

Natick Artists Open Studios Event Uncertain

BY SEAN SULLIVAN

The term *open for business* has taken on a different flavor during the pandemic, and assumed an aftertaste that promises to linger into next year. Indoor gatherings of all stripes continue to be somewhat pared back and prescribed, especially with the emergence of Covid variants.

And so more than a year into the pandemic, plans to hold the Natick Artists Open Studios (NAOS) event are in limbo.

The event offers Natick artists and artisans the chance to showcase their creativity to the community in the comfort of their own studios. Interested parties and art aficionados are directed via maps to visit the places where the magic happens - basements, empty-nested bedrooms, converted



garages and kitchens. These are spaces that have assumed new roles to suit the needs of the creatives who live there.

Visitors are afforded an opportunity to see and purchase the artists' finished work, but also to peer through the window of the creative process that produced those pieces. Among the many and eclectic

mediums usually on offer at NAOS are photography, pottery, painting, and sculpture.

But the pandemic has changed the way the public interacts, prompting organizers and participants of NAOS to take extra precautions.

ARTISTS

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Residents Start Dog Podcast

It wasn't just humans who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Dogs and other animals also felt its effects. The difference, however, was that the pandemic was a good thing for those in need of a new home.

But with all those new pet owners, came many questions about how to be the best fur parent possible. Enter Kim Condon

and Kelly McPherson.

The duo, both of whom live in Natick, decided to use their breadth of animal knowledge to start a podcast. During each podcast, the women will interview the dog expert. Read more about it in the following Q&A:

PODCAST

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ARTISTS

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The event is ostensibly planned for the October 16th and 17th weekend, but organizers plan to play it by ear, taking Covid conditions into account as the date draws closer.

“It’ll all depend on whether it’s safe,” said Deb Sayre. She is the ever-present organizational force at the helm of NAOS and Natick’s popular weekly Farmers Market events. She added that artists’ work will be on display throughout the Natick Common on September 25th during that day’s Farmers Market.

After several decades of meeting to plan events like NAOS, Sayre and the group recently began to discuss formalizing the team of volunteers. They decided to tie the knot, so to speak, and make the relationship official. The group has taken “Natick Artists Association” as its name, and will assume a place among the growing number of groups seeking to foster creative arts in Natick.

“We’ve been talking about it for some time,” said Sayre, “And now we’ve made the decision. So, we’re growing up.”

Sayre hopes the formal name recognition will help get the word out about the opportunities and alliances to be had in the town for people interested in creative



endeavors. Being in the public eye as often as Sayre is - at farmers markets and various events - offers a bird’s-eye view of the creative landscape, and what areas may need tending to.

“I’m forever running into artists who don’t know about us. It’s always a delight to make those connections.”

As for the Natick Artist Open Studios event in October, she said the association

will make a final decision first thing in October.

In online video footage from January of 2020, Sayre can be seen speaking at an in-person meeting, elbow-to-elbow with more than a dozen participants. It was touted in a caption as the first NAOS organizational meeting of that year, and stated that all were “Looking forward to a creatively dynamic and rich year.”

That now stands among those countless historical documents, a snapshot of the way we lived prior to the pandemic, and how that would contrast with the reality of life just a few months later. The group held a similar meeting toward the end of last month, one in which that new reality and its restrictions played a central role in the planning. Members of the group were masked and set safe distances apart, and safety was the organizing theme among the approximately ten-person meeting.

They discussed how many artists were willing to open their studios to masked visitors for NAOS, and how many were willing and able to bring the substance of their studios out-of-doors for the event.

“Basically we were exploring a variety of options,” said Sayre. “With the understanding always that safety is the number one priority. There are so many factors involved, so everybody hopes for the best.”

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PODCAST

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Why start a podcast now?

Kelly & Kim decided to create a podcast about dogs (we also talk about cats) because we felt it was important to discuss pet related issues with owners due to the large number of folks who got pets for the very first time, during the pandemic.*

And after spending 7 years helping build the Natick Dog Park called Eddie's Park and forming the nonprofit FIDO of Natick, we felt the podcast was a great companion & good next step.

Why would folks be interested in this type of podcast?

We feel dog and cat owners would find our podcast to be helpful because sometimes pet ownership is messy or RUFF.... We talk about ourselves and our own dogs. We discuss Rabies, puppies, missing dogs, being a foster Mom, the dog park, training, behaviors, the Veterinary field, Coyotes, etc....



How did you get involved in working with animals?

Kim works at Boston West Emergency Hospital in Natick, is the Municipal Animal Inspector for Natick and has been a Foster Mom for Yorkies Inc. Kim, her husband & stepson have fostered over 40 small dogs since 2011. Kim currently has 3 dogs.

Kelly worked in the Veterinary field growing up and currently volunteers for Missing

Dogs Massachusetts. She has always had a passion for animals both domestic and wild. Kelly serves as President of FIDO of Natick. Kelly has 2 standard poodles, a wonderful husband and 2 daughters, a son and son in law. She works at a local church and is a real estate agent for a boutique firm Team Impresa representing buyers and sellers.

How will your experiences shape the podcasts?

All of the stories we tell, revolve around dogs and sometimes cats. On the episodes we interview experts in the pet ownership field. In this day and age, our pets have really become beloved family members. We hope our podcast is something folks will enjoy listening to & maybe our listeners will learn something about their pet & their environment at the same time. We hope to serve as advocates for the domestic animal population here in MetroWest. And we are super excited to learn that some of our listeners go beyond MetroWest, beyond New England & even beyond the US to places like United Kingdom, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Brazil, New Zealand & Germany!

As of July we have had over 500 downloads of our podcast episodes. We have released 10 episodes.

Folks can listen to "It Is RUFF Out There" on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iHeart Radio. We are on Facebook & Instagram

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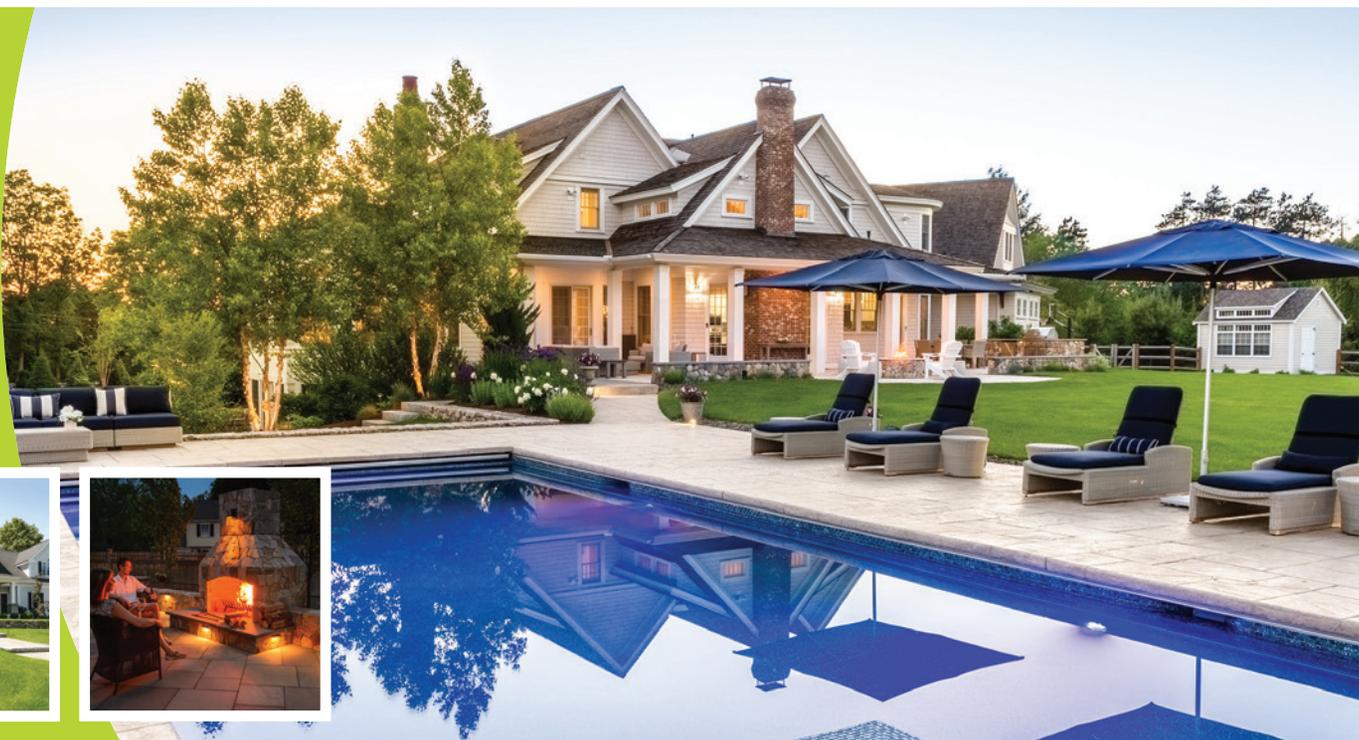
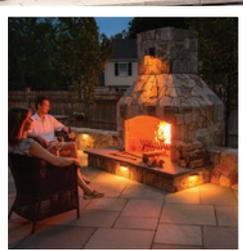
Stephen James, Pianist

Pianist Stephen James will present a lyrical program of classical, romantic and impressionistic works, including the Mozart Sonata in C minor, a selection of the Lyric Pieces by Edvard Grieg



including Wedding Day at Troldhaugen, and Le Tombeau de Couperin, by Maurice Ravel. Sunday, September 26TH, 4p.m. The Eliot Church 45 Eliot St (Rt. 16) South Natick Suggested donation: \$15 A benefit for the Eliot Church www.theeliotchurch.org

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SPARK Kindness is Looking for Volunteers to Help Spread Kindness + Connection (That Means You!)

September not only means “Back to School,” but it is also a great time to reconnect with each other and our community.

SPARK Kindness is a Natick based organization with over 8,300 members and a mission to build a community “where no one feels alone, bullied, unsupported or unconnected.” We are always welcoming new members and hope you can help us spread kindness! It’s easy for people to feel alone or isolated during the pandemic and in our fast paced world. SPARK programming and connection hopes to combat this epidemic of loneliness. SPARK is looking for (vol-

unteer) team members to help with our numerous (virtual and

and joining our Kindness Crew for pop up kindness activities. We welcome and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to join our (very kind and welcoming) team!

SPARK Kindness is also excited to be a part of Natick Days this year! On Saturday, September 11, between 10AM and 3PM, please stop by the SPARK table for this fun day in downtown Natick. We’ll have a kid-friendly activity at our table and lots of opportunities to connect with community members!

Above all, we would love to connect with you! Your experience and skill sets can help build a more kind and inclusive community! If you would like to get involved in this work of promoting kindness, please email us at info@sparkkindness.org and visit our website at www.SPARK-Kindness.org. Hope to meet you or see you at a program soon!

Visit SPARK Kindness at Natick Days on 9/11



Stop by to learn more about SPARK, our upcoming programs, and pick up a fun family craft project!

in person) opportunities to connect with others through kindness.

Some upcoming opportunities include: assisting with planning Kindness Week in Natick (November 13-20); assisting with SPARK’s online fall programs,

Annual Car Show Raises Money For American Cancer Society

On Sept 18, the 8th annual Car Show in Ashland, where all proceeds for the show goes to American Cancer Society, will be held by the Kidde Fenwal Relay for Life team.

In the past we have had over 200 antique cars at our show, coming from all over Metrowest and New England and an additional 300 spectators that come to the show to just see the cars.

The show is run like a festival as we have food vendors, a live band and a DJ at the show. But most importantly all the money raised from the show goes to American Cancer Society, we have no expenses as people donate their time to make this show happen.

The Kidde Fenwal Relay for Life team over the past 8 years through events similar to this have raised over \$250K for American Cancer Society.

Sat., September 18th
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Natick Artists Open Studios Weekend to take place October 16th & 17th

BY TOD DIMMICK

Every October over the past 20 years, local artists have opened their studios (virtually last year!) to the world in a celebration of art and community known as Natick Artists Open

of 'Oldtown.' The theme has inspired a broad range of images over the years; Natick Common in winter, along the river in Dover and Needham, pastures in Sherborn, Lake Waban in Wellesley.

Visitors to the competition



Hummingbird, by Eileen Nelson, won "Best of Show" by popular acclaim at the 2020 Oldtown Photo Calendar Competition

Studios (NAOS). The event has grown to over 85 artists passionate about jewelry, ceramics, sculpture, photography, painting, woodworking, and artistry with paper, fabric, glass, or garden.

The open studios weekend offers a unique opportunity to visit studios not normally open to the public, and to meet the artists themselves. This year's Open Studios weekend is October 16-17. Many studios will be open from 11AM to 5 PM each day. The weekend is run entirely by volunteers who love the Natick art community.

NAOS is now one of the art events offered by the newly formed Natick Artists Association, an affiliate of the Natick Center Cultural District. More information is available at <https://www.artnatick.org/>

One long time venue at NAOS weekend is the Oldtown Photo Calendar Competition (Sunday, October 17, 11AM – 3PM in South Natick. Visit www.oldtowncalendar.org in October for location information.) Photographers range from amateur to professional, but all share a passion for finding new and unique views

vote for their favorite photographs. The new 2022 calendar will also be unveiled at the show, featuring winners from the virtual 2020 competition. The calendar is a fundraising tool for the Natick Service Council, the Bacon Free Library, the Natick Historical Society, the Morse Institute Library, the Eliot Church of Natick, and others. The Natick Historical Society often leads "Oldtown" walking tours from the show. "The Eliot Church started the project twenty years ago as a way to build community," said Rosemary Driscoll, Eliot Church Moderator. "Since that time, it has grown into a popular tradition that really does bring people together."

For more information about the Oldtown Photo Calendar Competition, email theoldtowncalendar@gmail.com and visit www.oldtowncalendar.org.

For more information about the many other artists and venues featured in the Natick Artists Open Studios Weekend, visit <https://www.artnatick.org/>

Tod Dimmick, toddimmick@gmail.com

Natick Working Toward More Renewable Energy Sources

Across Massachusetts, cities and towns are leading the way to a future powered entirely by clean and renewable sources of energy. Municipal officials and staff — working with citizen activists, volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and businesses — are taking action to reduce fossil fuel consumption and increase the use of renewable energy.

This is the fourth edition of Renewable Communities, previously published in 2016, 2019, and 2020. This year's report includes seven new case studies of cities, towns, and regional agencies that have adopted innovative programs to promote renewable electricity, energy storage, clean heating, and energy efficiency.

Case studies from Renewable Communities 2021

- Arlington and Winchester: A community outreach campaign resulted in 224 contracts signed for the installation of clean heating systems like air source heat pumps.
- Chelsea: A proposed microgrid, managed by an innovative cloud-based system, would ensure clean, reliable power for buildings that provide key services to the community.
- CVEC (Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative): A coordinated approach to renewable energy deployment, bringing together dozens of municipalities and government agencies, has led to more than 50 megawatts of solar capacity built or in development.



- Mendon and Upton: A Solarize Mass Plus program offered residents a choice of six different clean energy technologies, including solar, battery storage, and air source heat pumps.
- Natick: Town officials have pursued several strategies to increase the deployment of solar on municipal buildings and on homes.
- Springfield: A 4.7-megawatt community solar array, built on a former landfill, is providing affordable electricity to hundreds of low-income residents.
- Worcester: The city's Community Choice Aggregation Program is providing residents with a higher percentage of renewable electricity from sources in New England.

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Local Nonprofit Gets \$1000 Grant

Natick-based nonprofit Family Promise Metrowest (FPM) proudly accepted a \$1,000 grant from the Rotary Club in Framingham for transportation subsidies for families served in its programs.

Since 2008, Family Promise Metrowest has provided shelter and housing support for families facing homelessness and has responded to their changing needs by expanding its programming to include the LIFE, SAIL, and Steps to Success programs. These programs provide homelessness prevention, shelter diversion, transitional, and education/employment support

to assist families in establishing long-term stability and independence. FPM often subsidizes the cost of transportation or assists parents in purchasing and maintaining a family car, as transportation is a vital component for families to be successful.

“Whether attending work, a doctor’s appointment, or school, it is imperative that all FPM families have reliable transportation. This new grant will help ensure that transportation is available to help our families transform and stabilize their lives,” said Susan Crossley, Family Promise Metrowest Executive Director.

Family Promise Metrowest



serves low- and moderate-income Massachusetts families with at least one child under the age of 18 that are facing

homelessness. With the help of a diverse community, FPM provides resources, guidance, and encouragement to help motivated families meet their goals, move themselves out of poverty, and become self-sufficient. FPM believes that if all community members take a role in solving the homelessness crisis, together as a community we can change lives permanently.

To learn more about Family Promise Metrowest and how to become involved or donate please visit www.familypromisemetrowest.org/ or email carole@familypromisemetrowest.org.

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Senator Rausch Files Universal Masking Bill For Ma Schools

Sen. Becca Rausch filed SD. 2723, An Act mitigating COVID-19 transmission among children and families, a bill requiring universal masking among students and staff in all Massachusetts K-12 schools as well as childcare programs licensed under the Department of Early Education and Care. The legislation will also ensure no attendance penalty for students with vaccination appoint-

ments during school hours and provide paid time off for parents and caregivers taking students to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

This bill comes on the heels of last week’s announcement from the Baker Administration of nonbinding masking recommendations for Massachusetts schools. The guidance contradicts updated CDC guidance and the American Acad-




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emy of Pediatrics’ guidance on COVID-19 safety in schools, both of which strongly recommend in-person learning with mandatory mask-wearing indoors and vaccinations for all students, staff, and faculty.

“With less than a month before our children head back to school, this administration chooses to play Russian roulette with the health of Massachusetts students and families,” said Senator Rausch (D-Needham). “I have heard from so many parents, school committee members, teachers, and public health experts who are rightly worried, angry, and frustrated in the wake of DESE’s weak, unenforceable, and non-binding mask recommendations. This administration fails to follow the science to the detriment of every community in this Commonwealth. I filed this bill to give families and school staff the piece of mind

Your Money, Your Independence

September is the Best Tax Planning Month. Yes, really.

September, not December or April, is the opportune time as it provides roughly 3 months to execute tax planning strategies for the current year while positioning for the year ahead.

Some usual activities:

Increase 401(k) - If your social security tax stopped after earning \$142,800 this year, consider allocating that amount (or more) to 401(k) contributions. This will help lower your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) or if a Roth 401(k), increase your tax-free savings for retirement.

Tax Loss Harvesting - No need to wait for the last days of December. In fact, many managers do selling in the fall to comply with wash sale rules and be fully-vested for the new year.

Work Benefits - Often, fall is open enrollment, the once-a-year

chance to enroll in tax-savings programs like Health Savings Account (HSA) and Flex Spending Accounts (FSAs).

HSAs enjoy triple-tax benefits, as contributions lower your AGI (reducing taxes owed), funds grow tax-free and are not taxed when used for medical expenses, premiums for long-term care and Medicare.

FSA contributions lower your AGI and the 3 programs available are Medical, Dependent Care and Transit (commuter or parking).

Unique for 2021 due to government legislation:

Child Tax Credit 2021 - Started getting money from the government in July? Those are "advance payments" up to \$3,000 per qualifying dependent child or \$3,600 if under age 6 on Dec. 31, 2021.

This tax credit reduces your tax bill on a dollar-for-dollar basis, so if you typically owe taxes, might be best to visit IRS.com to opt-out and receive a potential rebate later.

Dependent Care FSA (DC-FSA) 2021 - As referenced in June, new DC-FSA annual limits for pretax contributions increase for most from \$5,000 to \$10,500. Funding DC-FSA not only reduces taxable income but also avoids Social Security and Medicare tax. Thus, MA family in 24% federal tax bracket may have tax savings up to \$3,848 (32% tax bracket is \$4,688). But... your employer may opt-in to new limits within their plan, and have to elect funds to increase.

Roth Conversion - The spring "Biden Tax Plan" is still a proposal in late August. Congress

would be challenged (to say the least) if new tax laws passed this late in the year were retroactive for 2021. So for some, this may be a 2nd last chance to convert some assets to Roth IRA at current federal tax rates. Roth Conversion analysis takes time given the variables unique to each individual. Most importantly, conversions should be done near year-end with visibility of projected AGI as these are irreversible.

By focusing on tax planning now, you can relax over the holidays with more savings and less taxes. That calls for another slice of the pie.

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,



Glenn Brown

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.

MASKS

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they deserve about protecting their health and safety."

In addition to mandating masks for students aged two and older and staff in Massachusetts early, primary, and secondary education programs, the bill also provides excused absences from school for COVID-19 vaccination appointments, as well as up to six hours of paid leave for any parent or caregiver bringing their child to get immunized against COVID-19.

"It is the job of our government to protect our most vulnerable - which includes our Commonwealth's children," said Dr. Natalya Davis, a Quincy pediatrician who led a sign-on letter last week among medical professionals to mandate universal masking in Massachusetts schools. «Masks are a simple, safe, cheap intervention that saves lives. This is not debatable despite what opposing voices say. With Delta cases rising, masks are crucial to control the spread of COVID-19 while we vaccinate as many eligible individuals as possible.»

Today, by unanimous vote, the Massachusetts Teachers Association also called on Governor Bakerto implement a mandatory mask requirement

for all students and staff in all programs from pre-K through higher education.

Senator Becca Rausch represents the Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex District, comprised of Attleboro, Franklin, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, North Attleborough, Plainville, Sherborn, Wayland, Wellesley, and Wrentham. Currently

in her second term, Senator Rausch serves as the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture and the Senate Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

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After one bad experience too many with an unreliable contractor who used shoddy materials, Stephen Goulston founded Mario's Roofing.

"I didn't like the way things were going in this industry," he says. "I wanted to make a change. I started Mario's with the philosophy that I wouldn't do to your house what I wouldn't do to mine."

Thus began a fifteen-year quest for the perfect balance of craftsmanship, quality, and affordability. Mario's Roofing has grown beyond Stoughton to over a dozen local offices servicing Eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Mario's has also garnered several awards, including the Diamond Approval Award from Customer Track-Record, the CertainTeed Tenured Member and Governor's Awards, and the Triple Crown Champion Award.



"In all of North America, only eleven roofing companies have achieved Triple Crown status and we are one," Goulston says. "We're really proud of that."

A phone call or a website request for a quote brings a Mario's Roofing specialist right to your home. They'll make targeted recommendations, then spend time with the homeowner explaining what they've found.

"With roofing, we have a video for the customer to demonstrate every step in the process," Goulston says. "The key to a good roof is the preparation of the roof and the underlayment beneath the shingles. For the homeowner, it's the way it looks. For us, it's the way it performs."

Business spotlight

Goulston stresses continuing education for his teams, regularly inviting experts to teach his staff about the latest developments in techniques and materials. "Our guys are quality experts. Delivering the best to our customers requires we know what the best is. Then to make optimal use of it, we've got to know how and when to apply it. That's where my team comes in. We invest in experts so we can make the right recommendation for a client's situation." They'll even offer help with financing.

That commitment to cutting-edge materials is at the forefront with their siding. While Mario's offers basic vinyl siding, they also showcase a full selection of the newest and most versatile options, such as Everlast, a triple-composite formula that combines inorganic minerals, polymer reins, and acrylic colo-



rant to create the most durable siding on the market.

"September and October are the best times to work on your house," Goulston says. "Massachusetts winters can be hard on a home. Your roof needs reliable drainage to protect against ice dams. You need the gutters clear and ready to do the hard work. The siding needs to insulate against the snow and wind. Every part of a well-maintained exterior works together for the entire house's protection."

Take windows, for example, which directly impact heating and insulation. Older windows may vent heat in winter or trap too much warmth in the summer. Replacing old windows with energy-efficient ones is an easy way to enhance a home's beauty and efficiency.

Mario's offers a variety of windows, including custom design. Goulston says, "With windows, the installation is the most important part. All our window installers are highly-trained, and our policy is that the person who measures the windows is the person who installs them."

Window installation involves work on both the inside and outside, and Mario's will move the furniture and the curtains rather than expecting the homeowner to do it, then set it back in place.

Goulston says, "It's part of doing the job one hundred percent. Our workmanship separates us from everybody else, but over the years, it's also become a huge part of our reputation that we care."

Early on, Mario's adopted the tag line, "We won't soak you to keep you warm and dry." They've held to that commitment with quality materials, expert craftsmanship, and competitive pricing.

Mario's website showcases a photo gallery of their best work, as well as before and after pictures with a slider bar so homeowners can visualize their own home's transformation.

Jobs range from new front doors to re-roofed apartment complexes, or even a single basement window. Goulston says, "A small touch like that is important—not only because it looks good, but for increased security and insulation. Our customers see those details every day, and when it's all working right, they feel proud of their home."

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MassBay Welcomes Seven New Foundation Board Members

MassBay Community College Foundation Board is pleased to welcome seven new board members to join the nonprofit organization. The seven new board members bring a wide range of perspective and expertise to help the MassBay Foundation Board grow and fulfill its mission of increasing the College's revenue base to support scholarship awards, meeting its capital needs, building and engaging a community of support, and contributing to the overall fiscal strength of the institution. The new board members include:

- Christopher Bisada, of Sherborn, MA, an endodontist in Norwood, Dedham, and Franklin
- Chris Cavallerano, of Wellesley, MA, the Founder of Motivo, Inc.
- Jean Dyer, of York, ME, the former MassBay Director of Nursing and registered nurse
- Tony Loftis, of Natick, MA, an independent communica-

tions consultant

- Tina Kao Mylon, of Lincoln, MA, the Chief Talent and Diversity Officer for Schneider Electric
- Todd Ofenloch, of Wellesley, MA, a Managing Director of H.I.G. Capital
- Stacy Okada, of Wellesley, MA, an alumna of MassBay and Biochemist at Next Generation Sequencing

The MassBay Foundation Board annually awards more than \$250,000 to approximately 370 students, ensuring they have the financial means to continue their studies at the College.

"We welcome the new members to the MassBay Foundation Board and know their broad and varied experience will enhance the Board's impact," said MassBay President David Podell. "These professionals will help raise needed funds that are often the difference between whether our students graduate or drop out. Importantly, MassBay students who graduate from our

associate degree or certificate programs earn a higher salary over their lifetime than their peers, and they also provide a needed pipeline of skilled workers for the MetroWest community. The student scholarships the Foundation Board provides have a ripple effect on our regional economy."

Anyone interested in supporting MassBay student scholarships is encouraged to make a tax-free donation at www.MassBay.edu/give.



Tony Loftis



Todd Ofenloch



Stacy Okada

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The Metrowest Women's Fund Announces Creation of a New Fund at MassBay Community College to Support Single Mother Students

MassBay Community College and Metrowest Women's Fund are creating a new fund with a \$25,000 grant from the Metrowest Women's Fund to

assist MassBay's single mother students with their emergency financial needs. These funds will provide financial aid for non-tuition-related emergencies these students may encounter while pursuing their degrees including childcare expenses, housing costs, living expenses, and other basic necessities.

assist MassBay's single mother students with their emergency financial needs. These funds will provide financial aid for non-tuition-related emergencies these students may encounter while pursuing their degrees including childcare expenses, housing costs, living expenses, and other basic necessities.

“Our single mothers have many responsibilities outside the classroom, and we want them to have the peace of mind knowing there is a support system behind

single moms to focus on their education by lifting the crushing burden of fiscal stress. For these remarkable single mothers, the funds will make a tremendous difference in helping them overcome the sizable challenge of managing their life expenses while they pursue the education that can transform their lives and the lives of their children. We are truly grateful to the Metrowest Women's Fund and anticipate these funds having a tremendous impact.”

The Metrowest Women's Fund invests in women and girls in the Massachusetts Metrowest area through education, community building, grant mak-

ing, and strategic partnerships. The Metrowest Women's Fund programs focus on education inequality, safety from violence and uplifting the next generation of girls.

“The pandemic has highlighted the childcare crisis that impacts women who are in the workforce while enrolled in higher education,” said Metrowest Women's Fund Co-Founder, Rachel Sagan. “This fund for non-tuition-related emergencies will keep hard-working single

moms in school.”

The Metrowest Women's Fund was founded by Rebecca Parkhill of Weston, MA, and Rachel Sagan of Sudbury, MA,

who were driven by a single goal of doing their part to make the community of Metrowest a place where women and girls are supported and have access to the services they need and deserve.

“We are inspired and proud to support as many financially vulnerable students as possible at MassBay, the community college in our service area,” said Metrowest Women's Fund Co-Founder, Rebecca Parkhill. “The fund will bring new resources in support of the needs of women and girls in Metrowest.”

To learn more about the Metrowest Women's Fund visit www.metrowestwomensfund.com.

To learn more about MassBay visit www.massbay.edu.

MassBay Community College is the most affordable higher education option in MetroWest Boston, offering a

robust portfolio of courses and more than 70 associate degree and certificate programs with flexible day, evening, and weekend classes in Ashland, Framingham, Wellesley Hills, and online. MassBay students receive an unmatched educational value by earning stackable credits that transfer to bachelor's degree programs, and workforce-ready skills necessary to advance careers in high-demand fields such as health and life sciences, automotive technology, engineering, business, cybersecurity, and the humanities. MassBay's Associate Degree in Nursing (RN) and Practical Nursing (LPN) programs were both ranked as the #1 Nursing Program in Massachusetts in 2020-2021 by national nursing advocacy organizations RegisteredNursing.org, and PracticalNursing.org. Since its founding in 1961, MassBay has been accredited by several governing bodies and remains firmly committed to its mission of meeting the needs of the diverse local communities it serves. We value the intrinsic worth of all individuals, collectively in pursuit of inclusiveness and prioritize our work towards achieving equity within our community and beyond.



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Clean Energy Challenge Off To A Strong Start

Business spotlight

The Solar and Clean Heat Challenge is off to a strong start.

Over 350 residents in Ashland, Framingham, Holliston and Natick have submitted requests for no-cost assessments from the program installers and over 30 clean energy technology systems have been contracted to date!

The MetroWest Solar + Clean Heat Challenge is a regional partnership launched by the municipalities of Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, and Natick to connect residents and small businesses with reliable installers and competitive pricing for clean energy technologies of

- Solar panels, which convert clean, free sunlight to electricity, reduce air pollution, and can reduce or eliminate monthly electricity bills
- Air-source heat pumps, which are a flexible, cost-effective and energy-efficient option for heating and air conditioning
- Ground-source heat pumps, which are the most efficient heating and cooling system available and are reliable even on the coldest days

The MetroWest Solar + Clean Heat Challenge kicked off this past June and will run through the end of the year.

Going solar is good for the environment, it decreases the need for fossil fuels to be burned and is a completely zero-emission energy source. Not only is it good for the environment, but solar saves you money as well. It is an investment in which you can save thousands in avoided electric bill costs and even increase the value of your home. With the solar incentives available currently, there are even more savings to get excited about.

While most people have heard of solar panels and solar energy, there are a couple of other clean energy sources that can also save money over time. They are also as environmentally friendly as solar energy.

Geothermal energy is a clean, efficient way of heating and cooling your home with minimal impact on the envi-

ronment. The energy savings, in some instances, can pay off in as little as three to five years.

Electric heat pump systems are becoming increasingly popular because they do not rely on fossil fuels to produce warm and cold air.

Purchasing a heat pump will help reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that are released into the environment each year. In addition, installing a heat pump instead of a furnace or central air conditioner can help you save money on your utility bills.

A misconception about heat pumps is that they are not effective during our harsh New England winters. In reality, technological advances, along with the real life experiences of home and business owners in the area who have heat pumps, have demonstrated their effectiveness in providing clean heat and cooling year round.

Despite the data showing otherwise, solar and clean energy can have a significant impact in the New England area.

A misconception for solar is that it isn't worth it in New England, when Massachusetts is actually one of the best states to go solar. Even through our seasons, solar produces ample energy and the incentives in New England make going solar more economically viable.

Speaking of being worth it, don't let the upfront costs scare you away. There are plenty of financing sources that can help navigate your way into a cleaner, but less expensive heating system.

Learn more about the MetroWest Solar and Clean Heat Challenge, and meet the vetted partners to see which technologies are right for you! Check out their website or get in touch with the installers for any questions, information, or an estimate for your home. You can save a lot of green by going green, especially through this program.

Visit <https://www.metrowest-cleanenergy.com/> to learn more about each clean energy technology, sign up for a no cost home assessment, and check out upcoming events



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Photos by Achieve Renewable Energy, LLC.

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The Top 10 Reasons “Why Giving Back Feels So Good.”

AUTHOR: HEATHER J. CULKEEN

Charitable Foundation: Project Perseverance

What does it mean to give back to society? Giving back or donating to causes close to your heart benefits both the charity and you. Contributing to your worthy causes has far more benefits than you may realize.

Many give their time, talents, and/or money to the support community causes, which they hold dear to their heart. Giving back has also been shown to improve quality of life. So, to answer the question, why is giving to charity so satisfying? Here are the top 10 reasons “why giving back feels so good.”

1. Bring meaning to your Life:

By donating or giving back, you are creating opportunities to meet people who believe in the same causes as you do. The interaction with like-minded people can inspire you to create a real impact on these causes. It can also infuse your life

with a purpose or meaning in case you are stuck in a rut wondering why life is so stagnant. Giving back can reinvigorate your life.

2. Help others in need:

There will never be a perfect time to give back as we are not living in a perfect world. But there are always others who need help in tough situations. A simple compliment to anyone, even a stranger, can brighten their day at no cost. It may even change their life.

3. The Time is Now:

Regardless of the state of the economy or the pending rise in taxes and interest rates, it is not only kind to donate to those in need. Our financial difficulties hopefully last only a short time, but for those in need may could last a lifetime unless they get on the right path. For others more fortunate, just by providing a hand, donation, smile will go a long way to help those in need survive and thrive.

4. Strengthens personal values:

When asked why they want to give back, 96% of people who participated in the research said that they are feel obliged to help others. They said that it’s a moral duty which is rooted in their principles and personal values. Acting on these feelings is the responsibility of a human.

5. Teach generosity to children:

When children see you giving back, they will adopt the same attitude when they grow up. Many people stated that they learned how to give back from their parents and through personal experiences. You are benefiting humanity by teaching children to give, share, and donate.

6. Inspire friends and family:

If you educate your family and friends about your charitable donations after you’ve given back, they could be inspired to do the same. They may take your lead and donate whatever they can, especially to communal issues like promoting health, providing opportunities to rise above obsta-

cles, and allowing others to achieve their goals. Giving back ignites a fire within you.

7. Realize that small donations help:

You don’t always have to donate large amounts to make a difference. Even small amounts could result in week’s, months, and possible years of meals for starving children or the much-needed medical help for elders.

8. Improve Money Management:

You can also drive yourself to be a better personal family financial manager by allocating a specific amount to each donation each month. You can make donations, fund your family’s education, retirement, and other financial goals this way.

9. Give, when you can’t volunteer:

In cases where you think that you should volunteer but are too busy to spend time for a worthy cause, you can donate money. Money is just a workaround for a time as it helps the organizations to acquire more resources that can improve the cause.

10. Spreading the love:

You can demonstrate that love exists by giving back to society. While spreading love, charity gives people hope for humanity. If you can’t afford to donate, consider how a tiny gesture could help you achieve your desired feelings while also making others feel good about themselves.

Project Perseverance is dedicated to organizing and funding rescue efforts as well as delivering contributions to local and early stage non-profit organizations. We support children, families, elders, and others experiencing challenges that make us stronger.

To donate to Project Perseverance to help support our mission to give back, please email us at ProjectPerseverance888@gmail.com with subject line: PP888. The QR Code and link will be emailed for you to donate. Please feel free to suggest a cause via email that you feel would benefit from our support as well. Thank You.

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Family Promise Metrowest Receives Grant For \$2500

Natick-based nonprofit Family Promise Metrowest proudly accepted a \$2,500 grant from the Greater Boston Association of REALTORS® for its LIFE Program.

program. With subsidies to pay off rent in arrears and a year of case management to address the challenges that led to near- eviction, the LIFE program helps families stabilize their housing and develop long-term stability. This new grant will help fund the LIFE program and aid FPM in its ongoing mission to help families transform their lives and create sustainable homes where their children can thrive.



Since 2008, Family Promise Metrowest has provided shelter and housing support for families facing homelessness. In 2017, in response to an increase in calls from families who were in the eviction process but hadn't yet lost their housing, FPM launched the LIFE homelessness prevention

“These are challenging times and with an unprecedented increase in families facing unemployment and possible eviction, our community partners are needed more than ever. The Greater Boston Association of REALTORS® grant comes at an opportune time and we are so grateful for their support of our LIFE Program,” said

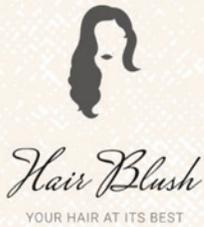
Susan Crossley, Family Promise Metrowest Executive Director.

Family Promise Metrowest serves low- and moderate-income Massachusetts families with at least one child under the age of 18 that are facing homelessness. With the help of a diverse com-

munity, FPM provides resources, guidance, and encouragement to help motivated families meet their goals, move themselves out of poverty, and become self-sufficient. FPM believes that if all community members take a role in solving the homelessness crisis,

together as a community we can change lives permanently.

To learn more about Family Promise Metrowest and how to become involved or donate please visit www.familypromisemetrowest.org or email carole@familypromisemetrowest.org.



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ACS is a dues-paying, nonprofit organization.



ACS was formed in 1963 as part of the Natick Newcomer's Club and consists of members from many towns and many walks of life, all with a common love of vocal music. Our next concert is on Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021.

We are planning on meeting in person, but due to the constantly changing virus requirements this could change. The last two semesters we stayed together via Zoom meetings. Even if we do meet in person, there is also the possibility of joining us on Zoom. Vaccinations are required to join us in person.

Check us out at www.theacappellasingers.org; contact us at info@theacappellasingers.org; call 774-231-1963; or just show up at our open rehearsals!

Public health experts and the American Academy of Pediatrics agree that universal masking in schools is an effective way to keep our vulnerable children and residents safe as we continue to fight this global pandemic. Parents, school staff and students seek clear, consistent direction as the school year starts, and they deserve to get it from the state. That's why I am calling on the Baker Administration to require masks in school this fall.

Statement from Senate President Karen E. Spilka on Masks in Schools

Next month, almost a million children will return to Massachusetts K-12 public schools. Of these kids, nearly half will be under 12 years old and therefore ineligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine before returning to the classroom.

Throughout the spring and summer, I joined parents and teachers in the hope that our children could return to school with a sense of normalcy. With the rise of the highly contagious Delta variant, however, the situation is clear: COVID-19 case counts are rising. The number of deaths is once again rising, including among those who have been vaccinated. This means that we are not quite ready to return to our pre-pandemic 'normal.'

Public health experts and the American Academy of Pediatrics agree that universal masking in schools is an effective way to keep our vulnerable children and residents safe as we continue to fight this global pandemic. Parents, school staff and students seek clear, consistent direction as the school year starts, and they deserve to get it from the state. That's why I am calling on the Baker Administration to require masks in school this fall.

No one wants to go back to the dark early days of this public health crisis, and so we must do everything possible to keep people safe and our economy stable. Wearing a mask around vulnerable populations, including unvaccinated children and others, is a small and simple action we can take to do this.

Our children deserve to learn, grow and thrive in a safe and healthy environment, free from the disruption, anxiety and fear of a COVID-19 outbreak in their school. Massachusetts residents have shown such amazing compassion, caring and resilience throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to keep going until our youngest and most vulnerable can be vaccinated.

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Myths and Misconceptions About Probate

Simply put, probate is a legal process for settling debts and distributing assets after a person passes away. There are many myths and misconceptions about the probate process, the most common of which we will dispel here.

The only way to avoid probate is to create a trust

Trusts are powerful estate planning tools capable of helping you accomplish a wide range of planning goals, including probate avoidance. However, having

Business spotlight



It takes years to complete the probate process

We've all heard stories about celebrities and wealthy families fighting over estate assets for years on end. And if you are expecting an inheritance, it can seem like years before probate is completed and you actually receive your inheritance. The truth is that while probate can be frustrating, time-consuming, and fraught with delays, the vast majority of estates are settled within a year and oftentimes require considerably less time than that. Most states also allow for what is known as a summary probate when an estate is small and other conditions are met. Summary probates can be completed in a few months. Factors that influence the amount of time required to probate an estate include the number of beneficiaries, the size and complexity of the estate, disagreements between beneficiaries, will contests, the lack of a will, and situations where the decedent had a large number of creditors or debts.

It's best to name the oldest child as personal representative of the estate

A personal representative is the individual who administers an estate during probate. You can name your personal representative in your will. (If there is no will, the court has the authority to select a "personal representative" to administer the estate.) Although many people want their oldest child to serve as personal representative, doing so is not a requirement. In fact, it may not even be the wisest choice. Given the importance of the personal representative's role and the numerous responsibilities involved in the probate process, you should put a great deal of thought into choosing your personal representative.

The cost of probate is so high that there will be little left in the estate for beneficiaries

While probate can be expensive, it typically costs less you might think. The cost varies greatly based on where the estate is probated, but it generally falls within a range of three to seven percent of the estate's value. Many of the factors that influence how long probate takes also impact its cost, particularly the size and complexity of the estate and whether disputes arise between beneficiaries.

We recommend working with an estate planning attorney to establish a plan that helps ensure your estate will not have to go through probate. If you are responsible for probating an estate, or think you will be soon, you should retain an estate planning attorney to guide you through every stage of the process.



If the person (the 'decedent') had a will, his or her estate won't have to go through probate

While a will allows you to choose the personal representative of your estate, name a guardian for your minor children, and convey your wishes about who receives your assets after you pass away, it does not allow your estate to avoid probate. As a matter of fact, part of the probate process involves determining the validity of a will.

a trust is not the only way your estate can avoid probate. Assets held in joint tenancy with rights of survivorship, payable on death accounts, and multiple party accounts with financial institutions can also avoid probate. It is important to talk with your estate planning attorney about the best way to title an asset so that it meets your goals.

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Pandemic Pets: Local surrender rates high but don't follow national trend

Local shelters say dog surrender rates doubled in last 12 months

BY AIDAN POOLE

National news sources have been reporting that “people are abandoning their pandemic pets nationwide as returns to work [and school] loom” (www.fortune.com) and, while local animal shelters say they too have seen an uptick in surrenders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not the newly-adopted pets who need to be re-homed.

Kathy Lundgren, the volunteer outreach coordinator of the Baypath Humane Society in Hopkinton, said “our dog surrender rates have doubled”

between July 2020 to July 2021, “but the surrenders haven’t necessarily been the pups adopted through the pandemic.”

Instead, Lundgren said, “the surrenders that we have been seeing have been from people who have had their dogs for years” and are giving them up due to pet behavior problems, personal health issues, or life changes, such as losing a home or job. “It’s a delicate situation so we don’t pry as to the reason for the surrender unless it is a behavioral surrender,” she said.

Barbara Farrington, the director of the Milford Humane

Society, connected the dots between certain surrenders and pandemic-related hardships. “Some of the surrenders have been directly related to COVID and job loss leading to home loss,” she said, recalling one family who had to surrender their cat because the main breadwinner was an event planner, one of the “types of jobs [that] could not survive the pandemic.”

Although COVID-19 has contributed to the Milford Humane Society’s workload, Farrington said that many of their surrenders are for other reasons such as pet owners changing their residence or elderly people becoming unable to care for their animals.

Lundgren says, at Baypath Humane Society, adoptions are



Lulu (fka “Dolly”) was adopted from Baypath Humane Society before the pandemic. Credit: Kati Enos

also up by about eight percent overall which helps offset the above-average surrender rates, and is “most likely due to the pandemic and families looking for companion animals.”

“It is an unfortunate number of surrenders and most of the time we understand that it is a tough decision for people to surrender their pets for various reasons,” said Lundgren, adding that Baypath Humane Society is “thankful that people do surrender them appropriately to a shelter” rather than “just [letting] them out some place to fend for themselves.”

Did you adopt a pet during the pandemic? Share their photo on our Facebook page @NatickTownNews

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Morse Institute Library News

Meet Morse Institute Library’s 13th Library Director, Mikaela “Miki” Wolfe!

Ms. Wolfe brings with her a love of libraries, a fresh perspective, and a strong sense of community building. Ms. Wolfe comes from the Sharon Public Library, where she served as assistant director since 2014. She

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) Tuesdays at 10am



brings with her a decade-long career in library services and a life-long love of books, BBC mysteries, and cross-stitching. She adds her leadership to a talented staff, tasked with continuing to open the library to the public and expand upon pre-pandemic services, as well as instilling her vision to the library’s evolving role in the Natick community. Please join us in welcoming Miki to our community!

Wellness and Self-Care: 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

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.

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Library News

Natick historical newspaper

We are excited to announce the launch of our newest online resource, the Natick Historical Newspaper Archive. Made possible by the MutualOne Charitable Foundation, the digital Natick Historical Newspapers archive is your place to search for all things local to Natick and the surrounding area. The archive offers you the ability to search twelve different Natick newspapers with various dates that go back to 1869 and up to 2004. The online archive is keyword searchable and you can share your findings online with friends! So whether its the results of the Natick and Framingham football game in 1954, or an article about the 4th of July parade in the 1960s,- you will find these treasures and more!

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 Pickup?

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.

Delivery Service

Delivery Service is available for our patrons who cannot safely come to the library, to see if you qualify for delivery click here.

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 Minute-

man 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!

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Sports

Little Is The 'Glue Guy' For Natick High Grid Team

By KEN HAMWEY
STAFF SPORTS WRITER

Jayson Little has all the attributes to be an outstanding captain for Natick High's football team this year.

First of all, he's paid his dues. The 18-year-old senior started his high school career on the freshman team, then moved to the jayvees as a sophomore before starting at safety and wide receiver as a junior on last year's Redhawks squad that finished 5-0 and won the Bay State Conference championship.

A BSC all-star who also was selected to the Metrowest Daily News and Boston Globe all-division teams, Little was pleased to achieve those accolades after turning in stellar efforts on offense and defense. But, those honors aren't as important to Little as being named a captain.

"My teammates choose the captains and I'm humbled that the players voted for me," Little said. "To earn the respect of teammates means a lot."

Little plans to lead by example and by being vocal and supportive. "I want my teammates to know they can rely on me," he said. "And, I also want to lead on and off the field."

Little's team goals and his personal objectives speak volumes about his team-first attitude and

his penchant for leadership.

"I want us to repeat as division champions, qualify for the playoffs and contend for a Super Bowl crown," he emphasized. "My individual goals are to keep improving at safety and wide receiver and to strive for all-star



Above: Natick High's Jayson Little (13) is an adept safety on the defensive side of the ball. Left: Little's 3.5 GPA also makes him an all-star in the classroom.
Photos Courtesy of ROFGANT PHOTOGRAPHY

recognition again. If I'm contributing like an all-star, then that's a positive impact on our team."

Last year, Little played superbly at safety, compiling three interceptions and 32 tackles in the abbreviated, covid-19 season. At wideout, he had 9 receptions for 114 yards.

Natick coach Mark Mortarelli likes what the 6-foot-1, 175-pounder brings to the table.

"Jayson was more of a de-

fensive player last year," Mortarelli said. "He's an exceptional leader. I'd call him a 'glue guy' because he keeps everything together. He's long and fast, but he also has great hands and good instincts. A very physical player, Jayson leads by consistently putting the team first."

Little is also a versatile athlete — he's played one varsity season of baseball in right field and he'll be a candidate in basketball as a guard-forward. Football, however, remains his favorite sport.

"I enjoy playing both safety and wide receiver," Little noted. "The key to success at both positions is preparation and a strong work ethic. What I like about being a receiver is having the chance to turn in a big play by outworking a cornerback. At safety, there's lots of freedom and you can dictate your style."

A native of Natick, Little's style is basically one of finesse with reliance on a high football IQ and an instinctive nature. He also possesses strong hands, is athletic and is extremely coachable.

Those assets were front and center in games last year against Framingham and Milton.

"I had two interceptions against Framingham in a 41-6 victory," Little recalled. "Against Milton, I had one interception

and four receptions for 70 yards. The interception came in the second half and gave us some breathing room in a back-and-forth game that we won, 48-26."

There's no back and forth when Little talks about his coach and the Redhawks other senior captains. He's quick to direct praise in their direction.

"Coach Mortarelli is a great guy and a knowledgeable coach," he said. "He's not only a big part of Natick's winning culture, but he's also a genius at devising game plans. Our other captains are Jake Adelman (linebacker, running back), Aaron Becker (linebacker, guard), and Jacob Snoeyink (tackle). They lead by example and by being vocal, they know how to win and they're physical players who can dominate on both sides of the ball."

Little knows a thing or two about domination. He's a National Honor Society student who has a 3.5 GPA. He's also the senior class treasurer and a member of the Future Business Leaders of America Club. "I plan on majoring in business in college," he said, "and if the opportunity arrives, I hope to continue playing football, likely at a Division 2 or 3 school."

Calling his parents (Matt and Alyssa) role models for their support and encouragement, Little

relies on an athletic philosophy that focuses on daily improvement. "It's also important to have fun, enjoy sports and to reach your potential," he emphasized. If all those things occur, then winning will follow."

Acutely aware that sports, specifically football, teach valuable life lessons, Little says he's learned to take advantage of new opportunities that lead to improvement. "The improvement can be in athletics, academics or within one's family," he said. "Sports have also helped me to be a better teammate, a leader, and how to handle and overcome adversity."

"The players all know they can count on Jayson," Mortarelli said. "He's a very positive presence and an all-around great kid. We'll lean on him a lot to replace the talent we had at wide receiver last year. He's the type of player any coach would want to work with. He never has excuses; he just works his tail off."

The personable Little enjoys watching Justin Herbert work for the Los Angeles Chargers. The quarterback is his favorite pro player. "He's got a cool style," Little offered.

Jayson Little's demeanor is cool, too, and it'll be on display when Natick kicks off its 2021 season at Needham on Sept. 10.

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Senior Center news

SEPTEMBER 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

September 6 – Labor Day-Center is closed, no programs offered

September 13- British Museum and Soo Hutton findings (movie ‘The Dig’)

September 20- Medici from the MET

September 27- Rembrandt

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.

Walking Group at Elm Bank

Tuesday, 9:30-10:30am, free-Drop-In

Meet us at the Elm Bank/Mass Hort Visitor’s Center parking lot for our weekly walk around the loop road and maybe even down the Charles River trail. This casual walk is a great way to start the day, meeting new people, getting outside and moving! Please wear sneakers/walking shoes, and any other outdoor stuff you need (ie. sunscreen, hat, water, bug spray etc). Goes rain or shine.

Elder Law Updates with Tim Loff- ZOOM

Monday, September 20, 1:30-2:30pm, free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Join Elder Law Attorney Timothy Loff in this overview of important updates and changes for 2021 on many legal issues important to seniors. Big changes in

the area of Estate Recovery for MassHealth benefits, remote notarization, and new issues involving Life Estates and Irrevocable Trusts will be among the issues discussed. General questions are welcome. Bring yourself up to date!

Art Matters- Women Artists- Part 1 - ZOOM

Thursday, September 23, 11am-noon, free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Sponsored by Avenu, Natick Women artists, capable of the art of creation as well as the creation of art, have historically proved threatening to the dominant male establishment. There are many examples of how she has flourished and failed, been celebrated or crushed, but in almost every instance, needing to be better than their male competitors to be taken seriously. Join us for a look and a discussion about the women who have defied convention to make art from the Renaissance through the 19th century. Part I features women artists up to 20th Century and



Part II (ON October 21) covers women artists of the 20th Century.

Pranayama Yogic Breathing- ZOOM

Monday, September 27, 2:30-3:30, free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Experience pranayama, the art and science of yogic breathing. Pranayama’s health benefits include reduced anxiety, lower 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. Note: This is best done on an empty stomach. We will sit in chairs.

Give Yourself the Gift of Laughter- ZOOM

Wednesday, September 29, 1:30-2:30pm, free, register thru Community Pass or call the center 508-647-6540.

Join Bill and Linda Hamaker, Certified Laughter Yoga Master Trainers. There are no fancy poses and no special clothing is needed. You can sit or stand. A pretend laugh even has all the same health benefits as a real one, but turns into a real laugh when practiced in a group. Laughing strengthens the immune system, unwinds the negative effects of stress, lowers blood pressure, lifts your spirits, improves mental alertness and much, much more.

Mindfulness Meditation-zoom program

Thursday, 2pm, 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.

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Family of Ricky Giacoppo donates backpacks to those with Substance Use Disorder

Register to view online fundraiser, receive free ticket to comedy show with Jimmy Tingle

BY DONNA LANE

NORWOOD - The letter begins, "Dear Friend, We would like to introduce ourselves. We are the parents of Ricky Giacoppo - Bernadette and Rich Giacoppo. We lost our son Ricky on May 11, 2019, to a fatal overdose...We adored our son and never gave up hope he would beat this insidious disease that he suffered from for over 20 years."

Ricky suffered from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Substance Use Disorder, a disease that affects a person's brain and behavior and leads to an inability to control the use of a legal or illegal drug or medication, homelessness, or mental illness.

More than two years have passed and the Giacoppo has channeled their grief into helping others who suffer with the

disorder that took their son, and addressing the stigma associated with Substance Use Disorder.

"It is a medical disease that is generally accompanied with a mental health issue," Rick stated. "We need to dispel the notion that it's a decision. It isn't."

The Giacoppo family is both retired from careers in public service - Bernadette spent 20 years as a social worker in Boston and Rich was a Norwood police officer for 30 years. So, it is no surprise to those who know them that even in their profound grief they choose to try to help others.

"Despite all we tried, we couldn't help Ricky," Bernadette said. "But if we could help someone else...that's what keeps us going."

Outreach: More than 1,000 backpacks distributed

The family has been doing street outreach both in Massachusetts and Maine for the past two years. The elder Giacoppo handle outreach in Massachu-

setts (primarily in the Boston area) and their other two sons, Christopher and Nicholas plus Nicholas' wife Virginia, handle community outreach in Portland, Maine.

"There are a lot of homeless people in Portland that need help," Bernadette said. "And there's a terrible humanitarian crisis going on in Boston. There are hypodermic needles everywhere on Mass[achusetts] Avenue. Many of these people are homeless, and they are getting robbed or sexually assaulted."

To date, the Giacoppo family has distributed more than 1,000 backpacks to men and women in recovery homes, detox programs, Department of Public Health programs that serve people with substance use disorder, veterans, and street outreach in the Mass Ave. Boston area through Ricky, Inc., the 501(c)(3) non-profit established in their son's memory.

The backpacks

Why a backpack? "Because people who are homeless don't have a lot of things," Rich said. "They cherish the backpacks and can carry all of their personal possessions in them."



Each backpack distributed contains the "Dear Friend" letter reminding the recipient they are a valued human being; an extensive resource manual pointing to detox treatment services, recovery homes, stabilization programs, hotlines, medication-assisted treatment locations; an explanation of the Good Samaritan Law; and much more. A version distributed to veterans also includes veteran-specific information.

Summer backpacks contain a notebook or calendar plus a gender-specific hygiene packet containing a toothbrush and toothpaste, shaving essentials, soap, shampoo products, deodorant, Band-aids, antiseptic wipes, foot powder, sunblock, two pairs of socks, a water bottle, rain poncho, sunglasses, and other sundry items.

RICKY

continued on page 21



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RICKY

continued from page 20

Winter backpacks also include warm hats, gloves, scarves, foot and hand warmers, and lap blankets.

The Giacoppo says Ricky was an avid reader so each backpack also includes a book.

“When he was on the street, he would often make his way to the Boston Public Library and read until he was asked to leave at closing time,” Bernadette shared. “He could talk with anyone about anything.”

Funding the mission

“Every penny we get goes into these backpacks. Nobody in the Ricky, Inc. organization is paid for their time or services,” Rich said.

To help raise funds for this endeavor, the Giacoppo will host their Second Annual Virtual Auction and comedy show fundraiser from Sept. 13 to Sept. 19. Registration is free and begins Monday, Sept. 6. Auction items include golf certificates, swan boat rides at the Boston Common, sightseeing tours, hotel stays (such as a Maine hotel getaway package), sports mem-

orabilia, and much more. Anyone who registers will receive a free ticket to a virtual comedy show featuring comedian Jimmy Tingle on Sept. 19.

To access the virtual auction page and register to bid on the auction items, visit <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/rickyauction>. For more information about Ricky, Inc., or to donate, visit <https://rickyinc.org> or <https://facebook.com/Rickyincorporated> or call 781-727-6628.

Comedy Fundraiser Sept. 19 to benefit Ricky, Inc.

The Second Annual Virtual Auction and comedy show fundraiser to benefit Ricky, Inc. will take place from Sept. 13 to Sept. 19.

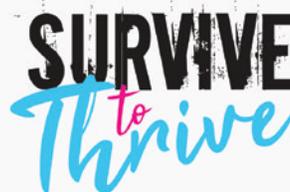
Registration is free and begins Monday, Sept. 6.

Auction items include golf certificates, swan boat rides at the Boston Common, sightseeing tours, hotel stays, sports memorabilia, and more.

Each person who registers will receive a free ticket to a virtual comedy show featuring comedian Jimmy Tingle on Sept. 19.

- To access the virtual auction page and register to bid: <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/rickyauction>.

- For more information about Ricky, Inc., or to donate, visit rickyinc.org and <https://facebook.com/Rickyincorporated> or call 781-727-6628



Sibling Support Group
(For youth ages 11-14)

This is a 10-week program that begins **Thursday, September 9, 2021 (5:45-7:30pm)**

The Survive to Thrive Sibling Support Group is offered for youth who have siblings with mental health and behavioral health challenges living in the home. Ben Speaks' knows the wide-ranging impact that mental health issues can have on families, and looks to serve as a resource to youth that are impacted by the stigma, volatilities, and demands placed on families. Siblings of family members with mental health needs may experience challenges and disruptions in their own emotional growth and development. This group will provide these youth with a nurturing environment to share their unique experiences of having a sibling with mental health needs, engage in empowering and fun expressive activities, and develop their own skills and resources, so that they may thrive in face of the challenges that they and their families encounter.

What is the Sibling Support Group?

- Group is open to youth ages 11-14 years old, living in MetroWest Massachusetts, who have siblings that struggle with mental health and behavioral health issues living in the home.
- Group sessions will include opportunities for both open and themed discussions, expressive art activities, age appropriate learning about mental health challenges and their impacts on families, and empowerment skills to enhance emotion regulation and effective communication.
- Group sessions to be held at the Ben Speaks Resource Office, 360 Woodland Street - 2nd Floor, Holliston, MA 01746. Meetings will be held in person as we follow the CDC rules regarding COVID-19. Drop off 5:45pm, Pick up 7:30pm. Healthy meal provided. If need be, we will shift to ZOOM.
- 10 weeks - 1.5 hours each week (No group will be held September 16 due to Yom Kippur)
- Facilitated by Bretton Torkelson, Psy.D., Judy Giovangelo, Michael Giovangelo and Penny Young; Members of the Ben Speaks' Board of Directors.
- Cost: FREE

Visit www.benspeaks.org for more information & to sign up



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Natick PorchFest is coming to your neighborhood!

The Natick Center Cultural District is looking for people to host musicians on their Porches, for Neighborhood Coordinators and Musicians to help plan for PorchFest, to be held on Saturday, September 25th, 2 PM - 6 PM.

Please email natickporchfest@gmail.com to sign up!

Check out the street list below to see which neighborhoods have been selected:

- Area #1: Washington St., Walnut St., Harvard St., Franklin St., Florence St., David Drive.
- Area #2: Grant St., Wilson St., Sheridan St., Sherman St., Avon St., Garfield St., Chester St., Morse St.
- Area #3: Pond St., Maple St., Plain St., Park St., Western Ave., Floral Ave., Waban St.

Generously sponsored by Music Go Round Boston, located on Rte. 9 in Natick.

Natick PorchFest:

What is PorchFest? Natick PorchFest is a grassroots community music festival happening on Saturday - September 25, 2021 from 2pm-6pm. Musicians play on front porches, and attendees enjoy lots of free music and local color as they walk and bike around the neighborhoods. It's a great opportunity for local musicians to share their talents with their neighbors, and for residents to discover their neighborhoods anew!

Where does it take place? Natick PorchFest will take place

on the porches of generous hosts, who are sharing their porches and lawns with neighbors and the community around Pond Street in Natick Center!

Who's performing? Anyone who wants! We'll have lots of acts, from home grown to nationally recognized, performing everything from Folk to Techno to Polka. We welcome nonmusi-

fest.org as we lead up to September 25th. Check our listings for the most up-to-date information, as new bands and porches are joining each day.

What about eating and drinking? Feel free to bring your own food and beverages. If you need to pick up some snacks, please consider the local businesses spread throughout town! Just re-

it comes to dogs.

Where do I park? There is plenty of on-street parking in Natick Center and in the surrounding areas listed. We also encourage walking and biking for those who are able - it's the best way to soak up as much music as possible!

Will there be bathrooms? No. Please note that porch hosts will not provide restrooms.

What do I need to bring? You won't need much of anything to stroll around town and enjoy the music. However, if you are planning to settle in for particular a performance, you might bring chairs, a blanket to sit on, or a picnic lunch. Alternatively, if you are planning a schedule of concert hopping, you might want to bring your bike.

Do the musicians get paid? Organizers, performers, and porch hosts are all giving freely of their time and talents. If you would like to support a band, you are welcome to make a donation at the performance.

Who's organizing this? Natick Center Cultural District, the Natick Community & Economic Development Department and a fantastic team of energetic community volunteers.

I've still got questions. Email us at www.natickporchfest.org

Music Go Round:

Music Go Round is New England's Ultimate USED gear resource. From Guitars to effects, Drums to cymbals, Mics to mixers, their on-staff gear experts

know the products you are selling and looking to buy and operate on a business model of customer transparency. Located on Route 9, Natick, Music Go round can help you get the sound you are looking for. Visit www.musicgoround.com/locations/natick-ma

Natick Center Cultural District:

Natick Center Cultural District - home to more than 200 working artists, The Center For Arts in Natick, the Morse Institute Library, The Walnut Hill School for the Arts, many independently owned businesses and cultural organizations, and an active Parks and Recreation Department, all contributing to a busy year-round schedule of arts and cultural events. Visitors to Natick Center can expect an intimate, friendly experience and the rich heritage of a classic New England town, while celebrating a vibrant, contemporary fusion of art, culture and business. Against the backdrop of the quintessential New England town center, a passionate group of committed individuals and organizations work, through businesses and studios, to create a dynamic and diverse community. We work in partnership with the Town of Natick and committed members to cultivate a lively and diverse downtown neighborhood by enhancing the cultural, economic, and social life of our community. Visit www.natickcenter.org to learn more.



cal performers as well. Check out our listings ahead of time to plan your route or start at your favorite performer and wander from there.

Who should come? Anyone and everyone! Natick PorchFest is family-friendly and features a wide variety of music so there's sure to be a band or performance that sparks your interest.

Do I need a ticket? No. Attending the event is completely FREE of charge. Check out one band or twenty! Stay for 20 minutes or all afternoon!

Is there a map or schedule? An event map and schedule will be available on [member that each venue is someone's porch, so please be sure that you are respectful and clean up after yourself.](http://www.natickporch-</p></div>
<div data-bbox=)

What about beer and wine? Natick PorchFest does not have a contained festival area and will not be selling alcohol (or any food and drink). When in public, you are subject to the usual laws regarding alcohol consumption.

Are dogs allowed? Rules for FIDO are the same as they would be at any other time on the street or sidewalk. Please be aware and respectful of any homeowners' preferences while on their property as different hosts will likely have different preferences when

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Real Estate Corner

AAA: Massachusetts Gas Prices Down One Cent

Massachusetts's average gas price is down 1 cent from last week (\$3.05), averaging \$3.04 per gallon. Today's price is 2 cents higher than a month ago (\$3.02), and 92 cents higher than August 23, 2020 (\$2.12). Massachusetts's average gas price is 12 cents lower than the national average.

"Crude oil prices saw not only a dramatic drop on the week, but the price per barrel is at the cheapest in three months," said Mary Maguire, AAA Northeast Director of Public and Government Affairs. "If this downward trend continues and less expensive prices are sustained, Americans can expect to see relief at the pump in the near future."

AAA Northeast's August 23 survey of fuel prices found the current national average to 2 cents lower than last week (\$3.18), averaging \$3.16 a gallon. Today's

national average price is 1 cent higher than a month ago (\$3.15), and 98 cents higher than this day last year (\$2.18).

The AAA Gas Prices website is your resource for up-to-date fuel price information. Search average gas prices by Regular, Plus, Premium and Diesel on National and State levels, as well as Metro areas.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with 71 offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 6 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, finance, and auto-related services.

Use our online request system for easy and convenient roadside service:

AAA.com/GetMoving or through the AAA app

Region	Current Price*	1 Week Ago	1 Month Ago	1 Year Ago
Massachusetts	\$3.04	\$3.05	\$3.02	\$2.12
Rhode Island	\$3.06	\$3.06	\$3.03	\$2.13
Connecticut	\$3.17	\$3.18	\$3.15	\$2.19

*Prices as of August 23, 2021

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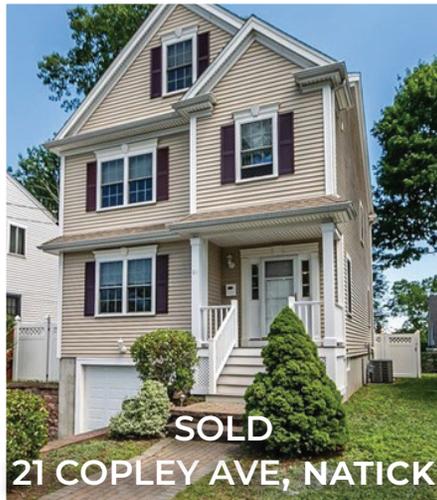


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