

Holliston localtownpages

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April 1, 2026

HHS DECA Comes Away from States with 13 Qualifiers for International Competition

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Holliston DECA is continuing to impress, with 13 students (on eight teams) qualifying for the Massachusetts State Career Development Conference (SCDC) last month in Boston qualifying for the DECA International Career Development Conference (ICDC) to take place in Atlanta, GA April 25-28. They include:

- Sal Herbert
- Rishita Mitra (Holliston DECA VP of fundraising)
- Steven Lima (Holliston DECA President)
- Antonia Stevens and Sophia Rickman



Thirteen Holliston's DECA students will head to the DECA International Career Development Conference (ICDC) in Atlanta, April 25-28. Shown, L-R, Xuanye Zhang, Sanika Javali, Steven Lima, Sophia Rickman, Antonia Stevens, Margaux Pelissier and Rishita Mishra.

- Kevin Whynot (Executive officer of mentorship) and Luke Burgett (VP of mentorship)
- Xuanye Zhang (VP of Fundraising) and Sanika Javali (VP of Mentorship)
- Yukti Avala (Executive officer of fundraising) and

DECA

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Holliston Eyes Community Bike Park Near Rail Trail

By JESSICA OMMEN

Holliston could soon add a new outdoor recreation destination — a community bike park designed to bring riders of all ages and abilities together just steps from the town's popular Charles River Rail Trail.

Town officials and local advocates are working to develop the park on a town-owned parcel at 260 Woodland Street, across from Robert Adams Middle School and connected directly to the Rail Trail. The proposal recently received support from the Holliston Select Board and the Community Preservation Committee, a key step toward moving the long-discussed project forward.



If approved and funded, the bike park would include features such as a pump track, skills areas, jump lines and other terrain designed to help riders build bike-handling skills in a safe, purpose-built environment.

"We have an incredible system of sports fields, hiking trails and, of course, our Rail Trail," said Mark Frank, Holliston's Di-

BIKE PARK

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DECA

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Isabella Yang

- Srivalli Kuragayala and Varennya Neelamraju

“The kids in this organization have been unbelievable,” says DECA Advisor Mark Freeman, lauding student officers for “really identifying what needs to get accomplished and how to do it.”

A certified financial planner, Freeman, who was asked to judge a portion of the state competition, says the depth of knowledge the students exhibit rival his own CFP exam.

“My socks were knocked off at the depth of knowledge these kids had,” he says, adding, “these aren’t cakewalk challenges. They’ve taken written exams, they’ve been studying on their own with a knowledge base they’ve developed, and then they have to communicate clearly to some adult sitting



39 Holliston DECA students participated in Massachusetts State Career Development Conference (SCDC) last month.

across from them.”

Xuanye “Josh” Zhang is one of the students who qualified for the DECA ICDC, and he’ll be going for the second time. DECA, he says, has not only helped him develop some business knowledge and skills, “but it has also worked to build other soft skills like communication, teamwork, how to build long-term processes, especially for team decision-making categories, quick thinking on the spot and recognizing pros and cons swiftly. I think regardless of whether or not one person wants to do business-related activities, or build business-related careers in the future, so many of these soft skills at DECA will help,” says Zhang, who says Sanika Javali, “is a great partner,” for their state competitive event, Business Law and Ethics.

The competition was tough. “There were a lot of very well-qualified teams in our category,” says Zhang, “It was tough and a lot of hard work, and good quick thinking on the spot helped us a lot.”

Javali, a junior, explains Zhang and she needed to “take a 100-question test ... with questions on operations, information management, different parts of business management, etc. Then after that, we compete in role plays, essentially given a case study where we have to re-

spond to a problem, usually regarding ethics, with 30 minutes to take the case study, come up with a solution and present to a judge in 15 minutes.”

To prepare, the students researched, took sample tests and conducted a lot of role play, learning to streamline the process for better results.

“We’ve been prepping a lot. Josh has done an amazing job prepping,” says Javali, who joined DECA as a freshman and will be the first member of Holliston DECA to head to the international competition for a third time. “I’m really excited about being able to meet so many new people...and be able to share time with them, enjoy new friends, and hopefully make the top 20,” she says.

Sal Herbert, who joined DECA just this year, says she’s “honored” to qualify for ICDC.

“I didn’t think I was going to be good at DECA,” says the junior, who was surprised to be second in her district at the regional competition, adding, “It’s more business-oriented, and I’m normally a more creative thinker.”

Herbert says DECA has especially helped her hone her problem-solving skills.

“I think it allows you to rely on your knowledge and apply that to situations and how you can come up with a solution to



UniBank’s recent contribution to Holliston DECA is appreciated, as contributions are greatly needed for the team’s travel expenses. L-R Advisor Robert Tivnan, Bo Daley VP, Market Executive, Rishita Mitra VP Fundraising.

them,” she explains, “It makes you feel like you can do a lot more than you thought you could.”

An unexpected bonus for Herbert was a new perspective and respect for her category, Quick Serve Restaurant Management.

“I tried to get into the mental space of my category, the lingo and aspects of the hospitality and tourism industry. There’s a lot of subsets to it, like marginal labor, product extension... I learned a lot about OSHA regulations! It definitely makes me think a lot about how much I take for granted, and how sim-

ply getting a coffee – I know how much goes into that, now.”

Right now, Mr. Freeman explains that not all students who have qualified and have no conflicts are able to attend ICDC, due to financial concerns.

“Going to this next competition is expensive, and not all the kids can afford to go,” he says.

As there is little time left in the year to fundraise, he appreciates any support from the community. If you would like to donate, please reach out to his fellow DECA advisor, Robert Tivnan, at tivnanr@holliston.k12.ma.us.

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BIKE PARK

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rector of Recreation. “The bike park would be a perfect addition. And like the other activities we offer in town, it would serve both kids and adults.”

While the Charles River Rail Trail is a well-used multi-use path shared by walkers, runners, dog walkers and cyclists, the proposed bike park would offer a more specialized experience focused specifically on biking.

Bike parks typically include sculpted terrain such as pump tracks, berms, jumps and flow trails that allow riders to gradually develop their skills.

“Purpose-built bike parks create a controlled environment where beginners can learn and grow, while experienced riders can challenge themselves in a safe, community setting,” said Mike Carvalho, a Holliston resident who has helped lead the project.

Organizers are working with Avid Trails, a planning, design and construction firm that has specialized in bike parks and trail systems for more than a decade. Early design concepts presented at local meetings suggest the park would include features suitable for both beginners and advanced riders.

“There will be a skills loop, like a hybrid walking trail that goes around the circumference of the park that will be good for younger riders and adaptive riders,” said Carvalho. “He said



Shown is the area being considered for a bike park in Holliston, with an Avid Trails concept drawing of its potential. Images used courtesy of Holliston Bike Park



the park would remain family-friendly, making the turns less sloped so families, kids, and adaptive riders are safer.

In addition to the Select Board, both the School Committee and the Parks and Recreation Department have expressed interest in the proposal.

Regional trail advocacy group the New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA) has offered expertise in trail construction and maintenance. Volunteers from the organization could assist with building and upkeep, though the park would ultimately be managed by the town.

“The goal is to create a space that becomes part of the Holliston experience and builds on what already makes our town great, including the Rail Trail,” said Georganna Woods, president of Friends of Holliston Trails.

Friends of Holliston Trails is among the groups helping promote the project and raise funds for its construction.

Much of the funding could come from Community Preservation Act funds as well as state and federal grants. Similar projects in Massachusetts have received support through programs offered by MassDOT and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Local fundraising will likely cover the remaining costs, including a \$10,000 matching grant pledged by Friends of Holliston Trails.

Last October, the town voted to approve funding for conceptual designs of the park, and, in March, the Community Preservation Committee unanimously approved \$650,000 for construction. However, those funds are contingent upon approval at the Holliston’s Annual Town Meeting on May

11. A detailed proposal is also expected to be presented at the meeting.

Supporters of the project say the park could help boost Holliston’s economic development by drawing riders from neighboring communities, while giving residents — especially young

riders — a place to stay active and build skills.

“If all goes well,” Carvalho said, “we hope to open the park in September, just in time for back to school.”

For more information, or to donate: visit www.holliston-bikepark.org.

Ask the Assessor

BY KEVIN RUDDEN, PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR

Question:

“I know that churches are exempt from paying property taxes. Are there any other tax-exempt properties in Holliston?”

Answer:

Yes. Under state law, properties that may qualify for exemption from local property taxes include public and facilities, hospitals, schools, churches and cultural institutions.

Charitable organizations and fraternal societies have to file a form known as “State Tax Form 3ABC” with the Board of Assessors. This elected body

then decides whether or not to grant tax-exempt status to a particular group in the fiscal year that begins on July 1st. In addition to relevant state laws, there are opinions by the state’s Appellate Tax Board and courts that have defined specifically what types of organizations do or do not qualify for tax-exempt status.

In Holliston, we have about 450 separate properties that are tax-exempt. The great majority of these are owned by the Town of Holliston (public buildings, the rail trail and conservation lands) and the U.S. government/U.S. Army Corps

of Engineers (flood plains), and one is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (handicapped access to Lake Winthrop).

Other tax-exempt owners include: churches and synagogues, the New England Water Works Association, the Massachusetts Audubon Society and Upper Charles Conservation, the Mount Hollis Masonic Temple, Habitat for Humanity and several group homes. Two low-cost housing sites – Mission Springs and Cutler Heights – are tax-exempt but make a payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) to the town.

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Vesta Real Estate Group Expands 14th Annual Community Shredding Day to Include Electronics Recycling

Holliston, MA – Building on a cherished community Earth Day tradition, Vesta Real Estate Group is thrilled to announce its 14th Annual Community Shredding Day, taking place on Saturday, April 25th, 2026. The event will be held in the Holliston High School parking lot from 9 a.m. to Noon.

This year, the event is growing! In addition to providing secure document destruction, Vesta Real Estate Group is excited to introduce a brand-new electronics recycling station. This expansion gives residents a comprehensive, one-stop opportunity to do their spring cleaning. While clearing out filing cabinets, community members can now also safely and responsibly dispose of outdated, broken, or unwanted electronics, keeping hazardous e-waste out of local landfills and celebrating Earth Day with even greater impact.

The core shredding services that residents have come to rely on will run as smoothly as ever. Historically, this highly popular event has seen over 200 cars

pass through a fast, highly organized line. Attendees are welcome to bring up to 8 boxes of sensitive personal documents, such as old tax returns, bank statements, and receipts. Because the IRS typically only requires tax records to be held for three years, this is the perfect opportunity to safely dispose of those boxes piling up in your attic or basement.

For maximum security and peace of mind, two large shredding trucks will be on-site, allowing you to watch your personal documents get destroyed right in front of you. Vesta Real Estate volunteers will be ready to direct traffic and can even unpack the car for you, placing your items directly into the shredding barrels. Participants are just asked to take their empty boxes back home with them.

The shredding and recycling services are entirely FREE, but voluntary donations are warmly welcomed to support a local cause. Last year, the community generously raised \$2,000 during the event. This year, Vesta Real Estate Group is proud to



announce that 100% of all donations collected will be sent directly to the Holliston Bike Park, currently being developed off Woodland Street in town. Your contributions will help bring this exciting new outdoor recreational space to life for Holliston residents.

An event of this scale would not be possible without the un-

wavering support of our dedicated local sponsors, many of whom have supported this initiative for multiple years. A massive thank you to Gallo Movers, Affordable Junk Removal, Equity Resources (Ed Moloney), Pino Law Offices (Pat Pino), Affordable Mold and Duct Cleaning (Guy Oliver), and Brown & Brown Insurance (Sandra

Hodgdon) for keeping this event free for the public.

For more information about the 14th Annual Shredding Day and the new electronics recycling guidelines, please visit www.VestaMA.com or contact the Vesta Real Estate Group at Team@VestaMA.com or (774) 233-1926. We look forward to seeing you there!

Metrowest Women's Fund Accepting 2026 Grant Applications through April 8

The Metrowest Women's Fund (MWF) is now accepting 2026 grant applications. The application and grant guide-

lines can be found on our grant guidelines page at <https://www.metrowestwomensfund.com/grants>.

The application is an online form and closes at 5 p.m. EST on April 8, 2026. Please share this funding opportunity with your networks.

The mission of the Metrowest Women's Fund is to identify the needs of women and girls in the Metrowest and raise resources to meet those needs.

The Metrowest Women's Fund accepts grant applications for programs that meet the needs of women and girls from low incomes in Metrowest in the following three impact areas: Educational Opportunity, Girls: Our Next Generation, and Safety from Violence.

You are invited to join us for a virtual Grant Information Session regarding the MWF Grant Process. This is an occasion to present and ask questions about your programs. It is also an opportunity to connect with the Co-Founders / Co-Directors and others engaged in this work.

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Buying and Selling at the Same Time: Strategies for Navigating Today's Market



Lynne Ritucci and Tim Swift

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

Buying and selling a home at the same time can feel like solving a puzzle with several moving pieces. For many homeowners, the goal is clear: sell the current home and move into the next one with as little stress and financial risk as possible. The challenge is coordinating the timing so that one transaction supports the other.

In today's competitive real estate market, this balancing act has become even more important. In many cases, sellers are receiving multiple offers and tend to favor buyers whose purchase is not dependent on the

sale of another home. Understanding this reality early can help homeowners plan a strategy that gives them the strongest position possible.

One traditional approach is making the purchase offer contingent on the sale of your current home. This means the purchase of the new home moves forward only if your existing home goes under agreement. While this provides financial protection for the buyer, it can make the offer less competitive. In today's market, many sellers are reluctant to accept offers with a home sale con-

tingency because it introduces uncertainty and additional timing risks. For that reason, this strategy may only be successful in situations where there is less competition for the property.

Another option is selling your current home first and then purchasing your next one. This approach offers the greatest financial clarity. Once your home is sold, you know exactly how much equity you have available for your next purchase and you eliminate the risk of carrying two mortgages. Some homeowners negotiate a longer closing or a short-term rent-back agreement from the buyer, allowing them to remain in the home for a period of time while they search for and secure their next property.

For those who prefer to buy first, bridge financing may be worth exploring. A bridge loan allows homeowners to access the equity in their current property before it sells, providing funds for a down payment on the new home. This can allow buyers to submit a stronger offer without a home sale contingency. However, bridge loans require careful financial planning and should always be discussed with a lender to understand the costs, timelines, and qualifications involved.

Preparation also plays a major role in making a buy-and-sell transition successful. Having your current home ready for

the market before beginning the home search can provide a significant advantage. When a home is properly prepared, priced strategically, and marketed effectively, it is more likely to attract strong buyer interest quickly. That early momentum can create greater flexibility when coordinating the timing of both transactions. We will often set up a professional staging consultation and then do the profession photo and videography shoot ahead of time so clients are ready to list quickly once they do have an accepted offer on their next home.

While buying and selling at the same time requires thoughtful planning, it is something many homeowners successfully navigate every year. With a clear

strategy, the right professional guidance, and a realistic understanding of today's competitive market, homeowners can move forward with confidence and position themselves for a smooth transition to their next home.

Lynne and Tim are proud Holliston residents and a trusted Real Estate Team, always happy to help with any Real Estate needs. For additional information or questions, please contact Lynne or Tim.

Lynne Ritucci (508) 479-8505
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St. Paul's Choir Performs at St. Mary's Church



The St. Paul's Boys Choir, of the St. Paul's Choir School, under the direction of Brandon Straub, Director of Music, performed a Lenten chorus for

Saint Mary's Church on February 27th, 2026. The program included pieces from Fauré, Saint-Saëns, Vivaldi, and Bach. *Photo by Jane Lebak*

Voices Rise for International Women's Day at Holliston Library



By JESSICA OMMEN

On March 7, the community gathered for an inspiring afternoon of music as the Diverse Holliston Choir and Sing for Your Soup presented a special concert in celebration of International Women's Day. Held at the Holliston Public Library, the performance brought together singers, families, and neighbors to honor the voices, stories, and achieve-



ments of women around the world.

The program featured a diverse selection of music from contemporary choral pieces to folk songs. Several selections during the evening were composed or arranged by women, reflecting the many ways women have shaped musical history and creative expression. The choir also introduced brief reflections between songs, offering context about the composers and the significance of the works being performed. Audience members were especially moved by the choir's performance of pieces that explored themes of resilience, unity, and hope.

The concert drew a strong turnout from the community, with many attendees noting the powerful atmosphere created by the music and the message behind it. "It was incredibly moving," said one audience member.

"You could feel the pride and appreciation for women's voices in every piece."

Under the direction of Sara Stalnaker, the choir delivered a heartfelt performance that showcased both musical excellence and a deep sense of purpose. With its blend of artistry and purpose, the concert served as a meaningful tribute to the voices of women past and present, leaving the community inspired and united in song.

Events like this remind us that music can be more than entertainment—it can be a celebration of history, identity, and shared values. The Diverse Holliston Choir's next performance is scheduled for June 14 at 11 a.m. during the HolliPride celebration.

Anyone interested in joining the choir can reach out to Sara at sarastalnaker@gmail.com for more information.

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Risks Threatening Gen Z's Retirement — and How to Tackle Them



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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While older generations worry about having enough money for retirement, many Gen Z workers aren't even starting to save. Research in 2025 by Edward Jones and Morning Consult shows that nearly half haven't begun setting money aside for their golden years, and only 22% are contributing to a workplace retirement plan.

The culprit is a perfect storm of financial pressures that can make saving for the future feel impossible.

One of the biggest challenges this generation faces is debt. High-interest credit card balances and persistent student loan payments leave many feeling they're just trying to stay afloat, rather than planning decades ahead.

The cost of living doesn't help either. Nearly 60% of Gen Z renters are considered "rent-burdened," spending more than 30% of their pre-tax income on rent, according to a StreetEasy analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. Rising prices driven by inflation and tariffs squeeze budgets further, moving retirement savings down the priority list.

The nature of work has also changed. Gen Z is more likely than previous generations to hold gig jobs, contract positions or other flexible work arrangements that often don't include employer retirement plans, according to Pew Research. Even when plans are available, only 22% partici-

pate. Feeling overwhelmed by jargon, confused by investment choices or focusing only on today's experiences and technology can all delay participation. These early gaps may lead to catch-up needs later in life.

Unfortunately, Gen Z has little faith in the retirement safety net. Only about a third of Gen Z-ers say they believe Social Security will still exist when they retire, according to the latest information from the CATO Institute.

Fortunately, there are steps Gen Z can take now to get their retirement savings off to a good start:

- **Use a workplace retirement account:** For anyone with access to a plan, enroll and contribute at least enough to receive any employer match. It's one of the few forms of "free money" available.
- **Open an IRA:** If no plan is available through work, take charge by opening an individual retirement account (IRA).
- **Simplify investing:** If the choices feel confusing, consider options such as a target date fund, which reduces complexity and helps keep you properly invested without needing expert advice.
- **Use found money:** Direct tax refunds, bonuses or gig income into retirement savings to boost progress without straining the monthly budget.
- **Automate contributions:** Automatic transfers make saving effortless. Review this annually and increase contributions as income grows.
- **Build confidence:** If investing feels overwhelming, look for quick financial education resources from an employer, plan provider or reputable nonprofit organization. Even a little knowledge can make decisions easier.
- **Start small:** Even a few dollars per paycheck builds a savings habit and gets compounding interest working in their favor. Early momentum matters more than starting big.
- **Let compounding do its work:** Small, consistent contributions can grow dramatically over time, especially when they have decades to accumulate.

The path to retirement doesn't require perfection — just progress. Building consistency early helps create choices, security and financial breathing room later in life.

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

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Local Psychologist Offers Creative Alternatives to Screen Time

By LISA GENTES-HUNT

One Franklin man is attempting to combat the constant stress of screens with art. Richard Rollingcross, a longtime Franklin resident and retired psychologist, has been offering children and adults an alternative to screen time with his nonprofit, the Time Away From Screens (TAFS) Foundation.

Rollingcross established the nonprofit in 2024 and is hoping to combat Nature Deficit Disorder in children. His goal is to provide educators and parents tools to ease the anxiety and mental overload that excessive technology time can produce.

One of those tools is a special type of art called diamond art. "It's like a paint by number but with gems," the 71-year-old said.

He discovered the calming effects of working on a diamond art creation by chance, using a machine he owned for his practice that measures brain waves. He wore it while doing a diamond art creation and the results showed that he was "in a state of deep meditation," he recalled.

That inspired him to take the finding and apply it to assist those dealing with mental stress, particularly to counter the uptick in anxiety and depression in children seen throughout the nation since 2020.

"I've gotten very positive feedback from the teachers of the students who are doing the diamond art, saying that it improves their focus, their concentration, and helps with their emotional regulation," said Rollingcross, who used to have a practice in Franklin and worked in the Holliston school district.

The Rhode Island College and Boston University graduate with over 30 years of experience in psychology said he became concerned about excessive screen time use in children.

"This is why I created the TAFS foundation - to educate and inform about the dangers of excessive screen time, while providing specific solutions that increase student Time Away From Screens," he states on his website.

Currently, the foundation works with students in the Judge

Baker Center in Boston, the Franklin Senior Center and one local after-school program, along with Tri County. He is hoping to bring diamond art classes to the library this summer as well, he said.

In all of these facilities, TAFS offers the diamond art class - which allows the participants to create cards, posters or photographs and turn them into these "paint by number" gem-filled masterpieces for free.

"Initially it can be intimidating," the retired psychologist and Rhode Island native said of the art, which requires steady hands and a lot of patience.

He said doing the diamond art produces a plethora of mental health benefits, especially for those with anxiety, depression and focus issues.

"It's a very unique and helpful method," he noted of the diamond art.

One other creative way to get away from screens is labyrinth walking, which Rollingcross explained as a calming outdoor activity.



Labyrinths, like this one Rollingcross created, "offer a single, winding path that encourages reflection and calm focus."

In his backyard in 2008, he created a labyrinth out of stones to allow himself to meditate while walking in nature, he said. "Labyrinths can be an effective tool to help address the effects of excessive screen time and its impact on children," he states on his site.

"Unlike mazes, which present problems to solve, labyrinths offer a single, winding path that encourages reflection and calm focus. This can help children de-

velop the ability to be still with their thoughts - a skill that's increasingly rare in our screen-saturated environment."

With two other volunteers, Rollingcross is trying to spread the word about the TAFS art offering and recruiting new volunteers who enjoy working with children and adults.

For more information on diamond art, labyrinth walking, or volunteering, go to TAFSFoundation.org.

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Your Money, Your Independence

The Snow Has Melted—It’s Time for Financial Spring Cleaning



Glenn Brown, CFP

After a winter spent clearing snow and managing the elements, spring brings a welcomed shift. It’s time to open things up and clear out the old. Just as melting snow reveals what’s been hidden all winter, spring is also a chance to uncover areas of your finances that need attention.

Let’s discuss five areas for review to help ensure things remain organized, efficient, and aligned with your planning.

1. Review Beneficiaries

Work benefits, retirement accounts, and life insurance policies pass according to the beneficiary listed, not your will or trust. Studies show ~30% of Americans have outdated beneficiary designations, which can lead to unintended heirs or tax consequences. Life events such as marriage, divorce, births, or deaths can change your intended beneficiaries. Even with-

out major changes, it is wise to confirm that your accounts reflect your intentions.

2. Revisit Auto, Homeowners, and Umbrella Coverage

Homeowners coverage should reflect current replacement costs, auto liability limits should align with your assets, and umbrella insurance provides an extra layer of liability protection.

Rising property values and auto replacement costs naturally raise premiums, but some of the largest increases come after state-approved rate adjustments. While the state may approve a 3–7% increase, insurers can adjust individual policies within their pricing matrix. Examples of policyholders seeing 30–75% increases occur, even if nothing about their home, auto, coverage, or claims history has changed. Because of auto-renewal, most people simply accept and pay. Without shopping your options, you could end up paying far more than necessary.

3. Check Your Estate Plan

Estate planning is not a one-time task. Trusts, wills, powers of attorney, and healthcare proxies should be reviewed to ensure they reflect your current wishes and family circumstances.

While the federal estate tax exemption is roughly 15 million per individual, Massachusetts has a much lower exemption of 2 million, ranking it 49th in the United States. This makes state-level planning especially important for residents.

Review also allows you to evaluate strategies such as lifetime gifting, trust funding, or charitable giving that may reduce state estate tax exposure. It is also essential to ensure that successor trustees, health care proxies, and other responsible parties have electronic copies of your documents, and that assets intended for a revocable trust are properly titled in the trust’s name. These steps help prevent delays, confusion, and unintended consequences.

4. Consolidate Old Retirement Accounts

Over 50% of Americans have multiple retirement plans still held at prior employers. Leaving accounts scattered can create unnecessary complexity, inconsistent investment strategies, and administrative inefficiencies.

Consolidating into a coordinated structure simplifies management, improves oversight, and makes it easier to rebalance your allocations to align

with your evolving goals and risk tolerance. Fewer accounts also allow for better investment alignment, lower fees, smoother required minimum distribution planning, and a clearer view of your overall progress toward retirement.

5. Declutter Accounts and Organization Systems

Just like a closet or garage, your financial life accumulates items you no longer use. Old bank accounts, unused credit cards, dormant investment accounts, and forgotten subscriptions create unnecessary clutter. Closing or consolidating accounts simplifies your administrative burden. Many find it helpful to consolidate to one primary bank account and one primary credit card, making it easier to reconcile expenses, track spending, and perform a cash flow analysis for the year ahead.

Minor Changes with Meaningful Impact

Financial spring cleaning does not require major changes.

It is about maintaining clarity, ensuring alignment, and reducing unnecessary complexity. Taking time to review these baseline areas strengthens your plan, improves organization, and provides confidence that your finances reflect your current priorities and goals.

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

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

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Artificial Intelligence Is Transforming Eye Care

By ROGER M. KALDAWY, M.D.
MILFORD FRANKLIN EYE CENTER

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming medicine, and ophthalmology is one of the fields experiencing its impact firsthand. For patients, this means eye diseases can be detected earlier, monitored more accurately, and treated more effectively. Although AI may sound futuristic, it is already integrated into clinics and hospitals, enhancing vision care and improving patient outcomes.

The Complexity of the Human Eye

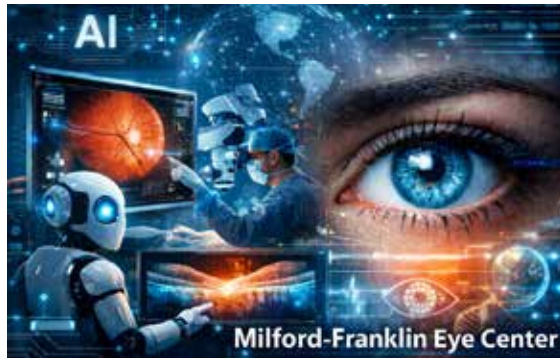
The human eye is an intricate organ. At its core is the retina, a thin tissue layer containing millions of light-sensitive cells that convert light into signals the brain interprets as vision. Because the retina's structures are microscopic and delicate, early disease detection can be challenging. Even experienced ophthalmologists rely on advanced imaging technologies to identify subtle abnormalities.

AI as a Diagnostic Assistant

AI now assists doctors in analyzing these images in ways that were previously impossible. Sophisticated algorithms can review detailed scans of the retina and optic nerve, comparing them with thousands or even millions of other images. By recognizing patterns difficult for the human eye to detect, AI can help specialists identify early signs of disease, guiding faster and more accurate diagnoses. Importantly, AI does not replace physicians; it acts as a powerful assistant, helping ophthalmologists interpret complex data and make better-informed decisions.

Early Detection of Eye Disease

One major benefit of AI in eye care is early detection. Many conditions, including diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration, can damage vision silently be-



fore patients notice symptoms. By the time vision changes are apparent, disease may already be advanced. AI analyzes retinal images to detect subtle abnormalities that might otherwise go unnoticed. In some clinical settings, FDA-approved AI tools automatically screen for diabetic retinopathy, identifying patients who need specialist evaluation.

Accuracy and Consistency in Monitoring

AI also enhances accuracy and consistency. Imaging technologies such as optical coherence tomography (OCT) generate highly detailed three-

dimensional retinal images, enabling specialists to examine microscopic layers of the eye. AI algorithms can measure retinal thickness, detect fluid accumulation, and monitor optic nerve health with remarkable precision. This reduces variability in interpretation and allows doctors

to track even minimal changes over time, improving diagnosis and monitoring of glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, and macular degeneration.

Predicting Disease Progression

Advanced AI tools can also predict disease progression. By analyzing large databases of retinal scans and patient outcomes, these systems estimate which patients are at higher risk of vision-threatening complications. Predictive insights allow physicians to intervene earlier and tailor treatments more effectively, shifting care from reactive to proactive.

Expanding Access to Care

AI is expanding access to eye care as well. Tele-ophthalmology programs in rural or underserved areas enable patients to have retinal images captured locally, which are then analyzed using AI to determine who requires further specialist evaluation. This approach improves efficiency, reduces unnecessary travel, and ensures that serious conditions are not overlooked.

AI in Surgical Planning

AI is influencing surgical care, particularly cataract surgery. Advanced algorithms analyze detailed eye measurements, assisting surgeons in selecting the optimal lens implant for each patient. These tools improve surgical planning and increase the likelihood of excellent postoperative vision. At Milford-Franklin Eye Center, we integrate AI and advanced technology to deliver high-quality care. Our state-of-the-art retinal imaging systems detect disease early and accurately, while multiple OCT scanners provide extraordinary detail of the retina and macula, aiding in the diagnosis and monitoring of

macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease.

Milford-Franklin Eye Center and Technology

Every patient at Milford-Franklin Eye Center benefits from the highest level of our commitment to advanced technology. When it comes to glaucoma treatment, we were the first in the region to adopt the newest Direct SLT laser system, which uses advanced eye-tracking technology to track the eye during treatment and complete the procedure in about 1.2 seconds. Surgical care is equally advanced. Our accredited ambulatory surgery center in Milford was the first in the area to adopt the Unity cataract surgery system and offers laser-assisted cataract surgery. With our ORA system, we can verify lens implant power in real time during surgery to ensure the most precise visual results.

Commitment to you

Milford-Franklin Eye Center outcomes rival those of major Boston hospitals while keeping care close to home. We offer same-day emergency care, Saturday appointments, and a full-service optical shop with an on-site lab. Our QUAD A-accredited surgery center provides the highest level of safety and comfort, with anesthesiologists and IV sedation available for every procedure. Unlike practices performing office-based cataract surgery without anesthesia support, we ensure world-class care in a fully accredited facility.

The AI Revolution and Commitment to the Community

Living in the communities we serve, we remain dedicated to advancing ophthalmology through technology, AI, and patient-centered care. From early detection to precise surgical interventions, artificial intelligence is transforming vision care and helping patients preserve sight, improve quality of life, and access the best care close to home.

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Why Heat Pumps Are a Smarter, Healthier Choice for Your Home



Alexandra McKernan



Ryan McKernan

Why Homeowners Love Heat Pumps Energy Smart

Because heat pumps move heat rather than create it, they use significantly less energy. That means lower utility bills and a more efficient home overall.

Consistent Comfort

No more temperature swings or rooms that never feel quite right. Heat pumps deliver steady, even comfort throughout the house.

Healthier Air

Many heat pump systems offer advanced filtration and humidity control, helping reduce dust, allergens, and excess moisture - great news for families, pets, and anyone with allergies.

Quiet Operation

Today's heat pumps are designed to run smoothly and quietly, so comfort doesn't come at the cost of background noise.

All-in-One Simplicity

Instead of maintaining two major systems, you get one smart solution that handles heating and cooling year-round.

Choosing Wisely Matters

Not all heat pumps, or installers, are created equal. The brand you choose and the quality of the installation have a huge impact on performance, efficiency, and long-term reliability. Working with a knowledgeable, properly trained professional ensures your system is sized, installed, and optimized correctly from day one.

Incentives That Make It Affordable

Thanks to local programs like Mass Save, upgrading to a heat pump is more accessible than ever. These incentives reward homeowners for choosing

energy-efficient solutions that benefit both their homes and the environment.

The Bottom Line

If you're looking for a smarter, healthier, and more efficient way to heat and cool your home, a heat pump is a strong investment. Local experts like Pro Comfort Control can guide you through your options, help you maximize available incentives, and install a system that keeps your home comfortable and on course for years to come.

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HEATING INSIGHTS

For many homeowners, staying comfortable year-round has traditionally meant juggling two systems: a furnace to get through winter and an air conditioner to survive summer. Today, there's a simpler, smarter option that does both - the heat pump.

What Is a Heat Pump?

Traditional heating systems like furnaces and boilers create heat by burning fuel or using electric resistance. Cooling,

meanwhile, requires a separate air conditioner. A heat pump works differently and more efficiently.

Instead of generating heat, a heat pump moves heat. In winter, it pulls warmth from the outdoor air (yes, even when it's cold) and transfers it into your home. In summer, it reverses direction, removing heat from inside and keeping your home cool.

The result? One system that replaces both your furnace and your air conditioner, simplifying comfort and reducing energy use.

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Holliston Public Library April Adult Programs

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Investment and Fraud Advice with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

Thursday, April 2, 2-4 p.m.
Jennifer Brady, an attorney from the Boston regional office of the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) will be here to discuss financial investment advice and fraud detection and prevention. In this presentation you'll learn some basics about investing and saving as well as about fraud scams - which are much more common than you think! Get advice you can trust to protect your hard-earned money. Bring your questions as there will be time for a Q & A!

Morning Book Club

Monday, April 6 11-12:30 p.m.: *We All Live Here* by Jojo Moyes

Chickens & Eggs & Ugali, Oh My! Stories from My Time in Kenya as a Peace Corps Volunteer

Monday, April 6, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Please Register

Curious about what it's like to live in a different country? Learn a new language? Manage cultural differences? Returned Peace Corps volunteer and Hollistonian Laura Keen will share stories, photos, and insights about her life as a high school science teacher living on shores of Lake Victoria for the past two years.

VIRTUAL PROGRAM: "Shut Up and Read" with Author Jeannine A. Cook

Monday, April 6, 7-8 p.m.
We are so excited to have Jeannine A. Cook, self-described "word worker" join us for this virtual event! Jeannine's latest book, *Shut Up and Read: A Memoir* from Harriett's Bookshop goes straight to our reader's hearts.

The author of *It's Me They Follow* chronicles the improbable true story of how she left an abusive past to build a bookshop that survived the Covid pandemic and become an international sensation. *Shut Up & Read* is her story-the story of the little bookseller who could, and of the woman who has been the driving force behind it all. Oh, my gosh, we cannot wait for this conversation! We hope you can join us. Register for the Zoom link.

Terrarium Workshop with Tower Hill

Tuesday, April 7, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Please register

Led by instructors from the New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill, make your very own terrarium and learn how to care for it! Adult program. *This is expected to be a popular program.

LIBRARY

continued on page 15

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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:

Monthly Breakfast, 2nd Tuesday of Month, 9 a.m.: April 14. \$5 Thanks to the Senior Support Foundation

Lions Club Lunches, Seniors & Veterans Welcome, April 19 at Mission Springs, Pasta, meatballs, salad and dessert (menu subject to change). Call The Center to sign up.

Writers Group, First Tuesday of Month, 10 a.m.

Join us for a gathering to practice writing skills and connect with others through written words.

April 7 ~ Poetry month: share a poem you've written or one from a favorite poet.

Book Club, Second Friday of Month, 1:30 p.m.

April 10 ~ *Born A Crime* by Trevor Noah

Call the Holliston Library at

(508) 429-0617 if you need help getting these books.

Assisted Living Group Tour Series

Mary Ann Morse at Heritage in Framingham, Tuesday, April 14, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Transportation is available upon request with our van service 3 days prior to event, limited to 8 participants, call (508) 429-0622.

Senior Safe Program

This fire and fall prevention program provides grab bars and detectors for older adult residents. Thanks to a partnership with the Holliston Fire Department and the Massachusetts Senior SAFE grant, these items are provided and installed at NO COST. Excludes hard-wired detectors.

Spoonfuls Partnership

The Center is now receiving a weekly delivery of fresh produce, prepared meals, dairy and more to support our neighbors in need of nutrition support.

One bag per person. EVERY THURSDAY

Hearing Aid Cleanings, with Hopkinton Audiology Services, Wednesday, April 1, please reg-

ister at (508) 429-0622.

Estate Planning & Wealth Management, with Attorney Jay Marsden, April 14, register at (508) 429-0622

Java with Jay (Zoom), April 30: "Options to pay for a nursing home" Register and receive Zoom link 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 continue Mondays through the first week of April. Call The Center at (508) 429-0622.

Expressive Art Therapy Class, facilitated by Franci Dumar of Clear Guidance, LLC, March 17, 1 p.m. free, sign up through Sherborn Council on Aging at (508) 651-7858, or coa@sherbornma.org. Will take place at The Center in Holliston.

Dementia-Friendly Free Lunch & Learn: The Holliston and Sherborn COAs have part-

nered on this program, funded by Bay State Federal Savings Bank Charitable Foundation. Friday, April 24th Documentary—Beyond Memory Loss: The Changing Science of Alzheimer's Disease

Normal Aging Vs. Memory Loss, Wednesday, April 8th, 1 p.m., Please join Sarah Turcotte DP-NC, CDP, from Bridges by EPOCH for this special presentation, she will give tips and provide insight on recognizing the most common signs of early-onset dementia in the hope that more people can identify the symptoms, and the disease can be diagnosed and treated as early as possible. Please call (508) 429-0622 to sign up.

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. Tuesday, April 28th at 12 p.m. Chicken Marsala, potatoes, vegetables, garden salad, rolls and dessert. \$5 per meal, per person, sign up a week in advance by calling (508) 429-0622.



Assisted Living Group Tour Series: Mary Ann Morse at Heritage in Framingham, April 14, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Transportation available upon request with our van service 3 days prior to the event. Space is limited to 8 participants. Registration required at (508) 429-0622.

Home Safety Workshop, Fall Prevention Tips to Keep You Safe at Home, Thursday, April 30, 1:30 p.m.: Join us for a free, informative workshop packed with smart, simple ways to help you stay safe and confident at home. Learn how to reduce fall risks, make your living space safer, and avoid unnecessary hospital visits. Presented in partnership with Mary Ann Morse Home Care.

27th Annual Charles River Earth Day Cleanup April 24 & 25

Boston, MA – The 27th Annual Charles River Earth Day Cleanup will take place on Friday, April 24, and Saturday, April

25, 2026, and volunteer registration is now open at CharlesRiverCleanup.org! This much-loved event brings together over 3,500

community volunteers each year.

"We are so grateful to the thousands of volunteers who turn out to remove trash from the banks and parks and roadways near the Charles," said Emily Norton, Executive Director of Charles River Watershed Association. "We look forward to the day when this cleanup isn't necessary, but until then, this amazing turnout demonstrates

how much people care about a clean, healthy Charles River.

To get involved, learn more and register for the Earth Day Charles River Cleanup at <https://www.charlesrivercleanup.org>. The Charles River Cleanup is coordinated by the Charles River Conservancy, the Charles River Watershed Association, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, the Esplanade Association, and



the Waltham Land Trust, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Women Take Aim

event at Fin, Fur and Feather Club in Millis

June 20, 2026 from 8:30 - 4:30

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No previous shooting experience is required



Registration is \$150 includes supplies and lunch

Register at finfurandfeather.us

Stony Brook Camera Club April Events

The Stony Brook Camera Club meets in person and/or virtually on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. from September to June. In-person meetings are held at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer, 195 Main Street, Franklin. Our meetings feature speakers, competitions, and discussions of general in-

terest. We also sponsor a number of photography activities and workshops throughout the year. SBCC includes and welcomes photographers of all abilities.

Our program for April:

- April 7: (Zoom) Member competition
- April 14: (Zoom) "Black and

White Photography" with Silvana Della Camera

- April 21: (Zoom) "The Art of Photographing Trees and Woods" with Mark Bowie
- April 28: (Zoom) New Member Showcase

Visit stonybrookcc.com for a calendar of events and member information.

Where Community and Home Come Together

Holliston Home Expo 2026, April 11th, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Holliston HS Fieldhouse

By JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Spring is finally here, and with that comes the Holliston Home Expo 2026, which will take place on Saturday, April 11th, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Holliston High School Field House. The home vendor showcase is the brainchild of the Executive Partner and Realtors® Lynne Ritucci and Timothy Swift, of Realty Executives Boston West, and it's in its second year.

"The event last year was a great success, and we are excited to build on that," says Ritucci, adding, "We had over 500 visitors, and over 35 vendors. It was such a fun community event, and the food trucks were a big hit, as well as a special appearance by Chase from "Paw Patrol," all of whom will be visiting the Expo again this year. One vendor gave out free beach balls, and the middle of the high school gym was alive with many children hitting dozens of beachballs in the air and having a great time."

The Holliston Home Expo gave residents a chance to talk with vendors to get inspiration for home projects, as well as contacts for future projects.

"It wasn't just a place to go to find out about home improvement, but a way to connect with local businesses," says Ritucci. Vendors enjoyed the opportunity to have real conversations with homeowners in a fun atmosphere.

Homeowners will connect with trusted professionals in home maintenance, landscaping, renovation, design and more. Businesses such as licensed home inspectors, solar energy experts, landscapers, builders, mold remediation specialists, mortgage professionals, real estate experts, and more will be gathered in under one roof, where attendees can discover valuable resources, ask questions, and explore solutions for their homes.

Ritucci adds that, for the most part, participating vendors are all small businesses, from a plethora of backgrounds, who were able to meet potential clients, build brand awareness, and generate leads. In order to present a vari-

ety of businesses, the Holliston Home Show will welcome only two to three businesses of the same service area.

"Most (the vendors) last year said, 'Let us know about next year,'" says Ritucci, noting many who had never before participated in a home show felt inspired to get more creative with their booths this year.

Professionals not only connect with customers, but they also connect with potential colleagues and other businesses that complement their offerings. Colin Emmons, who started his mold remediation service, Above All Mold Removal in 2024, was able to connect with a local home inspector looking for a specialty contractor in his field.

"The Holliston Home Expo expanded our network in a meaningful way, and it has helped us grow our business mutually through referrals," says Emmons.

"It's a way to promote 'shop local,'" says Ritucci, who couldn't be more pleased with last year's response. "We love doing this event and are so excited to bring it back for its second year. We're bringing local business in the home sphere together to introduce themselves and their business to visitors, to share ideas, expertise and inspiration while building community," she says, "And the food trucks certainly add to the fun atmosphere!"

The 2026 Holliston Home Expo is a free event, but monetary donations for the Holliston Pantry Shelf will be gratefully accepted at the door. Since fees generated pay for marketing expenses and costs for space, any money left over is also donated to the food pantry. Last year, the event generated a \$700 donation to combat food insecurity in town.

For more information on the 2026 Holliston Home Expo, visit HollistonHomeExpo.com. To sign up or learn vendor details, email Lynne at lynneritucci@gmail.com or Tim Swift at timswiftrealestate@gmail.com. You can also reach Lynne at (508) 479-8505, or Tim at (201) 394-7292.

Washington Street Players to Present *The Curious Savage* in April & May



The Washington Street Players, which recently celebrated its 30th year, will be presenting *The Curious Savage*, by John Patrick and to be directed by Karen Dinehart, on Friday and Saturday nights, 8 p.m., April 17 & 18th, 24th & 25th, and May 1st & 2nd. The cast includes area thespians Bunny Porter (Ethel Savage), David Foster (Dr. Emmett), Savannah White (Miss Wilhelmina), Jeanette Lake Jackson (Mrs. Paddy), Laura Often (Florence), Jake Bonenfant (Jeff), Mikey Dearn (Hannibal), Elise Andelman (Fairy May), Sandra Miller (Lily Belle), Doug Freeman (Samuel Savage), and Randall Divinski (Titus Savage). All performances will be at Holliston Town Hall, 703 Washington Street, Holliston.

The Curious Savage is the story of an elderly widow named Ethel Savage, whose husband

has left her ten million dollars which she intends to give away to people who wish to pursue their "foolish dreams." Her stepchildren strongly object to this and have her committed to a sanatorium called "The Cloisters." It is among the gentle residents there, that she finds

her true family. *The Curious Savage* is a warm comedy that contrasts the kindness and loyalty of the psychiatric patients with the greed and hostility of so-called "normal people."

For more information, visit the WSP website, <https://www.washingtonstreetplayers.org/>

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HDAAC Brings Youth to DC!

The Holliston Drug and Alcohol Awareness Coalition Youth Action Team continues to demonstrate that youth voice is not only powerful but essential.

With 42 active members at Holliston High School, the Youth Action Team is a student-led group dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing substance misuse, and strengthening community wellness. Through peer education, advocacy, leadership development, and community engagement, members work to change social norms and reduce stigma surrounding drug and alcohol use. Over the years, students have organized large school initiatives, engaged hundreds of peers in prevention programming, and advocated at the Massachusetts State House.

This winter, nine members of the Youth Action Team brought their leadership to the national level by traveling to Washington, D.C. to attend the CADCA National Leadership Forum. The annual National Leadership Forum is a four-day conference that brings together thousands of coalition members, prevention professionals, and youth leaders from across the country and beyond. Both adult and youth participants have the opportunity to engage in workshops, plenary sessions, and advocacy events alongside like-minded prevention leaders from all over.

For the nine Holliston students selected to attend, the experience

was both inspiring and transformative. Throughout the conference, students attended sessions on public speaking, communication skills, collaboration, leadership, mental health, and youth advocacy. Many students identified the workshops and youth sessions as the most impactful part of the experience.

One student shared, "What I found most interesting was the workshops and sessions. How important the youth voice is when it comes to advocating for prevention." Another student reflected, "The sessions were both the most helpful and interesting, as they taught many helpful skills to aid in prevention."

Within these workshops, public speaking emerged as a recurring theme. One student described a communication session as "the most helpful because it gave me very helpful tips on how to communicate with others effectively." Another shared, "I got the chance to practice and improve my public speaking." For many, the conference reinforced a powerful message about advocacy. As one student put it, "The youth are the future, and it does matter what we decide to do with our voices."

Beyond the formal sessions, students found tremendous value in connecting with peers from across the country. One participant explained, "I really enjoyed being able to collaborate with other peers from different towns

and states. It was great being able to see and hear their different experiences." Another student wrote, "One thing I learned from this experience was how powerful it can be when people who advocate for similar issues work together."

A defining moment of the trip was Capitol Hill Day. The Holliston students met with staff from Senator Elizabeth Warren's office and with Representative Jim McGovern to discuss the impact of substance misuse and mental health challenges in their community. One student shared, "Being able to speak at these meetings and hear my peers share their personal stories was unforgettable." Another described the meetings as "a highlight," adding that the group "was able to get a firsthand look into who they were and what they could accomplish."

Advocating at the national level deepened students' understanding of how policy and prevention intersect and how their voices can influence change beyond their hometown. While the educational programming was impactful, students also emphasized the importance of the shared experience as a team and seeing how this work extends beyond Holliston and Massachusetts.

One student reflected, "In my opinion, the overall best part of this trip was being able to explore the city, especially the museums, and spend so much time with the other members of this group."



The trip strengthened relationships among team members and deepened their sense of purpose as a coalition. One student shared, "I learned how to collaborate better, even with people I do not know." Another wrote, "I truly learned the most from my fellow peers as we experienced this trip together."

We are incredibly proud of our students for the effort they put into this trip. It was an incredible opportunity to watch their voices shine in our nation's capital. Hearing students share reflections such as, "I had a wonderful experience at CADCA, and I am so grateful that I was a part of the trip," reinforces how meaningful this opportunity was

for them.

The nine students who returned to Holliston are now equipped not only with new knowledge and skills, but with renewed confidence in the power of youth leadership. They bring back strengthened public speaking abilities, improved communication strategies, a deeper understanding of mental health and prevention efforts, and a broader national perspective on coalition work.

Most importantly, they return with a reinforced belief that their voices matter in their school, in their community, in their state, and even on Capitol Hill.

As one student said simply, "The youth are the future."

Diverse Holliston to Hold Mythbuster at Walpole COA

Have you missed one of our Diverse Holliston Mythbuster events? Well, you are in luck! The next installment will occur April 10, 2026, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Walpole Council on Aging, 60 South St., Walpole.

LGBTQ+-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



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!

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Boy Scout Troop 14 Holds Annual Pancake Breakfast



Photos by Jane Lebak

BY JANE LEBAK

On Sunday, February 8th, rather than preparing for a Superbowl Party, the Scouting BSA Troop 14 started making pancakes.

Scouting BSA Troop 14 hosts

this pancake breakfast at Saint Mary's Church every year in conjunction with National Scout Sunday. In addition to hosting the breakfast, the Scouts are honored at the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass.

For \$5, guests could partake of pancakes, sausages, juice, and coffee, with table service by the scouts. Funds raised by the breakfast are earmarked to support Boy Scout Troop 14 in their

activities, including camping, hiking, and community service.

Troop 14 is in its 60th year, established in 1965, and this year, the troop has 44 scouts.

Anyone interested in joining

Troop 14 should contact Scoutmaster Michael Hebert at Troop14Holliston@yahoo.com or show up to a meeting on Monday evenings from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Saint Mary's in the Lower Hall.

LIBRARY

continued from page 11

Pay careful attention to your confirmation email which will confirm your approval or waitlist status.*

Creative Writing Group

Wednesday, April 8, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m.

VIRTUAL PROGRAM: In Conversation with Romance Author & Baseball Enthusiast, KD Casey

Thursday, April 9, 7-8 p.m.

Just in time for Spring Training, we are thrilled to be chatting with MM romance author, KD Casey. Her most recent book, "Breakout Year", features some of our favorite tropes - fake relationships and second chance ro-

mance. We'll find out why KD is such a huge baseball fan, how she decided to feature this in her writing (although, she also has a paranormal short story which is adorable!), and all of the reasons why we should pick up her books (there are so many!). We hope you can join us for a fun and fascinating conversation! Register for the Zoom link.

History Book Club

Monday, April 13, 10:30 a.m.: *Paul Revere's Ride* by David Hackett Fischer

Mystery Book Club

Tuesday, April 14 11 a.m.: *Hand in Glove* by Ngaio Marsh

Tuesday Matinee

Tuesday, April 21 12:30-2 p.m., *Conclave*

This month's showing is *Conclave*. Cardinal Lawrence has one

of the world's most secretive and ancient events, participating in the selection of a new pope. Surrounded by powerful religious leaders in the halls of the Vatican, he soon uncovers a trail of deep secrets that could shake the very foundation of the Roman Catholic Church. Running time 2 hours. Rated PG (2024)

VIRTUAL PROGRAM: Ren Faire Romance with Authors Jen DeLuca, Jamie Pacton, and Sam Parks

Tuesday, April 28, 2-3 p.m.

We're so thrilled that Jen DeLuca, Jamie Pacton, and Sam Parks will be joining us. If you know of their books, you know that their Ren Faire settings for luscious romance stories are to die for (not on by the sword, just metaphorically. We hope you can

join us for this virtual discussion about Jen, Jamie, and Sam's characters, the ideal place at a Ren Faire to fall in love, and the vagaries of choosing between grog and mead. Then, after this program, we hope you will jump on your valiant steed and join us, in person, for our Ren Faire! Where you, too, may juggle your way into your dream date's heart. Register for the Zoom link. Programs are largely supported by the Friends of the Holliston Library. We are grateful for your donations to help support these programs. To donate or become a member, please visit the Holliston Library website: www.hollistonlibrary.org

Early May Events:

Morning Book Club

Monday, May 4, 11-12:30 p.m.: *All Creatures Great and*

Small by James Herriott

She Can Do It: Real/Reel Women & Midcentury Mysteries

Monday, May 4, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Join mystery and suspense authors Janet Raye Stevens and Sharon Healy-Yang for an engaging, multi-media event revealing some intriguing inspirations for creating a mystery set circa WWII. Using film clips, anecdotes, and excerpts from their books, Janet and Sharon talk about 1940s women in real as well as 'reel' life and how these smart, stylish, and wise-cracking gals in books and film inspired their own 1940s-set mysteries.

This lively blend of mysteries, movies, and lots of banter is one you won't want to miss!



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CALENDAR

April 2

Investment and Fraud Advice with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 2-4 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston.

Jennifer Brady, an attorney from the Boston regional office of the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

April 6

Morning Book Club, 11 a.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, *We All Live Here* by Jojo Moyes.

Chickens & Eggs & Ugali, Oh My! Stories from My Time in Kenya as a Peace Corps Volunteer, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, Please Register.

"Shut Up and Read" with Author Jeannine A. Cook, 7-8 p.m., VIRTUAL PROGRAM through Holliston Public Library. Register for Zoom link.

April 7

Terrarium Workshop with Tower Hill, 5:30-7:30 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington Street, Holliston, Please Register.

Stony Brook Camera Club meeting, 7:30 p.m., Zoom, Member competition, visit stonybrookcc.com for more info.

April 8

Creative Writing Group, 6:30-7:45 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston.

April 9

In Conversation with Romance Author & Baseball Enthusiast, KD Casey, 7-8 p.m., VIRTUAL PROGRAM through Holliston Public Library, Please Register.

April 10

Diverse Holliston Mythbuster event, 1-2:30 p.m., Walpole COA, 60 South St., Walpole, Dr. Barbara Fritts will guide you through LGBTQ+ issues and terminology and explore truth behind LGBTQ myths.

April 11

Holliston Home Expo, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., Holliston HS Fieldhouse, 370 Hollis St., Holliston, free for public, but donations accepted for Holliston

Pantry Shelf. For vendor details, email Lynne at lynneritucci@gmail.com or Tim Swift at timswiftrealestate@gmail.com . www.hollistonhomeexpo.com

April 13

History Book Club, 10:30 a.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington Street, Holliston, *Paul Revere's Ride*, by David Hackett Fischer.

April 14

Mystery Book Club, 11 a.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, *Hand in Glove* by Ngaio Marsh.

Stony Brook Camera Club meeting, 7:30 p.m., Zoom, "Black and White Photography" with Silvana Della Camera, visit stonybrookcc.com for more info.

April 17

Washington Street Players present *The Curious Savage*, 8 p.m., Holliston Town Hall, 703 Washington Street, Holliston.

April 18

Washington Street Players present *The Curious Savage*, 8 p.m., Holliston Town Hall, 703

Washington Street, Holliston.

April 21

Tuesday Matinee, 12:30-2 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, Conclave

Stony Brook Camera Club meeting, 7:30 p.m., Zoom, "The Art of Photographing Trees and Woods" with Mark Bowie, visit stonybrookcc.com for more info.

April 24

Washington Street Players present *The Curious Savage*, 8 p.m., Holliston Town Hall, 703 Washington Street, Holliston.

April 25

Washington Street Players present *The Curious Savage*, 8 p.m., Holliston Town Hall, 703 Washington Street, Holliston.

Norfolk Public Library 2026 Annual Book Sale, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Freeman-Kennedy School, 70 Boardman St., Norfolk, over 30,000 books in good to excellent condition, 50 cents to \$3.

Electronics Recycling Day, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., First Congregational Church of Milford, 4 Congress St., Milford, items

\$5-\$45 to recycle, no charge for cell phones, which will go to charity, hard drives wiped no additional charge.

April 28

Ren Faire Romance with Authors Jen DeLuca, Jamie Pacton, and Sam Parks, 2-3 p.m., VIRTUAL PROGRAM through Holliston Public Library, Please Register.

Stony Brook Camera Club meeting, 7:30 p.m., Zoom, New Member Showcase, visit stonybrookcc.com for more information.

May 1

Washington Street Players present *The Curious Savage*, 8 p.m., Holliston Town Hall, 703 Washington Street, Holliston.

May 2

Charles River Chorale Spring Concert, 5 p.m., Medway High School, 88 Summer Street, Medway, <https://our.show/crcspringconcert>

Washington Street Players present *The Curious Savage*, 8 p.m., Holliston Town Hall, 703 Washington Street, Holliston.



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Sports

From Nothing to Something Big

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Ex-Holliston athlete Eli Lammi had tried a lot of different sports growing up all the way into middle school, but nothing seemed to be what he was looking for or made him happy while participating. Then, under the urging of his father Eric, who had participated in the Decathlon, he decided to give track and field a shot.

“My father wanted me outside and doing something outside to keep me active,” Lammi said. “He got me into track and field as he enjoyed it. I decided on throwing the discus, because I was not a runner, and I felt that I was built for the event.”

With COVID around during his sophomore year, the Holliston would-be athlete couldn't really do much in terms of athletics with all the restrictions. During that time, he did have a growth spurt and found himself now a tall skinny kid who was going to attempt to throw the discus for Holliston during his junior year.

In the beginning, he was an ok thrower, nothing special. However, with only two seasons of the event under his belt, he soon found himself as the Panther's number two discus thrower.

“I guess you could say over those two years I did pretty well,” he said. “There was nothing remarkable about my throws, although I was able to get to the State Meet.”

Lammi would begin hurling the discus 100 feet when he first started and by the end of his senior campaign he was pushing 130 feet. Following high school, he found himself not to be a good recruit for colleges, but with the help of his father things were about to change for the incoming University of Vermont (UVM) freshman.

Lammi was going to be attending UVM to major in Wildlife Biology and knew that his mere 130-foot throw was not what the Catamount Coaches were looking for. They wanted someone who could throw the discus at least 150 feet.

“I was attending college for academics, but if I could somehow weasel my way onto the team that would be great,” he

said. “My father had a lot of connections and contacted the Coach, and soon after I started emailing him, eventually I was allowed to walk-on and tryout.”

The first-year Catamount still believed that he was too skinny at 6'4" and 185 pounds and his body frame was definitely your typical discus build. Not only did he feel his body was not right for the sport on the collegiate level, Lammi felt that he was far behind the athletes who were already on the team and had been throwing the discus far longer. Lammi was very unsure of himself and the uncertain of actually making the University's track and field team.

In the fall of his freshman season at UVM, the ex-Holliston athlete got a chance to compete in a mock meet, where he threw the discus 108.2 feet; a toss that he said was not very good for an incoming freshman discus thrower looking to make the team.

The freshman somehow made the team, but was he there because of his ability or did his father have something to do with it?

“I've thought about that a lot,” he said. “Eventually I came to the conclusion that I believe I made the team because of my interview with Coach Belfield (one of the biggest reasons I love the sport).”

Although believing he was on the team because of how he interacted and answered questions put forth by the UVM Coach, Lammi wanted to go out and do something to prove he belonged there. Unfortunately, it was not going to happen during his first official collegiate meet.

“I threw 108-feet – that was really bad for a Division 1 College thrower,” Lammi said. “In fact, it was one of the lowest throws in the meet and pretty much at the bottom of the ranks. It was really tough on me, and I thought about it and possibly leaving the team.”

Lammi was throwing 120-feet by the end of his first season but was still of the 150-160 foot throws the Coaches were actually looking for. By the end of his sophomore year, he was close to 140-feet and then he made a big jump in the beginning of his junior campaign when he tossed



Eli Lammi, at first, wasn't even sure he was really good enough to be throwing discus at the collegiate level. Now, the Holliston native is poised to break the University of Vermont record.

the discus 154-feet.

“I had done a ton of work on my throwing, and although I had not really been that good, I honestly believe the big change was mentally,” Lammi said. “I had been super tense and was constantly sweating when I stepped into the circle, something which is not good for a discus thrower. My teammates helped me through that.”

When his junior season came to an end, Lammi had secured his position on the team by finishing third at the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America (IC4A) Championships. He would then go on to finish sixth at the New England Championships and was ranked fifth in the America East Conference. Things were looking up, and being able to place so high was a big deal for the Holliston native.

“Originally I was feeling Imposter Syndrome,” he said. “I really sucked all the way from high school into college and should have just given up.”

Having not given up now puts Lammi on the brink of UVM history. Currently his best throw is 161.6 feet and the University's record, which was set in 2001, sits at 163.2 feet a mere 1.6 feet higher than Lammi's best throw.

“It's pretty shocking, if I was talking to my junior self (when he first started to throw the discus) that six years later I'd be one of the top throwers in New England and on the verge of breaking UVM's school record I'd say you're crazy,” he said. “I

am extremely proud of myself and what I have been able to accomplish. It just shows that I put in a lot of work and hours; it took six years but I'm doing it.”

As he gets ready to participate in his final season with the Catamounts track and field team, Lammi wants nothing more than to be able to throw the discus 164 feet, while eclipsing the 2001 distance record and engrave his name into the University of Vermont's record books. Following that, he would like to be able to

reach the Division 1 East first round and become a top competitor and move onto the Division 1 Championships. Although reaching the Division 1 Championships are a lofty goal, he still hopes he can make a charge at it.

Following college, the senior noted that there is always a possibility of aspirations of making the Olympic Trials. The way things have gone for the Holliston discus thrower over the last six years – nothing is out of the possibility.

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03/05/26	7 Lone Oak Circle	\$970,000
03/04/26	358 Underwood St.	\$575,000
03/04/26	140 Concord St.	\$573,000
03/02/26	11 Wingate Rd.	\$830,000
02/26/26	152 Turner Rd., Unit 13	\$229,900
02/20/26	151 Mohawk Path	\$1,510,000
02/17/26	75 Ridge Road	\$546,000
02/09/26	156 Mitchell Road	\$1,110,000
02/06/26	625 Norfolk St.	\$642,500
02/06/26	152 Turner Rd., Unit 43	\$225,000
01/29/26	1037 Washington St.	\$975,000
01/21/26	39 Taylor Road	\$301,000
01/14/26	150 Westfield Drive	\$687,000
01/12/26	134 Bogastow Brook Rd.	\$835,000
01/12/26	266 Willowgate Rise	\$1,040,000

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A Prize A Day for the Month of May Calendar Raffle!

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors 'A Prize a Day for the Month of May' calendar raffle is back with all proceeds going to the HNN Community Grant Fund which gives back to our community. Every day of our 'Month of May' calendar is filled with great give-aways from businesses in Holliston and the surrounding communities. Every calendar will have a unique number assigned to it. Then each day in May, a calendar number will be selected and whoever has that number will win that day's prize.

Want to be one of the lucky winners? Purchase one or more calendars at hollistonnewcomers.org (\$15 for 1 calendar with discounted prices for multiples) and wait to see if your name is picked. You can buy as many calendars as you want and you can win twice on each calendar

- how fun is that!

HNN would like to thank the local businesses that have donated helping to make this fundraiser a success including A Soul Spirit Studio, b.LUXE Hair & Makeup Studio, Candy Cottage, Cheryl Cohen Mosaics, Cozy Crumb Kitchen, EZ Way Car Wash, Fiske's General Store, Goldfish Swim School Milford, Holliston Hardware, Lyric Photos, Muffin House Cafe, Noun Photo Studio, Red Heat Tavern, Roche Brothers, Southwick's Zoo, Thai Pepper, The Wine House, T.C. Scoops, Twist Bakery and Yama Fuji.

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors is a not for profit all volunteer organization that coordinates charitable, civic, and recreational events and activities in Holliston. Through the years, the HNN Community Grant Fund



has awarded grants to Holliston Parks & Recreation free summer concert series, Holliston Public Library Museum Passes, Holliston Police & Fire Departments, Holliston Community Farm, amongst others.

Learn more and join us at hollistonnewcomers.org - Building Friendships, Building Community.

Holliston PD Sgt. Ryan Receives 5th Annual Norfolk County CIT-TTAC, DMH, and NAMI Award

Last month, the Holliston Police Department posted a congratulations to Sergeant Ryan Parent on being selected the department's recipient of the 5th Annual Norfolk County CIT-TTAC, DMH, and NAMI Award!

This award honors officers who go above and beyond in supporting individuals experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis and serving vulnerable members of our community. Sgt. Parent exemplifies the balance between protecting our community and connecting those in need with the right care and resources.

The Facebook post continued, "We are proud to have officers like Sgt. Parent on our team. Thank you for your compassion, dedication, and commitment to making a difference every day."

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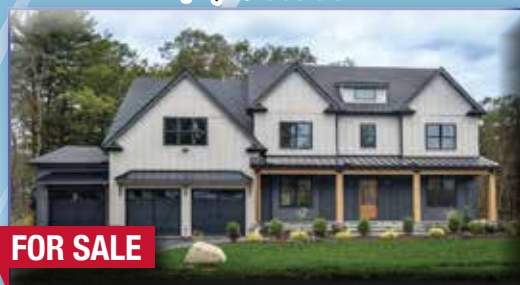
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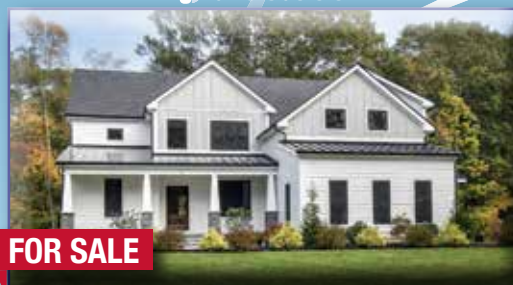
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KATIE MCBRIDE

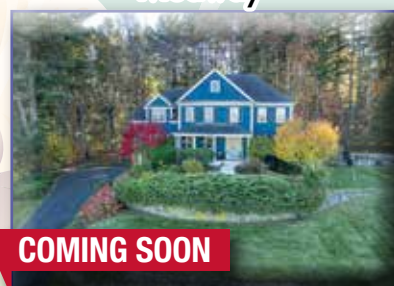
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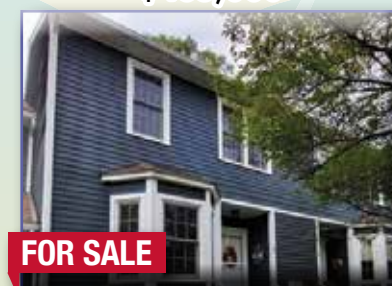
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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

The Secret to Healthier Hair Might Be... Your Scalp

When we talk about hair care, the conversation usually revolves around the hair itself. Shine. Volume. Color. The perfect cut.

But there's a quiet truth that hair professionals have always known and science continues to confirm: the real starting point for healthy hair is not the hair at all.

It's the scalp.

The scalp is skin. The same living, breathing organ that covers your face and body continues up over your head, creating the environment where every single hair strand begins. Yet most of us treat it very differently from the rest of our skin.

We exfoliate our faces. We moisturize our skin. We protect it from buildup and congestion.

Our scalp? It usually gets shampoo and conditioner... and not much else.

Dermatologists often describe the scalp as one of the most active skin environments on the body. It contains tens of thousands of hair follicles and a high concentration of oil glands that work continuously to protect both the scalp and the hair shaft.

Like the rest of our skin, the scalp sheds cells, produces oil, responds to its environment, and benefits from proper care.

When the scalp becomes congested with excess oil, product buildup, dry shampoo, or environmental debris, the follicles can become weighed down. Hair may appear flat, dull, or harder to style. Sometimes the scalp itself may feel dry, tight, or irritated.

Think of the scalp like the soil in a garden. When the soil is clean, oxygenated, and balanced, plants grow beautifully. When it becomes compacted or congested, growth struggles.

Hair is no different.

Why Scalp Care Is Trending

That realization has sparked a quiet movement in the beauty world: the rise of scalp care.

Across the country, salons are beginning to approach the scalp the same way skincare professionals approach the face.

Gentle exfoliation, cleansing, circulation stimulation, and hydration are becoming part of modern hair wellness.

The idea is simple. When the scalp is healthy, hair behaves better.

It feels lighter. It moves more naturally. It often appears fuller at the root because buildup is no longer weighing it down.

Many people are surprised to learn that scalp care can also influence how hair holds style or how long a blowout lasts. When follicles are clear and the scalp is balanced, hair tends to respond more predictably to styling.

A Closer Look at the Scalp Spa

At b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio in Medway, this philosophy has inspired a growing interest in scalp-focused treatments.

Our Scalp Spa Experience begins with a look at the condition of the scalp itself. Just as an aesthetician studies skin before recommending a facial, stylists evaluate what the scalp needs at that moment. Some clients benefit from gentle exfoliation, while others need hydration or circulation-focused massage.

The treatment includes a detoxifying scalp scrub, nourishing oil application, massage, cleansing, and a professional blowout. It's designed to address a variety of concerns ranging from dry, itchy, or oily scalp to clogged follicles, irritation, and hair that feels weighed down.

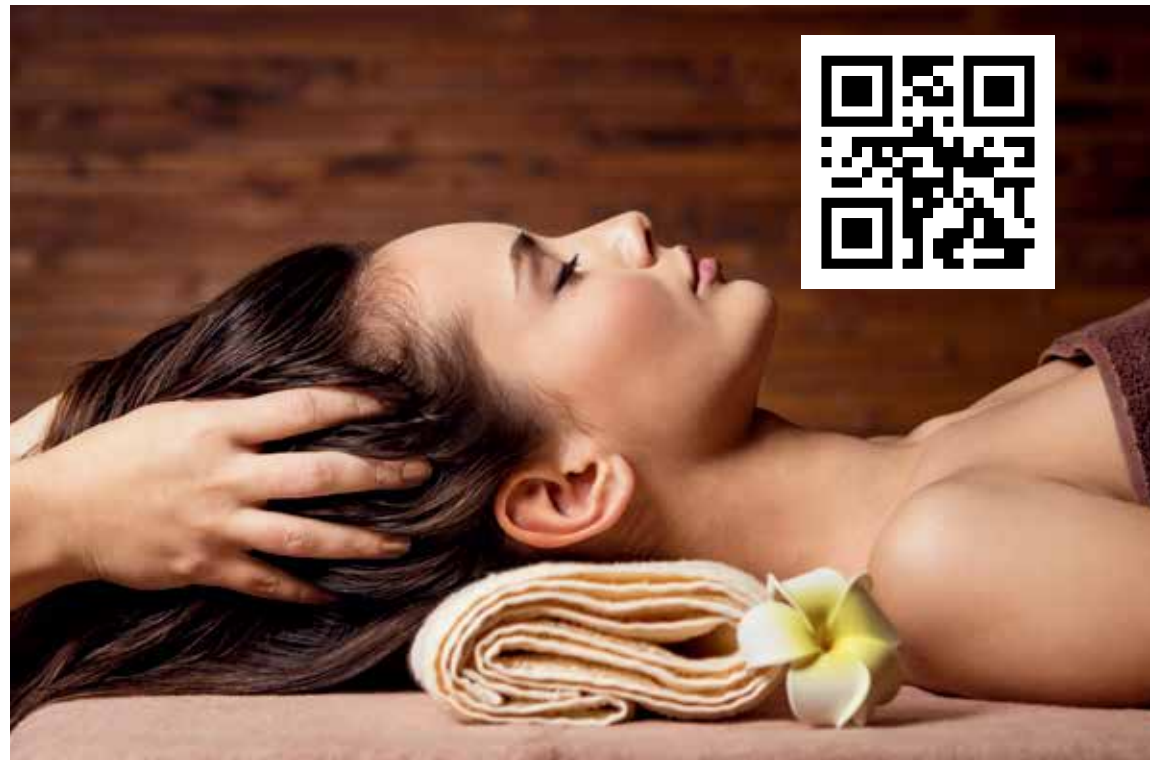
The goal is simple: restore balance.

Clients often describe the treatment as deeply relaxing, but the benefits go beyond relaxation. When the scalp is refreshed and clarified, the hair itself can feel noticeably different.

Lighter. Softer. More voluminous at the root.

The service concludes with a professional blow-dry, allowing clients to see just how well hair behaves when the scalp environment is reset.

What's interesting is that most people discover scalp care not because they were searching for it, but because they were try-



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ing to solve a hair problem. Hair that won't hold volume. Hair that feels heavy no matter what products are used. Hair that just doesn't seem to cooperate the way it once did.

Often, the answer isn't another styling product.

It's simply caring for the skin beneath it.

As more people begin to think of scalp health as part of overall hair wellness, this once overlooked area is finally getting the attention it deserves.

To help maintain results at home, b.LUXE also carries

luxury scalp-care products from Oribe and Kerasilk. These professional formulas are designed to gently exfoliate buildup, soothe irritation, and support the scalp's natural balance. When the scalp is treated with the same care as skin, the result is hair that feels lighter, healthier, and noticeably more vibrant.

Those curious about scalp health or wondering whether buildup, dryness, or irritation may be affecting their hair can speak with a stylist during a regular visit or consultation. Many people are often surprised to

learn how much the condition of the scalp can influence the way their hair looks and behaves.

After all, healthy hair doesn't begin at the ends.

It begins at the roots.

b.LUXE Hair and Makeup Studio, Medway

Visit us at bLUXE.com or call (508) 321-1624

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