

Birthday Wishes Brings Joy and Hope to Homeless Children

BY CYNTHIA WHITTY

A Natick-based organization, Birthday Wishes, distributes 20,000 birthday boxes filled with goodies every year, and before the pandemic, was visiting 200 shelters in four states to bring parties to kids.

Denell Nuese, the executive director for Birthday Wishes, says that birthday parties are “a simple way to make a huge difference in the lives of children experiencing the trauma of homelessness, many of whom may have never had a birthday party or even seen their name on a birthday cake. It is our belief that every child deserves to know the day they were born was special.”

The organization began as a family volunteer project and grew quickly. In 2019, Birthday Wishes moved out of its Newton office to larger warehouse and office space in Natick to



Photo/courtesy Birthday Wishes

accommodate its growing operations. “Our current office provides ample storage for our gifts and party supplies and is conveniently located near major highways making our Birthday-

in-a-Box deliveries much more efficient.” Nuese said.

From its Natick location,

WISHES

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Natick Center Cultural District Kicks off ‘Natick Nights’ on June 3

BY CYNTHIA WHITTY

Natick Nights will showcase the entertainment and artistry that is unique to Natick Center every Thursday evening, June 3 through July 29, 5 to 7:30 p.m., rain or shine.

Visitors to downtown will enjoy street performers, a walking history tour, a performance, a gallery opening, artist demonstrations, maybe a beer or wine tasting, restaurant specials, and featured merchant specials.

Natick Nights, now an annual tradition hosted by the Natick Center Cultural District (NCCD), is a fun, family-friendly series of events that helps promote local artists, businesses, and restaurants.

According to NCCD, “Local small business in the commu-



nity have been hard hit by reduced footfalls and sales due

NATICK NIGHT

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WISHES

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Birthday Wishes serves shelters in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire, including Natick-based Family Promise and several shelters throughout Framingham and MetroWest.

Pandemic Challenges

The biggest change due to the pandemic, Nuese explains, was that “we had to pause our in-person party program for all shelters where our volunteers hosted monthly birthday parties. It was important to us that the birthday of every child we serve be celebrated, as the pandemic only added yet another level of complexity to the challenges homeless families face. We moved everyone into our Birthday-in-a-Box program, which fortunately we already had in place for our partners who cannot accommodate group parties on site, for example, domestic violence shelters or motel housing.”

“Our Birthday-in-a-Box program allows for a small celebration with family. The brightly wrapped boxes include party supplies, birthday gifts based on

the child’s interests, goody bags for siblings, and of course, candles to blow out with their birthday wish. We fill an average of 200 orders per month. We are grateful for the continued support of our sponsors, including Hasbro and Village Automotive who continued to support our efforts by providing toys and funds to cover the monthly delivery of boxes throughout Massachusetts and Rhode Island.”

“We’re looking forward to getting parties started again and being able to interact with the families and children we serve. We are beginning the process of working with our shelter partners on timing and planning for changes which may be necessary in a post-pandemic world. We are also expecting our orders to increase and are focused on raising funds and creating new partnerships to ensure we are able to fully meet the demand for our program. Like everyone, we look forward to getting back to normal!”

10th Annual “Walk for Birthdays”



Birthday Wishes is hosting its annual walk and fitness challenge to raise funds and awareness for homeless children. The walk is one of the organization’s signature fundraising events, and this year, due to the pandemic, will be held virtually. Individuals can sign up to help meet the goal of 15,000 miles by June 6.

Participation is an easy and meaningful way to work toward fitness goals while giving back. Participants simply register (for themselves or a team), create a fundraising page, and start logging miles. Any activity that can be measured in miles counts—bicycling, running, or swimming. Individuals can choose their own personal goal and help collectively log 15,000 miles by June 6.

For more information and to register, visit the Birthday Wishes website, <https://bit.ly/3w1NV0J>.

NATICK NIGHT

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to the COVID-19 pandemic. As we cautiously move towards fully reopening businesses as well arts and culture programming, NCCD hopes that events such as Natick Nights will provide the community the much-needed impetus to visit Natick Center and support local businesses and artists that make our downtown unique and vibrant.”

This year, Natick Nights is supported by a business marketing grant from the MetroWest Visitors Bureau, which will help promote Natick Nights and other



events in the following months and further NCCD’s goal of establishing Natick Center as a hub of arts and culture in the MetroWest region.

For listings for the night’s

events, visit the NCCD website, www.natickcenter.org, and social media. For more information, contact NCCD at info.natick-center@gmail.com or call 508-650-8848.

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Royal Adventure, Thrilling Mystery: Young Natick Author Writes First Book

BY CYNTHIA WHITTY

Eight-year-old Holly Marshall describes herself as “a budding storyteller with a passion for royalty and all things magical.” Making good use of the pandemic shutdown in the summer of 2020, Marshall wrote and published her first book, *Princess Clara’s Royal Adventures: The Lily Pond at Rivers Hollow*. It is a story about Clara and her rowdy brothers, their adventure filled with magical fairies, nature, and a mystery the young reader works to solve. The book is suited for ages 5-9.

Judit Laidlaw, a junior at Natick High School, created the book’s magic-theme cover design. Laidlaw and fellow student Mandy McCauley run a non-profit called MUDARTS (www.mudarts22.com), where all proceeds go to victims of domestic violence.

Natick Local Town Pages asked Marshall to describe her book



and her writing process, and tell a little about herself.

Whitty: What inspired you to write *Princess Clara’s Royal Adventures*?

I went kayaking with my mom

at Lake Wequaquet on Cape Cod. We found a lily pond with geese and their babies and then when I got home, I asked mom if I could write a book. She talked to dad about it and she said yes.

Whitty: What is your book about?

It is about a Princess whose name is Clara and her family. They go to Rivers Hollow and find some magical things. They go on a marvelous adventure, solve a mystery, and prepare for the Royal Ball.

Whitty: Do you have any more stories planned?

I have started another one, but I’m taking a break for now because it’s been a crazy

year and want to rest my brain from thinking!

Whitty: Can you tell me a little about yourself?

I am in 2nd Grade, I am 8 years old, and have two brothers, a mom, and a dad. The family

[book] characters are based on us, except in the book I am the oldest. In real life, I am the middle child.

I really like to imagine new stories. Writing this book has been fun, but it is hard work. My favorite part about writing this book has been reading it and sharing it with my friends. I feel good that people like what I made.

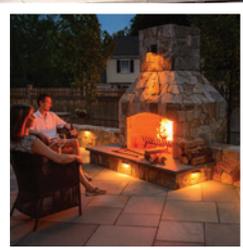
Whitty: What interests do you have?

I like to read. My favorite books are Harry Potter, Dog Man, Judy Moody, and Diary of an Ice Princess. I also like to bake, swim, and surf. My favorite place to surf is on Cape Cod.

Where to find Holly’s book

Marshall’s book is available on Amazon and at local shops, including Paper Fiesta in Natick, Wellesley Books, Aesop’s Fable in Holliston, Park Street Books and Toys in Medfield, and Blue Bunny Books and Toys in Dedham.

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Parkinson's support group helps women find safe space

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

An avid runner, Liz Brouillard noticed a strange sensation in right her foot about 4 years ago, a feeling that mimicked a cramping of sorts. It's easy to attribute such a thing to the wear and tear of pounding the pavement, those acute aches and pains that that can accompany regular exercise.

But then followed the stiffness in her right hand, a phenomenon that convinced Brouillard to seek medical advice, the expertise of a neurologist. The news came soon after - a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease.

"I got an education I didn't want," she said. "It was completely unexpected."

The neurodegenerative disorder's most pronounced effect is a disruption of motor control. More specific symptoms include tremors of the arms, hands, legs

and face. Gait and balance dysfunction, and rigidity of the limbs are also hallmarks of the affliction.

Now on the cusp of her 50th birthday, Brouillard is among a younger cohort of people diagnosed with Parkinson's.

The percentage of older people afflicted with the disease is high enough that the term young-onset Parkinson's was adopted to differentiate those of fewer years suffering from it. This incidence of the ailment is used to describe people aged 50 years or younger, who comprise about four-percent of those diagnosed with the disease.

The highest-profile person with Parkinson's is likely Michael J. Fox, the actor whose journey is illustrative of how it can affect younger people. Diagnosed in 1991 at age 29, he kept his condition from the public until 1998.

Brouillard connected with Natick resident Cindy Bittker, who's lived with the disease for more than 16 years, and who also carried the kernel of a support group with her for much of that time. Bittker had been compiling a list of local women with Parkinson's, and partnering with Brouillard, used that as a tentative roster for their first meetings.

Over the course of the pandemic, Bittker worked on a website aimed at educating people about Parkinson's, and was busied for much of last month with

a big move to another town. The launch of the website will be a triumph of sorts before leaving Natick.

"Writing and organizing thoughts and actually finishing something becomes really difficult with Parkinson's because of cognitive impairments," wrote Bittker. "So it's my victory march to get this thing online before I move."

Brouillard and Bittker held their support group's in-person meetings for about two years before the pandemic forbade such face-to-face gatherings. Their venue was the Natick Community Center on East Central Street, where they would meet monthly. At their inaugural meeting, the two hoped and expected three or four women would attend, and were surprised when 17 showed.

"The response has been tremendous," said Brouillard.

The group transitioned to "zoom" calls last year, the now ubiquitous video conferencing that the rest of the world has adopted during the shutdown.

The switch, as other organizations have found, has brought with it some much-valued benefits. The commute is gone, and the reach of the group has expanded beyond borders. The video version of the meetings have become so successful and well-attended, that Brouillard says they may adopt the format permanently.



Brouillard works out regularly at Natick's Longfellow Health Club, a local gym where she can be found gliding on an elliptical machine and participating in yoga and pilates classes. Movement, she said, is essential in staving off the symptoms of Parkinson's.

"Exercise is one of the best things we can do. Anything you can do to keep moving and not stop. All that core work and balance work is so helpful."

Theirs is the only Parkinson's group in Massachusetts for women only, Brouillard said - a niche she and her co-founder saw a need to fill. The group is promoted as being for those with young-onset Parkinson's, but women of all ages are encour-

aged to join.

Brouillard said there are a number of reasons why they saw the need for a gender-exclusive group. If a woman has served in a caregiving role, that can make the loss of functionality particularly acute.

"There's actually a lot of unseen symptoms," she said. "People rely on you. It really can be disruptive of that role in our lives."

Some symptoms of Parkinson's can also be quite personal, things that many might feel uncomfortable talking about in a mixed setting.

"I'm still doing everything I need to be doing in my life," she said. "It really creates that safe space."

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A Taste of What's to Come at SALMON at Medway

When Food Goes Beyond the Dining Room for Seniors

SALMON at Medway – the new 55+ community, opening this summer at 44 Willow Pond Circle – loves doing senior living ‘outside the box.’ Nothing about this combined active independent and assisted living facility has a been-there, done-that feel, especially true of the 57-acre campus’s dining program.

Passionately and creatively helmed by Director of Culinary & Dining Operations, Chef Jason Wallin, SALMON’s ‘Anytime Dining’ restaurant-style meal plans are enough to make any college student drool with envy.

“It’s not just about eating fresh, local and healthy”, says Wallin. “It’s about making dining more than a meal and truly making it a lifestyle. Our offerings will feed and nourish the body, mind and soul.”

Residents will have tough decisions to make when it comes to eating as they will find many

choices available anytime of day, including fresh, locally sourced Mediterranean and plant-based options designed with input from on-site nutritionist Sarah Clarke.

Speaking of local, let’s talk about SALMON’s partnership with Medway Community Farms. Not only is the farm providing 20-30% of all produce at the community and helping tend to the on-site hydroponic garden, they and SALMON will host on-campus farmers markets open to the public all summer long.

And the sweetest little ‘extra’? A collaboration with Best Bees of Boston making SALMON at Medway the only senior living community in New England to boast on-site beekeeping. Residents can immerse themselves in education, experience and fresh honey drizzled on top of anything they want.

As a family-owned business, Wallin, SALMON CEO, Matt Salmon and their team

are committed to making the community feel like ‘home’ for seniors’ family and friends, too. “Our campus is an open, inviting place where people want to be”, says Wallin. “Every element is thoughtfully planned to maximize the health, well-being and happiness of our residents and their extended social circles.”

Included among the family-friendly dining and entertainment: a game room for grandkids to hang featuring a more kid-focused menu; a casual café with grab-and-go items for in-room entertaining; and cooking classes hosted by Wallin.

When it comes to the menu and lifestyle at SALMON at Medway, there hasn’t been a detail overlooked and the community is excited to open its doors to residents and the local community. Check them out at www.medwayseniorliving.com or on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok @SalmonatMedway.

Artist in Residence - Amy Adams

Natick Center Cultural District is pleased to announce its new Artist in Residence for 2021 - emerging, local artist, Amy Adams. Amy will create opportunities for community engagement around the themes of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion through her art. We are thrilled to have her on board and look forward to collaborating with her on her projects.

Artist Statement - «When I create art, I am fluid with the messages I convey. Many are inspired by current events and used as an aid to raise awareness on topics affecting all communities in one form or another. The goal is to create opportunities for questions and foster the beginning of communication. If my images highlight challenges, there are elements of hope and positivity to balance them.

During my term as Artist in Residence for the Natick Center

Cultural District, it is my focus to engage the public in using art as a form of expression related to



Social Justice through several art projects. I am inviting students of all ages interested in joining me in a workshop to email paintingvenus1@gmail.com. Most workshops will be virtual and a few others in person as COVID-safe protocols allow. I am excited to be able to share in this journey with you.” - Amy Adams

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Art In Bloom Was A Success



Natick Garden Club Plant Sale 2021

Starting May 22 and continuing throughout the summer growing season, the Natick

Garden Club is offering a variety of plants that have been proven to grow successfully in our sometimes challenging weather conditions. Most of the plants are perennials from our members' gardens, and are labeled for bloom time and season, height, spacing needed, and sun and moisture requirements. We promote native plants as well, meaning they are native to this area, and tolerant of drought conditions and excellent at providing habitat for good insects and birds.

Plants make wonderful gifts for Father's Day, or to mark a special occasion in anyone's life. Or treat yourself and play in the dirt, a proven stress reliever! All proceeds from the sale fund the Natick Garden Club, a group devoted to civic beautification and service in the Natick community.

This year the group has pivoted to an online sale in lieu of the annual auction due to Covid-19. To purchase go to www.natickgardenclub.org/shop. Free delivery within five miles of Natick Center on orders \$60+, and easy pick-up otherwise. Online preview starts May 15, sale live May 22. Check back often as we will continue to add to the shop!

For more information please visit us at <http://www.natickgardenclub.org/> or find us on Facebook.

Info on our club:



Our mission is to promote a positive educational environment for sharing gardening, horticultural, and conservation information and to encourage civic planting, beautification, and service in the Natick community.

Organized in 1998 by three women, the Natick Garden Club currently has about 80 members. Members represent a range of ages, genders, and gardening acumen. All have a passion to learn, share, and volunteer in service to their garden club. The NGC has evening meetings September through May at Morse Library featuring a keynote speaker, with time for socialization and NGC business at the start (the NGC uses Zoom during the pandemic). September and March are non-membership meetings and for the public at large. We have deep roots in Natick although draw members from several communities, and can be found around town in a variety of capacities throughout the year. The plant sale is our main fundraiser.

Thank you to all of the floral artists and volunteers of the Natick Garden Club as well as all the attendees for making Natick's Art in Bloom such a fabulous, and joyful event!

Radiant Leaf Consulting and Natick Garden Club had seasonal giveaways like mini pine trees, seedling packets and much more!

The virtual ArtWeek events that preceded Art in Bloom, including the Patachitra - Traditional Indian Scroll Painting, Meditation and Cooking workshops, were well attended with participants joining from across the globe! It was heartening to witness how art and culture can transcend geographical boundaries and physical distances, with participants joining us from the UK, Australia, India, Dubai and many states in the US.

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Your Money, Your Independence

New Dependent Care FSA Changes Provide Tax Savings

Mo' stimmy, mo' complexity. It's like the more stimulus we come across, the more complexities we see.

The Good. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), signed into law on March 11, raises pretax contribution limits for dependent care flexible spending accounts (DC-FSAs). New DC-FSA annual limits for pretax contributions increases to \$10,500 (up from \$5,000) for single taxpayers and married couples filing jointly, and to \$5,250 (up from \$2,500) for married individuals filing separately. This is only calendar year 2021, for now.

Money put into a DC-FSA not only reduces taxable income but it also avoids the 7.65% tax of Social Security and Medicare.

For example, if in a 24% federal tax bracket + 5% state tax + 7.65% = 36.65% DC-FSA Contribution Tax Savings Rate. Thus,

the new \$10,500 maximum for 2021 is \$3,848 tax savings in this scenario. In a 32% federal bracket, make it \$4,688 (44.65% x \$10,500) in tax savings.

So just go to your HR benefits and raise your DC-FSA amounts?

If it were only that simple, as Congress loves complexity.

The Bad. APRA doesn't require employers to offer the new DC-FSA annual limits. Those that are, many offer a one-time, midyear change. If you're not proactive or paying attention to HR communications, you will miss out.

If miss out on DC-FSA, fear not as the ARPA also increased the child & dependent care (C&DC) tax credit for 2021, which is positive but...

The Ugly. The C&DC credit is fully refundable, and maximum credit percentage increases to 50% (from 35%). This phases

down to 20% with AGIs between \$125,000 and \$400,000, and further phases down 1% for each \$2,000 over an AGI exceeding \$400,000. The amount of expenses eligible for the credit increases to \$8,000 (from \$3,000) for one qualifying child and \$16,000 (from \$6,000) for two or more qualifying children, thus maximum credits are \$4,000 and \$8,000.

Got that?

Furthermore, you can't "double-dip". Meaning contributions to DC-FSA to cover qualified expenses can't be used for C&DC tax credit, but you can create a combination to maximize tax savings.

Questions To Ask. If better to put money into a DC-FSA or take C&DC tax credit or a combination, consider:

- Able to participate in DC-FSA?

- What is your AGI?
- How many qualifying children?
- Expected qualified dependent care expenses (i.e. day-care, after-school, summer camp)?

Yes, summer camps count, even for your 12 year old's soccer camp.

Tax laws and regulatory changes remain constant, connect with your Certified Financial Planner to see how to maximize tax savings to your situation.

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

Glenn Brown is a Holliston resident and owner of PlanDynamic, LLC, www.PlanDynamic.com. Glenn is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ helping motivated people take control of



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their planning and investing, so they can balance kids, aging parents and financial independence.

June events for Natick Community-Senior Center

Ongoing:

JUNE Mondays at a Museum – zoom program

free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Join us on Monday, 11am-noon, as we preview video highlights from a range of Museums, free

Monday, June 7- NO Mondays at a Museum

Monday, June 14- Travels with a Curator- Castel Sant'Angelo/Rome; Japanese Palace/Dresden, and more

Monday, June 21- MFA- Hans Hoffman- Balance of Art and Nature

Monday, June 28- Gees Bend Quilts, Grandma Moses and The Highwaymen Artists

Mindfulness Meditation-Zoom program

free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Every Thursday with Sharon 2:00-2:40 pm. This meditation is audio only and participants are muted during the meditation portion. Everyone is welcome to join for some guided meditation, some quiet sitting and some reflection with Q & A and sharing.

Visit Elm Bank/Mass Horticultural Gardens by borrowing the Natick Community-Senior Center member card. Each pass admits 2 for the day.

Reserve the pass online at Community Pass for the date you wish to visit. The pass may be borrowed between 10:00 am and 4:30 pm. You may pick up the pass at the Center about 15 minutes before your visit and return the pass directly after your visit.

The pass will also be available to borrow for weekends (Gardens open 10am-7pm daily) with a pick-up time from the Center on Friday between 1:00-2:00 pm and must be returned to the Center Monday morning between 9:00-9:30am. If there is a Monday holiday, then the pass must be returned the next day 9:00-9:30am. If you need assistance reserving

the pass, please call the center 508-647-6540.

Sponsored by Whitney Place Assisted Living and Memory Care at Natick.

Group Walks at Elm Bank-In Person

Tuesdays, June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 9:30-10:30 am, free

Walking outside is a great way to start your day and many studies have shown that walking is one of the best ways to keep fit! Join Sharon from Natick Community-Senior Center and others for a moderate paced/casual walk on the loop road at Elm Bank/Mass Hort. Meet at the parking lot by the Visitor's Center, 900 Washington St, Wellesley. Wear a MASK.

Special Events:

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SENIOR CENTER

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Natick Trails Day a success

Martin Kessel, chairman of the Open Space Advisory Committee, said the Natick Trails Day was a success.

He posted to the Open Space Advisory Committee Facebook

page:

Another successful Natick Trails Day, at Hunnewell Town Forest today, the first organized by the new Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee. Despite

the constant drizzle, there were over 50 volunteers, who worked on a wide variety of projects throughout the 100-acre forest.



Volunteers gather at the entrance to the forest.



Doug Drenik, chair, and other members of the Trails and Forest Stewardship Committee, who organized the event and led the various work groups.



Committee member Mike Uccello with all the necessary tools.



Rick Jennett and John Moran bring junk found in encampments along the North Rim Trail.



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SENIOR CENTER

continued from page 7

of Latin and Balroom dancing with Eileen and Paul, Dance Caliente. Bring your own lawn chair. Sponsored in part by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

DNA Results as a Research Option- Genealogy with Seema- Zoom Program

Monday, June 7, 1:30-2:30pm
Whether you've taken or are still considering a DNA test to determine your kinship with someone or trace your lineage, knowing how to work with the results you receive is crucial! Receiving the result is one thing, understanding them and using them as a research tool are totally different things. Join Genealogist, Seema Kenney for this presentation.

Father's Day Celebration- Trivia Game - Zoom Program

Monday, June 7, 7:00-8:00pm, free

Register at <http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/trivia2000-2/>

In partnership with Bacon Free Library, we are pleased to offer our first virtual trivia game in celebration of Father's Day. Categories may include Founding Fathers, Famous Fathers, Sports, Cars, Home Repair, and more! You can Zoom in by yourself and be a spectator or play with others in this friendly competitive game. There are prizes too! Winners may receive one of the following: Red Sox & Patriots mem-

orabilia, gift certificate passes for a round of golf at Sassamon Trace, car wash gift certificate to ScrubaDub.

Questions? Email kkassel@minlib.net

Father's Day Celebration - Sports Talk with CBS Boston Sportscaster, Levan Reid- Zoom Program



Monday, June 14, 1:30-2:30pm, free, register online at Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Celebrating Father's Day with SPORTS TALK! Whether you are a fan of baseball, football, hockey, or other sports, join us for this LIVE entertaining, free-wheeling talk with CBS Boston Sportscaster, Levan Reid. Levan is so knowledgeable about sports, not only our favorite local teams but everywhere as well; he is personable and always keeps a good sense of humor. Submit your questions in advance for Levan at lmcnally@natickma.org and Zoom Chat questions will be fielded during the program too. Hope you can join us!

Levan Reid is a veteran sports reporter for WBZ-TV's and The New England Patriots' flagship programs "Patriots All-Access"

and "Patriots Gameday" and is a contributor to "Patriots 5th Quarter" post-game show.

Author Talks on Tuesday - Zoom Program

Tuesday, June 15, 12:30-1:30pm, free

The Doctors Blackwell: How two pioneering sisters brought medicine to women and women to medicine, with author Janice Nimura and Dr Perri Klass moderating.

In 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman to receive an M.D. and her sister, Emily soon joined her becoming the second woman M.D. Find out about this fascinating story of two strong and smart women, the state of healthcare and medical treatments during this time in history and its intersection with women's rights and healthcare.

Pranayama- Yogic Breathing for Health- Zoom Program

Tuesday, June 15, 2:30-3:30, free

Experience pranayama, the art and science of yogic breathing. Pranayama's health benefits include reduced anxiety, lower/stabilized blood pressure, increased energy, muscle relaxation, improved concentration, and more. Join Anjana Bhargava, an Ayurvedic Wellness Counselor has bachelor's degree in Science and Mathematics and master's degree in Electronics from India. Note: This is best done on an empty stomach.

MEET-UP for a Walk at Garden in the Woods, Fram-

ingham- In Person

Wednesday, June 16, 2:00 pm, \$5pp

Meet at 180 Hemenway Rd, Framingham, free parking on site. Gift shop and bathrooms available. Size limited to 15. Sharon from the COA will meet everyone at the entry.

We will be free to meander through the 45 acres of this varied garden landscape, sculpted by retreating glaciers into eskers, steep-sided valleys, and a kettle pond. A shaded brook and wetlands draw a panoply of animals and insects. Here you'll find inspiration for your own garden and a new appreciation for the varied plant life of our region. Map will be provided. Please wear comfortable walking shoes, sneakers and mask as we socially distance for this activity.

Author Talks on Tuesday- Zoom Program

June 22, 12:30-1:30pm, free with author Vivek Murthy talking about his book, Together with moderator, Barbara Bush

DR. VIVEK H. MURTHY—author, physician, and Surgeon General of the United States—for a discussion of his book Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World. He will be joined in conversation by Global Health Corps co-founder BARBARA BUSH. Murthy makes a case for loneliness as

a public health concern: a root cause and contributor to many of the epidemics sweeping the world today from alcohol and drug addiction to violence to depression and anxiety. Loneliness, he argues, is affecting not only our health, but also how our children experience school, how we perform in the workplace, and the sense of division and polarization in our society. But, at the center of our loneliness is our innate desire to connect. We have evolved to participate in community, to forge lasting bonds with others, to help one another, and to share life experiences. We are, simply, better together.

Art Matters- Marc Chagall- zoom program

Tuesday, June 22, 1:30-2:30, free

Marc Chagall, known as the "Poet", was one of the most versatile artists of the 20th Century. He merged the traditional images of his native Russian, Jewish culture with the modern styles of Cubism, and Fauvism. His paintings portray stories and fables, ideals of freedom, dreams of love, nightmares of war, passionate emotions and soul refreshing humor. He never finished a canvas until something in it "surprised" himself. Join us for a retrospective look at his work, his life, and his unique perspective of the world.

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Library news

Due to rising cases of COVID-19 within our Community and the surrounding areas, the Library and Board of Health have decided to scale back service and close for in-person browsing. We are very excited to announce a new point of service that will allow you to get your holds without an appointment, with our brand new, Walk-up Window!

Walk-Up Window for Holds Pickup

What is the Walk-up Window?

The Walk-up Window allows you to pick up your holds with no appointment necessary! Come to the library and line up outside along the ramp, where you will be protected from the elements with our exciting new Holiday Window Display. This exciting initiative will give you the flexibility to pick up your items on your time, with expanded hours during the week and on weekends.

If you have holds to pickup, please use the Walk-up Window!

This window is located in our interior entryway.

- One person may enter at a time
- Please enter at the bottom of the ramp, and wait on the marked spots to keep physically distant
- An exterior light indicator will go from red to green when it is your turn to enter the Walk-up Window.
- Scan your library card once inside, and we will grab your items for you!

• Don't have anything on hold? Give us a call at 508-647-6520 and we will assist you! Or head to "my account" and browse our catalog!

Walk-Up Window Hours
 Monday – Thursday : 9am-8pm
 Friday & Saturday : 9am-4:30pm
 Sunday : 1pm-4:30pm

Can I still do Contactless Holds Pick Up?

Yes! We encourage everyone who cannot stand outside or may not want to wait because of children or pets in their car to still book an appointment online or via the Minuteman Library App.

Contactless Pickup
 We will still have contactless pickup appointments available for your convenience and safety.

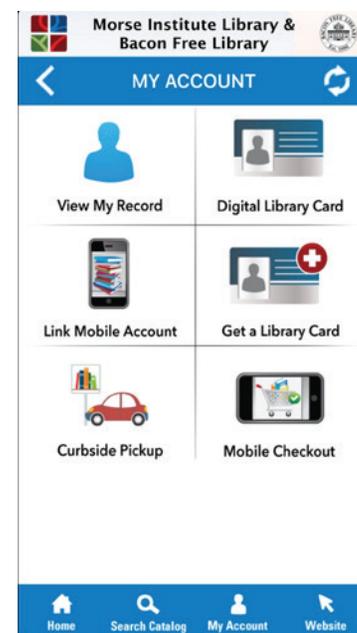
• Pickup appointments are available from 9am-10am daily from Monday through Friday, and 9am-10am on Saturday. We also have appointments from 7pm-8pm Monday through Thursday.

• You may only book a pickup appointment AFTER receiving a request pickup notice from the Library that your items are ready.

• If you miss your appointment, please call us to schedule another. Because we only have so many slots per appointment, we are unable to reschedule pickup for the same day.

• Puzzles and items from the "Library of Things" are not available during contactless pickup.

How does it work?



• Step 1: Put items on hold using your Minuteman account

• Step 2: Wait for an email, text, or phone call that your items are ready to be picked up.

• Step 3: Book a pickup appointment window using our online pickup calendar OR give us a call at 508-647-6520

• Step 4: Come to the Contactless Pickup area outside the library during your appointment window and grab your items off the contactless pickup shelf. Items will be checked out and bagged with your name on it.

Can I Browse Books?

Not at this time. However, staff are hard at work making solutions to give you browse-ability while we are closed. If you would like a recommendation give us a call 508-647-6520 or join Morse Book Match!

Delivery Service

Delivery Service is available for our patrons who cannot safely



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What Stays Virtual

- All programming and events will continue to be hosted online.
- Reference assistance by email, chat, text message, appointment, or phone through our Digital Branch
- Virtual Reference hours: Monday-Friday 9am-6pm, Saturday 10am-2pm
- Access to all the great digital content like e-Books, e-Audio-books, movies, magazines, and music from MorseInstitute.org website and our Virtual Reading Room

Remote access to research resources like databases

Express bundles

The new Express Bundles for adults, DVD, teens, and children have launched! Also, we have a new Book-Fix program, that is similar to Stitch-Fix (book bundles curated to fit your taste).

You can use the Walk up window to pick up an Express Bundle on demand.

OR, you can fill out an online form to request:

1. Express Bundle(s) to pick up later at the walk up window (within 1 day!)
2. Express Bundle(s) to pick up via contactless holds
3. Book-Fix curated collection based on your preferences within the categories of adult, teen, or children.

Mobile Self-Checkout & Contactless Pickup now LIVE on the Minuteman App!

In order to make getting your materials as fast and safe as possible, we are excited to announce that you can now book a contactless pickup appointment directly from the Minuteman App available for both Apple IOS & Android devices!

Coming into the building to pickup materials? You now have a contactless option to check out your materials from within the library! Open the Minuteman Library App, select "Mobile Checkout" and scan the item

barcodes to checkout. It is simple, fast, and safe!

Special Sunday Holds Pickups!

In order to help those who cannot safely come into the Library, we are opening three hours of Contactless Holds Pickup on Sundays. Times will be available at 1:30, 2:30, & 3:30. Visit the Contactless Holds Pickup webpage for all the information on picking up your holds without coming into the library!

MIL Virtual Programming

CHILDRENS

Program Videos

Premiering on our Facebook and website, no registration needed!

Rhyme Time

Posted Wednesdays 10:00am short stories, songs and play-time extension activities geared for infants and toddlers and their grownups.

Preschool Play

Posted Fridays 10:00am weekly program of stories, songs and games designed especially for the preschool set.

BedTime Buddies

Posted Wednesday nights 7pm A fun pre-bedtime program full of songs, skits, reading and



more! A family program for younger listeners and the young at heart

TEEN AND TWEEN

Dungeons & Dragons Online Gaming

Friday evenings, 6:00-8:00pm Play a Dungeons & Dragons adventure online over 5 weeks! It will be a fifth edition standard fantasy D&D campaign set in Faerun. Players will be able to choose from a variety of pre-gen-



erated first level characters. Beginners welcome!

Open to Teens ages 13-18.

Relaxing Coloring

Join us for a coloring session with exclusive coloring sheets - and chat with other Teens & Tweens on Zoom! Hosted by Teen Librarian Robin. If you want to take the coloring sheets and color on your own time, that's OK, too!

Open to Teens ages 11-18 + 5th graders.

Monthly, from 3:00-4:00pm



ADULT PROGRAMS

Meditation with Vivek and Lipi

Wednesdays at 6:30pm

Good news for our Wednesday Night Meditation folks! Vivek and Lipi will be hosting Meditation live using Zoom every Wednesday night at 6:30pm! Join us for relaxation and mindfulness! You must register for each session separately using the online calendar above. The Zoom link will be included in your registration confirmation.

Self Care Series: Virtual Qi Gong ("chi" gong)

Every Tuesday at 10am

Join us weekly on Tuesday



mornings for some relaxing and low-key Qi Gong. Qi Gong is a centuries-old system of coordinated body-posture and movement, breathing, and meditation used for the purposes of health, spirituality, and martial-arts training. With roots in Chinese medicine, philosophy, and martial arts, Qi Gong is traditionally viewed by the Chinese and throughout Asia as a practice to cultivate and balance qi (pronounced approximately as "chi"), translated as "life energy". The best part

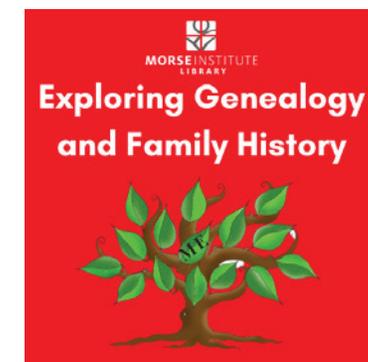
about Qi Gong, anyone can do it! Please register for each session you will be attending using our online calendar.

RESEARCH & LEARNING

Exploring Genealogy & Family History

Every Thursday at 3pm

Join Morse Research Librarian Karol to learn about the Library and other online resources you can use to start researching your family history! Stop by with your questions, or if you have started your research, let us know how it's going. This is a great space to share ideas and strategies to help grow your family tree. This program will be held using ZOOM! Registration is required for each



session you plan to attend. Please be sure to enter a valid email address as a Zoom room code and link will be sent in the email confirmation.

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Information Session May 17, 2021 @ 7PM Norfolk Town Hall if permitted due to COVID
Applications accepted: postmarked June 10, 2021 @ 12:00 PM if dropped off must be by 6PM
Housing Lottery: June 15, 2021 @ 7PM Via Zoom link available at www.norfolk.ma.us

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email contact: sjacobson@norfolk.ma.us
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Aging Gracefully: Advice on What to do Now!

Doctors and patients have all kinds of difficult conversations. How to prepare for aging and caring for an aging partner or parent is one of those. For Lee Willis and her husband Hal, the conversation started this way: their beloved doctor of 15 years asked Lee, point-blank: "Are you prepared for the possibility that Hal may outlive you?"

At 94, Hal is ten years older than Lee. A plane accident broke multiple bones in his legs, and arthritis had settled in. Walking is hard for him. He does his own laundry and washes the dishes, but he doesn't drive and often uses a wheelchair.

Lee, on the other hand, just bought herself a new kayak. A nine-year cancer survivor, she relieves pain with exercise, not medicine. She swims three times a week. When not caring for Hal, she's active, traveling, and socializing.

Still, the doctor had a point: Be prepared.

Facing the Facts of Aging

Most people avoid the subject of getting old. Death is as natural

as birth, but too many people simply don't want to think about it until they are too ill to participate in decision making, leaving family members and their physicians to make decisions that may or may not be what they would have wanted at the end of life. We need to prepare better.

Finding a Place to Age

The main goal for Lee in preparing for Hal and her own aging was to find a place that could happen. Lee didn't just do a Google search. She visited dozens of nursing homes. She made lists of in-home care services, and visited each of those.

But Lee wasn't satisfied, mainly because of shifting staff. "You can never guarantee the same people. The bottom-line dictates staffing. This turnover and the resulting lack in continuity of care, is a problem."

So, she looked at the option of aging in place. She volunteered at programs of all-inclusive care for the Elderly, which offers 24/7 coverage for anyone qualified for a nursing home. It seemed like "this would probably be what we

choose to do," she said.

But then Lee discovered The Green House Project, a new model for long-term care for elders. In 2001, a doctor named Bill Thomas was appalled at the state of elder care. He saw it was a hospital, not a home with people just sitting in wheelchairs. So, he introduced a lot of changes, brought in birds, dogs, cats, and plants. But it still wasn't enough. So, he "super-trained" staff to behave like family members, not healthcare providers. He built a new structure, with one central room, the residents living in rooms off in spokes. It became a communal place, with a common kitchen where people cook family recipes and behave like relatives.

Lee found one in her state. "If we both have to go somewhere, this will be it!"

Aging Gracefully: How to Get Started Now

The best advice Lee's received from her doctor: Exercise. He told her that the biggest factor that differentiates healthy from unhealthy aging is exercise—folks who remain sedentary clearly become frailer more rapidly than those who either remain or become active in their later years.



Exercising on a regular basis makes a huge difference in how one ages.

Lee's primary lessons for younger people: Be proactive. "It's really hard when you're 50 to think about being 80, but you should." She advises younger people to:

- Take your health seriously—eat well and exercise.
- Prepare with a reputable Estate Planning Attorney who cares about your health as well as your assets.
- Be an advocate for yourself.
- Get political and advocate for end-of-life care.

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Bacon free library news

Our curbside pickup hours remain the same.

**We are now open on Mondays and Tuesdays by appointment; patrons can make an appointment on our website: Baconfreelibrary.org

JUNE PROGRAMS

Gorgeous Gardens of New England

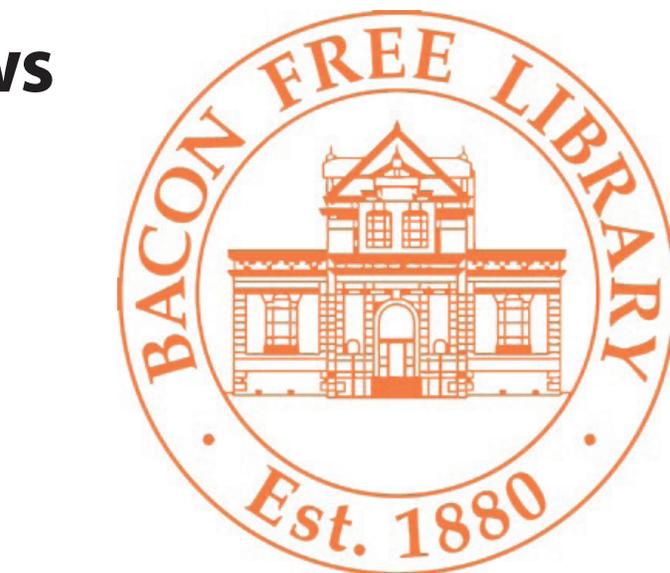
Wednesday, June 2 @ 7 pm
<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/gardensne/>

Family Trivia Night: Father's Day Trivia

Monday, June 7 @ 7 pm
<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/trivia2000-2/>

Pixar Trivia Challenge

Monday, June 21 @ 7 pm
<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/pixartrivia/>



Adult Trivia Night: Pop Culture of the 2000s

Friday, June 18 @ 7 pm
<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/trivia2000/>

On-site Bug Hunt at the BFL

Tuesday, June 29 @ 2 pm
<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/hands-on-nature-bugs/>

We will begin in-person, outdoor story times on Monday and Tuesday mornings at 10am, starting on Monday, June 21.

<http://baconfreelibrary.org/event/outdoorstmon/2021-06-21/>

Do You Need A Trust? Business spotlight

One of the first questions many clients ask is whether they need a trust. It's a great question, but it leads to another: What do you want your plan to accomplish? Let's begin with a brief discussion of what trusts are and how they work. Then we'll explore their benefits, which should give you a better idea of whether a trust is right for you and your family.

What is a Revocable Living Trust?

There are many different types of trusts and they can accomplish a wide range of goals. However, when most people think about trusts, the one they have in mind is a Revocable Living Trust.

A Revocable Living Trust is a legal document that allows the grantor (the person who creates the trust) to take personal assets and transfer them to the ownership of the trust. While the trust technically owns the assets, the grantor can continue to use them as he or she normally would.

When a Revocable Living Trust is established, the grantor names a trustee to manage the assets in the trust during the grantor's lifetime. Most grantors name

themselves as trustee, giving them complete control over the trust's assets. Typically, a successor trustee is also named to take over management of the trust and distribute trust assets after the grantor passes away.

What are the benefits of a Revocable Living Trust?

One of the primary benefits of a Revocable Living Trust is that it enables assets held in the



trust to avoid probate after the grantor's death. This allows trust assets to be distributed to heirs quickly. The costs associated with probating the estate are also avoided. In addition, a Revocable Living Trust protects the privacy of the grantor (and beneficiaries) because the trust's provisions are confidential. A Last Will and Testament, on the other hand, is a

matter of public record. Anyone can access information about the decedent's assets, creditors, debts, and more.

Another benefit of Revocable Living Trusts is they not only allow the grantor to control trust assets during life but also after he

or she passes away. The grantor can stipulate when, how, and under what circumstances the successor trustee is authorized to distribute trust assets to beneficiaries. This is particularly important if the beneficiaries are not yet mature enough to manage an inheritance on their own, or in situations involving blended families. For example, the grantor could



stipulate that children from a first marriage receive assets from the trust, not just the children from a more recent marriage.

Revocable Living Trusts can



also be used to protect the grantor and the grantor's family from a stressful and expensive guardianship proceeding if the grantor becomes incapacitated.

As we mentioned earlier, there are many different types of trusts. If one of your primary goals is to protect assets from long-term care costs, creditors, lawsuits, and other threats, an Irrevocable

Trust or an Asset Protection Trust may be a much better option than a Revocable Living Trust. If you have a loved one with special needs, a Special Needs Trust can allow you to create a fund for goods and services not provided by Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income while protecting eligibility for these vital programs. A Charitable Trust allows the grantor to set aside money for both a charity and beneficiaries, realize certain tax advantages, and generate an income stream.

These are but a few examples of various trusts and what they can accomplish. If you're still not sure whether you need a trust, we welcome the opportunity to explain your options in detail and, if appropriate in your particular circumstances, design and implement the trust that's right for you and your family. You will find our contact information in the ad on this page.

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Foundation for MetroWest Surpasses \$5 Million Milestone in Emergency Grants to Local Nonprofits

COVID-19 has demonstrated the acute need in communities across Massachusetts, many of which were exacerbated by the pandemic. The Foundation for MetroWest, the community foundation serving the MetroWest region of Greater Boston, has been a critical resource for vulnerable communities during this time. It announced today it has officially passed the \$5 million milestone in emergency grants distributed

to community organizations since the pandemic began. The funds were allocated across 588 rapid response grants addressing the immediate needs of the MetroWest communities impacted by the pandemic.

“This year has illuminated the critical need for a strong community foundation in the region, that is able to mobilize resources for the community during unprecedented times,” said Jay Kim, executive

director of the Foundation. “It has pushed all of us to work smarter under pressure, and most importantly, to work together in new and creative ways. This milestone is a huge accomplishment for the Foundation and the people it serves and celebrates the vital work nonprofits continue to do throughout MetroWest to support and uplift our communities.”

The grants were distributed from the Foundation’s 25th anniversary grant program, two emergency relief funds (MetroWest Emergency Relief and Feed Framingham), partnerships with the MA COVID-19 Relief Fund and the Commonwealth’s Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), town funds in Lexington and Wellesley, and donor advised funds who gave to emergency relief efforts in 2020. The grant recipients meet the unique needs of geographically and culturally diverse communities throughout the MetroWest, using the grants awarded to make an impact in the areas of food insecurity, basic hygiene needs, and financial security for older adults, individuals

with disabilities, and struggling families; engage underserved youth; build upon mental health programming; provide legal aid; and hire staff. This past year, for many, did not go as planned, but these organizations, with the help of the Foundation for MetroWest have great hopes for the future.

“We are extremely grateful for the partnership of the Foundation for MetroWest in making a lasting impact for our families, not only during this public health crisis, but also far beyond COVID-19,” said Trish Appert, Executive Director of Bethany Hill Place.

The Foundation for MetroWest is honored to be a trusted community resource and serve as a partner for its most vulnerable neighbors.

“Covid presented a unique set of challenges. We leaned into best practices for fundraising, governance and strategic thinking that we learned about through the Foundation’s programs,” executive director of BAMS, Pamela Verklan stated. “We feel strongly that the support we have been given in the past contributed significantly to our success in navi-

gating those challenges last year.

For more information on the Foundation’s emergency COVID relief, visit here.

About Foundation for MetroWest Established in 1995, the Foundation for MetroWest is the community foundation serving the cities and towns in the region, encompassing 700,000 residents from Westborough to Waltham and Acton to Walpole. The Foundation promotes philanthropy across the area, helps donors maximize the impact of their local giving, serves as a resource for local nonprofits and enhances the quality of life for all our residents. The Foundation is supported by a wide range of businesses, individuals, community groups and other philanthropic organizations. Since inception, the Foundation has granted \$23 million to its nonprofit partners and currently stewards more than \$26 million in charitable assets for current needs and future impact. To learn more, please visit <http://www.foundationmw.org/> or call 508-647-2260.



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Congratulations to our May Winners: William Scotland, Corinne Fahey, Bob Zalvan, Joe Clar & Sherri Bauman

State Police Colonel, State Fire Marshal Announce Fireworks Enforcement Efforts Have Begun Statewide

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey and Massachusetts State Police Colonel Christopher Mason announced today fireworks enforcement efforts have started. The State Police Bomb Squad is part of the Fire and Explosion Investigation Unit (F&EIU) assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal, which has already started working with local police and fire departments to enforce the fireworks laws and intercept fireworks being brought into the state illegally.

“It is illegal to bring fireworks into Massachusetts, even if they were legally purchased elsewhere,” said State Fire Marshal Ostroskey.

The State Police Bomb Squad had a 63% increase in response to fireworks calls in 2020 over 2019. During the F&EIU 2020 fireworks enforcement operation, there were 47 criminal summonses issued over a 4-day period. This year’s enforcement operation has already started and will last longer.

“In addition to special enforcement efforts to intercept fireworks coming into Massachusetts, troopers and local police will seize illegal fireworks they find during routine traffic stops,” said Colonel Mason. “We don’t want a repeat of the huge increase in resident complaints we experienced last year.”

In communities throughout the Commonwealth, there has been a significant rise in resident complaints regarding fireworks. Complaints to the Boston Police Department increased 1,518% from 1,504 in 2019 to 21,346 in 2020, and in calendar

2020, the Springfield Police Department received 3,504 calls for



fireworks. The peak was between May 1 and July 31 when 3,345 calls were received.

Fireworks complaints to the Lawrence Police Department increased 409% in 2020 from 2019, and there were 159 fireworks complaints in 2019 and 810 in 2020. In the summer period (May 1 – August 31), fireworks complaints increased by 420% from 148 in 2019 to 769 in 2020. In Brockton, resident complaints about fireworks to the Brockton Police Department increased 611% from 209 in 2019 to 1,486 in 2020.

“There will be supervised displays of fireworks this year unlike last year, so we encourage you to leave the fireworks to the professionals,” said Fire Marshal Ostroskey. “Fireworks are illegal because they are dangerous. Fires started by fireworks in Massachusetts increased 180% in 2020 from 2019.”

In the past decade (2011-

2020), there have been 941 major fire and explosion incidents involving illegal fireworks reported to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS). The incidents caused 12 civilian injuries, 42 fire service injuries, and an estimated dollar loss of \$2.1 million, which is high considering most fireworks fires are outdoor brush fires.

Additionally, 32 people were treated at Massachusetts emergency rooms for severe burn injuries from fireworks (burns covering 5% or more of the body) according to the Massachusetts Burn Injury Reporting System. This does not include visits to hospital emergency rooms for eye injuries, amputations, puncture wounds or smaller burns. Forty-one percent (41%) of fireworks-related burn injuries reported by hospitals to the Office of the State Fire Marshal in the last 10 years (2011-2020) were to children under age 18. Twenty-six percent, (26%) were children under age 10.

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Natick MassBay Student Selected for Department of Higher Education's "29 Who Shine" Award

MassBay Community College is pleased to announce that liberal arts student, Evan Bogan of Natick, has been selected as MassBay's representative for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's "29 Who Shine" award.

In May 2011, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education launched "29 Who Shine," a commencement season awards program to recognize 29 outstanding student graduates from the Commonwealth's 29 public higher education institutions. Each honoree from a community college, state university, or a University of Massachusetts campus is nominated by a faculty or staff member or by a university awards committee. This award is typically given out at a State House ceremony, but due to the coronavirus pandemic, the ceremony will be held virtually on May 13, 2021.

Bogan's educational journey began at Needham High School, where he was a shy student who was unsure where to attend college. While at Needham High, he participated in a mentorship program, Needham Steps Up, that "changed his life." Through

the Needham Steps Up program, Bogan was matched with Needham High School history teacher, Gabe Swanger. Swanger mentored him from ninth grade to senior year, watching him become a more social and focused student. Because of the Needham Steps Up program, Bogan learned about the educational opportunities at MassBay, including the seamless transfer options through the MassTransfer program to earn his bachelor's degree at a Massachusetts state university or UMass campus. After Bogan graduated from Needham High in 2019, he enrolled as a liberal arts student at MassBay. At MassBay, Bogan again turned to mentorship, working closely with Professor Carolyn Guttilla and Academic and Transfer Advising Coordinator, Karen Akukwe, which kept him focused on his future goals and connected to the MassBay community. Bogan, who overcame a learning disability, has been a dedicated student at MassBay, earned a place on the Dean's List every semester, maintained a 4.0 GPA, and was inducted as a member of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society.

When the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Massachusetts, Bogan lost his job working at an afterschool program at the local YMCA, but he turned this setback into an opportunity to make a difference with his peers at MassBay. Bogan decided to get more involved in campus life by joining the Student Government Association (SGA) as the Vice President of Public Relations. In this SGA position, he created connection groups for students, gathered information about the struggles students have faced with online learning during the pandemic to help find solutions, helped keep students engaged in campus activities, and focused on spreading the word to students about the benefits of Open Educational Resources (OER) to reduce student's textbook costs. In the classroom, he helped his peers by organically building connections and mentoring them, ensuring others are aware of all the resources available at MassBay including emergency funding, textbook grants, scholarships, and mentoring opportunities through the career services office.

Bogan's positivity consistently leads him to look at every mo-

ment as an opportunity to help someone, just as his mentors did for him. His future goals include transferring to a four-year university to earn his bachelor's degree. He wants to become a high school history teacher and mentor students to complete the circle of giving back the lessons he has learned from his mentors.

"Evan represents the very best of MassBay and this Commonwealth," said MassBay President, David Podell. "His passion for helping others is deeply rooted in the opportunities his mentors have helped guide him towards. It is truly inspiring that Evan wants to give back to his community in the same ways, becoming a teacher and a mentor. We are thrilled to stand with Evan and honor him for all that he has accomplished during his journey and we look forward to his successful future."

"I know Evan is the perfect student to represent MassBay as the 29 Who Shine," said MassBay Coordinator of Transfer Affairs & Articulation, Karen Akukwe. "His deep desire to become a mentor and a history teacher, giving back to his community, is inspiring. Evan has risen above any



Courtesy photo by Gary Gillis

challenges, always with a can-do attitude and positive outlook, focused on his future career."

"I am truly humbled and honored by this recognition," said Bogan. "I would like to thank my advisor Karen Akukwe, my professor Carolyn Guttilla, and my Needham Steps Up mentor Gabe Swanger. They have all guided, supported, and encouraged me during every step of my academic journey. Most importantly though, they have shown me the value of dedication. Not only to one's academics, and one's self as well."

Students selected for the "29 Who Shine" award must meet the following criteria. They must:

Show exceptional promise as a future leader in civic affairs or in business or professional activity in Massachusetts, having already demonstrated an ability to contribute to the civic and economic wellbeing of the Commonwealth.

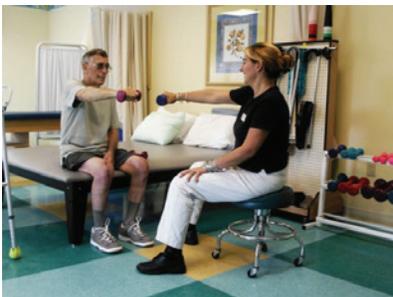
Pursue a career track or interest for which there is a demonstrated need in the Commonwealth, such as a high-demand STEM-related career (health care, life sciences, information technology), or a start-up business that will produce jobs, or a community service role to better the lives of fellow Massachusetts citizens (such as teaching, working in a social service agency, or community organization, etc.).

Be a Massachusetts resident who plans to continue living and working in the state upon graduation. A student who plans to live in Massachusetts after furthering his or her education, either in or out of state, would also qualify.

Complete his or her degree or certificate requirements at the Massachusetts community college, state university, or UMass campus within the academic year.



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13 World Softball Day	14  Flag Day	15 National Nature Photography Day	16 Fresh Veggies Day	17 Bunker Hill Day	18 International Picnic Day	19 Juneteenth
20 Father's Day	21 National Selfie Day	22 National Onion Ring Day	23 National Pink Day	24 National Work from Home Day	25 National Food Truck Day	26 National Canoe Day
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ACT is Back

We are thrilled to resume theater activities with all new original material!

“The Viewing Room”

Sept 23-24-25 and Oct 1-2, 2021 at Marconi’s Theater at the VFW in Ashland

Directed by Joe White

Written by Mark Smith

Starring - Will Annand, Tom Astore, Melanie Blodgett-O’Toole, Randy Divinski, Larry Loring, Lida McGirr, David Mularski and Lynda Slocomb.

“The Viewing Room”

The show is an original comedic play about the death and life of Chester Dumbrosky. “The Viewing Room” takes place in January of 2005 at the Hollerbach Funeral Home at the wake of Chester Dumbrosky, patriarch of the Dumbrosky family. The play is about family interactions and the interpersonal relationships we all have or want to have with our families. While every family dynamic is different each one of us plays a role within that dynamic. We guarantee you will see some similarities to a family

that you know. Perhaps even your own.

The Viewing Room is ACT’s 13th production and our sixth at Marconi’s Theater at the Ashland VFW.

Grab a friend, get your tickets, and join us at the Ashland VFW for a great evening. We promise to make you laugh and maybe even cry a bit!

What: The Viewing Room

Dates: Sept 23-24-25 and Oct 1-2

Time: 7:30 PM

Where: Ashland VFW, 311 Pleasant St., Ashland, MA

Tickets: \$15

Buy Tickets: Information Coming Soon; there will be both In-Person and Streaming Opportunities

ACT Short Film

ACT has been working on a film over these last 7 months.

Joe White is directing a short film called

“Friends in Black and White” screenplay adapted from a Tom Astro play.

Starring Jerry Halfhide and

The Viewing Room

An Original Play by Mark Smith



Larry Loring.

More information about the premiere and streaming options will come in future communications.

ACT Holiday Show Dec 2021

“Dashing Through the Snow” directed by Julie Murphy.

Dates: Dec 16-17-18

Time: 7:30 PM

Where: Ashland VFW, 311 Pleasant St., Ashland, MA

Tickets: \$15

Information Coming Soon; there will be both In-Person and Streaming Opportunities

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Sports

McGrath's Leadership Big Plus For Natick's Girls Lacrosse Team

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

When Alex McGrath heard that last year's spring sports season was canceled because of the covid-19 pandemic, her immediate thoughts went far beyond disappointment and frustration. She said: "I was devastated."

A promising lacrosse player for Natick High, the 5-foot-5 defender turned in consistent and capable efforts as a sophomore in 2019, helping the Redhawks post a 13-5 regular-season record and advancing to the second round of the sectional tournament. "Devastating" was a normal reaction because of what McGrath and her teammates lost in 2020.

"We had a strong team with nine seniors and six juniors, all experienced players," she said. "We were excited about a season that had the potential for us to go deep into the tourney. Besides experience, we had depth and talent and we were all looking forward to that season."

When the shock wore off that nine seniors wouldn't be able to complete their final season and that six juniors had to wait another year to play, McGrath faced reality.

"I realized the seriousness of the situation," she said. "Now, I'm very grateful for the opportunity to play lacrosse in my senior year. There are modifications to adjust to but we're adhering to the changes. We all love sports and we all want to play but what's most important is the health and safety of everyone."

McGrath is a very special student-athlete, one who's able to fully grasp what has to be prioritized. One who understands the importance of perseverance.

A captain who's competing as a defender, and a midfielder if needed, McGrath is a very dynamic component for the Redhawks, and coach Tanner Guarano is acutely aware of her value.

"Alex has a high lacrosse IQ," Guarino noted. "She's also athletic, well-skilled and coachable. She pushes herself and that makes other players elevate their ability. She'll play college lacrosse for St. Anselm's College and she'll excel at that level because of her work ethic and her drive. Alex is well-rounded, on and off the field."

There's no doubt about McGrath's versatility or her off-the-field results. She's a high honors



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student and a member of the National Honor Society. Her leadership ability, which was sharpened as a captain in field hockey, is easy to detect.

"As one of the lacrosse captains, I try to lead by example and by being vocal and supportive," McGrath emphasized. "What's important is to demonstrate hard work and perseverance. The key is to build positive relationships."

At Local Town Pages deadline, the Redhawks had a 2-1 record and McGrath had one goal. She's optimistic her objectives for the team can be reached.

"We want to qualify for the sectional tourney, get past the second round, and aim for a sectional and state title," she offered. "Our prospects are good if we all work hard and develop team chemistry. My personal goals are

to strive to contribute offensively and to be a Bay State Conference all-star.

A Natick native, McGrath had three outstanding varsity seasons in field hockey. She was a captain, a BSC first-team all-star, and twice competed in the sectional semifinals where the Redhawks bowed to Andover on both occasions.

Lacrosse, however, is her sport of preference. She began playing in Natick's youth league as a seven-year-old. She's also competed at the club level with Gold Star Lacrosse for five years.

"Lacrosse is appealing because it's fast-paced," she said. "It features contact and it requires being creative, whether it's when you're passing, scoring, or on the defensive end."

McGrath enjoys playing ei-

ther defense or the midfield and she's able to adjust to whatever the challenges are. "Defense requires communication," she said. "Breaking up a scoring chance is fun and being the last obstacle in front of the goalie puts a defender in a key role. Playing midfield is challenging because there's so much transition. Endurance is a must because of so much running. To get into a consistent rhythm you need lots of energy."

McGrath was superbly energetic when Natick faced Concord-Carlisle in the second round of the sectional tourney during her sophomore season. The Redhawks lost but Guarino liked how her young defender competed. "Alex had a break-out game," Guarino said. "She displayed confidence and ability as she got more involved in our offense."

Sports



McGrath calls that contest “my best game.”

“I was able to move the ball up-field and pass effectively,” she recalled. “Although I was nervous, I took the lessons learned

during the season and applied them against Concord-Carlisle. I was aggressive and played out of my comfort zone.”

McGrath rates her selection as a captain as her top thrill in

lacrosse. She also appreciates the squad’s other seniors and her coach. The seniors are mid-fielders Mary Dougherty, Emily Cochi and Molly Healy, defender Lily Kingdon and attacker

Megan Cuddy.

“We’ve played together for 10 years and it’s great to be with teammates who are positive, talented, athletic and skilled,” McGrath noted. “And, coach Guarino is a dynamic motivator. She knows the game and she’s terrific with strategy.”

McGrath’s competitive philosophy stresses winning, reaching one’s potential and having fun. “Winning is important and it happens when potential is reached and having fun occurs,” she said. “Athletics also help us to learn valuable life lessons. I’ve learned how to be a good teammate, a leader, how to overcome adversity, how to sharpen my work ethic and how to communicate better.”

The recipient of a partial scholarship, McGrath isn’t sure what she’ll major in at St. Anselm’s but she’s learning towards business administration. As for college lacrosse, she knows there’ll be challenges. “I’ll have to adapt to a faster pace and a stronger tal-

ent level,” she said. For my transition to go smoothly, it’ll require sharpening all my skills.”

McGrath says her role models in lacrosse are last year’s graduated seniors. “The way they led, the way they practiced and played, and the way they formed great relationships made them special,” McGrath said.

A superb approach to athletics and her mental toughness allow McGrath to be special, too.

“In lacrosse, what matters after a play is more important than what happens before the play,” she emphasized. “The key is to allow mental toughness to surface and be able to bounce back from what may have been a negative situation.”

There’s little doubt how well Alex McGrath bounced back after losing out on her junior year of lacrosse because of the pandemic.

She personified mental toughness at a very difficult time for her and her teammates.

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Real Estate Corner



Are we in a housing bubble?

The 2021 real estate market has been red hot. Low interest rates coupled with a historically low number of homes for sale has created an ultra-competitive seller's market. Homes are receiving multiple offers, oftentimes selling significantly over asking-price with buyers waiving contingencies to ensure their offer comes out on top. This fevered market seems unsustainable in the long run and has many people wondering if the housing market is ready to burst.

So, are we in a housing bubble? In short, no. Stricter lending practices over the past few years have ensured more qualified buyers and stronger underwriting on mortgages. A decade of stable housing market conditions has also allowed homeowners to build up more equity, ensuring less people are underwater on their mortgage. We are also not seeing a high number of foreclosed homes hit the market all at once as a result of the pandemic. The pandemic mortgage forbearance programs have

allowed some homeowners to postpone mortgage payments without penalties to help them get back on track. Foreclosures over the next few years will unfortunately increase but the number should be significantly less than the housing crisis of 2007.

The predictions for the rest of 2021 market are optimistic. Home prices should continue to rise this year with demand remaining strong. However, as the mortgage rates continue to rise and more buyers take a seat on the sidelines, the market should naturally balance itself out to a variation of seasonal supply and demand that we are used to seeing. As the market corrects itself, home prices may eventually experience a dip but nothing like the crash we saw 15 years ago.

By Jen Paratore, Realtor
Jen owns Cordaville Realty in Ashland
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Real Estate Corner

Here are some ways to celebrate Father's Day this year...

The first official Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910, in the state of Washington, created by a woman whose father had raised her and her five siblings by himself. In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued a proclamation declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day, and in 1972, President Richard Nixon declared it a national holiday.

Here are some things to do on Sunday, June 20 (or any day) to celebrate the father figures in your life:

- Bicycle ride
- Breakfast in bed
- Build a drone or a kite together
- Camping
- Clean your room/space (really well)
- Dinner - make his favorite dinner or take him to his favorite restaurant
- Facebook tribute - say thanks to Dad on social media
- Game Day - host a neighborhood soccer or baseball pickup game
- Geocaching
- Handmade cards (regardless of your age)
- Hiking trip
- Host a virtual Father's Day celebration with anyone who can't be there
- "I love you"
- Mini-golf
- Movie marathon - watch all of the Marvel or Star Wars movies in order
- Picnic - plan and pack a picnic for the backyard or a favorite destination
- Plan a fun-loving prank together
- Scavenger Hunt
- Share stories and memories with him
- Surprise him in any way you can
- Wash his car
- Write a letter, poem, story for him

Sources: www.calendarr.com/, www.goodhousekeeping.com, etc.

Compiled by Theresa Knapp for Local Town Pages

Statement from Senate President Karen E. Spilka on Chauvin Trial Verdict

The verdict reached in the Derek Chauvin trial has brought relief to many of us, and a glimpse of hope for more accountability, and ultimately, justice. This evening, I am thinking of George Floyd, the many friends and family who loved him, and the pain of their irreparable loss. I am also deeply grateful for the courage of the witnesses who testified against Chauvin, as well as the countless individuals who persisted in protesting for accountability over the past year.



Last year, we began the long process of answering calls for change by passing nation-leading legislation to improve equity, transparency, and accountability in policing in Massachusetts. I am proud of this accomplishment, but I am determined to do more. I will continue to call on the Mas-

sachusetts State Senate to be intentional in our policymaking, and view all legislation through the lens of racial justice in order to break down the systemic barriers that have unfairly burdened generations of Black and brown people. As Senate President, I am personally committed to the hard work that will be required of all of us to make our Commonwealth a more equitable and just place.

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