

Dynasty? Either Way, NHS Girls Soccer Team is No. 1



The Natick High girls soccer team gathers around the Division 1 State championship trophy and banner after defeating Franklin in the tournament final. *Courtesy photo*

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Hearing the 'D' word is getting to be routine in Natick,

especially after the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association soccer tournament ends and a Division 1

girls champion is crowned.

DYNASTY
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Residents Need to Learn to Live With Coyotes, ACO Says

By SANDY QUADROS BOWLES
EDITOR

A Natick resident was walking his dog on a recent afternoon when he turned around and saw he was being followed.

A coyote was tailing him.

The resident didn't panic. Instead, he blew an airhorn that he carries.

The noise did its job. The coyote scampered off.

That reaction was perfect, Natick Animal Control Officer Peter Cunningham said. He is working to educate residents about coyotes and how to avoid interacting with them.

The first thing to understand,, he said, is that coyotes aren't going anywhere. Just as people have set-



A coyote on the hunt. Photo courtesy Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife

tled in Natick and other suburban towns, so have coyotes.

"If you live in Natick," he said, "you're living with coyotes."

COYOTES
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Natick Police Make Holidays Brighter Through Shop with a Cop

Children received gifts and made warm memories during the Natick Police Department's 10th annual Shop with a Cop Dec. 16.

The effort represents a multi-agency collaboration that brings holiday joy to local children and families.

Officers from Natick and surrounding communities spent time with kids from across the region, helping them shop for gifts and creating meaningful memories during the holiday season.

This event was supported by Brigham and Gill Motor Cars, Natick Mills Apartments and the Natick Service Council.

The officers from Natick and beyond volunteered their time to support local families.

The police report that the event truly reflects what the season of giving is all about: collaboration, compassion, and coming together as a community to make a difference for kids.



A certain visitor from the North Pole was among those participating in Shop with a Cop. Courtesy photo

Grant Helps Natick Service Council Support Those in Need

The Natick Service Council has received \$10,000 in funding to provide financial assistance to those needing support.

The Community Foundation for MetroWest provided the money as part of a \$320,000 distribution of Hunger Relief Grants to 61 local organizations that provide essential food assistance in the region.

“During a time when so many of our community members need extra support the Community Foundation for MetroWest proactively stepped up with funding that allows NSC to carry out our motto of Neighbors Helping Neighbors,” said Rachel Vingsness, executive director of the Natick Service Council.

The funding will be used for clothing, housing financing assistance and gift cards to grocery stores, Vingeness said.

These grants reflect the foundation’s ongoing commitment to addressing food insecurity in MetroWest and to supporting nonprofits on the front lines

serving families and individuals facing hunger, according to the foundation.

“In a year marked by increasing challenges for many in our community, the Foundation has once again prioritized hunger relief as a key area of focus. The grants will help local food banks, meal programs, and emergency food pantries expand their capacity to meet the growing demands for food assistance, ensuring that our neighbors don’t go without, according to the foundation

“Hunger relief is an ongoing need that requires both immediate action and long-term commitment,” said Jay Kim, Executive Director of the Community Foundation for MetroWest.

“These Hunger Relief Grants are part of our continuous effort to provide both quick support and lasting assistance,” Kim said. “We’ll keep listening carefully and responding thoughtfully to ensure we meet the needs of our community, now and in the future.

“There’s a clear split between recent sales and current inventory, especially above \$1.5M. In November, 14 single-family homes sold at a \$990K median in about 33 days. As of December 1, 33 active listings sit at a much higher \$1.58M median and roughly 80 days on market, heavily skewed to \$1.5M+ homes. For buyers, that higher-end inventory and longer DOM may signal opportunity. Thinking about selling or buying this winter or spring? Let’s build a plan” – Ted

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MARKET ANALYSIS

November 2025 Sales & Current Inventory

NOVEMBER 2025 SINGLE FAMILY SALES

TOTAL SOLD

14

MEDIAN PRICE

\$990K

AVG DAYS MARKET

33

AVG DAYS OFFER

25

DECEMBER 1, 2025 ACTIVE INVENTORY

TOTAL LISTINGS

33

MEDIAN PRICE

\$1.58M

AVG DAYS MARKET

80

AVG DAYS OFFER

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Data Source: MLS PIN • December 1, 2025

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COYOTES

continued from page 1

Coyotes are particularly noticeable this time of year. Breeding season peaks in mid-February. Last season's pups are on their own now, looking for a territory and seeking a mate.

"They're running around, trying to figure things out," Cunningham said.

"I get reports of people saying 'I saw a coyote in my neighbor's yard' or 'I saw a coyote running behind the school.' That's all normal behavior for urban and suburban coyotes."

The coyote population is well established throughout the state, except on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, according to the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

The animals will utilize whatever food is naturally available, including small animals, birds, insects and fruits, as well as artificial sources such as garbage, pet food, birdseed, and compost, according to Mass Wildlife.

Coyotes have been known to follow trash trucks on garbage days, Cunningham said. And trash bags left on the ground translate to an "all you can eat buffet."

The animals play a crucial role in nature, wildlife biologists report. They scavenge road kill, which helps to keep the environment clean, and will help keep populations of rodents, rabbits and deer in check.

Unfortunately, they have also



Coyotes have become part of the landscape in Natick. Photo courtesy Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

been known to attack small pets, which they view as a potential meal. Cunningham urges residents to obey the leash law and to avoid leaving pets alone outside. Cats allowed to roam can be struck by vehicles as well as becoming prey for coyotes.

So how does a resident reduce the chances interacting with a coyote?

Remove bird feeders. Bird feeders attract many small mammals, like squirrels, that coyotes prey upon. Coyotes may also consume bird seed and suet. Remove bird feeders to avoid attracting coyotes.

Secure your garbage and compost. Coyotes raid open trash and compost piles.

Protect produce and livestock. Clear fallen fruit from around fruit trees and ripe vegetables from garden. Use fencing to protect livestock from coyotes.

Feed pets indoors. Outdoor feeding can attract many wild animals.

A key step residents can take is to make them feel unwelcome. Coyotes can become habituated, or accustomed to humans. This

can make them more likely to interact with humans.

To avoid this, residents should

"haze" the coyotes, much as the resident walking his dog did.

There are several ways to do this.

Move toward the coyote while waving arms or clapping.

Make loud noises by yelling, whistling or using an air horn.

Spray a hose or toss small items such as tennis balls in the creature's direction.

By doing this, coyotes will learn they are not welcome near you.

Natick provides a portal where residents can report coyote sightings. This service is provided for

data collection, Cunningham said, and should not be used to report emergencies.

In an emergency, call the police, Cunningham advises.

But a mere sighting, without the animal showing aggressive behavior, does not constitute an emergency, he said. The animals are part of the landscape, he said.

They've adjusted to us. We haven't adjusted to them yet."

To report a coyote sighting, visit <https://www.natickma.gov/FormCenter/Misc-Forms-9/Report-a-Coyote-Sighting-55>



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Natick celebrates MLK Day Jan. 19

Natick will host its 21st annual Martin Luther King Day celebration Monday, Jan. 19 at Natick High School.

Each year, the celebration has included a service project and an opportunity for connecting with neighbors and community resources. Community partners also highlight ways for people to deepen their learning, take everyday actions for justice and inclusion, stand up against racism, spread kindness and build a community where everyone belongs.

A community connection will begin at 9:30 a.m. with Starbucks refreshments.

The program starts at 10 a.m.

The keynote presentation will be offered by Audi Lynch, the METCO director at the Natick schools.

The program will include musical performances by students, middle school creative contest winners, community leaders and partners and interfaith clergy representatives.

All community members are encouraged to bring nonperishable food or unopened, unexpired personal care items and diapers of all sizes to Fill the Van for the Natick Service Council from 9:30 to 11 a.m. on that day.

For more information, contact dreamteam@firstchurchnatick.org.

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Chanukah Celebration Brings Community Together

Natick celebrated Chanukah in December with a menorah lighting on the common and a talk the next day.

Both events were sponsored by Chabad Center of Natick - Metrowest.

The menorah lighting took place Sunday Dec. 14, complete with light-up necklaces, hot latkes and hot cocoa.

The Natick Fire Department dropped Chanukah chocolate gelt coins, which children in the crowd awaited with anticipation.

The next day, about 50 residents gathered for a celebration that center representatives described as filled with warmth, insight, and spirited conversation.

Rabbi Levi Fogelman captivated the room with a Chanukah message of “Spirit over Matter” that shared a profound message:



The menorah was lit at Natick common. Courtesy photo

Beneath the routines of daily life lies a deeper purpose and light, according to the center, a shared sense of joy and inspiration.

His engaging style was infused with humor and genuine connection, which transformed the program into a lively, thoughtful dialogue filled with questions and reflection, center representatives said.

Adding to the experience, Rabbi Fogelman brought along silver Menorah, which residents admired with great enthusiasm.

The evening was complete with glowing menorah necklaces and sufganiyot a jelly-filled doughnut traditionally served during Chanukah that symbolizes the oil that lasted eight days.

Attendees also enjoyed crispy latkes, and, most importantly,



Attendees enjoyed the festivities. Courtesy photo



Children anticipate the dropping of chocolate gelt coins. Courtesy photo

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New Year's Financial Resolutions: Making Them Stick



Gary Shilman, Financial Advisor

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As the calendar flips to a new year, millions of Americans pledge to improve their financial lives. But without a concrete plan, those well-intentioned resolutions often fade quickly.

Financial goals consistently top the list of New Year's resolutions. A 2025 CFP Board study shows that financial resolutions are prominent, with saving

more money (45%) and reducing debt (32%) ranking among the top three goals.

Unfortunately, most resolutions don't last. A 2023 Forbes Health poll found that over half of people give up on resolutions by the four-month mark and only 1% make it the full year.

The challenge isn't a lack of desire for change. People may set the same resolution year after year, revealing a disconnect between intentions and action. Or it may be that they try to tackle too many goals at once, or aim higher than is realistic, setting themselves up for disappointment.

Set smart financial goals. Before crafting your action plan, consider which financial priorities matter most to you. If you need ideas, here are some areas where you may want focus in 2026:

- Regularly review your financial goals and track progress toward meeting them

- Increase your 401(k) contributions or max out your IRA and/or HSA contributions
 - Pay down debt strategically and negotiate lower interest payments
 - Build an emergency savings fund of six to 12 months
 - Save more consistently
- Be specific.** Vague resolutions like "save more money" rarely succeed. Instead, it can help to make goals specific and measurable. For example, rather than making a resolution to "start an emergency fund," commit to a specific goal, such as, "I will put \$100 a month into an emergency fund."
- This shift from general to specific transforms wishful thinking into actionable steps. When goals are attainable, it's easier to track progress and stay motivated.

Find an accountability partner. Don't go it alone. Having someone to check in with can help you stay on track. This could be a spouse, friend or family member who shares similar goals.

Consider working with a financial advisor who can help you create a realistic plan, monitor your progress and adjust strategies as needed. A professional can provide expertise and accountability, making it easier to stay on track throughout the year.

Start small and build momentum. Rather than overhauling your entire financial life all at once, focus on one or two priority areas. Identify where the largest gap exists between your current situation and where you want to be, then concentrate your energy there.

Breaking larger goals into smaller, manageable actions makes them less overwhelming and more achievable. Each

small win builds confidence and momentum for tackling the next challenge.

The new year offers a fresh start and renewed motivation to improve your financial health. With specific goals, a solid action plan and the right support system, this could be the year your financial resolutions finally stick.

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

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Charting a Confident Financial Future

Every successful journey starts with a roadmap. Whether you're planning for retirement, funding your child's education, protecting your family, or building a legacy, a clear and personalized financial plan is the foundation for achieving your goals with confidence.

At the heart of every strong financial plan is a trusted advisor; someone who can translate your dreams into concrete goals and strategies. Financial planning is not a one-time task, but an ongoing process. As life evolves, so do your priorities. A dedicated advisor helps you adjust your plan to keep pace with life's changes, en-

suring that you remain on track.

Why Planning Works

The numbers speak for themselves. Investors who work with financial advisors enjoy an average of up to 5.1% greater returns over time than those who do it alone, in other words a "planning premium."

That difference compounds significantly. For example, if you save \$1,000 a month from age 30 to 67 with a 6.25% annual return, you could retire with \$1.73 million. Add just 5% more return by working with an advisor, and that grows to over \$6.6 million; that's a 280% increase!



Planning can also help promote smarter asset allocation, greater diversification, and increased discipline during market volatility.

A Proven Process

Working with a financial advisor means engaging in a structured, multi-step process that ensures your financial picture is fully understood.

The initial discussion can

sometimes seem like the most daunting but this candid conversation about your experiences, goals, and financial mindset will help your advisor assess key areas such as:

- Net worth and cash flow
- Retirement and investment planning
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They will then create a strategy that is aligned with your goals and priorities. Finally, together, you will review, refine, and begin implementing your financial plan with your advisor guiding you every step of the way.

As Warren Buffett said, "Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago." The sooner you start planning, the brighter your future will be!

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Moving Forward Made Simple: Selling Your Property ‘As Is’ with Sable Homes

By JENNIFER RUSSO

In the competitive real estate market here in Massachusetts, one team has steadily distinguished itself through a blend of local expertise, personalized service, and thoughtful strategies: the Sable Homes Metro-West Team.

Operating out of Natick, the Sable Homes team has a strong local presence that gives them an edge: they’re not just familiar with listings and pricing - they know the neighborhoods, schools, and local sites of interest which matter to families and investors. They are also experts in educating property owners on how to “sell as is” – avoiding the hassle of making costly repairs prior to listing, while still getting a great return on their original investment.

The team of three is unique in that they combine their individual strengths into an experience that truly serves their clients.

Leader and regional specialist Nina Sable brings experience from senior-care consulting into real estate, making her an ex-



pert at guiding clients through transitions such as downsizing, relocating, or selling inherited homes. Her main goal is helping her clients make confident and informed decisions and guiding them through every step of the process.

Claudia Shepherd adds bilingual (Spanish/English) capability and a design-savvy background, supporting sellers with staging and marketing to maximize property appeal. She has a solid foundation in marketing and community engagement and has an unmatched eye for detail.

Lisa Miles complements the group with a buyer and seller-focused skill set, helping to match clients with homes, nuisance-free experiences, and strategic guidance. Her creative marketing and business management back-



ground enables her to understand and achieve each client’s unique goals.

Together, they offer full-spectrum service for anyone who is looking to buy or sell a home, whether they are first-time homebuyers or seasoned investors. Their experience and knowledge span every type of property, including “as-is” properties, single or multi-family homes, vacation investments, and more.

From professional photography and floor plans to robust digital exposure, staging, and vendor referrals, the team sets up clients not just for a sale, but for success.



They emphasize their open, seven-day-a-week availability and treat each client as a true partner in the process.

The Sable Homes Metro-West Team offers local market mastery, tailored services, and an innovative mindset that embraces modern marketing tools to keep listings competitive, but with an individualized touch that really sets them apart.

If you’re looking for a real estate partner that combines strategy, creativity, and genuine care, the Sable Homes Metro-West Team is positioned to support you whether you’re selling a longtime home, buying your next space, or exploring investment opportunities.

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Bacon Free Library has Busy January Planned

Check out what's happening at Bacon Free Library in January.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

All Together Preschool Storytime, Mondays and Tuesdays at 10 a.m. Enjoy stories and songs. The historic nature of the building limits accessibility. This program is also offered in an accessible location at the Morse Institute Library.

Lapsit Storytime, Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Stories, bounces, and songs for babies up to 24 months and their grownups.

Jammin with You, Friday, Jan. 9 at 10:30 a.m. at the library and Friday, Jan. 16 at 10:30 a.m. at the Common Street Spiritual Center. Be prepared to laugh, dance, sing, and jam through 30 minutes of non-stop family fun. Registration is required due to space limitations.

ALL AGES PROGRAMS

Featured Art Exhibit: Tom

Doran: "Ease Your Eyes" through Jan. 28. Doran creates his unique digital compositions by layering photography and previous artworks. Informed by years of jazz improvisation and the tactile nature of paper collage, his process embraces spontaneity and a pursuit of balance between order and disorder.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Virtual: Gorgeous Gardens of New England, part 5, Wednesday, Jan. 7 at 6 p.m. on Zoom. Take a virtual tour of 10 gorgeous gardens from Mount Desert Island in Maine, down through Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, to Weir Farm in Connecticut and Enders Island in Mystic, Conn.

Landscape photographer Joanne Pearson will also guide viewers through Buttrick Gardens in Concord, the John Hay Estate in Newbury, N.H., and the Tracy Memorial Library garden in New London, N.H.

Virtual: "Love and Loss after Wounded Knee: a Biography of an Extraordinary Interracial Marriage", Wednesday, Jan. 7 on Zoom. Listen in as author Julie Dobrow shares the story of Elaine Goodale, a white woman from the Berkshires who moved to the Dakota Territory in 1884 to teach Native American children, and Ohiye S'a, or Charles Eastman, a Santee Sioux, born in Minnesota and educated at Dartmouth and Boston University who became a reservation physician.

Virtual: In Conversation with Heather B. Moore, Author of "Julia", Monday, Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Join in on a conversation with author Heather B. Moore about her recent release "Julia: a novel inspired by the extraordinary life of Julia Child." Chat with the author about the book, her writing and research process, and if she found any surprises when researching the iconic Julia Child.

At the library: Winter Sowing, Tuesday, Jan. 13, 5:30 p.m.

Winter sowing is a simple way to start seeds outdoors during the wintertime. All you need is a milk jug, potting soil, seeds, and a sunny, protected location. Once you've sown your seeds, you can practically forget about them until it is time to transplant the seedlings into a spring garden bed. At this in-person workshop, learn all about this process while creating a winter sowing jug. All supplies will be provided in the workshop including locally harvested native seeds. Registration is required.

Virtual: Poisoning the Well: How forever chemicals contaminated America, Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Author Sharon Udasin will discuss her new book, "Poisoning the Well: How Forever Chemicals Contaminated America." Learn how PFAS, a set of toxic chemicals many people have never heard of, poisoned the



Theresa Knapp photo

entire country. Based on original, shoe-leather reporting in four highly contaminated towns and damning documents from the polluters' own files, the book traces a history of corpo-

BACON FREE

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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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No Rain on Santa's Parade During Holiday Celebration

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

Panels designed to catch the sun provided shelter from rain on as hopeful youngsters awaited the arrival of St. Nick.

The jolly giver of gifts made the rounds on the last day of November, shielded from the elements in the confines of a Natick fire truck. The two-hour Sunday tour made stops at Natick schools.

Brown Elementary boasts that array of protective solar panels, a feature advertised on the town's website for Santa sightseers looking to dodge the drizzle that fell throughout the day.

Around two dozen parents and kids had gathered under the overhang for St. Nick's third stop on his route, little ones bouncing with excitement and to stay warm.

Jaxon and Zoe Wong of Natick, aged 8 and 6, were among the crowd and shared some of their holiday wish list while they waited.

"Legos and Dragon Ball Z things" were at the top of Jaxon's list, who confirmed that toys are



Zoe and Jaxon Wong with the man of the hour. Photo by Sean Sullivan

indeed the most laudable feature of the holiday season. For his sister Zoe, some sort of claw machine was top of mind.

Christmas traditions for the Wong family include some of the classics, such as setting out cookies for Santa and carrots for his hardworking reindeer. Cousins would visit, as would a grandfa-

ther and "oma" (grandmother).

He was assisted by two uncharacteristically tall elves, who'd also disembarked from the hulking red sleigh that heralded St. Nick's arrival.

In keeping with Santa's reputation of impeccable time management, the blare of a fire engine sounded through trees just off



Sadie with the snowman at the Cole Center festivities. Photo by Sean Sullivan



Two volunteer elves went along for the Santa ride. Photo by Sean Sullivan

Mill Street at 3:35 p.m. Via his schedule posted on the town's website, that precise appointed hour had been promised for his visit to Brown School.

"Here he comes!" declared Jaxon, as the fire truck ferrying St. Nick came into view.

Descending from his high perch on the engine, the old elf greeted the awed gaggle of children who'd braved rain and chill air to catch a glimpse of the jolly fellow.

St. Nick gifted the crowd with a few holiday trivia questions, followed by a rendition of "Jingle Bells," complete with crowd participation.

"Let's kick this off right!" declared the big man.

Santa's parade was part of the town's official launch of the holiday season that afternoon, in conjunction with its ceremonial lighting of trees on the Natick Common. To accommodate the weather however, the

latter event was moved indoors to keep residents warm and dry and spirits high.

A few miles from the common, Natick's Cole Center had been designated as the backup venue for the festival, and revelers gathered there to ring in the festive season.

There, youngsters mingled and played with others their age, took part in games, holiday snacks and hot chocolate libations. A face-painting station saw a steady stream of young customers, whose decorated visages paraded within the Cole Center gym in increasing numbers through the afternoon.

Eight-year-old Sadie was among them, partaking in the celebration with her parents.

A Labubu doll topped her wish list for the season.

"I get to have Christmas dinner and I get to sleep really good," during the holiday, she said.



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Start the Year Off Strong at Morse Institute Library

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Lapsit Storytime, Monday Jan. 5, 12 & 26, 10 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Stories, bounces, songs, and bubbles for babies birth to 24 months and their grownups. In the StoryCraft Room in the Children's Department on the Lower Level. No registration required.

Project ABC, Friday, Jan. 2, 9, 16 & 30, 10 to 11 a.m. Project ABC's playgroup in collaboration with the library offers a variety of activities for children birth to age 6 and their families. Explore a new theme each week based on a favorite book. STEAM, ELA, and SEL activities, and a circle time with songs and stories. No registration required.

Boredom Busters, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 14 & 21, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Build creations with Magna Tiles or Keva Blocks in the Children's Library. Play a game of Jenga or take the challenge and build a tower using office supplies. No registration required.

Pajama Time Stories, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 14, 21 & 28, 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. Join Miss Susan for a few songs and lots of stories in

the Children's Library. Forty-five minutes of stories and songs. No registration required.

Purposeful Play, Thursday Jan. 8, 15, 22, 10 to 11 a.m. Drop in to the Children's Department to explore tabletop activities for preschool aged children and their grownup partners. Just bring your imagination. No registration required.

Play Night, Monday, Jan. 26, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Drop in and play with select themed play items for littles and their grownups to explore. Play nights are for everyone, but are geared to the preschool set and their adventuresome grownups. No registration required.

All Together Preschool Storytime, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 10 to 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs, and a short play activity. This story hour is geared for children ages 3 to preK5 and their grownup partner. Younger siblings are welcome as observers. Registration is required.

Toddler Time, Wednesday, Jan. 28, 10 to 10:30 a.m. Toddlers (walkers through age 2) and

their special grownups are welcome. This program features stories, songs, and stretches for the first half and special play activities for the later half. Registration is required.

Baby Play!, Wednesday, Jan. 28, 11 to 11:30 a.m. This program connects babies and their special grownups with songs, rhymes, and socializing. This program is geared for non-walkers and their grownups. No registration required.

ALL AGES PROGRAMS

Bookmobile: Farmers Market, Saturday, Jan. 3 and 17, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring a library card to check out books, audiobooks, bestseller speed reads, and DVDs for all ages. At Common Street Spiritual Center, 13 Common Street, Natick.

Friends Winter Book, Bake, and Music Sale, Saturday, Jan. 24, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. & Sunday, Jan. 25, noon to 3 p.m. Mark your calendar for the Friends of the Morse Institute Library's two-day book, bake, and music sale. Choose from a wide

selection of adult, teen, tween, and childrens' books and DVDs and vinyl. Adult books are \$1, and children, tweens, and teens selections are 50 cents. Inventory is restocked throughout the week-end and credit cards are accepted for purchases of \$5 or more. Proceeds from all sales go to support the Morse Institute Library. No registration required.

TEEN PROGRAMS

Tween & Teen Take & Make: Mini STEM Kits, Monday, Jan. 5, 2 to 9 p.m.

For tweens and teens ages 11-18, Pick up a Mini Stem Kit in the Teen Room; available until the kits run out. No registration required.

YAB: Youth Advisory Board (Tweens and teens), Wednesday, Jan. 7, 7 to 8 p.m. The YAB is the Teen Room's Youth Advisory Board for tweens and teens ages 11-18 and meets monthly to hang out, have their voice heard about library programs, suggest books and other materials for the teen collection, write book reviews, help with special proj-

ects and do fun activities. Sign up so that materials can be planned. To apply, register for the event and fill out a one-time application that is available in the Teen Room or online.

Teens & Tweens Drop-in, "You're a Star!" Mini Boxes, Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2 to 4:30 p.m. Come stop by and make a mini "You're a Star!" box! Perfect to remind you or a friend just how awesome you are anytime. For teens 11-18, drop-in activity while supplies last. No registration required.

Teens & Tweens: Drop-In Dried Flower Bookmarks, Saturday, Jan. 17, 2:30 to 4 p.m. Make a dried flower bookmark. Drop-in activity while supplies last. No registration required.

Teen Study Break Kits, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2 to 9 p.m. Midterm week can sometimes be a stressful time. So come to the Teen Room and pick a Study Break Kits filled with short activities, stress-busting fidgets, and local mental

MORSE INSTITUTE
continued on page 17

Limited space available.

Call us to RSVP.

TUES 1/13
2-4 PM



UPCOMING
EVENTS

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continued from page 8

rate greed and devastation of human lives.

Virtual: How Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II, Wednesday Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Author Elyse Graham will discuss her new book, “Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II”, the true untold story of the academics who became OSS spies, invented modern spycraft, and helped turn the tide of the war to defeat the Nazis.

Virtual: Creating a Modern Homestead with Author Victoria Pruett, Monday, Jan. 26 at 7

p.m. on Zoom. Chat with modern day homesteader, blogger, and author Victoria Pruett about her book “Creating a Modern Homestead: Traditional Skills for Real, Everyday Life.” She will walk viewers through many aspects of homesteading, such as cooking from scratch, food preservation, backyard chickens, gardening, natural pest control, and other topics. Gain some understanding of what it takes to get closer to nature and less dependent on large, commercial corporations.

Virtual: Armchair Tour of the Faroe Islands with Joanne Pearson, Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 6 p.m. The rugged and remote Faroe Islands, an archipelago of 18 islands located in the North Atlantic between Iceland, Norway, and the Hebrides, have a

long and rich history. Settled by Irish monks around 600 AD, colonized by Vikings in the ninth century, and Christianized around 1000, the Faroe Islands are now an autonomous territory of the kingdom of Denmark. Formed by volcanic activity and reshaped by ice age glaciers, mountains rise steeply and sharply from the sea. Landscape photographer Pearson will be our guide through this virtual tour of the Faroe Islands.

Virtual: Agents of Change: the Women Who Transformed the CIA, Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Author Christina Hillsberg will discuss her new bestselling book “Agents of Change: the Women Who Transformed the CIA.” Explore the pioneering

women who changed the insulated world of international espionage, from the barrier-crashing challenges of the 1960s to the present-day reckoning, told through the eyes of a former intelligence operative herself.

ADULT BOOK & FILM CLUBS
Registration is required for all clubs; visit baconfreelibrary.org/clubs-programs/

Mystery Book Club, Thursday, Jan. 8 at 1 p.m. on Zoom. “The Moonstone” by Wilkie Collins.

History Book Club, Thursday, Jan. 8 at 11 a.m. on Zoom. “Into Siberia: George Kennan’s epic journey through the brutal, frozen heart of Russia” by Gregory J. Wallance.

Environmental Book Club, Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. “Arctic Dreams: imagination and desire in a Northern Landscape” by Barry Lopez.

Tuesday Book Club, Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 6:30 p.m. at the library. “The Guest Book” by Sarah Blake.

Nonfiction Book Club, Saturday, Jan. 31 at 10 a.m. on Zoom. “The Monk of Mokha; by Dave Eggers.

Cinephile Mondays, Monday, Jan. 26 at 4 p.m. on Zoom. Check the website for the film of the month and registration details.

For more information about the library programs, including registration information, visit baconfreelibrary.org.

LEGAL NOTICE

Errolle Lynch of 287 Bacon Street, Natick, MA 01760 has been issued a business certificate by the town of Natick, Commonwealth of Massachusetts as doing business as ERROLE JOVAN LYNCH.

BUSINESS CERTIFICATE NUMBER:
2025-0261 issued October 7, 2025

Deadlines set for Election Day March 31

A new year brings a new election cycle. Election day is Tuesday, March 31.

Here are some deadlines and information to keep in mind.

Open offices for the 2026 election include: Select Board (2 seats available each for a 3 year term)

- **School Committee** (2 seats available each for a 3 year term)
- **Planning Board** (1 seat for a 5 year term)
- **Planning Board Associate**

Member (1 seat for a 5 year term)

- **Recreation & Parks Commission** (2 seats available each for a 3 year term)
- **Board of Assessors** (1 seat for a 3 year term)
- **Board of Health** (1 seat for a 3 year term)
- **Housing Authority** (1 seat for a 5 year term)
- **Town Meeting Member, Precincts 1-10** (3 year term with only 10 signatures from your pre-

cinct to get onto the ballot)

Nomination papers are available now at the Town Clerk’s Office. Twenty-signatures from any registered voter in town are required to secure a place on the ballot. Completed papers must be submitted to the Clerk’s Office for certification no later than Jan. 6, 2026.

For more information, visit <https://www.natickma.gov/2299/Annual-Town-Election-3312026>.

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Future Study Supported for Memorial School



The next step has been taken to determine the future of Memorial School. Courtesy photo

The Memorial School building project has been accepted for future study by the Massachusetts School Board Authority.

The board’s unanimous vote allows the Natick public schools to work alongside the MSBA to consider new construction or a renovated and expanded school to replace the existing school through a feasibility study.

“I am grateful for the Town of Natick’s strong relation-

ship of continued support and partnership with the MSBA,” State Rep. David Linsky said. “I look forward to seeing this project continue progressing towards the construction of a new, improved school building in Natick.”

He and Senate President Karen E. Spilka, who represents Natick in the Senate, attended the meeting of the MSBA Board and spoke in favor of the project.

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 potential. 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.

Discover Dean’s 2026 Summer Programs

Pre-College Programs

High school students gain hands-on experience and train with professionals in our week-long programs.

Sports Broadcasting*

7/19–7/24 or 7/26–7/31

Podcasting*

7/26–7/31

Social Media Influencer

7/26–7/31

*College credit available

Summer Arts Institute

Students ages 14–18 train with esteemed performing arts faculty in our professional studios.

Dance Intensive

7/26–8/2

Musical Theatre Intensive

7/26–8/2

It’s Time to Register!

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



All Was Shiny and Bright for Natick Holidays



Festive
Holiday
Lights
in
Natick

Photos by Sean Sullivan





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5—One or Two Bedroom Rentals
Rents 80% AMI: One BR—\$2,313; Two BR—\$2,551
Tenants are responsible for all utilities

Natick Corner—69 East Central Street—Natick

Public Information Meeting Via Zoom.com
6:30 p.m., Mon., January 12, 2026
Meeting ID: 843 0813 0522
Passcode: 965448

Application Deadline
February 9, 2026

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4—\$132,300

Units by lottery.

Language/translation assistance available, at no charge, upon request.

For Info and Application Availability:
Pick Up: Natick Town Hall, Community Development Office, Public Library
Phone: (978) 456-8388 **FAX:** 978-456-8986
TTY/TTD: 711
Email: lotteryinfo@mcousing.com
Online: mcousing.com

Applications must be submitted or postmarked on or before the application deadline. Applications can be returned by mail. The Application includes all submission information.







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Toys for Toys Event Fills Truck, Hearts



Residents filled a fire truck with toys. *Courtesy photo*

The Natick Fire Department reports that the community displayed “outstanding generosity” during its Toys for Tots campaign in December, which they described as a “great success.”

The department hosted a fill a truck event from noon to 4 p.m. Dec. 13 at Sherwood Plaza.

New, unwrapped toy donations were also accepted at the stations.

Toys for Tots is a charity sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve that collects and distributes toys and other gifts to economically disadvantaged children during the holidays.



The department praised the community for its generosity. *Courtesy photo*

Full Slate of Possibilities in January at Council On Aging

Natick Council on Aging has a busy January scheduled. Here is a sampling of events.

Still Life Drawing, Fridays Jan. 2 to Feb. 27, 10 a.m., \$50.

In this beginners class, students will be introduced to life drawing (drawing from observation of real world objects). Emphasis will be placed on realistic perspective, lighting and composition. The class will include instructor demonstrations of all lessons. Lessons will allow for progression towards more complex compositions. List of supplies given during registration.

Acrylic Painting, Fridays, Jan. 2 to Feb. 27, \$65.

Learn about composition, light and shadow, and other key visual concepts while also learning how to mix colors, apply paint to different surfaces, and create texture and depth that will help in creating dynamic and engaging works of art. No experience is necessary. List of supplies given during registration.

Winter Sowing, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 10 a.m., \$15.

Learn how to grow plants through the winter by creating a winter sowing jug using a recycled milk jug, potting soil, and seeds. In this hands-on workshop, all supplies are provided, and participants select one seed packet to use. Receive guidance on setting up your jug in a sunny but protected spot and caring for it throughout the season.

Community Reiki Experience, Mondays, Jan. 5, 12, 26 & Feb. 2, 9 and 23, 11 a.m. \$10.

Relax into Reiki energy. Sit comfortably in a chair to experience increased mindfulness, a strengthened immune system,

and a gentle detoxification process. This class offers a calming, supportive environment to rejuvenate body and mind. Registration required for each class.

Sound of Healing, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 10:15 a.m. Discover the power of sound in a soothing 75-minute session of gentle movement and immersive vibrations. Join Leo Ryan and Nicole Ward for a relaxing practice where participants simply settle in and let sound wash over them. Bring a yoga mat.

Tech Workshop with Natick High’s Robotics Club, Monday, Jan. 5, 3 p.m.

Struggling with a computer or device? Join an in-person technology workshop led by students from the Natick High School Robotics Club. This one-hour session offers simple, helpful guidance for older adults using their own technology. Please bring a device. Space is limited, so pre-registration is required.

Opera and Music Appreciation, Fridays, Jan. 9 to Feb. 27, 10:30 a.m. \$65.

Join award-winning artist Ron Williams as he guides participants through symphonies, jazz, and world music. A familiar face to opera and concert audiences across New England, he made his Boston Lyric Opera debut in 1992 after touring opera houses throughout Europe.

Spanish is in the Air, Thursdays, Jan. 8 to Feb. 26, 11:30 a.m., \$40.

In this beginner Spanish class, no experience is needed and learning is fun and relaxed. By

COUNCIL ON AGING
continued on page 18

NATICK RENTAL 62+ AFFORDABLE HOUSING
8—Studio, One or Two BR Rentals
Rents 80% AMI: Studio—\$2,048; One BR—\$2,294; Two BR—\$2,511
Tenants are responsible for all utilities

Union Place—26 Union Place—Natick

Public Information Meeting Via Zoom.com
6:30pm, Wed., January 14, 2026
Meeting ID: 863 0164 5662
Passcode: 858236
Application Deadline
February 9, 2026



Pet Free. Smoke free. Section 8 and other housing vouchers accepted.

Reasonable Accommodations Available for persons with disabilities. Units distributed by lottery.

For Info and Application Availability:
Pick Up: Natick Town Hall, Community Development Office, Public Library
Phone: (978) 456-8388 **FAX:** 978-456-8986
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Email: lotteryinfo@mcousingsservices.com
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MAX INCOME
80% AMI
1—\$92,650
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3—\$119,100
4—\$132,300

Units by lottery.
Tenants 62 + years old.

Language/translation assistance available, at no charge, upon request.

Applications must be submitted or postmarked on or before the application deadline. Applications can be returned by mail. The Application includes all submission information.



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MORSE INSTITUTE

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health resources! No registration required.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Cookbook Club, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Do you enjoy cooking, sharing ideas, and kitchen tips, while enjoying great food? Sign up for the Cookbook Club! This month's cookbook is Ina Garten: Comfort Food. The cookbook is on display at the Reference Desk and available for check out at Circulation. It is also available as an Ebook using Libby. Pick and prepare a recipe from the featured cookbook and bring it to the library where participants will eat, share, chat, and connect over food in the Lebowitz Meeting Hall. Registration required.

Crochet Bird, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Start a crochet journey with this cute yellow bird project. This class is geared towards beginners, but all are welcome. The class will focus on holding the yarn and crochet hook, and learning the single crochet stitch. All participants will receive a kit with all the supplies needed. Innovation Studio;

registration required.

20s and 30s Book Club, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 7 to 8 p.m.

Join a group of 20- and 30-something book lovers in Natick who will meet once a month to discuss a book that has been decided on and all have read. Every month participants will vote on the next book to read and do guided discussion on the book, as well as have time to mingle and talk about the book in smaller groups. This month's book is "The Nightingale" by Kristin Hannah. Copies will be held for members at the circulation desk to borrow while supplies last. Libby and Hoopla are available for digital copies too. No registration required

Board Game Thursdays, Drop-ins Welcome, Thursday, Jan. 8, 10 a.m. to noon. Calling all board game enthusiasts. Join in on the second Thursday of each month to play favorite games or learn new games and meet new board game buddies in the community. A different featured games each month. Feel free to bring in a favorite game to teach as well. No registration required!

Thoreau Society: Civil Rights

& Civil Disobedience, Thursday, Jan. 8, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thought-provoking exploration of Thoreau's participation in the Underground Railroad, his abolitionist views, night in jail and how his writings have historically inspired civil rights movements around the world. Registration required.

Open Mic Night, Tuesday, Jan. 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Singers, poets, musicians, writers, performance artists, all are welcome! Performers can sign up for a 5 minute/10 minute time slot on a first come first served basis on the second Tuesday of the month. No registration required.

Genealogy Group, Thursday, Jan. 15, 2 to 3 p.m. Learn about library and other online resources to start researching one's family history. Stop by with questions, or if you have started your research, share how it's going. This is a great space to share ideas and strategies to help start and grow a family tree. Registration is required.

Author talk, World War II Massachusetts, Thursday, Jan. 15, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Over 500,000 Massachusetts residents answered the call

to military duty in the Second World War, while the rest of the state's citizens fought the war on the home front. Everyone in the family, including pets, found creative and essential ways to contribute. Author James Parr reveals the stories of these brave and dedicated citizens as they faced wartime challenges. Registration required.

Restoring the Promise: A Discussion About Immigration Policy and the Path Forward, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Join this nonpartisan, community-based discussion series that invites participants to reflect on the impact of current immigration policies, the ways immigration has shaped our nation, and the constitutional questions that affect both non-citizens and U.S. citizens. Grounded in shared ideals including fairness, accountability, and the belief that the nation's greatest strength rests on how every person under its protection is treated, the series creates space for meaningful dialogue. Registration for this event is suggested, but not required.

Morning Book Discussion, Wednesday, Jan. 21, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This month's selec-

tion is "True Biz" by Sara Novic. Copies of the book are available at the Circulation desk, and some titles are available through Hoopla and Libby/Overdrive. New members welcome, no registration required.

Writing for Healing, Thursday, Jan. 22, 7 to 8:30 p.m. This writing workshop explores the ways bodies hold onto trauma and how expressing one's self through writing can help heal. Sharing one's writing with the group is encouraged but not required. Registration is required.

Chat & Chew Book Club, Friday, Jan. 23, noon to 1:30 p.m. Bring a lunch or snack and discuss books you've read recently. There's no assigned reading, so you get to read what you want! Drop in if you have time or register to get event reminders.

Digging into the Archives, Monday, Jan. 26, 2 to 3 p.m. Learn about historic resources in-house and online to start researching the history of Natick. Stop by with questions, or if you have started research, share how it's going. No registration required.

For more information, visit morseinstitute.org





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COUNCIL ON AGING

continued from page 16

the end, feel confident making small talk in Spanish, all in a friendly, supportive environment. For the final class, practice these new skills at a local restaurant.

Ukulele Lessons, Fridays, Jan. 9 to Feb. 27, 10 a.m., \$57.

This is an intermediate class designed for players who have mastered the basics of ukulele playing. In this class, students will enhance their rhythm skills and learn how to play chord progressions. Students need to bring their own instrument. Class is limited to 10 people.

General Precautions and Emergency Preparedness, Wednesday, Jan. 14, 12:30 p.m.

Join Tanya Quigley-Boylan, Fire Inspector for the Natick Fire Department, for a presentation on general safety and emergency preparedness for seniors. This session will cover essential topics such as when and how to call 911, File of Life information packets, the importance of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in the home, fire extinguisher usage, and general

steps to take in various emergency situations. Deputy Chief Chris Hampton and Louie, the therapy dog. This presentation is designed to provide valuable information to help feel more confident and prepared.

Digital Confidence, Wednesday, Jan. 21, 1 p.m.

This program will help you build confidence using a phone, tablet, or other everyday devices. The program covers essential topics such as staying safe online, understanding apps, taking and organizing photos, and using the device to stay connected with others. The presentation is simple, supportive, and designed to help participants feel more in control, more independent, and more comfortable with everyday technology.

Hearing Screening, Thursday, Jan. 29, 9 a.m.

Audiologists from the Learning Center for the Deaf (TLC) will be offering 15-minute hearing screenings. A hearing screening is a quick test to see how well you hear different sounds. Participants will be presented with various tones and will need to respond when they are heard. More testing may be needed if a hearing loss is identified.

A series of evening class is also offered. These include:

Dance Cardio with Shawn, Wednesday, Jan. 7 to Feb. 25, \$70.

Dance to better physical and mental health. Structured dance classes can lead to improvements in areas such as emotional well-being, depression levels, motivation, social cognition and memory. In this 50-minute class, he will teach choreography to songs from all over the world. No class on Feb. 18.

The Joy of Art with Lisa, Wednesday, Jan. 7 to Feb. 25, 4:30 p.m., \$40.

Come relax and escape with Lisa and discover the artist within you. This class will allow participants to create fun and easy projects that even a beginner will enjoy. Every week we will have a new piece of art. Most supplies will be provided, but purchase an acrylic paint set, mixing palette and an apron if you choose.

Natick Council on Aging and Human Services is located at 117 East Central St. For more information, call 508-647-6540 or visit <https://www.natickma.gov/626/Council-on-Aging-Human-Services>

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Sports

NHS Boys Soccer Champs Eager for a Repeat Effort



The Natick High boys soccer team displays the Division 1 championship trophy and banner after it defeated St. John's Prep. Courtesy photo

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

There's good news for Natick High soccer fans who watched the boys squad capture the first State championship in the program's history last fall.

Coach Dan Joseph, who guided the Redhawks to the Division 1 title by beating heavily-favored St. John's Prep, 3-2, sincerely believes that back-to-back championships are a distinct possibility. And, when it comes to assessing his squad's future, Joseph has a knack for being accurate.

Very accurate.

Consider this about the sec-

ond-year coach. He was spot on in pre-season practice last August when he told his 2025 contingent that one of his expectations was to go deeper in the playoffs. That meant advancing to the Final Four and/or the State final. That objective became a reality last November and that reality now includes a state title.

Joseph, a 30-year-old Natick native had a nice first season at the helm. It ended with a 10-4-3 record and a No. 7 power rank. And, when the playoffs got underway, his squad downed Somerville and Boston College High before losing, 1-0, in the Elite Eight to Newton North.

The personable Joseph not only directed the Redhawks into last November's Final Four but Natick's upset of St. John's in the title game enabled the boys to join the championship girls squad to make Natick the state capital of interscholastic soccer.

"If our players have the same attitude and the same buy-in approach, it wouldn't shock me if we're back in the state final," Jo-

seph said. "We'll have new players but our core group is back. We lose 10 seniors but we have 11 returnees who are talented and will provide veteran leadership. We won the championship because of athleticism and high soccer IQs, but most important was our team chemistry and our coachable players."

Natick's players are dynamic and their efforts buried the thought that Joseph would have

to contend with a sophomore jinx in his second year.

Cole Boggis goal with 7:51 left in the second half clinched the outcome. Earlier, Owen Ford and Luke Dougherty scored, enabling the Redhawks to stay even with the Eagles. "Cole took a pass from Luke, went one-on-one

BOYS SOCCER CHAMPS
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Sports

BOYS SOCCER CHAMPS

continued from page 19

with a defender in the box and shot the ball between the goalie's leg for a 3-2 lead," Joseph recounted. "What's interesting is that in all of our playoff games we were either behind or tied."

At halftime, with the score knotted at 1-1, Joseph wisely instructed his players to breathe. "They were a bit worried but all they needed was to relax and take time for a mental reset," he recalled. "I told them that being tied, 1-1, with St. John's is a good place to be."

Natick advanced to the final by beating Leominster, Attleboro, BC High, and Newton South.

"I've received lots of congratulations but I wasn't on the field scoring goals or making saves," Joseph offered. "This championship is a testament to the players. They were so coachable and they implemented our strategy perfectly."

A great example of adapting and implementing strategy oc-

curred after a 6-1 loss to Newton South during the season. Joseph switched from a 4-3-3 formation to a 3-5-2 format.

It worked because the Redhawks proceeded to win 12 of their next 13 matches.

"Our players bought in, adapted nicely and got comfortable with the adjustment," Joseph said. "It's a difficult change because it requires being in specific spots at specific times."

The winning roster includes:

Jack Stephens, Seb Battat; Luke Dougherty; Bodhi Sands; Kal Masse; Drew Cochrane; Luca Tavilla; Ethan Rivera; Nate Kingscote; Devin Irwin; Cole Boggis; Brady Dubeshter; Austin Dubeshter; Jackson McGrath; Drew Liepins; Tate Sheriff; Sam Fishman; Gavin Weddle; Shaun Smith; Owen Ford; Robbie Thorpe Jr.; Nathan Wasielewski.

Varsity Head coach: Daniel Joseph. **Varsity assistant coach:** Josh Arno; **JV Head coach:** Ivor Ford; **Freshman head coach:** Jack Moriarty; **Team managers:** Isa Hierro and Lucia Vargas.



Natick's players set their goals early on and all their objectives were realized.

"They wanted to go deeper, they wanted to yield the fewest goals in the Bay State Conference and they wanted to surpass 10 wins," Joseph offered. "Our 12-5 regular season record topped the 10 victories we had in our first season together. They went deeper for sure and they managed to be in the top three in goals against."

The classy Joseph had high praise for St. John's Prep.

"They were the standard in Division 1," he emphasized. "They're well-coached, very talented and simply a great team."

They were the best team we faced all year."

St. John's finished 19-2-2 and Natick was 17-5.

Before facing the Eagles, the current squad got plenty of encouragement from members of Natick's 1987 team, which was the last boys contingent to play for a State title.

That team lost to Springfield Cathedral in five overtimes. Players from that team emphasized that the 1987 season still bonds them.

"They still talk about it to this day, they still meet up and they're still friends," Boggis said. "This team, I hope, is forever connected. We have such good energy and such tight chemistry. We want to go back-to-back for sure, we know we have the talent. I don't see why we can't."

The champs also got plenty of support from the crowd at Doyle Field in Leominster.

"There were many fans cheering for us," Joseph said. "We had a large fan base. Our community really turned out."

Another plus was the Natick Police and Fire Department's escort back to the high school. "When we left Wayland and got onto Route 27, we were greeted by police and fire personnel who provided a great escort," Joseph smiled. "The ride back was something else."

People stood on sidewalks and at street corners to offer their congratulations."

St. John's coach David Crowell had some interesting thoughts after the match.

"We fell short, I'm not going to say I'm not disappointed," he said. "But I'm really, really proud of our kids. 'They'll bounce back, a lot of tears, a lot of hugs right now, but in a few days, they'll be back to being kids and playing soccer.'"

It's a good bet that Dan Joseph and his players are also thinking about soccer, thinking about the magnificent history they've provided for a school and community that historically has called itself "The Home of Champions."

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Sports

DYNASTY

continued from page 1

The Natick High girls soccer team, which defeated Franklin, 4-2, last fall, captured its third State championship in five years. It isn't odd that the Redhawks have won three trophies but they've all been secured in odd years, 2021, 2023 and 2025. Can a dynasty exist without consecutive crowns? Perhaps, as some would argue, but co-head coach Denise Trubiano takes a common-sense approach on the issue.

"To be labeled a dynasty, I think we'd have to win it all again next season," she said. One or two more in the immediate future would definitely qualify as a dynasty. It's exciting to entertain the thought but I don't like the pressure that puts on the girls."

Trubiano and co-head coach Kari-Ann Daley are acutely aware of the necessary changes that must be made from year to year. Also, factor in the time required to assess key decisions made in pre-season workouts, which last a mere two weeks.

"Each year we lose veteran players to graduation, new candidates try out, and we try to build team chemistry quickly," Trubiano offered. "Our style of play may have to be altered because of new personnel. Building a team goes way beyond pre-season workouts."

Trubiano also emphasizes that interscholastic sports are cyclical. "We go year to year with different players, and vacancies have to be filled," she noted. "There's no guarantee of stability. Situations change."

One example of change was on defense. The coaches had to rebuild 75 percent of their backfield. "Lulu Wislocki-Wasecki was our only returnee," Trubiano said. "Kaitlin Blair, Riley White and Ruthie Assencoa replaced graduates and did a good job. We scored 19 goals in the playoffs but we surrendered only three."

Both coaches credit team chemistry and coachable, unselfish players for the Redhawks return to the winner's circle.

"We figured things out and understood who we were," they said. "The girls were a close-knit group and they didn't care who scored goals. Our striker, Nicole Proia, scored 17 goals and often was triple-teamed. But others stepped up and took the pressure off her."

Daley pinpointed how positive the atmosphere was.

"It's what they do for us and what they do for each other that is just very, very special," she said after the Redhawks title game. "They talked in pre-game huddles about winning it and playing for one another."

The fourth-seeded Redhawks led, 3-2, at halftime, thanks to a pair of goals by Abby McCauley and one by Nicole Proia. Franklin, however, came out strong in the first 20 minutes of the second half but, with 15 minutes left, Proia added an insurance goal that gave Natick some breathing room.

"Franklin kept it close," Trubiano said. "They're an 80-minute team and they're aggressive, physical and relentless. We knew we had to put the ball in the net, take advantage of opportunities and then hang on for dear life."



The Panthers, who were seeded No. 6 in the playoffs, went on a 12-2-1 run after a slow start and finished their season at 15-6-2.

Franklin coach Jodi Klein knew her Panthers lost momentum after Proia's second goal. "Coming out of halftime, I thought we really controlled the first 20 minutes of the second half but that fourth goal really took the wind out of our sails," she said. "Natick deserves credit. They're a great team and a worthy champion."

Trubiano and Daley expressed high praise for their entire team but also cited the core group that led the Redhawks to a final record of 16-3-3.

The captains include McCauley (senior midfielder), Nicole Proia (senior striker) and Lydia Proia (senior midfielder). Also, Emilia Sousa (freshman striker), Kerrington Sherrif (sophomore striker), Marivieve McEleney (senior midfielder), Wislocki-Wasecki (senior defender), Blair (senior defender), White (junior defender), Assencoa (junior defender), Katie McMahon (senior goalie), and Liesl Neidermeyer (senior goalie).

"They were gritty, determined and resilient," the coaches said. "And, they were battle-tested. When they got knocked down,

they got back up."

Trubiano called the three captains "the heart of the team" and recalled what they said during the season. "They said 'we can do this.' That's when everyone shifted their thoughts and aimed for a state championship."

Both of Natick's coaches appreciated the fan support at Doyle Field in Leominster and they also were extremely pleased with all the fans waving when the girls and boys (also state champs) buses reached Route 27 and got a police and fire escort to the high school.

"The support was unbelievable," the coaches said. "At the match, the fans covered several generations. And, when we got to the high school, there were lots of people greeting us there."

Both Trubiano and Daley have been the head coaches of the girls squad for only two years. Their first season (2024) ended in the Final Four, losing by a goal to Bishop Feehan, which lost in the State final to Wellesley and former NHS coach Dave Wainwright. It was Wainwright who led Natick to its championships in 2021 and 2023.

Questions were raised and there was some criticism when Trubiano and Daley's team bowed out in the semifinals and Wainwright's Wellesley squad took the title.

"It's a nice feeling to win a championship on our own," Trubiano said. "But, even though

there were only 15 minutes left and we had a two-goal lead against Franklin, I never felt it was over. Those 15 minutes felt like forever. Kari-Ann and I are thankful and grateful for the way it all ended."

The girls were obviously joyful and thankful, too, after winning their championship several days before Thanksgiving. "It had come to fruition and they were enjoying the moment," Trubiano noted. "I didn't hear any talk about a repeat. They'll deal with that next season when the time is appropriate."

And, there's no doubt that the 'D' word will be heard when September arrives. Discussions and debates about whether the Natick girls soccer team is a dynasty will punctuate the autumn season.

However, there's one concept about the dynasty issue that is undeniable: It's a pleasant problem to have.

The complete winning roster includes: Katie McMahon; Liesl Niedermeyer; Lydia Proia; Kerrington Sherrif; Lulu Wislocki-Wasecki; Mady Waterhouse; Kate Cho; Emma Levey; Ruthie Assencoa; Abby McCauley; Alice O'Connor; Nicole Proia; Emilia Sousa; Maddie Bonner; Riley White; Lily Tocio; Marivieve McEleney; Kaitlyn Blair; Katie Borelli Head coaches Kari-Ann Daley and Denise Trubiano; Student managers Nathan Penn and Jessica Rothschild.

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Real Estate Corner

Selling Your Home Quickly in a Shifting Market: 4 Critical Factors to Consider



John McHugh

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

As a home seller, you want to attract potential buyers and sell your property quickly. However, with the current market shift, it's essential to have a solid strategy in place to stand out from the competition. Here are four critical factors that separate fast sales from dead listings:

Preparation and Condition

In today's market, buyers expect homes to be move-in ready. Some homes feel like they are begging to be bought; some feel like a "project." A well-maintained and staged home can make a significant difference in attracting potential buyers. Consider the following:

- Paint updates
- Decluttering
- Professional staging

These elements are no longer optional; they're essential to showcasing your home's best features.

Pricing Strategy

The current market dynamics have changed. With inventory up by approximately 13% year over year and buyers having more options, pricing your home correctly is crucial. Be aware that:

- Only 27% of homes sell above list price, down from 32 % last year

- Sellers outnumber buyers by roughly 37% or nearly 500,000
- The "price high and negotiate down" strategy is no longer effective
- Agents and buyers know when a property is overpriced. Avoid chasing the market down with reductions.

Active Competition

Buyers shop by comparison. If your home looks unprepared or is overpriced among the competition buyers will pass it up and move on. To avoid price cuts and attract potential buyers, price your home competitively from the start. Overpricing does not motivate ACTION. Avoid running the risk of buyers looking elsewhere, knowing the overpriced home will most likely still be available later and ultimately pass.

Overall Presentation

When buyers walk into your home, they should feel like it's move-in ready, not a project. With an average market time in Massachusetts of under 30 days (40 to 60 days nationally,) first impressions are crucial. Make sure your home presents well, and consider the following:

- Cleanliness
- Organization
- Highlighting your home's best features

A lot goes into the ideal personalized strategy. Focusing on these four critical factors can increase your chances of selling your home quickly and for a good price. Remember, the home that sells fast isn't always the best home, but the one with the best strategy.

Key Takeaways:

- Price your home competitively
- Prepare your home for sale with updates and staging

- Showcase your home's best features
- Be aware of the current market dynamics and adjust your strategy accordingly

By following these tips, you can stay ahead of the competition and sell your home quickly and efficiently.

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 25 years. He can be contacted at JohnSellsNow@Gmail.com and 978.902.5646. Visit his website for home-buying/homeselling tips and to search all properties: JohnMcHughRealEstate.com.

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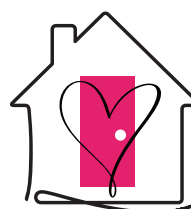
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Real Estate Corner

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12/12/2025	19 Harwood Rd.	\$1,950,000
12/12/2025	8 Hartford St.	\$1,100,000
12/10/2025	25 Sawin St.	\$810,000
12/10/2025	34 N Main St. #2	\$770,000
12/05/2025	11 Stanley St.	\$1,250,000
12/05/2025	64 Park Ave.	\$1,180,000
12/05/2025	8 Pitts St.	\$835,000
12/05/2025	20 Walcott St.	\$1,520,000
12/04/2025	40 Morse St.	\$800,000
12/03/2025	18 Harvest Moon Dr.	\$1,480,000
11/28/2025	40 Nouvelle Way #N749	\$820,000
11/25/2025	16 Davis Brook Dr.	\$1,540,000
11/24/2025	293 Bacon St. #B	\$1,100,000
11/21/2025	24 Silver Hill Ln.	\$415,000
11/20/2025	281 N Main St.	\$1,000,000
11/20/2025	9 Village Hill Ln. #24	\$300,000
11/20/2025	20 Walden Dr. #16	\$453,000
11/20/2025	76 Pleasant St.	\$980,000
11/20/2025	24 Silver Hill Ln.	\$415,000
11/19/2025	37 E Evergreen Rd.	\$925,000
11/18/2025	9 Liberty St.	\$1,220,000
11/17/2025	5 Milk St.	\$1,350,000
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