

Riders get 'All Aboard' special journey on rail trail

By Sean Sullivan

On a Saturday in the middle of last month, riders assembled in the gathering heat near downtown Natick.

At the south end of the town's Cochituate Rail Trail stretch, cyclists suited up, donning helmets and settling into their mostly three-wheeled conveyances.

"All Aboard" is the name given to the cycling event, which is geared toward riders working through mobility issues and other challenges. The program, which features five Saturday rides from April to September, was brought to the CRT by the town of Natick and other local sponsors.

"We bring our fleet of adap-



All Out Adventures supports the ride. Photo by Sean Sullivan

tive cycles out there," said Karen Foster Cannon. She is executive director of All Out Adventures, whose tagline is "outdoor

recreation for people of all

ALL ABOARD

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Ken Hamwey, in Memoriam

He wrote about the good

BY JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Ken Hamwey never missed a deadline, and he had a passion for telling a good story. Getting the word out about something or someone inspirational, conveying its importance, meant the world to him. That kind of drive, a level of investment scarcely seen in the world today, deserved your full attention. Our Town Publishing didn't just lose a sportswriter when we lost Ken Hamwey, we lost a lion-hearted wordsmith who cared deeply about the people he wrote about, and their moments of glory.

"Ken Hamwey was an amazing sportswriter and a consummate professional," said Jen Schofield, owner of Our Town Publishing. "He was someone I truly enjoyed talking with, listening to his stories, and his passion and dedication for covering high school sports was unmatched. He genuinely cared



Ken Hamwey October 14, 1943 - May 25, 2026

about the athletes, teams, and communities he wrote about, which was evident in his work."

HAMWEY

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ALL ABOARD

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abilities.”

The group provides equipment and expertise to enable people living with disabilities to participate in outdoor recreational activities.

Those special considerations could include spinal cord injuries, autism, advanced age, “anything that inhibits someone from riding a two-wheel bike,” said Cannon.

Summer’s dog days had arrived early. The precipitation and chilly weeks that marked the month of May were a poor prelude to the heat and humidity that rolled in with June.

Earlier in the week of that Saturday ride, All Out Adventures had cancelled a kayak trip due to the lingering heat that had taken up residence in New England.

That Saturday morning in June, the All Out Adventures van was already on site in the parking lot off Mechanic Street, an hour early for the ride’s 10 a.m. start time. Staff from the group, and volunteers with Friends of Natick Trails were unloading the specialized conveyances that would carry riders along the trail.

“This is just the pre-gaming,”

said Sue Tracey, program director for All Out Adventures, as she worked with her crew to set up their fleet of cycles trailside.

Friends of Natick Trails staff were putting up sun tents and setting out drink coolers and portable fans, all as a balm against the heat and humidity already rolling in.

Though the mercury was already rising, riders would be mostly sheltered from direct sunlight along the trail. The pathway is shaded by trees along most of its route, especially so during morning and evening hours.

The Cochituate Rail Trail has been a resounding success, hugely popular among walkers, joggers and cyclists since its founding. The easy and safe access the paved trail provides has offered a smooth and sheltered way to get exercise and commute.

Yet for people living with mobility constraints and other challenges, that access can still be out of reach. Those barriers are what the All Aboard rides and All Out Adventures seek to break through.

Among the fleet of bikes that grew as the starting time neared, was a wheeled platform designed to accommodate a wheelchair, and a seat in the rear for a rider and peddler to



Riders facing challenges were not deterred. Photo by Sean Sullivan

propel the duo forward.

Another was “pedaled” by arm power, allowing its rider to operate the bike by hand. Many of the human-powered vehicles are trikes, three-wheeled recumbent chariots that allow for maximum stability and safety.

As launch time neared, the Morse Institute Library’s book mobile rolled up alongside the bike van. Morse’s Emily Toombs, outreach librarian for the library, brought snacks, sunglasses and their own electric fan to support the event. And of course, to get the word out about the book mobile and library programming.

“We just thought it was a nice partnership,” said Toombs, who planned on volunteering at the event as a Natick Rail Trail crossing guard.

This was Natick’s fourth year hosting the All Aboard ride, a concept that has since spread to neighboring towns including



A variety of bikes was available. Photo by Sean Sullivan

Sudbury and Holliston. Leading the charge of Friends of Natick Trails at the event was Josh Ostroff, Board President of FONT.

“Accessibility is part of our mission,” said Ostroff.

With a focus on the Natick Rail Trail, FONT promotes and helps maintain Natick’s network of trails, organizes and volunteers at events. Representatives from FONT appeared at a Mass Trails Conference to spread awareness about the All Aboard event.

As part of its five-ride spring and summer schedule, All Aboard features rides in April, May and June, skipping July and August in hopes of bypassing summer heat.

September and October host the final rides in the fall.

Bikes are limited at the All Aboard ride, dependent on the inventory available at the time. The June ride hosted about 44 riders, all of whom had to reserve a spot.

Framingham resident Sebastian Leu was the first rider on scene that June Saturday morning, watching and chatting with volunteers as they set up the event.

With three rides to his credit, Leu is a veteran of the Natick event, and strives to make the entire round trip to the rail trail’s end. There and back again will cover about seven miles in total.

“Whatever’s available,” said Leu, when asked what bike he’d be riding. “It’s a great organization.”

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HAMWEY

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“Ken was very dedicated in getting the stories,” added Chuck Tashjian, who worked with Ken for many years as former publisher of Our Town Publishing, “He went above and beyond, especially with championship games. He really loved what he did. He loved writing, and he loved sports.”

“He just cared about the kids. If there was anything that stood out about him it was his passion for what he did ... He cared so much about making everyone look good, and that was such a good trait, and the way he’d remember things,” said Bellingham High School Football Coach Dan Haddad, who added both he and Ken were motivated by “love of the kids.” Student athletes Ken interviewed would tell the coach that Mr. Hamwey was “probably the nicest guy I’ve ever met.”

“What was unique about Ken was how he wanted to learn about me personally and what life experiences led me to where I am rather than other reporters who would just ask about jobs and responsibilities listed on a resume,” says Bellingham Town Administrator Joseph Laydon, who says he truly appreciated this approach in Ken’s regular Municipal Spotlight column for the *Bellingham Bulletin*.

Just 24 in 1967 when he entered the field of journalism, the young graduate of Natick High and Babson College began his career at *Framingham News*, now known as the *MetroWest Daily News*, covering the small-town beat of Millis. Ken would get the opportunity of a lifetime a year later, covering the Celtics’ defeat of the 76ers in Philadelphia to win the Eastern conference one day after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. In a lifelong story of his own he’d often tell, the late, great Celtics coach and general manager, Red Auerbach, in fact, held up the press corps bus so young Ken could call in that story. Ken would move on in 1973 to the Pulitzer Prize winning *Providence Journal*, and after 35-plus years as the Night Sports Editor, he received a citation from the Rhode Island State



Senate honoring his excellence as a journalist.

For many years, Ken would follow the trajectory of local sports heroes’ stories in a *MetroWest Daily News* column called “Yesterday’s Heroes.” In semi-retirement, Ken would continue to cover high school sports for local papers such as *Bellingham Bulletin* and *Local Town Pages* papers.

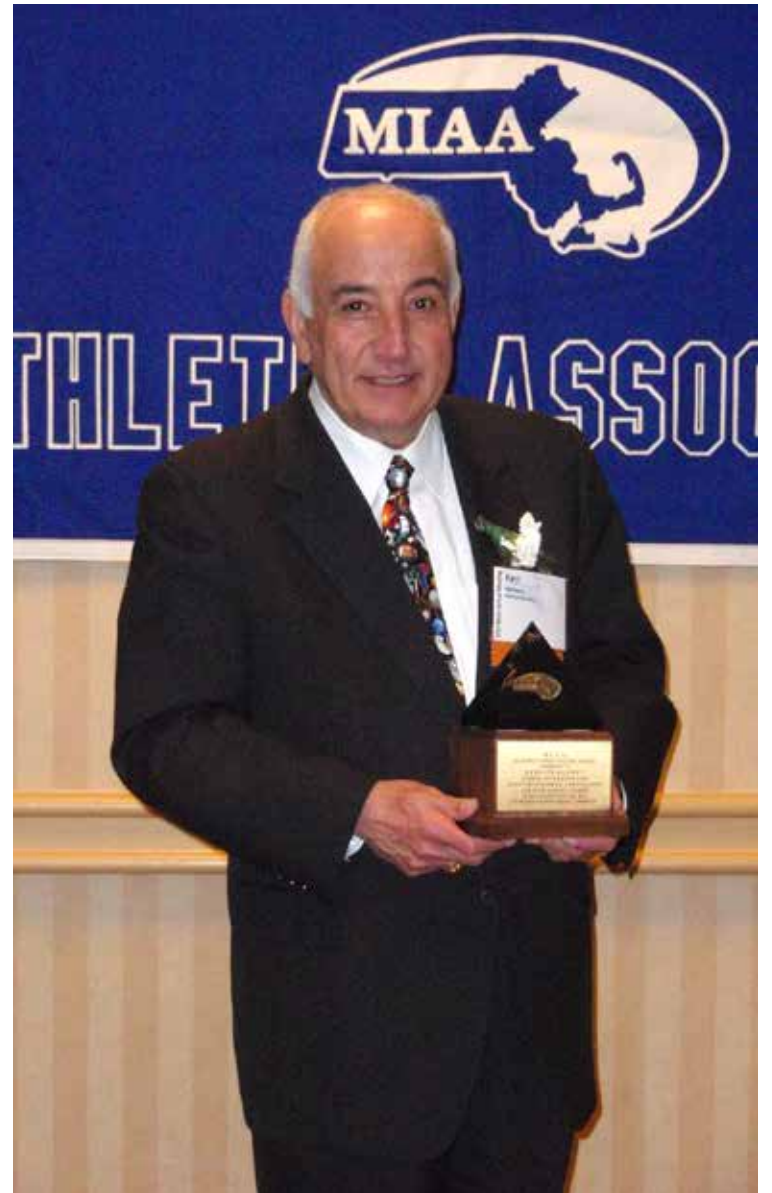
Ken was immensely proud of the recognition he received for his efforts. He was inducted into the Millis Athletic Hall of Fame in March 2022, and later, into the Bellingham Athletic Hall of Fame, and the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association selected him for its Distinguished Friend Award in 2010.

“High school sports lost a legendary storyteller with the passing of Ken Hamwey,” wrote Millis Athletics on X, “For nearly six decades, Ken dedicated his life to highlighting the achievements of local student-athletes, beginning with his very first varsity football story in Millis back in 1967.” Dover Sherborn Basketball also lauded his “passion and dedication for covering sports in our area...RIP.”

Ken Hamwey once told Dan Haddad, “I want to write about the good.”

In his own life, Hamwey, the beloved husband for 36 years of Pauline A. (Allard) Hamwey and the late Martha (Loan) Hamwey, and the loving father of Travis M. Hamwey and his wife, Katie, aspired himself to be the best person he could be, volunteering time as a coach and library trustee, devoting himself to his faith, and valuing each individual with whom he interacted. He once told me how much it meant to him that his coverage of young athletes might help them make it into college. He had an energy that drove him to weave a story of pride and potential that would shine a light on and lift up his subject. He offered such respect that you wanted to rise to be worthy of it.

“Ken was kind, dependable, and always willing to go above and beyond. Even shortly before his passing, while battling illness and facing deadline pressure, he completed his last three stories—a testament to his remarkable work ethic and commitment to journalism,” said Schofield, adding, “He was a one-of-a-kind colleague and friend, who will be deeply missed by everyone in his Our Town Publishing family. His legacy will live on through the countless stories he told and the many lives he touched.”



In 2010, Ken received the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Distinguished Friend Award.

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Historic dam to be removed this month

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

The removal of Natick’s historic dam will start this month.

The town’s official journey toward dam removal gained momentum in 2021, with the creation of an advisory committee tasked with evaluating and deciding on the structure’s fate.

In consideration of that, the committee weighed the potential risks should the dam fail.

The structure and its spillway were assigned a rating of “poor” by the state’s Office of Dam Safety, a designation of high risk that requires local municipalities to find a fix.

To that end, state funds are made available to help towns and cities shoulder the financial burden of addressing their dams.

The advisory committee found that renovating the cur-

rent structure would require removal of dozens of mature trees on the spillway’s south side.

The body also took into consideration the costs of future repairs and maintenance that would inevitably come due with the passage of years and more impactful weather events precipitated by climate change.

“It’s definitely a financial win for the town,” said Emily Norton, Executive Director of the Charles River Watershed Association.

Massachusetts will grant about \$1 million to help Natick complete dam removal, with the town pitching in about \$100,000.

Removal of the dam and its spillway, the committee determined, was effectively a one-and-done solution to the potential problems the structure might pose for the town and downriver geography.

“We protect the people downstream in case there’s a breach,” said Norton.

Opinion was swayed by ecological arguments for dam removal also, added Norton. The thrust of the CRWA’s efforts is to educate residents and policymakers about what’s best for the historic waterway.

“To understand how dam removal makes a river healthier,” she said.

Water that stagnates before a dam tends to be detrimental to the chemistry and aquatic life that calls a river home.

A free-flowing river means water that’s cooler and more oxygenated, a boon for fish that can also move more freely without the impediment of a dam.

As Natick residents know, another Great Depression-era artifact is currently being removed to make way for a more modern descendent. Natick’s Route 27 bridge is being replaced, its means of ingress and egress re-



The historic dam will change the water flow beneath. Photos by Sean Sullivan

designed for better traffic flow. Both the bridge and Natick dam were built in the 1930s.

The actual removal of the dam is slated to begin in the middle of this month, and is expected to be completed in as little as two weeks.

Once the structure is removed, the bulge of artificial lake preceding the dam will narrow, resembling more of a natural river. The water’s depth is expected to decrease also, from about eight to ten feet, down to about two or four.

This year marks “phase two,” a milestone in the story of the town’s dam removal project, the year the spillway and fish ladder will be removed.

The years 2027 and 2028 will comprise “phase three” of the effort, which will consist of monitoring the effects of dam removal, its impacts on the



The scenic beauty of the area.

surrounding environment and ecosystem.

In a May 27 Select Board meeting, the body set forth its rationale behind the decision to remove the dam in lieu of repairing it.

The Select Board in November of 2022 voted 4-1 in favor of removal.

Kathryn Coughlin is Chair of the Board, and stepped in on that May 27 discussion to drive home the town’s potential liability of maintaining the dam instead of removing it.

“If there were a dam failure, and if there was downstream loss of property or life, the town

is held in strict liability, meaning there is no affirmative defense.”

That potential liability would exist in spite of the town’s best efforts and expenditures to maintain the dam.

A recording of that meeting can be viewed on the town’s website.

The dam’s removal will be staged from the south side of the structure. Crews will lay down a bridge built from sandbags out into the river, a platform on which construction equipment can demolish the dam, working backwards to Grove Park until removal is complete.

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A special day as Natick police escort athletes



Some of the escort participants. *Courtesy photo*

A cruiser stood at the ready to help. *Courtesy photo*

This was a special assignment. The Natick Police Department recently participated in the Special Olympics Massa-

achusetts Cruiser Convoy. The department joined law enforcement agencies from across the Commonwealth to escort Special Olympics ath-

letes and show their continued support for an organization that promotes inclusion, determination, and opportunity for all.

The department thanked Special Olympics Massachusetts, the athletes, volunteers, and everyone who helped make the event a success. "We

were honored to be a part of this incredible tradition and look forward to supporting future events," the department stated.

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Woo-hoo: WooSox celebrate Natick with town takeover



The town is in the spotlight. Courtesy photo

Natick was in the spotlight during the recent town takeover sponsored by the Worcester Red Sox and held at Polar Park, the home of the Woo Sox.

The Natick Service Council invited more than 50 area families to attend the game and experience a community tradition, thanks to the generosity of the Worcester Red Sox, the Town of Natick and service council donors.

The night included many memorable moments, from seeing volunteers and community members to sharing the service council's mission on the WooSox radio broadcast. The Director of Community Engagement also had the honor of participating in pre-game festivities on the field and helping highlight the impact of our work in the community.

Council staff said they are



Residents shine on the big screen. Courtesy photo



Residents had a ball at the ball-game. Courtesy photo

“deeply grateful for opportunities like this that bring people

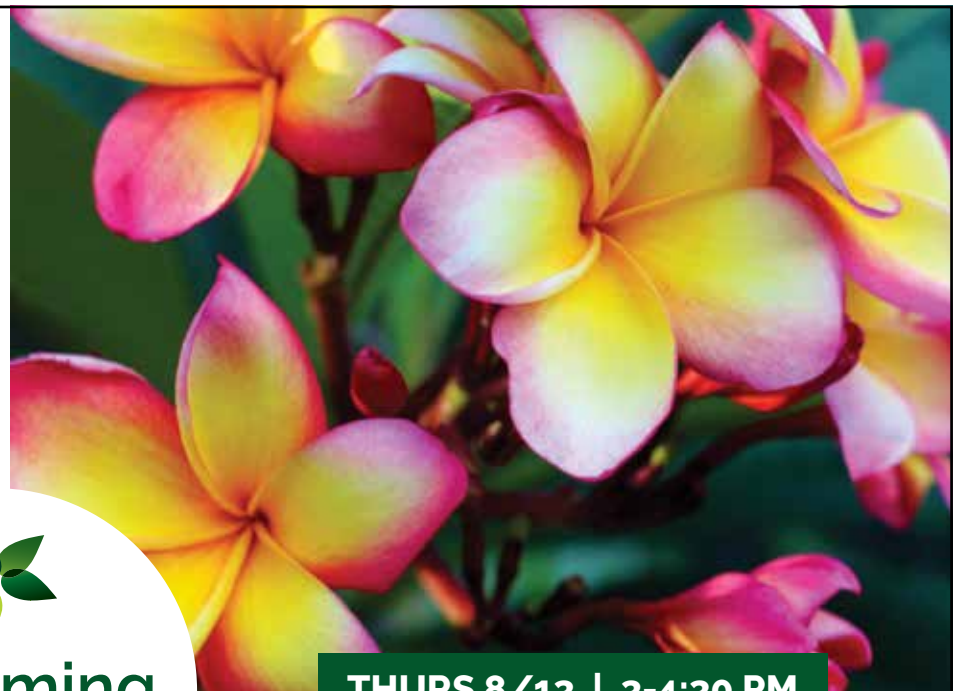
together and shine a light on the generosity, partnership, and

community spirit that make Natick such a special



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Margaret had saved diligently for decades. Every paycheck, a portion went toward her retirement account. Then, the day finally came: she retired. Suddenly, the hardest part wasn't the saving. It was learning to spend.

If that sounds familiar, you're not alone. Many retirees find the shift from building savings to living off them emotionally difficult, even when they've planned carefully. Here are five smart strategies that can help you feel more confident about what's ahead.

Give yourself permission to spend conservatively.

Your retirement plan likely assumes a certain annual spending amount, with increases each year to account for inflation. All else being equal, the lower those initial withdrawals, the longer your money will last. A financial advisor can help you set up portfolio withdrawals personalized to your goals and situation. Feel free to give yourself permission to spend those amounts, knowing there's intention behind them.

For many retirees, the challenge isn't math — it's mindset. After years of being rewarded

for saving, spending can feel like doing something wrong. It can help to reframe withdrawals as a paycheck you've already earned. For example, using your monthly distribution to cover travel, hobbies or time with family isn't indulgent; it's the purpose of the plan you built. Connecting spending to your values can make it feel more natural and sustainable.

Do be sure to review your spending regularly and don't forget to set aside funds for annual expenses like taxes and insurance.

Keep some cash on hand.

A general rule of thumb for retirees is to keep about 12 months' worth of withdrawals in a separate account for spending and another three to five years' worth in short-term, fixed-income investments. This cushion can allow your stock investments time to recover from a market downturn, reducing the need to

sell investments when markets are down. That said, holding too much cash carries its own risk, as your portfolio may not grow fast enough to keep pace with inflation. So, while some cash is good, you'll also want to remain invested in assets with more growth potential to help your portfolio last through retirement.

Review regularly. Retirement can last 25 years or more, and even the best-laid plans need updating along the way. Review your financial strategy at least once a year or after any major life change.

Stay flexible. Even small adjustments to your spending can have a big impact on how long your money lasts. Retirees who hold off on spending increases in years when their portfolio declines are often able to stretch their savings further than those who increase withdrawals each year for inflation regardless of

market performance.

Making the switch from saving to spending takes both careful planning and a genuine shift in mindset. A financial advisor can help you build out an effective approach to switch from saving to spending, and work with you so you can fully enjoy the retirement you worked so hard to reach.

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

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Firefighters honored for service, sacrifice on Memorial Sunday



Firefighters honor their fallen comrades in a solemn procession. *Courtesy photo*



The memorial wall. *Courtesy photo*



A beautiful arrangement placed in tribute. *Courtesy photo*

Firefighters honored their fallen colleagues at Fire-fighter Memorial Sunday, which took place June 14.

On that day Natick residents and the fire community honor active and retired firefighters who have died.

A special focus is placed

on those who died in the line of duty.

The grounds at the Natick Fire Department received special attention to prepare for the day.

Crews gave special attention to the grounds, the department reports, to ensure the area honors the firefighters appropriately.



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Ignore at your peril: Why fund a Trump Account for your child



Glenn Brown, CFP

This noise has millions of parents completely ignoring the program, assuming their older children aren't eligible or out of political disdain. What a massive financial planning error.

The truth is any U.S. citizen under 18 with an SSN qualifies for a parent or grandparent established Trump Account. The real opportunity is investing up to \$5,000 annually tax-deferred, which transitions directly into a Traditional IRA in the child's name at age 18. Free of spending restrictions, this complements a 529 plan.

Doing 10-year-old math

Say you have a 10-year-old and max contribute \$5,000 prior to each December 31 deadline until they turn 18. Your total out-of-pocket investment over those eight years is \$40,000.

Treasury mandates require these funds to be placed in diversified, low-fee index funds mirroring benchmarks like the S&P 500 (which has averaged 10.5% historical annual return since its 1957 inception). Assuming a 10% annualized return over that eight-year window, this 10-year-old's account grows to \$62,897 by age 18—meaning \$22,897 is investment growth.

The age-18 IRA handoff

At age 18, regulations dictate the account must transition directly into a Traditional IRA under the child's control. Because your original \$40,000 in

contributions was made with after-tax dollars, it carries over into that Traditional IRA as a non-deductible basis, meaning the principal can eventually be withdrawn tax-free. Why is this important?

The Roth conversion strategy

Instead of leaving this IRA to compound for a massive tax bill down the road, the optimal wealth-building move at age 18 is a full Roth IRA conversion. As a student entering adulthood with little to no earned income, they can exploit their standard deductions and baseline federal tax brackets to effectively neutralize the conversion tax.

Due to pro-rata rules governing Roth conversions, your 18-year-old will owe ordinary income taxes only on the converted growth portion (\$22,897) on their own tax return, not yours.

Consider an 18-year-old Massachusetts student with zero

personal income:

- **Federal Tax:** Standard deduction shields the first \$16,100 of growth. The rest falls into the 10% bracket, resulting in a \$680 tax bill.
- **State Tax:** Massachusetts applies its \$4,400 personal exemption, then levies its flat 5% tax for a \$925 obligation.

For \$1,605 paid in taxes, this Massachusetts 18-year-old has converted the entire \$62,897 into a Roth IRA. So, what now?

A \$3.4 million Roth IRA by age 60

If this Roth IRA is left untouched to compound at 10% annually with \$0 further added, the account will swell to over \$3.44 million by age 60—entirely tax-free upon distribution.

The truth is \$3.4M today isn't the same as \$3.4M in 50 years. However, by demonstrating the power of compounding through incremental invest-

ment, you lay the behavioral foundation for your child to keep saving and investing during their career.

Ignore at your own peril, but be prepared in 20 years for: "Mom, Dad, what happened? Why didn't you choose to do this?"

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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Save yourself the political angst, as I'm going to educate as a fiduciary on why you should open and fund a Trump Account for your child. Let me repeat: "educate as a fiduciary."

Building generational wealth via disciplined investment, forward-thinking tax planning, and unapologetic pragmatism shouldn't be partisan. Parents and grandparents need to look past political branding and understand this financial opportunity starting July 4 through the U.S. Treasury via IRS Form 4547, then deployed to major institutions, including Schwab, Fidelity, and Vanguard.

Reality Beyond Reels

Media outlets and social influencers are hyper-focused on flashy elements: the narcissistic naming, Michael Dell's \$6.25 billion gift, and the one-time \$1,000 newborn cash seed funded by the U.S. government for 2025–2028.



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Beat the heat at Morse Institute Library

The heat is on at Morse Institute Library with a variety of lively events. Here is a sampling.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Pajama Time Stories, Wednesday, 7/1, 7/8, 7/15, 7/22, 7/29, 6:30 to 7:15 p.m. Join Miss Susan for a few songs and lots of stories in the Children's Library. 45 minutes of stories and songs. No registration is required.

Summer Explorers: Button Bug Terrariums, Thursday, July 2, 3:45 to 4:30 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of in-person crafting in the children's department. This week we are making button bug terrariums. This program is for children entering grades 2-5. No registration is required.

Lapsit Storytime, Mondays July 6, 13, 20 and 27, 10 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Stories, bounces, songs, and bubbles for babies up to 24 months and their grownups. Gather in the StoryCraft Room in the Children's Department on the Lower Level. No registration is required.

Lego Free Build!, Mondays July 6, 13 and 27, 4 to 5 p.m. Join a LEGO family event. Drop in and build anything you like, LEGOs are provided. This program is for children ages 4 and older with a grownup partner. No registration is required.

Open Art: Bird Bracelets,

Tuesday, July 7, 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. Drop into the children's department and craft. This week make bird bracelets. Geared for kids from preschool through early elementary. No registration is required.

Summer Explorers: Can It Float? Pirates & Ships! Thursday, July 9, 3:45 to 4:30 p.m. An afternoon of in-person crafting. This week make pirates and ships and testing to see if they will float. This program is for children entering grades 2-5. No registration is required.

Open Art: Jungle Scenes, Tuesday, July 14, 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. Drop into the children's department and craft. This week make jungle scenes! No registration is required. Geared for kids from preschool through early elementary.

Summer Storytime on the Lawn!, Wednesday, July 15, 22 and 29, 10 to 10:30 a.m. Storytime fun on the library lawn. Share stories, songs, and free play activities. This is an outdoor family drop in event, so bring a blanket and your family. No registration is required. (In case of rain, gather in the Lebowitz Meeting Hall.)

Learn to Play the Ukulele Kids Workshop!, Thursday, July 16, 3:45 to 4:30 p.m. Learn how to play the ukulele. No experience is necessary. Ukuleles provided or bring your own. In this 45-minute

program, participants will learn about tuning, strumming, fretting, and how to play some easy songs. This program is for children ages 8-12. Registration is required.

Birds Carry the Seeds: Family Puppet Making Workshop, Monday, July 20, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. A family puppet making workshop. Puppeteers Cooperative will lead in making a variety of small bird puppets, which we will take on a short parade in front of the library. Families with children ages 4 and up are welcome to join. Registration is required for this event; all children and adults in each attending family must be registered. All children must have an adult with them for the program.

Summer Explorers: Sweet Potato Derby, Thursday, July 23, 3:45 to 4:30 p.m. Join an afternoon of in-person crafting in the children's department. This week run a sweet potato derby. This program is for children entering grades 2-5. No registration is required.

Open Art: Beach Scenes, Tuesday, July 28, 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. Drop into the children's department and craft. This week make beach scenes. Geared for kids from preschool through early elementary. No registration is required.

Summer Explorers: Fakémon Creations, Thursday, July 30, 7/30, 4:30 p.m.



Morse Institute Library. Photo by Theresa Knapp

Join in an afternoon of in-person crafting. This week make brand new kinds of Pokémon. This program is for children entering grades 2-5. No registration is required.

ALL AGES PROGRAMS Bookmobile Visit at West Hill Park, Wednesdays, July 1, 8, 22 and 29, 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Morse Institute Library Bookmobile will be at West Hill Park, 52 Mill St., on Wednesdays this summer through Aug. 19. At the bookmobile visitors can: sign up for a library card, check out books and puzzles for all ages, and learn more about the library's programs and resources. The MetroWest YMCA will be facilitating the Summer Eats program at this time as well, which is free and open to all. No registration is required.

Bookmobile at Sherwood Village, Wednesdays, July 2 and 16 East Building 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., West Building 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. At the bookmobile sign up for a library card, check out books and puzzles for all ages, and learn more about the library's programs and resources. No registration is required.

Bookmobile at the Farmers Market, Saturday, July 18, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring your library card to check out books, audiobooks, bestseller speed reads, and DVDs for all ages at the Natick Common.

Bookmobile at the Summer Performance Series, Wednesdays, July 8, 15, 22 and 29, 6:30 to 8 p.m. Visit the Morse Institute Library Bookmobile at the Natick Parks and Recreation summer performance

concert series! Bring your library card to check out books and puzzles, and learn more about library programs and resources.

Open Mic Night, Tuesday, July 14, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Singers, poets, musicians, writers, performance artists, all are welcome. Performers can sign up for a five-minute or 10-minute slot on a first come first served basis. No registration is required.

TEEN PROGRAMS Teen Take & Make: Mini Flower Growing Kits, Monday, July 6, 2 to 9 p.m. Stop by the Teen Room for a take and make mini flower planter kit. Kits are available inside the Teen Room until they run out.

Teen Food Explorers: Raspberry Cheesecake Pies, Wednesday, July 8, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Join Food Explorers for a delicious dessert class making raspberry cheesecake pies with your own homemade graham cracker crust and a fruity raspberry cheesecake filling with whipped cream on top. Recipe is nut free but will contain dairy and gluten. For teens and tweens, 11 to 18. Registration is required.

Teen & Tween: Plant Your Own Herbs, Tuesday, July 14, 2 to 3 p.m. Come celebrate the Summer Reading theme, "Plant a Seed, Read" and paint your own planter and sow herbs of your choice. For tweens and teens, ages 11-18. Registration is required.

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MORSE

continued from page 10

MetroWest, Thursday, July 23, 2 to 3 p.m. Hang out with friends and enjoy some ice cream and non-dairy frozen treats. OUT MetroWest will be here making mini mosaics. For teens and tweens (ages 11 to 18), Registration optional if you would like updates on this program (and to make sure we have enough ice cream.)

ADULT PROGRAMS

Paint by Sticker: Works of Art, Thursday, July 2, 7 to 8 p.m. Like paint by number, but with stickers. Find the sticker, peel it, and place it in the right space. Watch as a famous work of art emerges from the original unfinished illustration. Registration is required.

Cooking Class: Caprese Bundles, Wednesday, July 8, 3 to 4 p.m. Join Food Explorers for a hands-on cooking class. Make Caprese Bundles by creating Greek yogurt based dough and stuffing with fresh tomatoes, cheese and basil and cooking on the griddle until golden and melty. Recipe is nut free but will contain dairy and gluten. This program is for adults. Space is limited and registration is required.

Walk-in Technology Help, Saturday, July 11, 18 and 25, 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Having trouble figuring out how to use your smartphone, tablet, or other devices? Unsure on how to use Libby/Hoopla/Kanopy with your device? We can help with that! First come, first served session with one of our Information Services Librarians for help on the second floor each Saturday morning (except on Holiday closures).

Bring your questions and devices, and we'll work through them together. Sessions are a maximum of 15 minutes. More complicated questions or longer help needed will require a later one-on-one appointment. No registration is required.

Learn How To Play the Ukulele, Thursday, July 16, 7 to 8 p.m. Want to try an instrument that is fun and easy to play? Join Julie Stepanek as she shows the fundamentals of ukulele playing. Participants

will learn how to tune, strum, fret and read chord diagrams. No experience is necessary.

This program is for adults, and registration is required if you need to borrow a ukulele; if you have a ukulele you are welcome to walk in. Ukuleles are also available to borrow through the Library of Things.

Bachata Dance Workout, Saturday, July 18, 3 to 4 p.m. Get ready to move to the infectious rhythms of Bachata, a dance from the Dominican Republic! This class is all about having fun and moving your body.

The class will focus on high-energy follow-alongs that get your heart pumping with bachata footwork. The focus is on joy, not perfection. The goal is for you to feel energized, move your body, and get a taste of social dancing.

Students of all abilities are welcome and physical modifications and adaptations can be made to ensure everyone can fully participate and enjoy the movement. No prior dance experience is needed, and you do not need to bring a partner. Please wear shoes you can spin in and bring water. This program is for adults and registration is required.

Chat & Chew Book Club, Friday, July 24, 12:30 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. Registration is optional

In concert: The Jazz Trailblazers, Thursday, July 30, 7 to 8 p.m. A tribute to the women artists who served as pioneers throughout the history of jazz music. The group will feature music written or made famous by vocalists such as Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday as well as instrumentalists such as Lil Hardin Armstrong and Marian McPartland and others. Registration for this event is suggested, but not required.

Morse Institute Library is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., closed Sunday. The library is closed July 3 and 4. For more information, visit morseinstitute.org

Celebrate with Ghosts at summer concert July 6



Blast back to the 1980s with Ghosts in the Machine. *Courtesy photo*

Summer evenings are meant for relaxation and the summer family concert series has you covered.

Ghosts in the Machine, which describes itself as a “mostly” 1980s cover band, will per-

form on the town common July 6 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The band features Erin Kent on vocals, Patrick Kent on bass and vocals, Steve Aiello on drums, Mike Turner on keys and vocals, Ed St. George on

sax and percussion and Rick Wilson on bass and vocals.

The summer series continues with Knock on Wood July 13, Eclipse, July 20, Classic Groove, July 27, Jeff Thomas, Aug. 3 and The Max Klau Band, Aug. 10.



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Struggling with acne?

By LISA MASSIMIANO,
LICENSED ESTHETICIAN AND
CERTIFIED ACNE SPECIALIST

If you have been diagnosed with acne and haven't been satisfied with drug store products or the suggested treatment from your doctor, consider seeing an Acne Specialist.

What is an Acne Specialist?

An Acne Specialist is a licensed skin care professional who is specially trained to treat acne using a combination of clinical treatments, home care protocols and regular follow-up during the process of clearing acne prone skin.

Most physicians don't have the time to spend educating patients on the root cause of their acne. They often prescribe oral antibiotics and strong topical retinoids that can leave skin dry, red and irritated. Patients get frustrated with these side effects and stop using the products.

How an Acne Specialist can help you.

An Acne Specialist will assess your individual skin type, and the type of acne you have, to develop a plan of action

specifically for you. They will take the time to teach you about the root cause of acne and provide information on lifestyle, diet, medications, and ingredients in makeup and skin care products that exacerbate acne. They help you to get your skin clear and teach you how to keep your acne under control.

For people struggling with acne, it can be frustrating to try and communicate with their doctor on a timely basis. My clients tell me that the best part of working with an Acne Specialist is that we are there for them to answer their questions and provide support while they go through the process of getting their skin clear.

Questions about acne? Email Lisa Massimiano, owner Skin Smart Salon and Acne Clinic at skinsmartsalon@aol.com or call 508-881-1180. Visit the website skinsmartsalon.com for information about Skin Smart's acne program and other services.

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Stay cool Natick: New shade structure lowers the temperature



The shade structure was a town effort. Courtesy photo

The future's so bright that beach-goers sometimes have to find a little shade.

Sometimes a beach day, no matter how fun, can be a little

too sunny at times.

That will no longer be an issue at Memorial Beach. A third shade structure has been added to the beach, increasing the

chances of avoid too much sun.

The shade was supported by the Community Preservation Fund and approved by Town Meeting voters.

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Spirits bright at end of season celebration

The Teen Center at Natick Recreation and Parks recently celebrated the end of the season with games and other fun activities. Bring on the summer!



The teen center presented its 2026 award. Courtesy photo



Air hockey was on the agenda. Courtesy photo

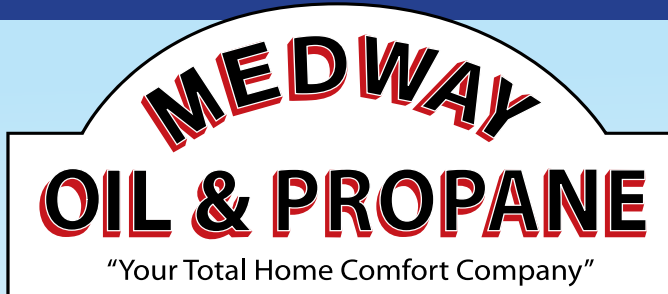


Games of all types were played. Courtesy photo



An inflatable provided plenty of opportunities to burn energy. Courtesy photo

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Celebrate summer at Natick Senior Center

Have a sizzling fun summer at the Natick Senior Center. Here is a sampling of activities.

Fruit and Smoothies Day, Thursday, July 2, 1 p.m.

Join us for a refreshing Fruit and Smoothies Day! Enjoy delicious smoothies made right on site using fresh ingredients, including healthy green smoothies and flavorful fruit smoothies. Sample a variety of fresh fruits while relaxing and socializing in a fun summer atmosphere.

Community reiki experience, Mondays July 6, 13, 20 and 27, \$10.

Relax into Reiki energy while seated comfortably in a chair, promoting mindfulness, gentle detoxification, and a strengthened immune system. This calming, supportive class helps rejuvenate body and mind. Registration is required for each session.

Women's Health, From Menopause to Bone Health and Beyond, Monday, July 6, 2:30 p.m.

Dr. O'Sullivan, an OBGYN from Metrowest Medical Center, will lead a talk on key aspects of women's health as women age. Topics will include

osteoporosis, menopause, mammograms, and other important concerns for senior women. The session will also provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and receive expert guidance in a supportive, open setting.

Playing pickleball safely, Tuesday July 7, 2 p.m.

Jennifer and Daniel Connors of Jumpstart Physical Therapy will discuss how safe pickleball play begins with preparing the body through stretching, strengthening, balance training, and proper movement techniques.

This presentation will explore common injuries seen in adults ages 65 and older, along with strategies to improve safety and confidence on the court, as well as practical tips to help players continue enjoying pickleball while staying healthy, mobile, and independent.

Still Life Drawing, Fridays July 10 to Aug. 28, 10 a.m., \$65.

Students will explore still life drawing by working from observation of real-world objects. The class focuses on developing skills in realistic perspective, lighting, and composition.



Natick Senior Center. Photo by Theresa Knapp

Each session includes instructor demonstrations to guide the lessons. Projects are designed to build toward more complex compositions over time. A list of supplies will be provided during registration.

Acrylic Painting, Fridays July 10 to Aug. 28, 12:15 p.m. \$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 will be given during registration.

"Fish Friends," A Collage Art Workshop, Monday, July 13, 10 a.m. \$5.

Explore your creativity through the art of collage. Using paper, photographs, magazines, textures, and mixed materials, participants will

create unique and expressive compositions in a relaxed and welcoming environment. Perfect for beginners and experienced artists alike.

Be a savvy senior and avoid being a victim of fraud, Tuesday, July 14, 11 a.m.

A representative from the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General's Community Engagement Division will provide an overview of the most common current forms of online, mail, phone, in-person, cryptocurrency and other scams; how to avoid scams and other exploitation; what is and how to prevent identify theft (and steps to take if you experience it); and how to reach the Attorney General's Office, including the AGO's Elder Hotline. More information about the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office can be found at Mass.gov/ago.

Wireless radiation risk, Stay-wireless connected and protected,

Tuesday, July 21, 1:30 p.m.

Join Cece Doucette, Director of Massachusetts for Safe Technology, for a discussion on smart meters and their potential health and privacy impacts. Learn about reported EMR symptoms, how children and adults may be affected, and explore ways to stay connected while protecting your well-being. Bring your questions!

Online registration basics, How to register for the center's programs online, Thursday, July 30, 2:30 p.m.

Participants will receive hands-on guidance and step-by-step support to confidently sign up for classes, activities, and events offered by Natick Community Senior Center. Bring your own phone, tablet, or laptop to practice.

The Natick Senior Center is located at 117 E. Central St. For more information, visit www.natickma.gov/626/Council-on-Aging-Human-Services.

Scouts support food pantry, kids' corner



Natick Girl Scout Troop 64070 members made a generous donation. Courtesy photo

Natick Girl Scout Troop 64070 recently donated handmade craft kits, which are now stocked in the Natick Service Council's Food Pantry and Kids Corner for families to enjoy.

Service council members noted that with summer vacation here, these creative kits

will provide children with fun, engaging activities to take home and enjoy. This is a "wonderful example of neighbors helping neighbors," council staff said.

"Your thoughtful donation is sure to bring smiles to many families this summer," they said.

Sign-up ongoing for annual Natick Days

It's time to sign up for the annual Natick Days celebration, which will be held on Saturday, Sept. 19.

The event is open to local nonprofits and youth groups; businesses are welcome to submit an application for sponsorship.

The form is available via <https://www.natickma.gov/2089/Natick-Days>. The submission deadline is Aug. 9.

Groups who submit an ap-

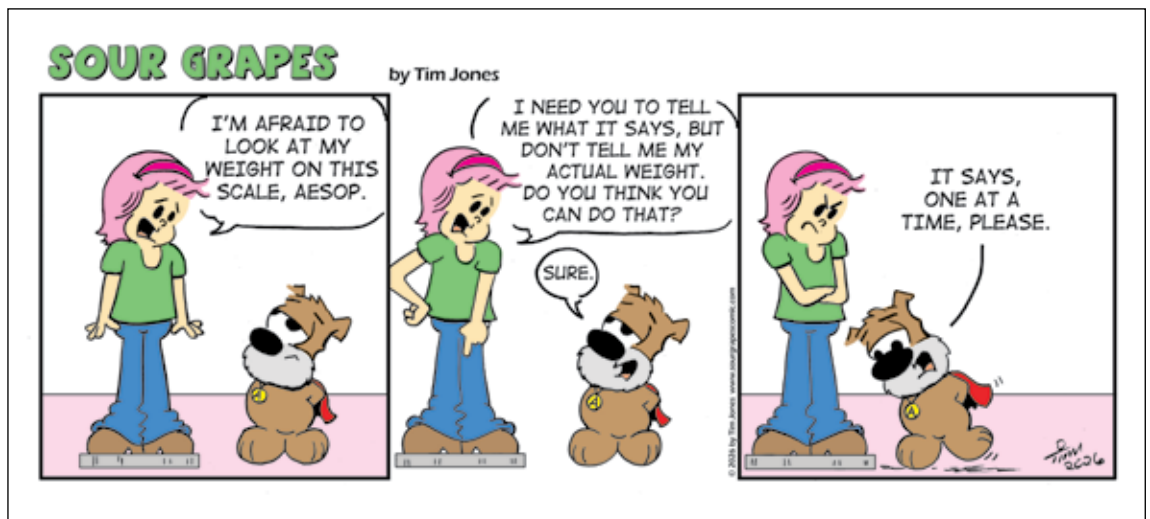
plication before the deadline will be notified in late July/early August of their acceptance. Those submitting an application after the deadline will be placed on a waiting list, and will need approval from the Natick Days Working Group.

For the past three decades, Natick Days has served as a way to local organizations to showcase their services and programs. The event includes

games, contests, entertainment, food and other offerings.

During the celebration, a part of Natick Center is blocked off (usually from the intersection of Main and East Central streets to Hayes Street), allowing hundreds of visitors to stroll around the area.

Natick Days is sponsored by the town's Recreation and Parks Department.



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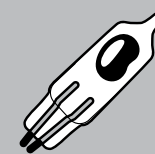
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The Labs celebrates Army's birthday with community party

BY MAUREEN SULLIVAN

The Natick Soldier Systems Center (known as the Labs) joined in the nationwide celebration Saturday, June 13 of the U.S. Army's 251st birthday.

The Labs hosted an open house with plenty of activities, from water skiing and a classic car show to World War II re-enactors and a chance to get autographs from New England Patriots players.

During the main ceremonies, five recruits were sworn in and welcomed by Brigadier Gen. George C. Hackler, the center's deputy commanding general and combat capabilities development command/senior commander.

He then presided over a cake-slicing ceremony; after cutting the cake with a sword, he presented slices to the center's oldest and youngest veterans.

Several vendors were on hand to present information about veterans' programs, including Honor Flight New England and the VFW.

Live music was provided by the 215th Army Band.

The Labs is on General Greene Avenue, and has been developing clothing and food products for the military since the late 1940s.

For information, go to <https://www.army.mil/natick>.



Mel Bloom, left, the administrative assistant to Natick's Veterans Services Office and the founder/CEO of 3-5-0 Girls, chats with World War II re-enactors during the Army's birthday celebration at the Labs on June 13.



Brigadier Gen. George C. Hackler, right, swears in five new Army recruits.



Local Scouts took part in the main ceremonies.



Classic cars line up, with Lake Cochituate as the backdrop, during the Army's birthday celebration.
Photos by Maureen Sullivan



A big draw to the Army's birthday celebration at the Labs on June 13 were World War II re-enactors and vendors, who came with a variety of weapons, equipment and food items from that period.

NATICK SPORTS

Captains lead the way to strong girls tennis result

BY MATT HYLEN

The Natick High School Girl's Tennis team had their best ever season, finishing their season with a trip to the round of 16 in the state tournament.

For sixth-year coach Jerry Daly, the result was the culmination of years of continuity, leadership, and a coaching philosophy built around finding each player's individual rhythm.

Daly, who has played tennis since he was four years old and competes locally at Longfellow Tennis Club and Sudbury River, took over the Natick program six years ago, just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

"I came in during COVID, so that was kind of an interesting year... I never got to meet the team," Daly said.

Since then, he's built the program into a consistent contender, and this season was no exception.

"I thought it was a great season," Daly said. "We ended up at 11-7 for the year, and we finished 15th in the state, which was tied for our highest finish... that was also the highest finish last year. So from a statistics point of view, it was great."

Entering the year, Daly said the goal was simply to finish in the top 20 in the state, a bar the team cleared with room to spare. Daly explained that the team's commitment never wavered, even with seven seniors on the roster navigating the typical late-spring distractions.

"The big thing this season for me was that, right up to the very end, everyone was supporting the team," Daly said. "Between prom and senioritis, players can kind of drift off, but the team all stayed focused and showed up, which is great."

While the loss to Winchester wasn't what the team was hoping for, Daly said the way his players competed made it a fitting way to close out the year. "It was a great game, and the beauty was that the whole team played their very best," Daly said. "It's nice to finish the season on a high note, even if we did lose."

Much of the team's stability came from a roster that re-

mained largely intact from a year ago.

Two freshmen, who joined the team last season, stepped into starting roles as sophomores this year, while the team's seven seniors anchored the lineup.

In total, 15 players saw varsity action this season, giving Natick a deep pool of experience to build around going forward.

"We pretty much carried over most of the players from last year, so we knew what was coming," Daly said. "Players who played varsity this year will hopefully come back next year and help the team."

On the court, Daly's coaching style traces back to his own training with Phil Parish, the longtime head pro at Longfellow Tennis Club. Daly is part of a group of four coaches who have trained under Parish for years, and he's carried that philosophy directly into Natick's practices.

"It's a lot of hitting," Daly said. "I don't really run mass drills. We work with the individual players and help with what they need to work on. Most of practice, players are out there hitting with opponents, finding their own game and finding their rhythm. We'll give little tips to each player, 'Hey, try this, try that,' but it's really about getting out there and playing."

Off the court, Daly pointed to one group as the driving force behind Natick's culture: its captains. "I pin our success right to the captains," Daly said. "I've been so lucky over the years to have captains who are so wonderful, engaging, and really encouraging to new players."

This year's group included one returning captain, providing continuity from the previous season.

Captains will run team dinners, lead pre-practice stretching, and organize a "question of the day," where the team sits in a circle so younger players can get to know the upperclassmen. "It forms a great team bond," Daly said.

One tradition stands out above the rest: the bus ride



The Natick High School Girls Tennis Team. Photo Courtesy of the Natick Girls Tennis Instagram Page

home after matches. "I really encourage everyone to take the bus home after a match," Daly explained. "It's a great time to decompress, and by the time we get home, you can't tell if we

won or lost. The atmosphere is just great. That's the captains leading that, just by their personality."

With a strong senior class graduating but plenty of re-

turning talent and a culture built to sustain itself, Natick girls tennis appears well-positioned to build on a season that matched the best finish in program history.

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 REAL ESTATE CORNER

The market has changed. Have sellers changed with it?



John McHugh

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

For the past several years, homeowners have become accustomed to hearing stories about bidding wars, homes selling in days, and buyers competing aggressively for limited inventory. While many of those conditions still exist throughout Natick and surrounding MetroWest communities, today's market requires a more thoughtful approach than many sellers realize.

The biggest mistake I continue to see is homeowners assuming that every property will automatically generate multiple offers simply because inventory remains relatively low. The reality is that buyers have become more selective. Although inventory remains below historical norms, today's buyers are facing higher monthly payments than they were just a few years ago. As a result, they are paying closer attention to condition, presentation, location, and value. Properties that are well-prepared and strategically priced continue to attract strong interest, while homes that are overpriced or poorly presented often sit longer than expected.

At the time of this writing, Natick continues to demonstrate strong market activity. Over the previous 30 days, there were 34 homes actively for sale, 54 properties with accepted offers, and 22 homes that had successfully closed. The average list price was approximately \$1,174,000, while

Did you know?

-  Homes that hit the market fully prepared often create a "fear of missing out" effect.
-  The majority of serious buyers today decide whether to visit a home within minutes of seeing it online.
-  Strategic pricing often creates more buyer interest than testing the highest possible asking price.

-  The first price is more powerful than any price reduction—buyers don't just see price; they interpret it as a signal of value and seller confidence.
-  In today's market, overpricing doesn't just delay a sale—it actively shrinks your buyer pool, sometimes cutting demand in half within the first week.

the average sale price was approximately \$1,082,500. Active listings averaged 37 days on market, while properties that secured accepted offers averaged just 16.5 days on market. Even more telling, the average time required to receive an offer was only six days. These figures suggest that well-priced, well-prepared homes continue

to attract strong buyer interest, while reinforcing the importance of proper pricing and presentation from day one. This creates an important distinction for sellers. A lack of inventory does not eliminate competition. Every home competes against every other available property, and buyers compare them all. The homes generating the

greatest success are often those whose owners invested time before going to market. Fresh paint, decluttering, landscaping, improved lighting and professional photography can dramatically influence buyer perception and ultimately affect a home's final sale price. The goal is not simply to list a home. The goal is to create demand. As we move through the second half of the year, homeowners considering a future sale should begin planning now. The most successful sellers are rarely the luckiest sellers. More often, they are the most prepared.

John McHugh has been a Senior Agent with Coldwell Banker for 25 years. He can be reached at JohnSellsNow@gmail.com or 978-902-5646. Visit his website for home-buying/home selling tips and to search all properties: JohnMcHughRealEstate.com

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Date	Natick	Amount
06/15/2026	3 Bunker Ln.	\$775,000
06/15/2026	35 Stacey Rd.	\$1,580,000
06/15/2026	26 Sherman St.	\$1,200,000
06/12/2026	250 Bacon St.	\$950,000
06/12/2026	9 Village Hill Ln.	\$300,000
06/12/2026	0 Michael Ter.	\$1,070,000
06/11/2026	71 Bacon St.	\$1,220,000
06/11/2026	6 Post Oak Ln.	\$420,000
06/11/2026	7 Village Hill Ln.	\$279,000
06/10/2026	17 Grove St.	\$1,430,000
06/10/2026	91 Speen St.	\$695,000
06/10/2026	33 Stacey St.	\$1,600,000
06/09/2026	278 N. Main St.	\$1,600,000
06/08/2026	7 Bennett St.	\$2,150,000
06/05/2026	36 Charles St.	\$1,950,000
06/05/2026	2 Arrow Path	\$2,400,000
06/04/2026	6 Briar Ln.	\$2,350,000
06/03/2026	32 Silver Hill Ln.	\$399,000
06/02/2026	5 Wight Farm Rd.	\$1,340,000
06/01/2026	32 Longfellow Rd.	\$800,000
06/01/2026	15 Terrane Ave.	\$730,000
06/01/2026	5 Village Rock Ln. #22	\$295,000
06/01/2026	16 Fairview Ave.	\$1,680,000
06/01/2026	25 S. Lincoln St.	\$1,240,000
06/01/2026	7 Westwood Rd.	\$690,000
05/29/2026	6 Cypress Rd.	\$500,000
05/29/2026	48 Silver Hill Ln. #24	\$320,000
05/28/2026	28 Barnesdale Rd.	\$925,000
05/28/2026	10 Nolin St.	\$1,800,000
05/27/2026	104 Eliot St.	\$2,660,000
05/26/2026	9 Silver Hill Ln. #15	\$425,000
05/26/2026	1 Richard Rd.	\$2,200,000
05/22/2026	8 Concord St.	\$775,000
05/22/2026	52 Village Brook Ln. #14	\$322,900
05/20/2026	21 Belmore Rd.	\$760,000
05/20/2026	3 Post Oak Ln. #8	\$310,000

Source: zillow.com Compiled: Local Town Pages

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The 5-bed, 4-bath, 4,325-square-foot house at 2 Arrow Path in Natick recently sold for \$2.40 million. Image credit: www.zillow.com

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