spa treatment is like hitting the reset button for your hair and scalp, and trust us, it's an experience you won't forget.

We start with a thorough consultation to understand your scalp's specific needs, whether you're dealing with dryness, oiliness, buildup, or sensitivity. Then we move into a deep cleanse and gentle exfoliation to remove all that product buildup,

dead skin cells, and everyday grime that accumulates over time. This is especially important if you use a lot of styling products, dry shampoo, or wearing winter hats.

The best part is the relaxing scalp massage with nourishing treatments customized to your needs. We use premium products that boost circulation, balance oil production, and promote healthier hair growth from the roots up. The massage itself is incredibly relaxing (some clients even fall asleep!), but it's also therapeutic, helping to relieve the tension and stress we all carry in our heads and necks.

The results speak for themselves: your scalp feels refreshed and revitalized, your hair looks shinier and fuller, and most clients are booking their next visit before they even sit up! It's one of those rare self-care treatments that feels incredible in the moment and leaves you looking noticeably better afterward.

Lash Lift & Tint: Your Morning Routine Just Got Easier \$90

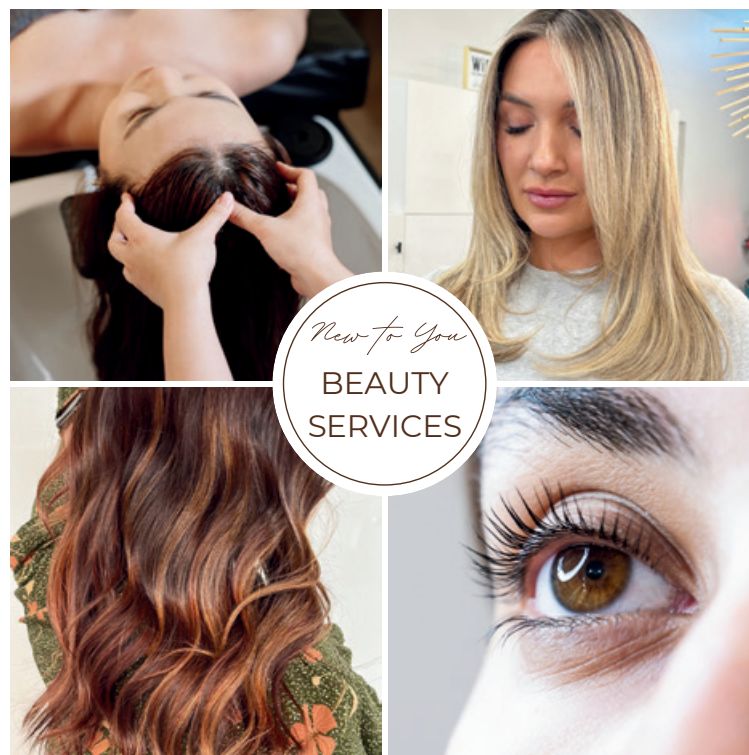
Imagine rolling out of bed with perfectly curled, defined lashes. No mascara wand, no lash curler, no worrying about smudges by noon or raccoon eyes after the gym. That's ex-



actly what a lash lift and tint delivers. Our Lash Lift & Tint devotees are hooked!

Here's how it works: We lift and curl your natural lashes from the root using a gentle, safe process that enhances what you already have. Then we add a custom tint in the shade that works best for your coloring. That could be classic black, soft brown, or something in between. The results last 6-8 weeks, which means you're looking at two months of stress-free lashes.

It's one of those treatments where you don't realize how much you need it until you have it (then you wonder how you ever lived without it!) Perfect for vacations, busy mornings, anyone who wears contacts or glasses, or if you just want to simplify your beauty routine without sacrificing that polished look.



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Good for both natural and chemically treated hair, this service adds instant radiance and mirror-like shine. You can book it as a standalone treatment or use it between your balayage or highlight appointments at around the 6 to 8 week mark. It adds just the right amount of dimension while blending regrowth and keeping your color looking vibrant. Think of it as maintaining the beautiful color you already have without starting from scratch every time. Your hair looks intentional and polished, never grown out or neglected. It's the icing on the cake.

Face Frame Highlight: Maximum Impact, Minimal Commitment \$55 - \$80+

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Our mini face frame highlight focuses strategically on the hair that frames your features (the pieces that catch the light and make the biggest visual impact when people look at you.)

It's perfect for extending the life of your full color service by refreshing just the most visible sections, testing out a lighter shade before committing to an all-over change, or just getting that fresh-from-the-salon feeling without blocking out half your day. Placement is key here, highlighting exactly where it counts to help brighten your face and add that lit-from-within glow. Quick, gorgeous, and totally transformative.

Let's simplify, streamline and make 2026 your best beauty year yet! This is your moment to strip away the noise, focus on what truly works for you, and build a routine that feels less like a chore and more like an act of self care. You deserve a beauty regimen that energizes rather than overwhelms, one that celebrates your unique features and fits seamlessly into your real life.

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The Real Cost of Delaying a Furnace Replacement



Alexandra McKerman



Ryan McKerman

HEATING INSIGHTS

As fall turns to winter, many homeowners are busy preparing for the colder months ahead - changing filters, checking thermostats, changing the batteries in the smoke detectors and CO2 detectors, and stocking up on firewood. But for those with aging furnaces, there's another question that's harder to ignore - should we repair or replace?

At first glance, postponing a furnace replacement might seem like a budget-friendly op-

tion. After all, repairs often cost less upfront than a full install. But experts warn that waiting too long can result in hidden costs that quickly outweigh any short-term savings.

Efficiency Loss = Higher Bills

Older furnaces tend to operate at much lower efficiency levels than today's high-performance systems. In fact, a 20-year-old furnace might be operating at only 60-70% efficiency, meaning up to 40 cents of every heating dollar is liter-

ally going up the flue. Newer models routinely achieve 95%+ efficiency, translating into significant monthly savings on energy bills.

Put simply, every winter you keep an old furnace running, you're likely paying more than you need to for less comfort.

Safety Risks

It's not just about efficiency. Aging systems can develop cracks or leaks in their heat exchangers, which may allow dangerous gases like carbon monoxide to enter your home. Even small leaks or improper venting can pose health hazards, especially for children, older adults, or those with respiratory issues.

Routine maintenance helps reduce these risks, but it can't always offset the wear and tear that naturally accumulates over decades.

Unplanned Emergencies

Few things are worse than a furnace failing on the coldest night of the year. Emergency repairs can be costly, and finding parts for older models can

be difficult or even impossible. Plus, when you're desperate for heat, you may end up settling for a "quick fix" rather than making the thoughtful, informed choice you would have preferred in the fall.

Financing Options Make Replacement Easier

The good news is that replacing a furnace doesn't have to break the bank. Many reputable local companies, including Pro Comfort Control, offer financing options, rebates, or seasonal promotions to make the transition more manageable. Some even include perks like free smart thermostats or extended labor warranties to add long-term value.

A Smart Investment in Comfort and Peace of Mind

While it's tempting to delay a replacement one more season, the long-term math rarely adds up. Between rising utility bills, mounting repair costs, and potential safety issues, delaying can cost more, in dollars and in peace of mind, than acting now.

Local experts like Pro Comfort Control specialize in high-quality installations and can help you choose the right system for your family's comfort and peace of mind. Pair the system with our "No Payment til 2026," and you'll have optimal comfort for your home and bank account over the holidays!

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January is National Blood Donor Month

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

The first month of the year marks a national awareness month for blood donation. According to the American Red Cross, someone in the United States needs blood every two seconds, with over 29,000 units of red blood cells needed every day. Blood and platelets cannot be manufactured, but nearly 5,000 units of platelets and 6,500 units of plasma are needed daily in the U.S. January is a critical time for blood donations, which often decline in November and December as people become busy with the holiday season.

The American Red Cross notes that in most states, donors must be at least years old in most

states, healthy, and weigh at least 110 lbs. In fact, less than 38% of the U.S. population is eligible to give blood. Some may be turned away due to illness such as the common cold, being on a particular medication, low iron or having recently traveled outside the United States.

Type O-negative blood and Type AB positive plasma can be transfused to patients of all blood types. Both are always in demand and often in short supply. Donors must wait 56 days before each whole blood donation, although they can donate platelets every seven days, up to 24 times a year.

Want to give blood? Here are some local blood drives this month:

Framingham MA Blood Donation Center, 150 Worcester Rd., Suite 4, Framingham, MA 01702

January 1, January 4, January 11, January 18, January 25: 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.

January 5, January 12, January 19, January 26: 7:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

January 6 & 7, January 13 & 14, January 20 & 21, January 27: 11 a.m. -7:15 p.m.

January 8, January 15, January 22, January 29: 9:30 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Natick Community Senior Center, 117 East Central St., Natick

10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Milford Regional Medical Ctr., 14 Prospect St., Milford

January 7 & January 22: 1-6 p.m.

January 13, January 25: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Franklin Elks, 1077 Pond St., Franklin

January 8, January 22: 1-6 p.m.

Longfellow Wellesley Tennis & Health Club, 140 Great Plain Ave., Wellesley

January 9: 12-5 p.m.

Morse Institute Library, 14 East Central St., Natick

January 14: 2-7 p.m.

Hopkinton Senior Center, 28 Mayhew St., Hopkinton

January 15: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Encompass Fitness, 27 Milliston Rd., Millis

January 16: 1-5 p.m.

Saint Mary's Parish, 8 Church St., Holliston

January 17: 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Boston Church of Christ, 214 Concord St., Framingham

January 17: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Blake Middle School, 24 Pound St., Medfield

January 19: 8 a.m. -2 p.m.

Faith Community Church, 146 East Main St., Hopkinton

January 27: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 3 Maple St., Framingham

January 27: 2-7 p.m.

If you would like to donate blood at any of these events, call 1 (800) RED-CROSS to make an appointment or sign up at www.redcross.org.

Letter to the Editor:

Use Equity Audit as Guide in Superintendent Search

Dear Editor,

Holliston is selecting its next Superintendent — a decision that will shape our schools for years to come.

In 2023, the district commissioned an independent Equity Audit that documented persistent inequities affecting students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and non-White students. The district committed to using this work to guide leadership decisions.

Yet equity has not been clearly or effectively prioritized in the Superintendent search. The Equity Audit was not used to guide the process; communities most impacted by inequities were not intentionally engaged; and there has been limited transparency about the Superintendent Screening Team.

The Superintendent Screening Team is charged with interviewing candidates and is currently composed of: 2 School Committee Members, 2 School Principals, a Select Board Member, a Teacher's Union Representative, and a retired Holliston Schools Employee.

Recruiting from a diverse candidate pool is not sufficient enough to address the complex issues our district faces. It is imperative that we hire a Superintendent who is capable of understanding and navigating the issues that affect people from diverse backgrounds and leading the district in implementing practices that foster inclusion, safety, and a sense of belonging for all.

The current Screening Team is lacking someone who is both qualified and specifically dedicated to assessing candidates' strengths and weaknesses in this area.

But there is still time to strengthen the process. We are asking the School Committee to add one member to the Superintendent Screening Team whose sole focus is to evaluate candidates through an equity lens. This is the only remaining opportunity to formally include that perspective.

You can read more about the concerns and background by visiting: www.diverseholliston.org/blog

Finally, we are asking the community to please sign the petition to show the School Committee that Holliston residents value equity, transparency, and informed leadership:

To sign the petition, see the QR Code here.

*Thank you,
Diverse Holliston*



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Interfaith Pickleball Tentatively Planned for January & February

Interfaith Pickleball

Date/Time: TBD; RSVP interest!

Location: Bosse, 310 Speen St, Natick, MA

Welcome to the Center for Interfaith Collaboration's first event of 2026! For our faith communities to collaborate authentically and in good faith, we first have to develop relationships of trust, humor, and effective communication across difference. What better way to do that than pickleball? When we play together, we learn to see the world through each other's eyes.

To sign up, visit: <https://www.interfaithcollaboration.org/events-1/interfaith-pickleball>.

Looking to advertise your business?

Contact Susanne: 508-954-8148

sue@sodellconsult.com

Gov. Healey Announces Federal Heating Assistance Funding Now Available

Boston, MA – Governor Maura Healey announced in December that the Trump Administration released federal funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). After more than a month's delay, the federal funding was released December 4th, and all applications can now be processed.

“For more than a month, President Trump has forced American families to wait in the cold,” said Governor Healey. “As we hit cold winter weather, we are relieved that funds are finally flowing now, and families can apply for help heating their homes. Our team has worked to make this funding available immediately, because our families cannot afford to wait. I'm grateful to Secretary Augustus and the team at the Executive

Office of Housing and Livable Communities for taking the necessary steps to ensure we were prepared to get the program started again as soon as the federal funding was made available.”

LIHEAP is a federal program, referred to as the Massachusetts Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) in Massachusetts, that typically helps more than 150,000 Massachusetts households, representing over 300,000 people, afford to heat their homes during the winter each year. This federal funding usually becomes available in early November, but it was delayed due to the federal government shutdown. Even after the government reopened on November 13, it took the Trump Administration nearly three weeks to release funding

– a delay that Governor Healey criticized.

During the pause, the Healey-Driscoll Administration utilized leftover federal funding from last year to support households with a heating emergency. The Department of Public Utilities also extended its shut-off moratorium to October 27, 2025 – April 1, 2026.

All eligible HEAP clients are now able to apply online at <https://www.toapply.org/MassHEAP> for heating assistance.

Residents of Holliston can also reach out to the Holliston Senior Center, 150 Goulding St., Holliston. Intakes can be scheduled by appointment only between the hours of 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call (508) 429-0622.

Two Charged with October Break-In at Mass Firearms School in Holliston

On November 21st, Holliston Police Department released a statement noting that Middlesex DA Marian Ryan and Holliston Police Chief Matthew Stone have confirmed that two individuals had been arrested and charged in connection with the break-in that occurred at the Mass Firearms School (MFS) in Holliston on October 30, 2025. Jason Liberis, 18, of Oxford, and Bryan Ayala Perez, 18, of Johnston, RI were charged with Breaking and Entering in the Nighttime, Breaking and Entering from a Firearms Dealer, Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Unlawful Possession of a Large Capacity Weapon and Conspiracy.

The statement read:

“On Thursday October 30, 2025, at approximately 11:19 p.m., the Holliston Police Department was dispatched to MFS at 100 Kuniholm Drive for a report of breaking and enter-

ing in progress. Video surveillance from inside the building indicated that three individuals were on scene, with two of those suspects observed actively inside the firearms retail store. The footage of the incident revealed that the break-in involved three suspects dressed in dark clothing and masks who stole two semi-automatic rifles before fleeing the area in a four-door sedan.

The subsequent multi-agency investigation further revealed that on October 30, 2025, Liberis, Ayala Perez and a third person allegedly traveled to MFS in a car that Ayala Perez had stolen from the parking lot of a convenience store in Johnston, RI. Once there, Ayala Prez stood watch outside while Liberis and the other individual broke in and took the rifles before fleeing in the stolen car.”

Liberis was arrested at his home in Oxford and arraigned at Framingham District Court

on November 21, 2025, and ordered held pending a dangerousness hearing scheduled for November 24th, while Ayala Perez was arrested the same day in Palm Springs, FL and would be arraigned subject to extradition to Massachusetts.

Holliston Police note that the investigation is “active and ongoing,” conducted by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, the Holliston Police Department, Massachusetts State Police assigned to the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, the Oxford Police Department, the Johnston Police Department, the Pawtucket Police Department, the Cranston Police Department, the Palm Springs Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Homeland Security Investigations (HIS). The firearms have not been recovered.

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MFEC Decades of Service to the Community and a New Provider

Milford–Franklin Eye Center has been proudly serving the community with advanced, compassionate eye care for more than four decades. With a staff of 59, an award-winning surgery center in Milford, and offices in Milford, Franklin, and our new locations in Hopkinton and Medfield, we remain one of the leading eye care centers in Massachusetts. We are also one of the few ophthalmology practices in the state that owns and operates its own surgical facility, the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford, allowing patients to receive ethical, world-class cataract surgery close to home. Our team includes fellowship-trained ophthalmologists and four optometrists, offering comprehensive care for the entire family.

Roger Kaldawy, M.D.

Dr. Kaldawy is an eye physician, surgeon, and corneal specialist trained at the University of Rochester and the University of Iowa. A former Assistant Professor at Boston University, he has

performed more than 32,000 surgeries, pioneering advanced techniques in corneal transplants, innovative glaucoma surgery, premium implants, and bladeless femtosecond cataract surgery. He has trained numerous physicians, has been featured in multiple news articles including Channel 5, and serves as Medical Director of the Cataract Surgery Center of Milford.

Alyse Richard, M.D.

We are pleased to welcome Dr. Alyse Richard, who will join our team in January 2026. She is a well-regarded retina specialist with expertise in macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal tears, and retina-related emergencies. Dr. Richard completed her medical degree at Albany Medical College, residency at the University of Rochester's Flaum Eye Institute, and a medical retina fellowship at New England Eye Center, Tufts Medical Center. She is known for her efficient, skilled approach to patient care and her commitment

to maximizing diagnostic precision. She performs intraocular injections, laser procedures, and repairs of retinal tears and detachments.

Dan Liu, M.D.

Dr. Liu graduated from Northwestern University and Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, where she was elected to Alpha Omega Alpha. She completed residency at Albany Medical Center as Chief Resident and a fellowship in Cornea and Anterior Segment Surgery at Tufts. Her expertise includes cataract surgery with ORA, DMEK/DSEK/PK corneal transplants, keratoconus treatment, MIGS glaucoma procedures, ocular surface tumors, and pterygia. She is board-certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology.

Shalin Zia, O.D.

Dr. Zia earned her Doctor of Optometry degree from Indiana University. She provides care for patients of all ages, specializing in routine vision exams, contact



lenses, and management of eye disease.

Michael Adams, O.D.

Dr. Adams graduated from John Carroll University, completed a Master's in Biochemistry at Ohio State, and earned his optometry degree from the New England College of Optometry. His training includes corneal pathology, specialty contact lenses, and advanced ocular disease.

Donald L. Conn, O.D.

Dr. Conn received his optometry degree from the New England College of Optometry and completed a residency in Ocular Disease and Primary Care at the Bedford VA. He provides care to both adult and pediatric patients.

Purvi Patel, O.D.

Dr. Patel earned her Doctor of Optometry degree at SUNY and completed a residency in Ocular Disease. As a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, she has held leadership roles at Boston community health centers. Her clinical focus includes diabetes, glaucoma, and community-based care.

New Offices: Expanding to Serve the Community

Boston Eyes in Hopkinton

Located at 66 Main Street, our new Hopkinton office provides comprehensive eye exams, contact lens services, surgical consultations, and a wide eyewear selection. With more than 24 years of connection to the Hopkinton community, we bring top-tier eye care directly to local residents.

Boston Eyes in Medfield–Millis

Our newest office serves Medfield, Millis, Dover, Sherborn, and Westwood. This renovated, convenient location offers eye exams for adults and children, contact lens fittings, and care for cataracts, glaucoma, diabetes, and retina conditions.

Why Choose Milford–Franklin Eye Center

At Milford–Franklin Eye Center, every patient is treated like family. Our outcomes rival those of major Boston hospitals, and we offer same-day emergency care, Saturday appointments, and a full-service optical shop with an on-site lab. New patients even receive a complimentary pair of select glasses.

We are especially proud of our state-licensed, QUAD A–accredited, state-of-the-art surgery center in Milford. Unlike practices that perform cataract surgery in office settings without anesthesia staff or IV sedation — and where patients are often needlessly charged extra “office-based surgery fees” — our patients receive the highest level of safety while staying in-network and benefiting from true ambulatory surgery center quality. No office-based surgery fees with us. Every procedure includes IV sedation and is staffed by anesthesiologists to ensure the safest and most comfortable experience.

Most importantly, we live in the same communities we serve. Whether in the office, at the supermarket, or in the ER at 1 a.m., our focus remains on you, your vision, and delivering world-



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Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors Sends Their Thanks

The **Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors Thanksgiving Drive Committee and Holliston Lion's Meals for Seniors** want to thank YOU! With the help from the community, HNN was able to contribute to the Thanksgiving efforts of the Holliston Pantry Shelf's gift cards to their patrons as well as Head Start and Wayside Youth who both support Holliston youth. The Holliston Lions assembled and delivered a complete Thanksgiving meal to nearly 100 Holliston Seniors identified by the The Center, Mission Springs and Cole Court.

Many thanks go to our local community organizations, religious groups and volunteers. These groups spread the word, made so many Thanksgiving cards especially the Holliston Scouts while the Holliston Lions volunteered their time to brighten the day of our Seniors.

But all of these efforts would not have been possible without



all the individuals and businesses that donated to this effort including the generous donations from Applewood Survey Co., Salone De Bella, TLC Painting, Fiske's General Store, Hastings Consulting, Holliston Sewer Service, Moor Metals, Village Automotive, Abbess Instruments and Systems, Dr. Barbara Preussner D.M.D and For A New You as well as donations from BDR Automotive, Archambault Construction, East Coast Perfection Coating, Farrell Pool, Meridian Financial Advisors, Prana Center, Travel Concept, John's Superior Shoe & Boot Repair,

Chesmore Funeral Home, Inspire Dance Academy, Optimize Vision Care, Marine Engines and Holliston Reporter.

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors, HNN Thanksgiving Drive Committee and Holliston Lions couldn't be more thankful for the support we received from the community. We are so proud that we could be a part of making Thanksgiving a great day for so many of our neighbors.

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors - Building Friendships, Building Community
Holliston Lions Club - Where There's a Need There's a Lion

Holliston Dems to Select Holliston Democratic Caucus Date at Jan. 10 Meeting

Democrats from across the Commonwealth will gather in Worcester for the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic State Convention, taking place Friday, May 29, and Saturday, May 30, at the DCU Center. Delegates, activists, and community leaders from

every corner of Massachusetts will come together to formally consider statewide Democratic candidates and begin charting the path toward victory in 2026.

Worcester, at the heart of the Commonwealth, has a long history of Democratic organizing and grassroots leadership. That spirit will be on full display as thousands of Democrats unite for two days of organizing, decision-making, and collective action. This will be a nominating convention and an important moment to build momentum heading into the 2026 election cycle.

The caucus window for the 2026 Democratic State Convention has now been officially announced. Democratic caucuses will take place between Thursday, February 19, and Sunday, March 22, 2026. At its January 10 meeting, the Holliston Democratic Town Committee will be selecting the date for the Holliston Democratic Caucus. The meeting will be held from

10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Holliston Town Hall. All Democrats interested in getting active, learning more about the caucus process, or considering a run for delegate or alternate are encouraged to attend.

Holliston will elect 10 delegates and 4 alternates to represent the town at the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic State Convention. Additional opportunities will be available for add-on delegates in designated categories, consistent with state party rules.

Learn more about caucus procedures, timelines, and delegate selection on the MassDems website, <https://www.massdems.org/caucus-and-convention>. For questions, or to get involved, contact HDTC Chair Cynthia Burrow at cjpburrow@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing Holliston Democrats engaged locally and representing our community in Worcester in May 2026.

EYE

continued from page 18

class care close to home.

As we look ahead to 2026, when it comes to quality eye care, you have one address: Milford-Franklin Eye Center.

Wishing our communities and patients a happy, healthy, and safe new year.

For more details, see our ad on the previous page.

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CALENDAR

January 5

Morning Book Club, 10 a.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston: *We Solve Murders* by Richard Osman

January 7

LGBTQ+ Mythbusters: Real Talk About LGBTQ+ Identities," 12:30-2 p.m. at "The Center," 150 Goulding St., Holliston

January 8

Holliston Drug & Alcohol Awareness Coalition (HDAAC) annual stakeholders' retreat, Anthony on the Green, 212 Prentice St., Holliston, 6-8 p.m., RSVP required by 12/30. Learn more by emailing Coalition Coordinator, Zoe Moreau at moreauz@holliston.k12.ma.us.

January 10

Holliston Democratic Town Committee meeting, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Holliston Town Hall, 703 Washington St., Holliston

January 12

History Book Club, 10:30 a.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston: *In the Shadows of Statues* by Mitch Landrieu

January 20

New England Ghost Stories, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, with storyteller Jonah Knight, register on library website calendar <https://hollistonlibrary.org>

Charles River Chorale Open Rehearsal, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. New members welcome to regional non-audition chorus. Sign up at <https://forms.gle/mgnj9NCiRSLU4jTG9> or come to rehearsal.

January 27

Wine Glass Paint Night, 6-7:30 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, register on library website calendar

"Creating a Modern Homestead" with Homesteader and Blogger (Zoom program) with Victoria Pruett, 7-8:15 p.m., visit <https://tinyurl.com/HomesteadPruett>, through Holliston and Ashland libraries

Charles River Chorale Open Rehearsal, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Church of Christ, 142 Exchange St., Millis. New members welcome to regional non-audition chorus. Sign up at <https://forms.gle/mgnj9NCiRSLU4jTG9> or come to rehearsal.



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Middlesex Sheriff's Office Welcomes New Correction Officers, Hosts Holiday Event for Families of Incarcerated Individuals

Winchester, MA. – The Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) proudly celebrated the graduation of the 53rd Basic Training Academy (BTA) at Winchester Town Hall on Friday, November 21, 2025.

Ten new correction officers were sworn in during a ceremony that featured remarks from Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and Winchester Police Chief Daniel O'Connell. 53rd BTA President Emily Magovern also addressed those in attendance.

The ceremony followed a rigorous academy process during which recruits underwent extensive training. The academy included both classroom and hands on work, as well as the mastering of policies, procedures, and skills needed to maintain safety and security.

The next day, at the Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) Training Academy, the office hosted an event for the families of incarcerated individuals. The 2nd annual holiday event was hosted by the MSO's Family Support Services Unit (FSSU). It featured activities with staff from the Discovery Museum in Acton, balloon animals crafted by retired MSO Captain Drew Crawford and cookie decorating.

Additionally, each family was given a turkey donated by the Manolis Family Foundation, fresh eggs from the MSO's Project EARTH, and cookies baked by the MSO's culinary staff. The Wish Project from Chelmsford and the MSO's religious services staff also provided gifts that were distributed to children attending the event.

The event also featured a raffle of two bicycles donated by the family of an individual previously incarcerated at the Middlesex Jail & House of Correction. The family donated the bicycles as a thank you for the support they had received while their loved one was incarcerated.

"I am incredibly grateful to our team, the Manolis family, The Wish Project and the Discovery Museum for making



Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian (5th from left), members of the MSO, volunteers from the Discovery Museum, and representatives of the Manolis Family Foundation from Pridestar Trinity EMS stand behind a table filled with gifts at the Middlesex Sheriff's Office Training Academy in Chelmsford on Saturday, November 22, 2025. Photo supplied.



Members of the 53rd Basic Training Academy (standing) pose for a photo following their graduation. In the front row are Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian (center), alongside members of the Middlesex Sheriff's Office command and training staffs. Photo by Josh London

this event such an overwhelming success," said Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian. "Speaking to so many of the families who came, it was powerful to hear not just how much today meant to them, but how impactful their experi-

ences with our Family Support Services Unit team are throughout the year."

Through the MSO's partnership with The Wish Project, the group also worked with the FSSU team to sponsor 40 fami-

lies of individuals in the MSO's lower security programs (community work, work release and pre-release). Parents were able to give these presents directly to their children during upcoming visits.

To learn more about the Middlesex Sheriff's Office, current career opportunities and the Family Support Services Unit, please visit www.middlesexsheriff.org.

Sports

Holliston & Ashland Hockey Move on as a Co-op

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Last winter, the Holliston boys' hockey team formed a co-op with Ashland, and the newly developed team played much better than they had in previous years. The Holliston-Ashland co-op went 9-10-1, earning themselves a 26 seed in the Division 3 State Tournament. Unfortunately, they fell to Melrose, a seven seed, in the first round 3-2 in overtime, despite playing very competitively.

Leading the team are two Ashland athletes in Oliver Lareau, a senior captain winger, and Tim Duane. Lareau was a 20-plus goal scorer for Holliston last season, and coach Derek Bedard is looking for him to take on a leadership role this sea-

son. Duane will also be looked upon to take his game to the next level as a leader as well as a goal scorer. According to the coach, the players love him in the locker room.

In addition to the Ashland players taking a lead, the coach will also be looking to senior defenseman Grady Lukis and Cullen Forde, both from Holliston. Both players are entering their third season with the team and bring leadership as well as energy to the ice. They will anchor the team's defense, and Holliston will have one of them on the ice at all times.

"Having graduated three top defensemen from last year's team, we are more forward heavy this year," Bedard said. "However, we will be looking for

Grady and Cullen to take more of a role in helping the younger defenseman step up their game."

In addition to his four leaders, Bedard is also excited about a trio of sophomore players, all from Holliston, taking the leap this season. Colin Grant, last year's Junior Varsity MVP; Ollie Sanford, who played alongside Grant, and EJ Georgelis.

Bedard noted that Grant and Sanford took the next step with their development and put on some size in terms of weight and muscle while bringing a quickness to the ice; something that the team lacked in the past. While the duo played a lot together last winter, the Coach is looking to separate them to spread their speed out, but he is sure that at some point during



Senior Captain Winger Ollie Lareau, of Ashland, scored 20-plus goals for the Ashland-Holliston team last season.



the year they may play on the same line for a game or two.

Georgelis, on the other hand, played club hockey last year and will be playing varsity hockey for Holliston for the first year, so Bedard doesn't know much about him except for what he has seen in the early stages of tryouts. Thus far, the Holliston coach is hoping for production from all three athletes when the season begins.

Last season, Holliston had three senior goalies on their squad, but with all of them having graduated, Bedard will be going with two sophomores this winter. Will Ward from Holliston and Liam Maki from Ashland have been playing together on the same team for years as a tandem. Bedard is hoping to keep the two alternating throughout the season but will go with the goalie who has the hot hand at any point during the season. Being that the two have played together in the past, neither is worried about who is number one.

Junior Mac Roberts is another player that is definitely

one who is well liked in the locker room. He is the glue of the team and brings an energy while playing the entire ice. Bedard is hoping that his goal scoring and veteran presence add to the speed the younger athletes bring to the ice.

Senior captain Brogan Roche, who began playing for Holliston years ago as a defenseman, was moved into a forward position, and this year, the center will be playing in the top six for Holliston. He is a playmaker with a high hockey IQ and sees the ice really well, allowing him to find that open guy.

As the season gets underway, Bedard is hoping that his squad can accomplish at least 10 wins, allowing them to get into the playoffs. Once there, anything can happen.

"I am really excited about this year," Bedard said. "It is the first time in a few years where the lineup choices will be difficult. It is something that a coach fears but actually wants. We should have three solid lines, and the fourth will be one that I am confident in as well."

Ashland-Holliston Hockey's success last year is fueling excitement for this season. Photos courtesy of Coach Derek Bedard.



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State Fire Marshal Issues Lithium-Ion Battery Safety Reminder

STOW, MA —On the heels of gift-giving season, State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine is reminding residents to use caution when using devices powered by lithium-ion batteries.

“Many of Christmas and Hanukkah presents will be use lithium-ion batteries,” said State Fire Marshal Davine. “These devices pack a lot of power into a small device, so it’s important to use them safely.”

- **Buy only listed products.**

When buying a product that uses a lithium-ion battery, look for a certification mark from an independent testing lab such as UL or Intertek/ETL. This means the device meets important safety standards.

- **Charge devices safely.**

Always use the cords that came with the product to charge. Follow the instructions from the manufacturer. Buy new chargers from the manufacturer or one that the manufacturer has approved. Charge your device on a hard surface. Don’t overcharge your device. Unplug it or remove

the battery when it’s fully charged.

- **Keep doorways, stairways, and windows clear.**

A fire involving a large device such as an e-bike can trap residents if left in an escape route like a doorway, stairwell, or window. Store e-bikes and electric scooters outdoors if possible.

- **Recycle batteries responsibly.**

When it’s time to dispose of the device or replace the battery, don’t throw it in the trash or regular recycling bins. Physical damage in a compactor truck or transfer station is a common cause of lithium-ion battery fires. Instead, bring them to a safe battery recycling location. Visit www.call2recycle.org to find a recycling spot near you.

In 2023, the Department of Fire Services launched a data collection tool to help officials track the extent of fires, explosions, and other lithium-ion battery incidents. This investigative checklist is used by the State

Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit, and local fire investigators are encouraged to use it as well. While previous reporting suggested about 20 lithium-ion battery fires per year, the new tool identified about 90 by the end of 2025.

Visit the Department of Fire Services’ website at www.mass.gov/info-details/lithium-ion-battery-safety for more lithium-ion battery safety resources.

Also, last month, the Department of Fire Services added three new drones to its Special Operations fleet that will allow fire/rescue personnel to stream footage from hazardous indoor environments, State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine said.

“Drones were a giant step forward for situational awareness in the fire service,” said State Fire Marshal Davine. “Up until now, we’ve used them primarily to provide aerial footage from outside a structure or above a large wildfire or search area. These new drones can operate reliably inside a building, which will be especially valuable for Hazmat, structural collapse, and other dangerous calls.”

Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild to Raise Funds for Home Base

The Thimble Pleasures Quilt Guild has chosen Home Base as their Special Fundraiser for their biennial quilt show to be held March 14th and 15th at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School.



Pictured are a sampling of the articles that will contribute to this fundraiser and some of the guild members who made them.

Home Base is a national non-profit organization dedicated to healing the invisible wounds of war for veterans of all eras. Service members, military families and families of the fallen have access to world-class direct clinical care, wellness, education and research at no cost to them regardless of era of service, discharge status or geographical location. The program was founded by Massachusetts General Hospital and the Boston Red Sox.

Home Base receives a significant portion of their funding

through fundraising efforts and Thimble Pleasures hopes to be able to contribute greatly to these efforts. Guild members have been busy creating articles to be sold at a special table during the quilt show with all proceeds being donated to Home Base. These articles have been created using patriotic and Red Sox fabric themes and include table runners, small quilts, cross-stitched Christmas ornaments, door decorations and pillows. This special fundraiser is being chaired by Pattie Trachimowicz and Linda Gosselin.

Students Collect Items to Benefit Veterans

Recently students at Milford’s Woodland Elementary School, under the guidance of Ms. Jenn Alger a 5th grade teacher, collected items to be donated to Thanks To Yanks and then distributed to veterans, Thanks To Yanks, a local non-profit, has partnered with Ms. Alger and the students of Woodland for many years. Pictured are some of the students that participated, along with Mike Shain and Scott Rielly of Thanks To Yanks.

For additional information on this charity, please visit Thanks To Yanks on Facebook.





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FOR SALE

KATIE MCBRIDE

14 Andrew Lane
Holliston



SOLD

Buyer's Agent

MELISSA KASPERN

45 Pine Island Road
Milford



SOLD

LYNN ROSSINI

10 Erick Road #34
Mansfield



SOLD

LYDIA RAJUNAS

26 Bayberry Lane
Holliston



SOLD

MELISSA KASPERN

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\$650,000



FOR SALE

TEAM RICE

412 High Street
North Attleboro



SOLD

LYDIA RAJUNAS

108 Prentice Street
Holliston



SOLD

LYDIA RAJUNAS

Lot 2 Hanlon Road, Holliston
\$450,000



FOR SALE

KATIE MCBRIDE



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What's Coming Up at The Center

The Center, located at 150 Goulding St., Holliston, is open Monday- Friday, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Reach them at (508) 429-0622 or visit <https://www.townofholliston.us/176/Senior-Center-The-Center>.

Following are some highlighted programs coming up:

Writer's Group: First Tuesday of the month, 10 a.m., practice writing skills and connect with others. January 6th prompt is "Pets."

LGBTQ+ Mythbusters: January 7, 12:30-2 p.m., Do you ever wonder what these letters mean? Does it seem like these letters and all the terms are always changing and it's impossible to keep up? Join us for a safe space to learn everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask. With Dr. Barbara Fritz, clinical psychologist and LGBTQ+ issues specialist. Also features a group of LGBTQ+ panelists. Call The Center to sign up at (508) 429-0622.

Book Club: Second Friday of the month, 1:30 p.m., January 9th selection: *Murder at Gull's Nest*, by Jess Kidd

Dementia-Friendly Free Lunch & Learn: The Holliston and Sherborn COAs have partnered on this program, funded by Bay State Federal Savings Bank Charitable Foundation. January 30: Music in Dementia, 12-1 p.m., Sherborn Town Hall, 19 Washington St., 2nd Fl., Sherborn. Must RSVP for lunch. Register by calling The Center at (508) 429-0622.

Keefe Tech Lunch at The Center: This new partnership provides nutritious lunches for seniors and learning opportunities for teens in the Culinary Arts program at Keefe Tech. January 27 (Chicken Picatta) and February 24 (Tuscan Chicken) at 12 p.m. \$5 per meal, per person, sign up a week in advance by calling The Center at (508) 429-0622.

Expressive Art Therapy: Facilitated by Franci Dumar of Clear Guidance, LLC, January 20 and February 12, an interactive program for adults with cognitive decline and their care partners offering participants a creative outlet for self-expression, emotional exploration and social connection. Register for free through the Sherborn Council on Aging at (508) 65107858, or coa@sherbornma.org. You can also call The Center at (508) 429-0622.

Community Education Program: Understanding Carotid Artery Disease, February 6, 10 a.m., with Board-Certified Vascular Surgeon Laura T. Boitano, MD. Light breakfast provided, please call The Center to register at (508) 429-0622.

Celebrate Black History Month: February 10, 2 p.m., Film: 13th, documentary directed by Ava DuVernay.

Jazzy Dessert Social February 12: Features live jazz from



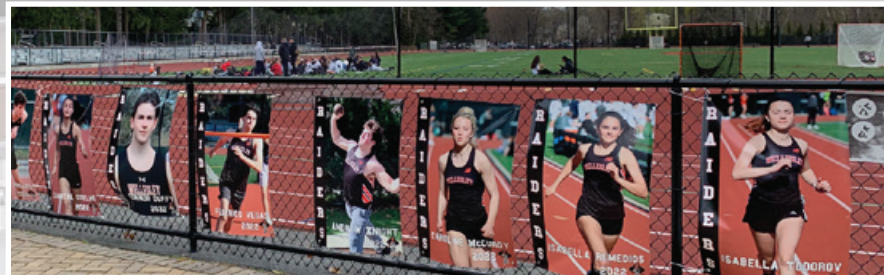
the Metrowest Jazz Project, sponsored by the Timothy Daniels House and homemade sweets. Sign up in advance by calling (508) 429-0622.

Free Tax Preparation: AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Volunteers will help you prepare and file your return. The service is free

and offered at The Center. While the AARP is focused on taxpayers who are over 50 with low to moderate income, the service is open to anyone of any age. Appointments begin February 9th and continue Mondays through the first week of April. Call The Center at (508) 429-0622.

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