

Holliston freshman Lucy Downin shines on the national stage

By DERRICK TOUBA JR.

Lucy Downin has spent the better part of the last year quietly becoming one of the most talented young distance runners in the country, and this June, she performed against the national stage and delivered.

The Holliston High School freshman placed second in the Freshman Mile at the New Balance Nationals Outdoor Championships, clocking a personal-best 4:51.18 against a field that included some of the fastest ninth-grade milers in the nation. It marked the second straight national meet where Downin finished runner-up in the Freshman Mile, after



Holliston Freshman Lucy Downin poses with the results board after finishing second in the Freshman Girls Mile at the 2026 New Balance Nationals Outdoor Championships at Franklin Field in Philadelphia. Photo courtesy of Nicole Downin

also placing second at New Balance Nationals Indoors back in March. It was the latest, and

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Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra to celebrate America 250 with Blair Square concert



Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra performs at Blair Square in 2024. Photo courtesy of Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra

By JESS OMMEN

The Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra is returning to Blair Square this month with a patriotic performance celebrating America's 250th Anniversary,

bringing professional musicians together for an evening of iconic music in one of the com-

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biggest, highlight in a breakout first year of high school competition that has included multiple school records, divisional titles and a runner-up finish in the 1,000 meters at the MIAA Meet of Champions, where she was edged at the line by a mere hundredth of a second.

For a 14-year-old who only started running competitively in sixth grade, the results have arrived fast. But Lucy says the approach behind them is simple.

"I think those accomplishments just kind of helped outline what I'd gone into the season trying to do," Lucy said, reflecting on her first full year of high school track. "And just kind of remind me of the goal of trying to have fun and being a good teammate, and that performance isn't always the thing that matters."

Lucy pointed to her teammates and coaches as a major reason behind her national runner-up finish, particularly during the buildup to nation-

als. She added that her teammates showed up at every meet throughout the year, whether they were competing or not, to warm up alongside her and cheer her on and help create the team atmosphere that made the season so memorable.

"They're all really supportive, and they push me to do better," she said. "One of my best friends, Emerson, came to practice with me every day, even though her season was over, and she really was a big motivator for me. If she didn't come, I would have been all alone."

Her mother, Nicole Downin, who coaches at Holliston, said she's most proud of how her daughter has handled success without losing perspective.

"What I'm most proud of with Lucy is how she's embracing her success and keeping it real and very down to earth, very humble," Nicole said. "She's a fantastic teammate, and she oftentimes thinks of her teammates over herself."

Looking ahead, Lucy isn't getting ahead of herself. While having aspirations to continue



Lucy Downin (Third from left) stands on the awards podium after placing second in the Freshman Girls Mile at the 2026 New Balance Nationals Outdoor Championships. Photo courtesy of Nicole Downin

competing at a high level, she mainly wants to keep enjoying the sport that's given her so much early on.

"I want to try to go to New Balance Nationals a couple more times, and set a couple

more school records," she said, "and just keep having fun, and enjoy the sport as much as I can."

With two national runner-up finishes into her high school career, while still only 14 years

old, Downin has put together an impressive freshman campaign. If her first season is any indication, Holliston may be watching her name near the top of the record books for years to come.

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munity’s most beloved outdoor gathering spaces.

The free, family-friendly performance will feature a stirring program of American classics, including Lincoln Portrait, An American Salute, John Williams’ Midway March, and other patriotic favorites. Organizers say the concert is designed to honor the nation’s history while bringing residents of all ages together through live music.

“We’re doing a sort of Americana program,” says Paul Surapine, Founder and Executive and Artistic Director of Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra, noting the concert will feature “some large pieces, serious wind ensemble windature from American composers like Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland and medlies, like ‘Chicago’ or ‘Jersey Boys.’ We kind of weave a theme of rekindling people with the sense of what a great country and what a great people we are.” One Copland arrangement in particlur, he says, will weave music in with segments of Abraham Lincoln speeches.

Last year’s Summer Winds concert at Blair Square drew one of the largest and most enthusiastic audiences of the season, with families, long-time residents, and first-time concertgoers filling the park to enjoy an evening of live symphonic music. The event showcased the community’s appreciation for free outdoor cultural programming, as audience members shared their excitement for future concerts in the days that followed.

The strong attendance and overwhelmingly positive response reinforced Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra’s growing connection with Holliston. Since the orchestra began performing in Holliston in 2024, attendance by local residents at its concerts has steadily increased, reflecting growing community interest in live orchestral music.

“We’ve been performing in Holliston now every summer. I think this will be our third performance,” says Surapine, “It’s a great venue, we get this huge crowd there, and they’re really enthusiastic. It was funny, because none of them seemed to

be aware of us as a professional regional symphony orchestra that performs on the same level as any major urban center in New England, and now, Holliston has become one of our biggest concerts in the symphony season. Once they were exposed to this, they became really great Claflin Hill fans and supporters.”

In fact, a few months ago, Surapine gave a talk at the Holliston Library, and he’ll be back to speak at a meeting of the Dull Men’s Group at the library on Friday, August 7, at 10 a.m.

This year’s performance is part of the Holliston Celebrates America 250 series of events, organized by community groups such as Celebrate Holliston, Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors, the American Legion and the VFW. The performance has been funded, in part, by a grant from the Holliston Cultural Council.

As communities across the country commemorate the nation’s semiquincentennial, organizers hope the Blair Square performance will provide an opportunity for neighbors to

gather, celebrate American musical traditions, and share in a celebration of community, heritage, and civic pride.

Now celebrating its 26th season, the Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra has become a regional cultural institution, presenting more than two dozen concerts each year, including symphony, chamber, jazz, and summer park performances. More than half of its annual concerts are offered free to the public, making professional orchestral music accessible throughout the region.

Founded in 1997, the orchestra employs more than 200 professional musicians from across New England each season. All hold degrees in music performance, with nearly four out of five earning master’s degrees or higher. Many have remained with the organization for decades while also teaching thousands of students each week in schools and private studios throughout the region.

Beyond entertainment, Claflin Hill points to growing research that demonstrates the value of live arts experiences.



Audience members enjoy a performance from Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra. Photo courtesy of Claflin Hill Symphony Orchestra

Studies from the World Health Organization and Harvard University’s Music and Health Initiative have found that attending live performances can reduce stress, improve mental well-being, strengthen social connections, and encourage civic engagement.

Claflin Hill works to extend those benefits by keeping concerts affordable and accessible through Pay What You Can

pricing, partnerships with local charities, complimentary ticket donations and free outdoor performances, including the one at Blair Square.

The Holliston Celebrates America 250 concert will take place at 6 p.m. on Saturday, August 15 in Blair Square. It is free of charge and open to all.

For more information and performance dates visit www.claflinhill.org.



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Cardio and connection with Holliston's 1013 Run Club

By JANE LEBAK

Slow runs are better than no runs, and now Holliston has a running club dedicated to exactly that.

"My husband and I have been running over 15 years," says club member Michelle Tapaninen. "He used to actually run competitively, but I am just doing it to clear my mind. I'm more recreational."

Enter the 1013 Run Club, named for the back-of-the-pack runners who are most comfortable running ten- to thirteen-minute miles.

Many recreational runners will hit the streets solo because they worry about not maintaining a blistering pace, or because they're still building up distance. 1013 removes those worries.

Sarah Baroud, the club's

Marketing Chair, says, "These are folks who are not trying to win the race. They are maybe getting back into the sport, or starting a 5K journey, or coming back after having a baby." To be clear, 10 to 13 minutes per mile isn't a requirement. "We have joggers, walkers, people that run faster than ten—it's the essence of it, not so much the numbers."

Renee Quinn founded the 1013 Run Club in June, 2022, in collaboration with the Bird and Bear Collective at 763 Washington Street. "We use their base as a community," Sarah says. "We still meet there for all our runs."

By sidelining the speed element of the sport, runners are competing against themselves rather than one another, fostering community and creating a safe space for personal growth.

"Everyone sets their own goal," says Michelle. "Last year, for every season, I ran a 10K."

"The longest I've run is a half marathon, but the goals keep growing and growing, so who knows what's to come?" Sarah says. "For me, personally, I was really interested in the idea of having a community of folks who just wanted to be supportive of one another. We're not trying to win anything, just being consistent and accountable to one another."

The club holds group runs up to three times a week: Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 7 a.m., the runners begin at the Bird and Bear Collective. From May through September, they also meet on Thursdays at 5:30 a.m. at the Holliston High School track.

Anyone who wants to try out the club can show up a few times to see if it works for them. After a few runs, together, you can join the club. Membership is \$84 per year.



Can't run a 5-minute mile? Join the club! The Holliston-based 1013 Run Club is for recreational runners who run maybe a 10-13-minute mile.
Photo by Renee Quinn

Although the 1013 Club doesn't emphasize speed, they are enthusiastic supporters of races. Several members ran the Holliston Rail Trail 5K and 10K race this June, and founder Renee Quinn herself was the announcer, something she told participants she'd long dreamed of doing.

Six club members are running this year's Chicago Marathon, simultaneously training for 26.2 miles and raising money for charity. "We all have six different charities," says Sarah. "The five other women have run at least one marathon in the past. I am the only one of the six that this will be my first marathon, so I'm really leaning on them for advice and support." Sarah is fundraising for Every Mother Counts, an international charity that focuses on improved birth outcomes and maternal mortality rates.

The Chicago runners are holding a charity fundraiser on August 29 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Rushford and Sons Brewhouse. The other five charities are Girls on the Run, the American Heart Association, Alzheimer's Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Chicago, and Camp One Step.

From first 5K runners to marathons, 1013 works to meet every runner's needs, and it's not just about the races. Sarah says of the group runs, "We're far more in it for the social aspect. If they're not training, they'll just walk with you. The social aspect is really big."

Michelle adds, "I know they're friends that I can count on, on or off the trails. It's great. You're never alone."

For more information about the 1013 Run Club, check out their website at <https://www.1013runclub.com>.



The benefits of slow running

The glory goes to two-hour marathon finishers and the Olympic sprinters, but running at any speed has documented benefits. Some studies show that twenty minutes of cardiovascular exercise, done a minimum of three days a week, improves blood pressure, cardiac health, bone density, mental health, and energy levels.

Since the 1980s, *Runner's World* columnists such as John "The Penguin" Bingham have inspired runners to tie on their sneakers at any speed. Jeff Galloway, an Olympic runner, writes about the benefits of run-walk intervals for races at every distance, including marathons.

Bingham and Galloway's programs are designed to increase stamina and prevent injury. Plus, not running to exhaustion means runners can hit the pavement more often.

For more information, check out *The Courage to Start* by John Bingham, and *Galloway's Book on Running* by Jeff Galloway. Brand-new runners can look into the "Couch to 5K" running plan, which gradually increases running intervals to get non-runners ready for their first 5K.

localtownpages

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

Publisher

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9 Industrial Road, Suite 107
Milford, MA 01757

Ad Deadline is the
14th of each month.

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Saving for retirement: Are you guessing or planning?



Mark Freeman, CEPA

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Let’s say you dream of spending your retirement mornings on a warm beach, coffee in hand, waves rolling in. To get there, you had a simple plan: save \$1 million and buy the beach house you always wanted.

But when retirement arrives,

reality hits. After accounting for keeping your current home, everyday expenses and health care, \$1 million doesn't stretch as far as you thought, and the beach house remains a dream. The problem wasn't your discipline – it was that your number was never really your number. It was arbitrary, not anchored to what your ideal retirement would actually cost.

How can you make sure your retirement number is right for you?

A solid savings goal starts with a clear picture of the retirement you want. Think through where you plan to live, whether you'll keep your current home or downsize, how much you plan to travel, if you'll help children and grandchildren financially and what health care might cost you later in life. Build a realistic monthly budget, then multiply by 12 months to find your an-

nual need. Adjust this amount for inflation until the first year of retirement.

Then, multiply that figure by 25 to get a sense of how much may be needed to save. It's a formula based on the idea of withdrawing 4% annually from your savings, assuming you retire in your mid-60s. If you need \$60,000 a year, your target is around \$1.5 million. You may need more or less depending on your lifestyle, health, unexpected expenses, Social Security benefits and other income. No single rate or strategy will work for everyone. A financial advisor can help you determine your number and strategy.

Once you know your target, the path forward becomes clearer. Here are a few tips for next steps:

Start early. The sooner you begin saving, the more time compound interest has to work in your favor. Small amounts set

aside automatically each paycheck have the opportunity to grow significantly over decades.

Live below your means. Spending less than you earn is one of the most powerful wealth-building habits. When your income rises, save and invest the difference instead of upgrading your lifestyle.

Keep your debt under control. Since credit cards and other high-interest debt can slow your progress, pay off balances monthly when possible.

Invest consistently. If your employer offers a 401(k), aim to contribute at least 10%-15% of your salary, and increase your contributions after every raise. If you max out your 401(k), a traditional IRA or Roth IRA may offer additional tax-advantaged growth (eligibility and contribution limits apply).

Boost your income when you can. Develop new skills, ask for a raise or explore a side income. Every extra dollar saved moves you closer to your goal.

The difference between a retirement you love and one full of compromises often comes down to the planning you do today. Know your real number, build a solid plan and get the right help along the way.

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

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Walk ‘n Mass Volkssport Club plans Castle Island trip this month

The Walk ‘n Mass Volkssport Club invites you to participate in the Boston—Castle Island walk route on Friday, August 28, and/or Saturday, August 29, 2026. This is a walk-at-your-own pace, just-for-fun event “in your own backyard.” The Castle Island route (choice of 6K or 11K) is specifically designed for these two days as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the club’s parent organization, AVA: America’s Walking Club.

The start point is the meeting room adjacent to the lobby in the Courtyard by Marriott – South Boston, 63R Boston St., Boston. Start anytime between 9 a.m.

-12 p.m. and finish by 3 p.m. A specially designed magnet will be given to all registered participants at this special walk event.

The 6K and 11K Castle Island walk routes start and end at the Courtyard Marriott. If you prefer to walk with a group rather than following the written directions to walk on your own, meet in the registration room at 9:30 a.m. on either Aug. 28 or 29. There are two route options for the 6K distance: one goes through Moakley Park and along the water but does not go as far as Castle Island; the other goes to Castle Island and participants take a bus to return to the Courtyard Marriott.

For further information contact Mary at 617- 387-1577 or Carol at 302-399-6334.

The Walk ‘n Mass Volkssport Club also hosts three other walk routes in Boston: Freedom Trail,

Back Bay, and Special Places/ Hidden Gems, which are available throughout the year. On August 28 and 29, you may register in person in the meeting room of the Courtyard by Marriott -

South Boston for any of these three events and then take public transportation to the respective walk route start points.

Visit www.walknmass.org for upcoming dates.

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Massachusetts real estate insights: Buyers are still making moves



Lynne Ritucci and Tim Swift

REAL ESTATE INSIGHTS

If you've been thinking about selling your home, you've probably seen headlines suggesting buyers have disappeared. While today's housing market has certainly slowed compared to the frenzy of a few years ago, the story here in Massachusetts is far more encouraging.

Across MetroWest, Greater Boston, and many surrounding communities, serious buyers are still actively searching for the right home. In towns like Holliston, Hopkinton, Ashland, Franklin, and Medway, well-priced homes that are thoughtfully prepared continue to generate strong interest. Buyers may be taking a bit more time

to make decisions, but when the right property becomes available, they're ready to act.

One of the best ways to measure buyer activity is by looking at pending home sales, properties that have gone under contract but haven't closed yet. National data shows pending sales have recently outpaced the same period during the previous two years, despite mortgage rates remaining above 6%. That tells us an important story: buyers haven't left the market, they've simply become more intentional.

We're seeing that trend reflected throughout Massachusetts. Many buyers who delayed

their move while hoping for lower interest rates are realizing that life doesn't always wait. Whether they're relocating for work, making room for a growing family, downsizing after retirement, or purchasing their first home, many have decided it's time to move forward rather than wait for the perfect rate.

Today's buyers are also among the most prepared we've seen in years. Most begin their search with financing already in place and spend weeks, sometimes months, monitoring new listings. When a home checks the right boxes, they move quickly because they know quality inventory remains limited in many local communities.

That doesn't mean every home sells overnight. Today's market is more balanced than it was during the peak of the pandemic housing boom, and buyers have become more selective. Pricing your home correctly, presenting it well, and invest-

ing in professional marketing are more important than ever. Homes that are priced appropriately and show well continue to stand out, while overpriced properties often remain on the market longer.

For Massachusetts homeowners, that's good news. Although higher mortgage rates have changed buyer behavior, they haven't eliminated demand. Limited inventory continues to support home values across much of the state, creating opportunities for sellers who understand today's market and have a well-executed strategy.

The takeaway is simple: don't let national headlines convince you that no one is buying homes. The market has evolved, but motivated buyers are still out there, and they're ready to make offers on homes that are priced and presented competitively.

If you're considering selling, the best place to start is with a

conversation about your local market. Every community is different, and understanding neighborhood trends, current buyer demand, and pricing strategies can help you make confident decisions. The right strategy can position your home to attract today's motivated buyers and help you achieve the best possible outcome.

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.

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The b.LUXE *beauty beat*

15 years later...

Fifteen years ago, we unlocked the doors to a brand new salon with a big dream, a small team, and absolutely no idea how many lives would eventually become part of our own.

Looking back, we've learned something that has very little to do with hair.

People rarely walk through our doors because they simply need a haircut, a color appointment, or a facial.

They come because something in life is changing.

Maybe it's a first date. A wedding. A new job. Senior pictures. A vacation they've been counting down to for months. Sometimes it's after having a baby. Sometimes it's after losing someone they love. Sometimes it's because they've spent months taking care of everyone else and finally decide it's time to do something for themselves.

And sometimes, they simply want to feel like themselves again.

For fifteen years, we've had the privilege of being part of those moments.

People often ask owner Heather Cohen what she's most proud of after fifteen years. Her answer is always the same.

"It isn't the renovations or the awards. It's hearing someone walk out the door saying, 'I feel like myself again.' The smile on their face is the best compliment of all."

Of course, the salon has changed too. Quite a bit, actually.

We've renovated multiple times over the years. First we doubled our space, and after the pandemic we took the biggest leap yet, expanding into the 4,000 square foot studio we call home today. Every time we grew, it wasn't because we wanted a bigger salon. It was because we wanted to create a better experience for the people who trusted us.

Looking back, we never sat down with a master plan that said, "One day we'll be a full-service beauty studio."

Most of what we've become happened because our guests kept asking for more, and we kept listening.

Someone wanted expert sk-

incare in the same place they already trusted for their hair. Someone else was looking for a makeup artist for a wedding. Curly-haired guests wanted specialists who truly understood their hair texture. Others were looking for extensions, lashes, waxing, smoothing treatments, or a little more time to relax and take care of themselves.

Instead of sending people somewhere else, we kept asking ourselves one simple question.

"Why not offer it here?"

Somewhere along the way, skincare became a big part of our story too. We realized pretty quickly that caring for someone's skin isn't all that different from caring for their hair. It's personal. It's confidence. Sometimes it's simply giving someone permission to slow down for an hour.

One of the most meaningful chapters has been creating our private wig and topper studio.

For women experiencing hair loss from medical treatment, alopecia, hormonal changes, or thinning hair, this work is about so much more than finding the right piece. It's about restoring confidence during a season when confidence can feel hard to find. Every consultation is private. Every solution is customized. Every guest is welcomed with kindness because we know these conversations matter.

Looking back, it's funny. We spent fifteen years growing, but not always in the ways we expected.

Yes, the salon got bigger.

But the best kind of growth has been watching people grow alongside us.

Our apprenticeship program has become one of the things we're proudest of. Every experienced stylist once stood at the beginning of their career, and helping new artists build confidence, learn their craft, and eventually welcome guests of their own has become one of the most rewarding parts of what we do.

There were moments over the years when we had to stop and pinch ourselves.

Editorial photo shoots. National advertising campaigns.



The Stories Behind the Chair

Television appearances. Creative projects that challenged us and reminded us there's always something new to learn.

The best part?

Every bit of that experience came right back into the salon, making us better for the guests sitting in our chairs every day.

Some of our favorite memories haven't happened inside the salon at all.

They've happened throughout our community.

Over the years we've been lucky enough to support local charities, schools, sports teams, community organizations, and businesses that make this area such a special place to live.

We're also honored to continue funding two annual scholarships for students at our sister school, the Martello Beauty Institute in Cancun, Mexico. Helping future beauty professionals begin careers of their own feels like one of the best ways we can give back to an industry that has given us so much.

When we think about the last fifteen years, we don't think first about growing larger or even the milestones.

We think about the bride who trusted us on her wedding day and still comes in for her color every six weeks.

The teenager who nervously sat in one of our chairs before her first school dance and now brings in her own children.

The guest who looked in the mirror after experiencing hair loss and smiled because she finally saw herself again.

The friendships.

The conversations.

The laughs.

The trust you've placed in us.

Those are the things that built b.LUXE.

As Heather likes to say, *"People think we've spent fifteen years building a salon. Honestly, we've spent fifteen years building relationships. The salon just kept getting bigger along the way."*

The walls have changed.

The mirrors have changed.

The heart behind them never has.

To every guest who has trusted us, celebrated life's milestones with us, laughed with us, cried with us, recommended us to a friend, or simply walked through our doors, thank you.

You are the reason we've never stood still.

Here's to the next chapter...and to the countless stories still waiting to walk through our doors.

If you're not sure where to start, our team is always happy to help. Visit us at b.LUXE Hair & Makeup Studio in Medway or learn more at bluxe.com.

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Your Money, Your Independence

When ‘I think they’re all set’ becomes ‘it’s complicated’



Glenn Brown, CFP

When meeting with new clients, we usually start with family. Conversations about kids bring great enthusiasm, but shifting to aging parents changes the mood instantly.

The responses almost always match the client’s age:

- **30s:** “I think they’re all set.”
- **40s:** “Well... it’s complicated.”
- **50s:** A heavy sigh and, “Yeah, it’s been a struggle.”

Discussing money, health, and estate planning with your parents is daunting. But delaying leaves families unprepared during a crisis, resulting in quick, sometimes irreversible decisions under emotional stress.

This isn’t about inheritance or taking away control. It’s about protecting their independence so hard-earned assets serve *their* wishes, not a medical crisis, an unwanted lifestyle or excessive taxation (looking at you, Massachusetts estate tax *cough*

money grab). Here is how to approach it in steps.

Rally your siblings first

Get on the same page with your siblings before talking to your parents. Aligning early avoids the too common, “*Your sister knows our plan,*” while telling your sister you do!

Focus on hearing and supporting their wishes, not taking control. Finally, pick a quiet time outside of major holidays with just the adult kids and parents (no spouses) to keep the conversation open and relaxed.

Open the dialogue on wellness

Start the conversation from a place of curiosity and respect. Use “I” statements to share your own thoughts rather than pressing for immediate answers. Focus first on wellness and long-term care preferences.

Would they prefer to stay in their home with professional support?

Transition to a retirement community?

What about when one passes, what should occur?

Outsource sooner than later

Waiting for a crisis to get outside help is a major mistake. This is true for home maintenance, caregiving, or financial management. Too often, older clients stubbornly insist, “*I’m not paying \$100 for a plow guy and his shovel!*” But shoveling snow, cleaning gutters and pushing a lawn mower in your 70s are widowmakers. Is saving a few

dollars worth a life-altering event?

This same mindset traps their savings. Without a distribution plan, retirees often freeze and refuse to spend on safety, convenience, or life goals out of fear. A CFP gives them permission to enjoy and spend their money with confidence, while keeping you in the role of a loving child rather than an exhausted caregiver.

Secure essential legal tools

Once preferences are clear, make sure the right legal structures are updated and funded.

A **Healthcare Proxy** names a trusted person to handle medical decisions if your parents can’t speak for themselves. Paired with a **Financial Power of Attorney**, daily bills and care choices are managed seamlessly without costly court intervention.

While many assume a Will is enough, a **Revocable Living Trust** offers critical advantages

that a Will simply cannot match:

- **Control during life:** A Will only takes effect after death. A Trust works while your parents are alive, letting a successor trustee step in immediately if they become incapacitated.
- **Control over distribution:** Rather than handing heirs a risky, lump-sum inheritance, a Trust can structure payouts over time or at specific milestone ages.
- **Control over privacy & contesting:** Wills go through public, lengthy probate court and can be contested. Trusts remain completely private and transfer assets smoothly without court delays.

(Did I mention a revocable trust is about control?)

Protecting their independence
Preparing for evolving health

needs, or the loss of a parent, spares your family from navigating an emotional crisis in the dark. By leading with empathy, collaborating with siblings, and setting up the right legal tools, you protect your parents’ autonomy and preserve peace of mind for everyone.

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 Plan-Dynamic, 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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One more show for Concerts in the Park in August

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors (www.hollistonnewcomers.org) sponsored Holliston Concerts in the Park, on Tuesday nights, 6:30-8 p.m. at

Stoddard Park this year. The final concert will take place on August 8, featuring *Colin Fields*. Bring a blanket or chair and enjoy!



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LIVING HEALTHY

Give your child the gift of clear vision this school year

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

As summer winds down, parents are busy checking off back-to-school lists—backpacks, notebooks, pencils, clothes. But one critical factor for classroom success can't be bought in a store: healthy, clear vision.

August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month, a timely reminder to prioritize kids' visual well-being. Experts estimate up to 80% of classroom learning is presented visually. Whether reading, writing, using computers, or watching the whiteboard, children's eyes work constantly. When they can't see clearly, learning becomes difficult, frustrating, and exhausting.

The hidden struggle: screenings vs. real exams

A common misconception is that children will complain if their vision is poor. In reality, kids rarely realize they have a problem—with no point of

comparison, they assume everyone sees the way they do, and simply adapt to blurry vision or eye strain.

Surprisingly, a child can pass a school vision screening and still have significant issues. Screening typically tests only distance acuity and aren't a substitute for a comprehensive eye exam. Studies show 1 in 17 preschoolers and nearly 1 in 4 school-aged children have undetected vision problems affecting their academic performance. Early diagnosis allows these conditions to be treated before they disrupt learning.

Warning signs to watch for

- Parents should watch for:
- Squinting, eye rubbing, or head tilting
 - Frequent headaches or eye strain after school
 - Sitting too close to the TV
 - Holding books or devices

very close to the face

- Losing their place or skipping lines while reading
- Covering or closing one eye to focus
- Excessive tearing, redness, or light sensitivity
- Sudden avoidance of reading or homework

Trust your instincts—if something seems off, schedule an exam.

Digital eye strain

Modern classrooms rely heavily on computers, smartboards, and tablets, which has driven a rise in Computer Vision Syndrome (Digital Eye Strain). Symptoms include blurred vision, tired or dry eyes, headaches, light sensitivity, and neck or shoulder discomfort. Screen concentration reduces our blink rate, drying out the tear film and



fatiguing the eyes.

Simple habits help: the 20-20-20 rule (every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds) relaxes focusing muscles. Kids should also blink deliberately, maintain a comfortable viewing distance, reduce glare, and take regular breaks from devices.

Notably, despite marketing claims, evidence doesn't show blue-light-blocking glasses meaningfully reduce digital eye strain. Proper viewing habits, breaks, and correcting refractive errors remain the most effective strategies.

The natural remedy: sunshine and outdoor play

One encouraging development is growing evidence that natural daylight helps reduce the risk of myopia (nearsightedness). Outdoor light exposure supports healthy eye growth, and outdoor activities encourage distance focusing rather than the near-focus demands of books and screens.

Experts recommend at least one to two hours outdoors daily—biking, playing soccer, swimming, or walking. This supports visual development while boosting physical fitness and emotional well-being. Digital devices are valuable educational tools, but shouldn't replace active outdoor play. Encouraging kids to disconnect and spend time in natural light is one of the simplest ways to promote lifelong eye health.

Safety and nutrition

This month is also a good time to focus on injury prevention. Many sports-related eye

injuries can be avoided with protective polycarbonate eyewear during practices and games. At home, keep hazardous chemicals and sharp tools out of children's reach, and teach basic safety habits like not running with pencils or scissors.

Nutrition also supports growing eyes. A diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables, leafy greens, omega-3-rich fish, eggs, and whole grains provides the vitamins and antioxidants needed for healthy retina development, tear production, and overall eye health.

A clear path to success

As the new school year begins, remember that clear vision is a cornerstone of your child's success, both academically and beyond. Early detection and treatment of vision problems can improve learning, confidence, athletic performance, and quality of life. Making a comprehensive eye exam part of your back-to-school routine is one of the most valuable investments you can make in your child's future.

At Milford Franklin Eye Center, our ophthalmologists and optometrists provide comprehensive eye care for children and adults using state-of-the-art technology. Our Children's Optical Boutique offers eyewear designed for infants, children, and teens, with an in-house lab for quick, precise service.

This school year, give your child the gift of seeing the world clearly.

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Choose to include

BY NATALEE WEBB-RUBINO,
WITH JUDITH O'GARA

Neurodivergence is often underrepresented in societal culture. Recognizing the need for inclusion rather than exclusion, Milford's Libby Lit created Unified Theater, an Adaptive Arts program at the Hopkinton Center for the Arts.

"It's for anyone," says Lit, of the adaptive classes. Theatre lovers of all abilities are welcome, but the program serves "the entire spectrum of neurodiversity, from things like ADHD and Global Development delay, to Autism and Down Syndrome." People with high level needs can participate, even alongside neurotypical players. Lit even sees a few such sibling pairs taking part.

According to Smile Givers International, "Art can provide a platform for self-expression, communication, emotional regulation, and social connections." Noah George of Ashland can attest to this. Since he has participated in HCA's Unified Theater's, Noah states he has indeed become more outgoing and confident, "I enjoy having fun with the whole group and have many friends, now."

Libby never considered working with people with disabilities until, by chance, she took a job in special education. She went on to earn her masters in Theater Education from Emerson, where, during her student teaching at Milford High, she developed a theatre arts curriculum for individuals with profound needs.

"There was a lack of opportunity for these individuals to express themselves in a way that was uniquely theirs and not scripted," says Lit, noting that many programs meant to help folks with severe needs to find gainful employment "so often, look at the disability and not the whole person, and a lot of times, these individuals end up in a job that doesn't reflect them. These are actual people

with actual interests, and we can build on those interests."

Hopedale's Kelsie Duest, who has Down Syndrome, loves to dance, and she shines as a Unified Theater performer. Her Mom Sharon expressed, with emotion, how the program also gives caretakers the opportunity to unite. "It's nice to be surrounded with like parents. We bond and build our sense of community together" she voiced.

Lit passionately rejects a one-size-fits-all approach to arts programming for people who have severe needs, as they, like everyone else, have a breadth of personalities. The Unified Arts program, she says, "honors the individual and their form of self-expression. We don't just have singers, we have pianists, percussionists, we have a person who works backstage." Participants can freely be themselves, and many, she says, take their craft very seriously.

Andy Pandey, from Franklin, for example, became Libby's Associate Director for his backstage skills. Working with him, Libby discovered Andy's writing talent, and she's now planning to have him do some script writing for their next show in December. Andy's Mom, Jaya, says that it puts a smile on her face watching her son participate.

"They get to put their whole heart into this production they make themselves, and in the end, you get something made by them, uniquely for them, that honors their contribution to society," says Lit.

Heart was certainly evident as Sam Cerulli of Holliston gave an emotional performance of Bill Withers' "Lean on Me," at June's "Put A Little Love In Your Heart" production. The entire cast joined her on stage with the audience chanting along in a moving, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Unified Theater and its core principle, "Choose to Include" creates more accessible and equitable



Hopedale Kelsie Duest and Mom Sharon
Kelsie Duest, who loves to dance, is shown here with her mom, Sharon. Of Hopedale, each find the Unified Arts program rewarding.



On the left is Sam Cerulli, shown with her sister, Maddie, both from Holliston. Sam is a singer and actor in the HCA Unified Theater program, an Adaptive Arts program that gives performers a chance to express their true selves.

opportunities in the arts for people with disabilities and neurodiversity.

"My hope with this Adaptive Arts program is that all people who are interested in the arts have fair and equitable access to the arts. It's time we start looking at the opportunities and the growth the arts can provide," says Libby, who says that although writing adaptive curriculum can be challenging, working with these arts students is the greatest joy of her life.

For more information on Unified Theater, or to volunteer, email Libby at libby@hopartscenter.org or contact Hopkinton Center for Performing Arts at 508-435-9222 or info@HopArtsCenter.org.



Libby Lit, who created the Unified Theater program at the HCA, is shown with her associate director and script writer Andy Pandey, of Franklin, and his mom, Jaya.

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News from Town Manager

Note from Frank Gervasio, Holliston Town Manager:

“The Town has identified an incredibly serious reporting issue involving the Capital Expenditure Fund that has resulted in the fund being overcommitted - not overspent. At this time, there is no immediate risk to the Town’s ability to meet its financial obligations, and we are taking proactive steps to fully understand and address the matter. We have notified our independent auditors and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue’s Division of Local Services, and we are working to retain an independent third party to conduct a comprehensive review.

My priority is ensuring a thorough, transparent process while safeguarding the Town’s financial resources - which ultimately belong to our taxpayers.

I’d like to reiterate, there is no money “missing” or misappropriated - this is a financial reporting error that has resulted in an overcommitment of the Town’s capital fund. Anyone with questions or concerns is welcome to contact the Town Manager’s office and to monitor the website/social media channels for further updates.

Among other communications, an upcoming HCAT segment will also provide an overview of this matter.”

New School Superintendent
Holliston Public Schools’ new superintendent, Kimo Carter, started on July 1, 2026. Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Howie Barber also started July 15, 2026 – the team at Town Hall look forward to working with them!

Holliston High School Building Project
Per Massachusetts School Building Association’s (MSBA) guidelines, a School Building Committee has formed, including:

- Select Board member: Ben Sparrell
- School Committee member: Frank Ogura
- Two School Committee appointments (parent or educator with MSBA experience): Lynn Ritucci and Andrew Cunneen
- Resident 65+: Deb Moore
- Two residents with background in architecture, engineering or construction: Barbara Ryan and Christy Oppen
- Non-voting school staff: Frank Gervasio, Kimo Carter, James Keast (Facilities Director), David List (High School Principal), and Howie Barber

(Asst. Superintendent of Finance and Operations)
The new committee met on July 21 with the goal of electing a chair by July 31. The committee elected Barbara Ryan as its chair.
Following this, the next two deadlines for the high school project will be completing an educational profile questionnaire and an online enrollment projection, both due August 31.

After that, Gervasio says, “November 27 is the deadline for an enrollment meeting with the MSBA, and by that date, we’ll also need to provide maintenance and capital planning information.”

Town Meeting
Fall Town Meeting 2026 will take place on October 19, 2026, 7 p.m. Holliston High School auditorium. Anyone interested in submitting a citizen’s petition should contact the Town Clerk’s office.

Woodland Street Bike Park update
Initially funded with an engineering study for \$72K in October 2025, the Woodland St. Bike Park project was approved \$650K for construction by the town in May 2026.

“We are hopeful construction will be wrapped up for that project in November.
For updates, visit www.hollistonbikepark.org.

DPW site
“We are still hoping to take ownership of the Cross Street site sometime in August,” says Gervasio, explaining the Town is waiting to hear more from the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which might be able to help get initial testing, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). “The EPA can’t help us until we have outright ownership of the property. Hopefully in the next 3-4 weeks we’ll have a better picture,” he said at press time.

Habitat for Humanity Accepting Applications for 550 Concord St. (through August 3)

Habitat for Humanity Metrowest/Greater Worcester is accepting applications for a home ownership opportunity for a 3-bedroom, one bath home at 550 Concord St., Holliston.

The selection will be made through a state-approved lot-

Flagg School lot project update (Linden Street)

Construction began on this project in mid-July after \$730K was approved at Fall Town Meeting.
“Fall Town Meeting supported \$730K in Community Preservation funding for the construction of a new basketball court and track in (was) a vacant grass space,” said Gervasio, who expected most of the work would be completed by school’s start.
Mark Frank and James Keast are managing this project.



Shown is an early architectural rendering of the vision for Flagg Park by Inge Daniels.

Holliston residents needed for board & committee vacancies

“Some committees meet monthly, some meet (less often), but the town relies heavily on volunteers. It’s sort of the trademark of small-town government in Massachusetts,” says Gervasio, “I’m very biased, but I think it can be a very rewarding experience.”

At press time, openings included:

Committee/Commission	Term
Agricultural Commission.....	3 yr.
Cable Advisory Committee - 2 Positions.....	None
Community Farm Advisory Committee	1 yr
Community Farm Advisory Committee - 2 Positions	2 yr.
Conservation Commission	3 yr.
Council on Aging.....	3 yr.
Disability Advisory Committee - 2 Positions	None
Envisioning Future Holliston (Health & Human Svcs.).....	2 yr.
Historical Commission	3 yr.
Housing Trust - 3 Positions	1 yr. & 2 yr.
Open Space Committee - 2 Positions.....	2 yr.
Policy Advisory Committee - 4 Positions	
1 Appt. by Select Board	3 yr.
1 Appt. by COA.....	2 yr.
1 Appt. by YFS.....	3 Yr.
1 Appt. by School Comm.....	2 yr.
Sustainable Waste Committee - 5 Positions	3 yr.
Taxation Aid Committee - 2 Positions	1 yr. & 2 yr.
Zoning Board of Appeals - 2 Associate Positions	1 yr.

tery process, with the lottery taking place on Sept. 3. Scroll down under the town website’s “News” section for details.

New Director of Planning and Community Development

The town has hired a New Director of Planning and Com-

munity Development, starting August 13.

“The Town is indebted to Karen Sherman for her over 25 years of service to our community, and we wish her all the best in her retirement,” says Gervasio.

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Next to Gaetano's Bakery

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:

The Center Lunch, Monday & Wednesday: The menu is on our website or pick up a copy at The Center. <https://www.townofholliston.us/176/Senior-Center-The-Center> Each meal is \$5. Register at 508-429-0622 two business days ahead.

During your birthday month one FREE lunch is provided to help you celebrate. Excludes special luncheons.

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.

August 4: Are there any superstitions that you believe in?

Senior Tax Work-Off Program:

The Town of Holliston has approved a program to help low-income older adults who meet certain eligibility requirements to lower their property taxes (by up to \$1,500) by volunteering their time in the district in various roles. This program is open to Town of Holliston residents ONLY.

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.



The Center. Photo by Wendy Watkins

Hearing Aid Cleanings: with Hopkinton Audiology Services, August 19, please register at 508-429-0622.

Dementia-Friendly Free Lunch & Learn, TUESDAY, July 28, 12-1 p.m.: Hand Drumming: The Holliston and Sherborn COAs have partnered on this program, funded by Bay State Federal Savings Bank Charitable Foundation. Sher-

born Town Hall, 2nd floor, 19 Washington Street. To register and RSVP for Lunch: Call 508-429-0622.

Durable Medical Equipment Loans: The Center loans durable medical equipment by appointment ONLY. All equipment MUST be cleaned & sanitized prior to returning.

The Center accepts donated equipment in CLEAN, LIKE-NEW condition. Please call first!

Farmers' Market Coupons:

Each year, The Center receives a limited number of Farmer's Market coupons for adults aged 60+ who meet income eligibility requirements. These coupons are typically available late July and can be used at several farmer's markets, including Holliston, Hopkinton, Millis, and more.

Watercolor Painting Class: Wednesday, August 5 & 19, 1 p.m.: (limit 12 sign up early!) Instructor Liz de Lemos, apron recommended. Sign up at 508-429-0622.

Good as New Garage Sale is Coming, Saturday, September 12, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

All proceeds benefit The Center's programs, classes and events.

Donation drop off dates: August 25 & 27 and September 1 & 3 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

All donated items must be in good or new condition and limited in size.

Volunteers are needed! Help is also needed on donation days August, Friday, September 11 and Saturday, September 12 for set up, staffing sales areas, food preparation and service. Please email Sheila to volunteer: sheiladjoslin@gmail.com.

A Cappella Singers now known as Allegra Commonwealth Singers

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. - On Monday evenings, September through April, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Framingham fills with the familiar sounds of chatter, laughter, and treble voices blending into something bigger than the sum of their parts. For the chorus long known as The A Cappella Singers, those weekly gatherings have always been about more than music alone: they are about community, resilience, and the joy of making harmony together.

Now, the group is beginning a new chapter under a new name: "Allegra Commonwealth Singers."

President Beatrice Wood says the change reflects both the ensemble's roots and its aspirations. "After extensive brainstorming, and then ranked-choice voting, this was the name that prevailed. We like that the initials stay the same, so it honors who we've been while also describing who we are more clearly," she said. "Allegra carries the feeling of joy and musical energy, and Commonwealth speaks to our Massachusetts home, our broader community,

and the shared spirit that connects us as singers."

Roots, Change, and Growth

The chorus, under the direction of Brett Abigaña since last year, has long been part of the MetroWest arts landscape, originating in Natick in 1963 and presenting concerts there and in nearby towns such as Wellesley and Framingham. During the earliest days when the group's name was coined, the chorus performed strictly a cappella pieces. Over the years, the group has adapted to changing schedules, changing needs, and changing times, and its repertoire today is mostly accompanied by piano.

According to Wood, there are a couple of other exciting opportunities on the horizon for the chorus beyond the traditional concerts: planning a 2027 summer tour in Ireland, and a 2028 workshop for young composers of choral music. Community singers interested in joining the trip next year are urged to contact the chorus prior to August 23, 2026.

An Open Invitation

While the name is changing, the heart of the chorus remains

the same - a community of singers committed to performing choral music together and sharing that joy with others.

Interested adult voices in the treble range (SSAA) are welcome to attend guest nights, on September 7, 14, and 21 where the December concert

repertoire will be introduced. Rehearsals are Monday nights, 7-9 p.m. at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 3 Maple Street, Framingham. There is no formal audition - singers are heard for voice placement, ability to match pitch, and capability to read music.

The new website is coming soon - until then, the public should continue to use the legacy name and reach out for more information as follows: Visit theacappellasingers.org Email: info@theacappellasingers.org Phone: 774-231-8508

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Are your kids enrolled in Holliston Public Schools?



If you have kids in the Holliston Public School system, please take 5 minutes to complete HDAAC's 2026 Parent Survey. Your feedback will help with student, parent, and overall community education for the next 2 years.

Scan the QR code or type



forms.gle/4RWKWUT33mgvYRqV9 into a web browser.

HCA Artist Collective seeking art to display at second campus

The HCA Artist Collective at Hopkinton Center for the Arts is seeking artwork inspired by the "Four Seasons" to display in an exhibition at HCA's second campus at 34 Hayden Rowe St., Hopkinton.

Have you created artwork that is inspired by a season? Everything from a landscape full of snow, or autumn leaves - and everything in between. All artists are invited, with a submission deadline of August 17. For submission details, visit <https://tinyurl.com/HCAFourSeasons>.

The exhibit, HCA Puzzled, is currently on display now through August 27 in the Lotvin Family Gallery www.hopartscenter.org/lotvin-gallery at HCA's 98 Hayden Rowe St. location. Featured artists in this exhibit use patterns, shapes, and elements to create unified works of art. Their creative process involves combining individual elements—each with its own size, texture, and color—to construct something greater than the sum of its parts.

Keith Buday receives MASBO 2026 John F. Conway Distinguished Service Award

Statewide association of school business officials honors the former Holliston Public Schools Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

The Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) has presented the 2026 John F. Conway Distinguished Service Award to Keith Buday, retired Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations in the Holliston Public Schools. Mr. Buday received the award at the association's 60th Annual Institute in Falmouth.

The award recognizes the accomplishments of a MASBO member who has enhanced the effectiveness of their school district in fulfilling its educational mission. This award is sponsored this year by KenMark / Visual Edge IT. It includes a \$1,500 contribution to the district in honor of the recipient.



David Jordan, the current Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations in the Holliston Public Schools, nominated Mr. Buday, commending his 24 years of service to the school district and stating that "Keith has always put students and learning at the front of all of his decisions and actions."

In his nomination, Mr. Jordan described Mr. Buday's record of successfully advocating for for school funding, managing difficult budgets during economic downturns, overseeing facilities renovations, and ensuring the safe reopening of schools during the pandemic, among other

accomplishments.

In presenting the award, MASBO Executive Director Margaret Driscoll said about Mr. Buday, "Known as both tough and fair, a trusted partner in negotiations, and a steady resource for colleagues, Keith has built a legacy of trust and respect. Even as his full-time work tapers off, that commitment continues through mentorship and guidance."

About MASBO
The Massachusetts As-

sociation of School Business Officials (MASBO) is a professional association for finance and operations professionals employed by public education institutions in Massachusetts. We provide opportunities for our members to engage in professional development, networking, collaboration, and advocacy, in support of high-quality teaching and learning in K-12 public school districts throughout the Commonwealth. For more information, visit www.masbo.org.

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SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones

Town celebration of US' 250th simple, poignant

On the sweltering hot, muggy day of July 4, 2026, dozens of Hollistonians turned out to recognize our nation's 250th year with a recitation of The Declaration of Independence

by town figures of note, who took turns reading portions of the document. With just a bit of period costume, a color guard, and a finish of Taps, attendees were able to focus on the words

and the intent of our founding fathers, some remarking on the timelessness of the writ's wording.

-J.D. O'Gara



Grand Prize Winner enjoys a day at Southwick's Zoo



Grand Prize winner Chelsea T. recently redeemed her four-pack of tickets to Southwick's Zoo, enjoying a memorable day with her extended family. Pictured above, Chelsea is the second from the right.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRAND PRIZE & RUNNER UP WINNERS

who correctly identified all **10 HIDDEN ANIMALS** in our May newspapers to win general admission tickets to **Southwick's Zoo**

GRAND PRIZE WINNER - Wachusett Free Press Chelsea T.

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Upton & Mendon Free Press.....	David C.	Hopedale Local Town Pages.....	Lisa B.
Milford Free Press.....	Paulo Sergio P.	Holliston Local Town Pages.....	Alan M.
The Yankee Express - South.....	Emily C.	Franklin Local Town Pages.....	Amanda G.
The Yankee Express - North.....	Hale S.	Blackstone Valley Express - South.....	April H.
Norwood Local Town Pages.....	Kelly A.	Blackstone Valley Express - North.....	Emilia S.
Norfolk & Wrentham Local Town Pages.....	Joseph C.	Bellingham Bulletin.....	Scott R.
Natick Local Town Pages.....	Meg W.	Ashland Local Town Pages.....	Suzanne M.

Thank you to all our readers for your enthusiastic participation in making this contest a fun and successful community event!

LEMUR PORCUPINE GIRAFFE CAMEL ZEBRA RHINO TURTLE OSTRICH TIGER SNAKE

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Holliston youth awarded Kids World Record



A child from Holliston, Mass., has earned recognition by Kids World Records for Most Jumping Jacks In 1 Minute, achieving this milestone on May 16, 2026.

Achievements like this highlight the capabilities of young people in Holliston, demonstrating what local youth can accomplish through focus and determination.

Cedric is a multi-talented kid

who plays football, basketball, lacrosse, baseball, and trumpet, speaks fluent French, and loves geography, science, gardening, and video games!

“Kids World Records now reaches young achievers in 63 countries, making it one of the fastest-growing global platforms celebrating children’s achievements,” said Emile Hoffman, CEO of Kids World Records. “We recently

released our 2026 edition - the sixth book published by our company - and we’re thrilled to welcome Cedric into the expanding KWR family. This attempt will be featured in our 2027 edition, and we hope it will inspire even more kids around the world to dream big and break records.”

For more information on Kids World Records, visit www.kidsworldrecords.com.

Sheriff Koutoujian recognized by Universidad de Alcalá presented with the university’s Honorary Silver Medal

BILLERICA, Mass. – Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office was recently honored for pioneering and innovative leadership in public service.

Recognizing his 15 years of work in building public-private partnerships, Spain’s Universidad de Alcalá presented Sheriff Koutoujian with the university’s Honorary Silver Medal for the 2025-26 academic year.

The Universidad de Alcalá was founded in 1499 by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros to be the crown jewel of the Spanish higher education system. Its students over the centuries have included luminaries such as the writer Antonio de Nebrija, physician Francisco Valles de Covarrubias, and two saints in Ignatius of Loyola and Juan de la Cruz.

Sheriff Koutoujian was honored alongside Ambassador Alfredo Martínez Serrano, Spain’s emissary to Canada, as well as Belén Garijo, the CEO of Sanofi Pharmaceuticals and alumnae of the Universidad de Alcalá. University Rector José Vicente Saz presented the Silver Honorary Award to Sheriff Koutoujian and spoke to his enduring efforts to promote the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office locally and globally.

“It was a pleasure to honor Sheriff Koutoujian as this year’s Silver Honorary Medal recipient on behalf of the Universidad de Alcalá,” said Rector José Vicente Saz. “His dedication to academic partnerships, men-

torship and scholarship, and the universal values of public service made him a deserving honoree. We are proud to recognize his accomplishments from Massachusetts to Madrid.”

In addition to receiving the medal during a formal ceremony, the Sheriff also spoke on lessons of leadership in public service at a conference organized by the university and the Franklin-UAH Institute, an academic program focused on North American studies.

“I am incredibly humbled to be presented with the prestigious Silver Honorary medal,” said Sheriff Koutoujian. “Public service isn’t a job, it’s a calling. I never expected that calling would bring me honors from a Spanish university, but I did always know it was the most noble thing I could do with my life. From serving as a bar advocate, an assistant district attorney, a state legislator and now as sheriff, I have never lost the sense of reverence for public service that I learned from two of the best civil servants I have known: my parents Connie and Peter. I’ve been fortunate to have a career that has allowed me to help my neighbors, serve my community and hopefully make the Commonwealth a better, healthier place to live.”

To learn more about Sheriff Koutoujian and the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office, please visit www.middlesexsheriff.org.

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Finding unity in diversity

BY JUDITH DORATO O'GARA

Every Tuesday morning, the local Baha'i community hosts a Zoom interfaith devotional via Zoom, but occasionally, the spiritual seekers meet up in person for brunch and camaraderie. Last month, folks gathered in the picnic area of Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Holliston to share psalms, passages, poems, and even just deep thoughts with their neighbors of various faiths.

"We listen to each other, accept each other, and we don't try to talk anybody into anything or proselytize," Fran Pollitt, a member of the Baha'i faith, explains, "We just share our spiritual feelings together for an hour every Tuesday." The concept of unity is central to her faith tradition, she says.

"We open our hearts," says Siri Karam Singh Khalsa, a practicing Sikh and self-described seeker, with a sense of humor who was "raised Jewish in a Protestant boarding school, went to a Quaker college where a lot of my friends became Baha'i and I became a Sikh." He adds, "We love people praying in a different way, but it's really not all that different."

"Unity in diversity," chimes

in Arthur Burton, a peace activist, originally from Bulgaria, who has traveled and prayed with many different groups.

"I think the most important thing we can do in this day in age is to strive for unity, because there is so much division, to create a community that is loving and honest with each other, not trying to split us apart," says Paula Haas, also Baha'i, who explains that the Tuesday group draws folks from different faiths, but also has connections to another group, the Metrowest Interfaith Community, also out of the Fatima Shrine.

Father Carl Chudy, a Roman Catholic priest, coordinates that Metrowest Interfaith Community, and he also attends the Baha'i Tuesday group.

"It's an extraordinary time to come together, not only to heal the wounds of divisions, but also, I think faith is a bridge, and even though there are very negative experiences of institutional religion, I'm a better Roman Catholic because of my engagement and friendship with Muslims, my Protestant friends, my Baha'i and Jewish friends, and so on. In our encounter with one another, we look to listen to what inspires each other and oftentimes the

things that inspire each other inspire all of us," says Chudy.

"I find the biggest hurdle of accepting other people is the fear of what they don't even know, and the more you talk to other people you realize we're more the same than we are different," says Kathy Spinazzola, a Catholic participating for the first time.

Marta Bachman, also Catholic and new to the gathering, was inspired share in faith in by her brother, who is now an Adventist. "He's always talked about learning about other religions to help him and so he can worship with his fellow man," she says.

Similarly, newcomer Rebecca Hecht joined in for the first time, because she is "interested in any kind of prayers and deepening, in spiritual connection."

First time participant Diane Evans offers, "Although I am a committed Catholic, I don't believe that is the only way. I welcome hearing what other people say, what they think. We all want the same thing for our families, for ourselves."

After sharing inspirations, participants parted in a sense of peace, with hearts a little closer together. "It makes me



Every Tuesday, the local Baha'i community hosts Tuesday morning interfaith devotions on Zoom, inviting people of all faiths to share prayers and inspiration. Last month, the group met in person at Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Holliston.

very optimistic about the future," says Haas.

To learn more about the Tuesday morning devotions,

call Paula at 816-536-6623.

To learn more about the Metrowest Interfaith Community, visit www.hollistoninterfaith.org.

American Legion Post 47 & VFW Post 8507 to Mark 25 years since 9/11

Holliston American Legion Post 47 and Holliston VFW Post 8507 will collaborate to remember the tragic events that took place on September 11, 2001, 25 years ago.

The program will start at 0830 hours on 9/11 and will consist of the following: greeting, prayer, speaker LTC. Barbara Ryan U.S. Army (ret),

extended moment of silence, rifle salute, TAPS and the singing by everyone of "God Bless America."

On September 13, American Legion Post 47 will conduct its Annual 9/11 Awards for Holliston Police, Fire and EMS who have gone above and beyond. Program and agenda TBD.

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CALENDAR

August 3

Morning Book Club, 11 a.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, “The Art Thief,” by Michael Finkel

August 4

The Legacy of Julia Child’s Kitchen with Smithsonian Curator Paula J. Johnson, , 2-3 p.m., presented by Holliston Public Library, Please Register for this online program. www.hollistonlibrary.org

HCA Summer Concert Series: Stoney’s Wicked Din, 11 a.m., Hopkinton Center for the Arts, 98 Hayden Rowe, Hopkinton, www.hopartscenter.org

August 4

Holliston Farmers Market, 3-7 p.m., 24 Water St., Holliston, music by Brady Wells, beer garden, food trucks, find schedule at <https://thewsk.org/farmers-market-schedule> or find Holliston Farmers Market on Facebook for updates.

Family Night at the Bandstand: Brass Attack! Sounds of Chicago, Blood Sweat & Tears and more, Corner of Congress & Walnut Streets, Milford

August 5

ABMI-TV Concerts on the Grass, 6:30 -8:30 p.m., Mendon Town Beach, 45 Taft Ave., Mendon, *Vinyl Echo* (power trio), 6:30-7:30 p.m. pony rides.

August 8

Concerts in the Park: Colin Fields, 6:30-8 p.m., Stoddard Park, sponsored by Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors, www.hollistonnewcomers.org

August 10

Celebrating America’s 250th: “Act Worthy of Yourself” with author Salina B. Baker, 7-8 p.m., Please Register for this online program. www.hollistonlibrary.org

August 11

Mystery Book Club, 11 a.m.- 12:30 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, “The Secret History” by Donna Tartt

Holliston Farmers Market, 3-7 p.m., 24 Water St., Holliston, music by Alicia Marinelli, beer garden, food trucks, find schedule at <https://thewsk.org/farmers-market-schedule> or find Holliston Farmers Market on Facebook for updates.

Family Night at the Bandstand: Carolyn Rae & The Rumors, 7 p.m., Corner of Congress & Walnut Streets, Milford

August 12

Summer Sounds: Off Campus, 5 p.m., Bellforge Arts Center, Bellforge Arts Center, 45 Hospital Rd., Medfield, free but please register, www.bellforge.org. Three rising Massachusetts bands.

ABMI-TV Concerts on the Grass, 6:30 -8:30 p.m., Mendon Town Beach, 45 Taft Ave., Mendon, *Alexander’s Jazztime Band*, 6:30-7:30 p.m. pony rides.

August 15

Claflin Hill Symphony Summer Winds on the Road, 6:30 p.m., Blair Square, Holliston, rain or shine

Rushford & Hollipride Open Mic Night, 6 p.m. sign up, 6:30 performance, Rushford & Sons, 747 Washington St., Ste. A, Holliston

August 17

History Book Club, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, “Every Living Thing: The Great and Deadly Race to Know All Life,” by Jason Roberts

August 18

Tuesday Matinee, 12:30 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, “Wicked for Good,” PG (2025)

Holliston Farmers Market, 3-7 p.m., 24 Water St., Holliston, music by Ricardo Barrazza, Bouncy House by Busy Bee Jumpers, beer garden, food trucks, find schedule at <https://thewsk.org/farmers-market-schedule> or find Holliston Farmers Market on Facebook for updates.

Family Night at the Bandstand: The Claflin Symphony Summer Winds, 7 p.m., Corner of Congress & Walnut Streets, Milford

August 19

Understanding A.I and Misinformation - A Conversation with Journalist Philip Ei, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, Please Register for this live program. www.hollistonlibrary.org

August 21

Children’s End of Summer Reading Ice Cream Party, 3-4:45 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, bring your reading log and make a sundae!

August 24

Teen Zone Summer Celebration, 3-4 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston, includes frozen treats, Ninendo Switch and a fun raffle for gift certificates to local businesses

August 25

Holliston Farmers Market, 3-7 p.m., 24 Water St., Holliston, music by Brady Wells, beer garden, food trucks, find schedule at <https://thewsk.org/farmers-market-schedule> or find Holliston Farmers Market on Facebook for updates.

Donation Drop-Off for Good-as-new Garage Sale (9/12) at The Center, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., The Center, 150 Goulding St., Holliston

When Trees Testify: Reclaiming America’s Black Botanical Legacy with Brenda Montgomery, 2-3 p.m., presented by Holliston Public Library, Please register for this online program, www.hollistonlibrary.org

August 26

First day of school grades 1-12, Holliston Public Schools **Creative Writing Group**, 6:30-7:45 p.m., Holliston Public Library, 752 Washington St., Holliston

August 27

Donation Drop-Off for Good-as-new Garage Sale (9/12) at The Center, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., The Center, 150 Goulding St., Holliston

August 28

First day of school, Pre-K, K, Holliston Public Schools **Downtown After Dark**, dusk, Downtown Ashland, community block party

August 27

High Altitudes and High Stakes: A Miss Marple Mystery with Lucy Foley, 2-3 p.m., presented by Holliston Public Library, Please Register for this online program. www.hollistonlibrary.org

August 29

1013 Run Club fundraiser, 5-8 p.m., Rushford & sons, 747 Washington St., Ste. A, Holliston, support Chicago Marathon runners from Holliston raising money for charity.

SAFE Coalition International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) events, 9-11 a.m., town commons and town hall lawns in Franklin, Medway, Norfolk, Wrentham and Millis. Anyone can attend and plant flags. Sign up at safecoalitionma.org/ioad.

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Southwick’s Zoo announces passing of white rhino Thelma

MENDON, Mass. – It is with profound sadness that we share difficult news with our zoo community. On Tuesday, June 30, 2026, we unexpectedly lost Thelma, one of our cherished white rhinoceroses. This loss has deeply affected our animal care staff, zoo team, and all who consider Southwick’s Zoo family. Louise, Thelma’s longtime

companion, is currently receiving veterinary care and continues to show encouraging signs of improvement. Out of an abundance of caution, she will remain off exhibit while our veterinary team continues to monitor her closely and completes additional testing. To better understand the circumstances surrounding Thel-

ma’s passing, an experienced pathology team from Tufts Veterinary Hospital performed a comprehensive necropsy. We are also grateful for the support and collaboration of veterinary professionals from Capron Park

RHINO

continued on page 19

Holliston Public Library

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www.hollistonlibrary.org

ADULT PROGRAMS

Morning Book Club, Monday, August 3: 11-12:30 p.m.

Please register for the Zoom Link.

“The Art Thief” by Michael Finkel.

The Legacy of Julia Child’s Kitchen with Smithsonian Curator Paula J. Johnson, August 4, 2-3 p.m.

Please Register for this online program.

Join us for a conversation that’s sure to warm your heart (and make your stomach rumble), as we delve into the legacy of cooking icon Julia Child with Smithsonian curator and public historian Paula J. Johnson, author of “Julia Child’s Kitchen: The Design, Tools, Stories, and Legacy of an Iconic Space.”

Julia Child’s 20’ x 14’ kitchen was a serious workspace and recipe testing lab that exuded a sense of mid century homey comfort. It has been on display at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., for most of the past 23 years, and it’s a top destination.

Celebrating America’s 250th: “Act Worthy of Yourselves” with author Salina B. Baker Monday, August 10, 7-8 p.m.

Please Register for this online program.

We’re thrilled to welcome author Salina B. Baker who will be discussing her book, “Act Worthy of Yourselves: A Novel of Dr. Joseph Warren and an American Rebellion.” This historical biographical novel brings Bostonian Dr. Joseph Warren to life in vivid, intimate detail—a healer who became a warrior, a scholar who became a revolutionary, and a man whose courage helped give birth to a nation.

Mystery Book Club, Tuesday, August 11, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

“The Secret History” by Donna Tartt.

History Book Club, Monday, August 17 10:30-11:30 a.m.

“Every Living Thing: The Great and Deadly Race to Know All Life,” by Jason Roberts.

Tuesday Matinee, Tuesday, August 18, 12:30-2 p.m.

This month’s showing is *Wicked for Good*. Running time 2 hours 17 minutes. Rated PG (2025).

Understanding A.I and Misinformation- A Conversation with Journalist Philip Eil

Wednesday, August 19, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Please Register for this live program.

The U.S. has long been

plagued by misinformation. But with the widespread use of AI, the problem has been supercharged: Deepfakes. AI-manipulated photos. AI-generated videos. Our info ecosystem is now inundated with inaccurate or misleading AI-generated content — and there’s no end in sight.

Join journalist Philip Eil for a session about AI, the role it plays in creating and spreading misinformation, and how you can stay vigilant against its ill effects.

When Trees Testify: Reclaiming America’s Black Botanical Legacy, with Beronda Montgomery

Tuesday, August 25 2-3 p.m. Please register for this online program.

Join us for a riveting conversation with award-winning biologist Beronda Montgomery as we discuss her book, *When Trees Testify: Science, Wisdom, History, and America’s Black Botanical Legacy*.

The histories of trees in America are also the histories of Black Americans. In *When Trees Testify*, award-winning plant biologist Beronda L. Montgomery explores the ways seven trees, as well as the cotton shrub, are intertwined with Black history and culture.

Creative Writing Group, Wednesday, August 26, 6:30-7:45 p.m.

High Altitudes and High



Holliston Public Library. Photo by Wendy Watkins

Stakes: A Miss Marple Mystery with Lucy Foley

Thursday, August 27, 2-3 p.m. Please Register for this online program.

Join us for a thrilling conversation with acclaimed author Lucy Foley as we delve into her brand-new Miss Marple mystery, “Murder at the Grand Alpine Hotel.”

CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS Children’s End of Summer Reading ICE CREAM PARTY! Friday, August 21, 3-4:45 p.m.

Celebrate the end of Summer Reading with our annual

Ice Cream Party! Bring your reading log and make a sundae!

Teen Zone Summer Celebration, Monday, August 24, 3-4:30 p.m.

Join us for frozen treats and Nintendo Switch to celebrate Summer ‘26! It’s also your last day to enter the Teen Zone Summer Raffle for the chance to win cool gift certificates from local businesses!

Programs are largely supported by the Friends of the Holliston Library. To donate or become a member, please visit www.hollistonlibrary.org.

RHINO

continued from page 18

Zoo, Roger Williams Park Zoo, and Dr. Bergman of Wilder-ness Wildlife Center in Pennsylvania. Our own veterinary team, Dr. Samantha King and Dr. Peter Brewer, along with our dedicated hoofstock keepers and the entire Southwick’s Zoo staff, have worked tirelessly throughout this process to ensure Louise receives the highest level of care.

Our rhinos have played a special role in connecting guests with wildlife through educational experiences offered by our nonprofit conservation partner, EARTH Ltd. Thelma

was an extraordinary ambassador for her species. Through her calm demeanor and gentle personality, she inspired countless visitors to learn about rhino conservation and the challenges wild rhino populations face, helping to raise meaningful support for rhino conservation initiatives in southern Africa.

Our hearts are heavy as we mourn Thelma, and our team remains focused on Louise’s recovery. We are awaiting the final pathology results, which may provide additional information about the cause of Thelma’s passing and help guide Louise’s ongoing care. Until our veterinary team is confident that she has been fully evaluated and cleared,



Louise will remain off exhibit. We will continue to provide updates as additional information becomes available.

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Exsultet! to hold auditions August 31



Do you love to sing? Then we would love to meet you! We are Exsultet!— a fun-loving, women’s choral group made up of around twenty musicians. We love making music and challenging ourselves to present concerts which enlighten and entertain. Exsultet! sings a repertoire of choral literature spanning musical periods and cultures and incorporates readings and poetry into our performances.

Exsultet! has openings for Sopranos and Altos for the 2026-2027 season. Auditions will take place on Monday, August 31 at 7 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 725 Washington Street, Holliston, Mass.

- Exsultet! rehearsals for the 2026-2027 Season will be on Monday nights from 7-9



p.m. in preparation for our two concert weekends. We typically perform our Holiday Concert in early December and our Spring Concert in April/May.

- To audition, download the audition piece, O Little Town of Bethlehem from our website, www.exsultet.us, and prepare to rehearse and sing it with the group. At the end of rehearsal, you will be asked to sing your part in a trio or quartet. Come prepared to sing, work hard, and have fun!
- Please contact Carrie Klimeczko at carrie7975@gmail.com for more information.

Friends of Winthrop Lake (FOWL) launches effort to restore Holliston’s beloved lake

HOLLISTON, Mass. — A new non-profit charity, Friends of Winthrop Lake (FOWL), has officially launched in Holliston with a mission to restore and preserve Lake Winthrop for the enjoyment of the entire community for years to come.

FOWL is a recognized 501(c)(3) corporation, allowing community contributions to be tax-deductible. This designation also allows for donations from Donor Advised Funds (DAF) investment accounts. (The organization is solely dedicated to the well-being of the cherished local landmark.

The initiative has already gained significant traction. FOWL was recently awarded a generous \$35,000 grant through the Holliston Community Preservation Committee (CPC). This funding will support a Public-Private Partnership initiative aimed at conducting a comprehensive “health check” of the lake.



A recent generous donation from Holliston Newcomers and Neighbors will also help FOWL with its efforts.

These grants, combined with essential community donations, will enable FOWL to hire an internationally recognized environmental engineering firm, TRC, to lead the assessment. This expert evaluation will be thorough, including detailed water quality testing, sediment analysis, and identification and mapping of both invasive and native aquatic plant life.

The critical data gathered from this extensive 2026 study will serve as the foundation for building a comprehensive short-term and long-term lake management plan. This strategic approach aims to guide future restoration efforts and

ensure the lake’s health and vitality for generations.

“We are incredibly excited about the support we’ve received so far from Holliston’s board and committees and the greater Holliston community,” said Greg McEwen, a representative for FOWL. “The CPC grant is a game-changer and shows the community’s commitment to preserving this vital natural resource. The invasive weeds were identified as major concern in 2008, and the situation has only gotten worse. We encourage everyone who loves Lake Winthrop to get involved and support our mission.”

Residents interested in learning more about FOWL, making a donation, or volunteering their time can visit the organization’s new website at www.winthroplake.org or come say hi to the team at Stoddard Park during the Tuesday Summer concerts on the lake.

MERCURY RECOVERY PROGRAM

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Ask the Assessor

By KEVIN RUDDEN,
Principal Assessor

Question:

“Will the tax rate be set for the fiscal year that began on July 1?”

Answer:

Even though the town’s fiscal (financial) year begins on July 1, tax rates are traditionally set in the fall.

This is because town financial officials have to “close” out the previous fiscal year’s accounting records, open the new fiscal year’s accounts, and also determine the amount of “free cash” (budgeted but unspent funds from the previous year plus revenues coming in higher than originally forecast) that is available. On the Assessors’ side of things, we are out determining the amount of “new growth” (newly built or remodeled prop-

erty never taxed before) during the past fiscal year and calculating the assessed valuations for the new fiscal year. For residential property (88% of Holliston’s tax base), this means analyzing property sales in town that took place 18 months to two years ago to see how they affect individual valuations.

Once these tasks are completed, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) has to approve all these calculations. Once the DOR does, the Select Board must hold a public “classification hearing” to discuss the overall increase or decrease in the town’s valuation as well as whether to have a single or dual tax rate. The tax rate is determined by dividing the amount of money to be raised by property taxes by the overall value of all property in town. The tax rate must then be certified by the DOR.

SPORTS

Holliston athlete answers call from college he forgot about

BY CHRISTOPHER TREMBLAY,
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Holliston High School baseball player Ben Maiorano knew that he wanted to play collegiate baseball for a long time. As he got closer to graduating, he started to begin emailing colleges that he wanted to attend. It wasn't long before he was receiving invitations from Johnson and Wales, Eastern Connecticut and Clark University. While contemplating those schools he got one more invite, from UMass, Boston.

"I had totally forgot about UMass Boston," Maiorano said. "It was one of those schools high on my list, and when I got the opportunity to visit the campus, I was hooked. With the campus in the city and surrounded by water, I fell in love with it. The coaches and facilities were also great and had an impact on my decision."

With his ticket punched to play for the Beacons, the Holliston athlete is ready to help the school playing somewhere in the infield.

"I'm hoping to play second base at UMass, but it will all depend on what happens," he said. "I really don't care as much as long as I'm playing somewhere; I'll go wherever the coach tells me."

Maiorano had been playing the infield for quite some time when his summer coach of the Northeast Longhorns thought it was best to move him into the outfield as he thought it was where the player was best suited

to help the team. The Holliston athlete took the move in stride and quickly learned the position.

"It was definitely difficult to transition, but you just got to trust the process," Maiorano said. "I began in right or left, and once I got the hang of it, in about a month, I was moved to center, where I really enjoy playing now."

Being this is his senior season with the Panthers, Maiorano was hoping to go out on top, but unfortunately, the Holliston outfielder pulled his hamstring in the third game and missed all but the last four games of the season. Although sidelined, he was itching to get back on the field as soon as possible.

"This was my senior year, and I thought that the team had a good chance at a State Title," he said.

Holliston went 13-9 in Division 2 and found themselves with a 26 seed and had to travel to Longmeadow to take on the number seven seed. The Panthers ran into a really good pitcher, and nothing seemed to fall Holliston's way. They were sent home after the first-round loss, 1-0.

Having basically returned to the field, Maiorano was hoping to have that one last deep run with his teammates, but that would not be in the cards. Being that he didn't get to play all that much, the senior opted to play baseball this summer with the Milford Legion team.

"I know that he had a tough senior season and worked ex-



Joe Maiorano's experience with the Milford American Legion baseball team this summer is sure to help prepare him for college-level play at UMass Boston this fall. Photo used courtesy of Ben Maiorano.

tremely hard to get back onto the field, and we are lucky to have him," Milford Legion Coach Steve DiVitto said. "He's got great plate discipline, can fly on the basepaths and has some serious pop into the gaps. When he's not in the lineup, we feel it."

Playing in his first ever Legion season, Maiorano had heard that it was a different type of game compared to high school, and he was hoping to get himself a lot of at bats against some quality pitchers to help adjust his game, so he'd be ready in college.

"I heard that the atmosphere was great and there was a lot of college kids playing, so it would help me prepare," Maiorano said. "It's a different game, and I will have to be able to adjust, but I'll pick the brains of my college teammates."

While his next endeavor has yet to begin, Ben is hoping that once he does leave college that he has the opportunity to play professional baseball. He knows a lot will depend on how things go over the next four years, but he's planning on giving it his all to earn a starting position and have fun. Whatever happens after that, happens.



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5/13/26	62 Ashland St.	\$1,050,000
5/04/26	18 Northway St.	\$750,000
5/01/26	244 Rolling Meadow Dr.	\$890,000
4/30/26	51 Burnap Rd., Apt. 3	\$279,000
4/30/26	67 Mohawk Path	\$1,670,000
4/24/26	99 Goulding St.	\$673,550
4/24/26	1 Danforth Dr.	\$1,630,000
4/23/26	6 Skyview Ter.	\$775,000
4/23/26	731 Norfolk St.	\$1,160,000
4/22/26	22 Greenview Dr.	\$700,000
4/16/26	53 Regal St.	\$640,000
4/14/26	48 Hemlock Dr.	\$590,000
4/14/26	44 Baker St.	\$675,000

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Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors
inducts new executive board for
2026-2027



The Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors organization celebrated the official induction of its new Executive Board for its new term during a ceremony held on June 24, 2026. The leadership transition follows elections conducted in May, with results verified and presented by the Election Committee; the Board unanimously voted to approve the election results, paving the way for the formal induction ceremony.

Justin G. Roy, who also served as President during the past year, will be joined by Vice President Jennifer Mott, Vice President of Membership Liz Facey, Treasurer Alan Mott, and Secretary Amy Forman, creating a cohesive and collaborative leadership structure designed to serve the organization's growing membership.

The Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors organization serves as a vital community resource, helping new residents integrate into the town while fostering



connections among both new and existing neighbors. The group organizes social events, community service projects, networking opportunities, and various recreational activities throughout the year.

"It is an honor to continue serving as President of Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors alongside such a capable and dedicated Executive Board. Together, we remain committed to strengthening the bonds this town a welcoming place for every resident, and we invite all who are interested to join us in that mission," Roy said following the induction ceremony.

The newly inducted board members officially began their

duties on July 1, with the term running through June 30, 2027. The organization continues to welcome new members and encourages interested residents to participate in upcoming events and activities.

For more information about joining Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors or to view upcoming events, residents can visit the organization's website at holliston-newcomers.org.

About Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors

Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors is a not-for-profit, all-volunteer organization that coordinates charitable, civic, educational, and recreational events and activities in the town of Holliston. Holliston Newcomers & Neighbors is open to all residents of Holliston. Whether you have just moved to town or have lived here for years, all are welcome! To learn more: www.holliston-newcomers.org.



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Downtown After Dark returns to Ashland

ASHLAND, Mass. — Downtown Ashland's small business community is inviting residents to do something simple: spend an evening together.

On Friday, August 28, 2026, Downtown After Dark returns for its second year, bringing neighbors, families, and friends into the heart of Ashland for an evening dedicated to community, connection, and discovering all that our town has to offer.

This community block party was born from a shared belief that vibrant communities don't happen by accident. They are built through relationships, shared experiences, and the everyday places where people gather, connect, and support one another.

Downtown After Dark is ultimately about creating joy, strengthening connections, and reminding residents that one of Ashland's greatest assets is the people who call it home. In a world that feels increasingly busy, expensive, and disconnected, the event aims to create space for something many peo-

ple have been craving: genuine local connection.

"We know life feels heavy for a lot of people right now," said the event organizers. "Everyone is balancing busy schedules, rising costs, and countless demands on their time. That's exactly why community matters. Downtown After Dark is an opportunity to step away from the day-to-day, spend time with neighbors, and celebrate the everyday people and places that make our town special."

Last summer, over 800 attendees joined together to celebrate. Just as our inaugural year, throughout the evening businesses will open their doors for special experiences, activities, and opportunities designed to encourage residents to explore, linger, and connect. Additional details about participating businesses, activities, and special offerings for this year's event will be announced in the coming weeks.

While Downtown After Dark is intended to be a fun and memorable evening, organizers also hope it sparks a broader



conversation about the role local businesses play in the community. Independent businesses do more than provide goods and services. They create local jobs, sponsor youth sports teams and community events, donate to local causes, and help create the character and identity that make a town feel like home. Yet many small businesses continue to face significant challenges - especially as current conditions are shifting consumer habits and raising operating costs.

This year, the event comes at a time when many communities are grappling with how to preserve vibrant downtown districts

amid changing shopping habits and increasing pressure on independent businesses."

The harsh reality is that the businesses people love don't automatically stay," organizers said. "All your favorite shops, restaurants, boutiques, wellness providers, and service businesses all depend on community support. If we want those places to be here tomorrow, we have to choose to support them today."

For organizers, however, the focus remains on celebration rather than concern.

"We believe our community is something worth investing in - from businesses and residents

alike," organizers said. "When people come together, support one another, and create opportunities to connect, everybody benefits. This event is our way of celebrating that spirit and inviting everyone to be part of it."

All are encouraged to save the date and join Downtown Ashland on Friday, August 28, for an evening of local discovery, shared experiences, and community celebration.

More details will be announced throughout the summer. Contact us for additional details or to get involved: DowntownAshlandMA@gmail.com

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