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December 12, 2015



## Sterling resident has Broadway dreams in Kinky Boots national tour

by Chelsea Dill

Ten-year-old Anthony Picarello arrived at Meadowbrook Orchards wearing a cowboy hat and boots bought in Texas earlier that week. He'd come home to Sterling for a short break before resuming his role as Young Charlie in the national tour of *Kinky Boots*, winner of the 2013 Tony Award for Best Musical, written by Harvey Fierstein, with music and lyrics by Cyndi Lauper.

Over lunch, Picarello commented on the recent grueling travel day. "Being on tour has its pros and cons, but it's still pretty fun. Travel days are definitely the hardest," he says, referring to the occasional delays.



Contributed PHOTO

*Anthony Picarello*

"Our flight was cancelled and we were stuck in the airport all day." But today, Picarello seems far from tired. He taps his feet on the table legs, bursting with as much energy as if he was preparing to go on stage.

His eyes light up when he describes his favorite experiences on tour. "The best thing is making new friends and being able to see everything," he says, citing the Mall of America, St. Louis Gateway Arch, Warner Bros. Studio Tour in Los Angeles, and Hoover Dam as highlights and memorable perks as part of on-tour school field trips and days off. He peppers his speech with spontaneous short bursts of song, demonstrating the developing vocal

STERLING RESIDENT, page 13

## Unsung heroes of the holiday season

by Jamie Chase Galvin

Sterling native Rosemary Furmaniuk enjoys her job so much that when she hears a love song on the radio she thinks of her patients, both past and present. Furmaniuk works as a nursing assistant at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Brighton, while pursuing her dream of becoming a registered nurse.

Furmaniuk is one of many unsung heroes in the helping professions who show up to work despite the weather, despite holiday gatherings with friends and family, and despite the hard work that marks every shift. Furmaniuk says she

UNSUNG HERO, page 15



Contributed PHOTO

*Rosemary Furmaniuk*

[SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com](http://SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com)

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## LETTERS

### Wachusett Earthday says thank you

As 2015 comes to a close, the Wachusett Earthday directors thank everyone who has used the Recycle Center this year. Many thousands of household items have been reused or recycled benefitting the givers and the receivers. Thank you to every volunteer who has served this year, some for hundreds of hours!

Colleen Abrams, President  
Wachusett Earthday Board of Directors

### Thanks to town for accessibility

My daughter is in a wheelchair and I am so very thankful that I can push her around town. The sidewalks, elevator at the library, Rail Trail, as well as the courteous drivers and door openers enable us to enjoy all Sterling has to offer. Thank you!

Candice McCubrey  
Redstone Hill Road, Sterling



# Sterling MEETINGHOUSE NEWS

The Sterling Meetinghouse News is published by Barbato Media LLC, PO Box 914, Sterling, MA 01564  
[www.SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com](http://www.SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com)  
978-422-9824 • [mail@SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com](mailto:mail@SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com)

For advertising information send an email to [mail@SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com](mailto:mail@SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com) or call 978-422-9824.

The next issue will publish January 16.  
The advertising and copy deadline  
is Wednesday, January 6th. Items received after  
the deadline will be included if space is available.

Publisher • Mark Barbato  
Editor • Lex Thomas  
Contributors • James Barbato, Chelsea Dill,  
Jamie Chase Galvin, Richard Maki,  
Lex Thomas and Susan West  
Advertising Sales • Mark Barbato  
Art Director • Kimberly Morse

The Sterling Meetinghouse News is mailed free of charge  
to all postal patrons of Sterling.

We are not liable for typographical errors in advertisements.

### Message from the Publisher

This issue marks the end of my first full year at the helm of Sterling Meetinghouse News.

I have much to be thankful for.

First, I'd like to wish all of our advertisers a happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year, and thank them for their continued business. Their advertising is our only source of revenue. Without them, we couldn't offer Sterling Meetinghouse News free of charge to everyone in town. When townspeople patronize our advertisers' businesses, remember to tell them you appreciate their support of our hometown newspaper. It helps our local businesses to know their advertising dollars have been well spent.

I would like to thank our talented reporters, Jamie Chase Galvin, Chelsea Dill, Allison Milliard, and Susan West, for their tireless efforts to bring our local news and human interest stories to your attention. I must also extend a very special thanks to Richard Maki, who contributes many of our photos and occasional stories. Despite our protestations, Richard provides his services free of charge.

SMN could not function without the incredible efforts of our editor, Lex Thomas. She has her finger on the pulse of Sterling. Her concise writing and editing is what makes Sterling Meetinghouse News such an outstanding publication.

My thanks also goes out to our creative director, Kimberly Morse. She is responsible for our layout, advertising design, and graphics.

Finally, as we approach a new year with so many complicated events occurring worldwide, we need to remember that Sterling is a beautiful town in which to work, live, and raise a family. We are blessed with good schools and dedicated municipal employees who work hard to maintain our town facilities.

All of us at Sterling Meetinghouse News are proud to be a part of your lives.

Mark J. Barbato  
Publisher & Advertising Manager

### Letters to the Editor

Letters should be no more than 350 words, and must include your name, address, phone number and signature. Send email to [lex@sterlingmeetinghousenews.com](mailto:lex@sterlingmeetinghousenews.com) or mail to:  
Sterling Meetinghouse News,  
PO Box 914, Sterling, MA 01564.  
We reserve the right to edit letters for length.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Walking and driving through our lovely town, I can't help but feel a surge of gratitude to live in such a safe and peaceful place. As I watch holiday lights sparkling and candles flickering in windows, I worry about those less fortunate, whether abandoned in war and strife-torn countries, or homeless, cold and hungry in our own nation. Opportunities for giving abound at this time of the year. Here in Sterling, we have food banks grateful for donations, Toys for Tots spearheaded by our police department, programs to make the holidays a little brighter for our Veterans and elderly population, and countless other ways to make a difference in someone's life. Whether or not we as individuals are able to help, it costs nothing to spare a healing thought and to open our hearts with loving kindness to those we hold dear. May 2016 bring peace, health and happiness to all.

-- Lex Thomas



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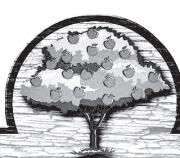
## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Wachusett Food Pantry distribution

The WFP provides monthly emergency food to any family with either a short- or long-term need. Food distribution takes place on the third Friday of the month for seniors, and the third Saturday of the month for everyone else. Residents of Sterling, Holden, Paxton, Princeton, and Rutland are eligible. Proof of residency is required. Located in the Cream Crock Distribution Building, 50 Worcester Road (Route 12), Sterling. Distribution Friday, December 18 for seniors, and Saturday, December 19 for the public, 9 to 11 a.m. Donations of non-expired food items, personal care products, and paper goods are gratefully accepted. Clean, intact plastic bags are also required. For information, call 978-563-1064, email [wfp@wfp1995.org](mailto:wfp@wfp1995.org), or visit [wfp1995.org](http://wfp1995.org).

### Bang on car hood to protect small animals

Animal Control Officer Louis Massa reminds pet owners that warm automobile engines are dangerous for cats and small wildlife. Parked vehicles attract small animals that may crawl under the hood of vehicle engines seeking warmth. To avoid injuring animals that may be hiding, bang on your car's hood to scare them off before starting your engine.



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### December and January curbside trash pickup schedule

Due to the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays on Thursday, December 25 and Thursday, January 1, Friday trash and recycling curbside routes will be picked up one day later. Residences whose regularly scheduled pickup day is Friday will have curbside pickup on Saturday, December 26 and Saturday, January 2.

The DPW will be closed on Monday, January 18, in observance of Martin Luther King Day. The holiday will not affect the curbside trash and recycling pickup schedule. Curbside trash and recycling will be picked up on a regular schedule during the week of January 18. Have trash and recycling curbside by 7 a.m. on your regularly scheduled pickup day.

### Recycling Center seeking volunteers

The Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center needs your help. Hours are Monday evenings, Tuesday mornings or Wednesday afternoons for 2-hour shifts and the third Saturday morning of the month. Regular or occasional volunteers are welcome. For information or to volunteer, visit [wachusettearthday.org](http://wachusettearthday.org), or contact Colleen Abrams at 508-479-2123.

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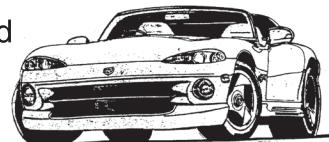
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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Keep pets away from holiday greens and other toxins

Holiday plants can be toxic for pets, and may cause severe illness or death if ingested. Keep animals away from poinsettias, mistletoe, holly, and philodendrons.

Chocolate contains a xanthine compound which is toxic to dogs, affecting both the nervous and cardiovascular systems. Ice melts and anti-freeze can be toxic to pets when they lick their paws. Pet owners should store ice melts and anti-freeze out of the reach of pets, and wipe their pets' paws after they have been outdoors.

**Post these emergency numbers near your phone.**

**These emergency veterinary clinics are open 24/7.**

**Tufts Veterinary Hospital, Grafton 508-839-5302**

**Wachusett Animal Hospital, Westminster**

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**888-426-4435**

### Wachusett Food Pantry needs your help for the holidays

WFP needs your help throughout the holiday season. Volunteers are needed for monthly food distribution days (Fridays and Saturdays), 9 to 11 a.m. New volunteers arrive at 8:30 a.m. for orientation. Volunteers are also needed for monthly sorting of donated foods to ensure quality. Adults and high school youth are welcome. For more information about times and requirements, contact WFP at 978-563-1064, email [wfp@wfp1995.org](mailto:wfp@wfp1995.org), or visit [wfp1995.org](http://wfp1995.org).

### Donate holiday gifts for veterans

The Hiram O. Taylor American Legion Post 189 is assembling Christmas boxes for local veterans living in assisted living and care facilities, and is seeking donations of clothing, lap blankets, books, toiletries, hats, gloves, socks, t-shirts, sweatshirts, stationary, and other items to make Christmas happier for dozens of deserving veterans. Donations of cash (enabling post members to shop for items) or items are gratefully accepted. Send donations to Hiram O. Taylor Post 189, P.O. Box 245, 32 School St., Sterling, MA 01564 (indicate Christmas Drive on check). Donated items can be delivered to 32 School St., Sterling, or contact Russ Fitch at 978-870-6813 or [jrfitch@hotmail.com](mailto:jrfitch@hotmail.com).

## Sterling-Lancaster Community TV

Broadcast Schedule Dec. 12 to Dec. 18, 2015		Broadcast Schedule Dec. 19th to Dec. 26th, 2015	
Comcast Channel 8		Comcast Channel 8	
Saturday	Genre	Saturday	Genre
12:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum - Undertaker and Pals	Entertainment	12:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum	Variety
4:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum - Undertaker and Pals	Entertainment	6:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum	Variety
7:00 AM Barbara and You	Interview	6:30 AM Barbara and You	Interview
8:00 AM Village Church Service	Religion	8:00 AM Village Church Service	Religion
10:00 AM AUC College Church Service	Religion	10:00 AM AUC College Church Service	Religion
12:00 AM Channel 8 Community Updates	News	12:00 PM Color in Your Life - Kylie Farrelly	Hobby
12:00 AM Pawdoption	Animals	1:00 PM InFocus - For Christ's Sake	Documentaries
1:00 PM InFocus - Liberation of Kobani	Documentaries	2:00 PM Contemporary Science - Math Multiverse	Educational
2:00 PM Color In Your Life - Michael Upton	Hobby	3:15 PM Color In Your Life - Kylie Farrelly	Hobby
3:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News	4:00 PM Drawing with Mark	Children
3:00 PM Pawdoption	Animals	5:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Outer Style	Music
4:00 PM Scuba Jack - Lobsters	Children	6:15 PM The Song - Mary Day	Music
5:00 PM Valley Homegrown - 48 Solutions	Music	7:00 PM InFocus - For Christ's Sake	Documentaries
6:15 PM The Song - Mark Nomad	Music	8:00 PM Contemporary Science - Math Multiverse	Educational
7:00 PM InFocus - Liberation of Kobani	Documentaries	9:00 PM Color In Your Life - Kylie Farrelly	Hobby
8:00 AM Pawdoption	Animals	10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview
9:00 PM Color In Your Life - Michael Upton	Hobby		
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview		
Sunday		Sunday	
12:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum - Undertaker and Pals	Entertainment	12:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum	Variety
4:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum - Undertaker and Pals	Entertainment	6:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum	Variety
7:00 AM Trinity Bolton Church Service	Religion	7:00 AM Trinity Bolton Church Service	Religion
9:00 AM ECC Service	Religion	9:00 AM ECC Church Service	Religion
11:00 AM Trinity Lutheran Church Service	Religion	11:00 AM Trinity Lutheran Church Service	Religion
1:00 PM InFocus - For Christ's Sake	Documentaries	1:00 PM InFocus - For Christ's Sake	Documentaries
2:00 PM Contemporary Science - Math Multiverse	Educational	3:15 PM Color In Your Life - Kylie Farrelly	Hobby
3:00 PM Pawdoption	Documentaries	4:00 PM Drawing with Mark	Children
4:00 PM Scuba Jack - Lobsters	Children	5:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Outer Style	Music
5:00 PM Valley Homegrown - 48 Solutions	Music	6:15 PM The Song - Mary Day	Music
6:15 PM The Song - Mark Nomad	Music	7:00 PM InFocus - For Christ's Sake	Documentaries
7:00 PM InFocus - Liberation of Kobani	Documentaries	8:00 PM Contemporary Science - Math Multiverse	Educational
8:00 PM Pawdoption	News	9:00 PM Color In Your Life - Kylie Farrelly	Hobby
9:00 PM Color In Your Life - Michael Upton	Hobby	10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview		
Monday-Friday		Monday-Friday	
12:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum	Entertainment	12:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum	Entertainment
4:00 AM Midnight Mausoleum	Entertainment	7:00 AM Barbara and You	Interview
7:00 AM Barbara and You	Interview	9:00 AM Tina Cooks - Three Fishes	Cooking
9:00 AM Recipes For Better Living - Corn Chowder	Cooking	10:00 AM Physician Focus	Health
10:00 AM Holistic Health - Beer	Health	11:00 AM Santa and the Three Bears	Children
11:00 PM Contemporary Science - Math Multiverse	Educational	12:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
12:15 AM Color In Your Life - Kylie Farrelly	Hobby	12:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
1:00 PM InFocus - For Christ's Sake	Documentaries	1:00 PM InFocus - Santa Claus	Documentaries
2:00 PM Church Services	Religion	2:00 PM Church Services	Religion
4:00 PM Drawing With Mark	Children	4:00 PM Mrs. Claus Show	Children
5:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Outer Style	Music	5:00 PM Valley Homegrown Rebirth	Music
6:00 PM The Song - Mary Day	Music	6:15 PM Chris and Meredith Openings	Music
7:00 PM InFocus - For Christ's Sake	Documentaries	7:00 PM InFocus - Christmas Lights	Documentaries
8:00 PM Contemporary Science - Math Multiverse	Educational	8:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	Hobby
9:00 PM Color In Your Life - Kylie Farrelly	Hobby	8:30 PM Pawdoption	Animal
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview	9:00 PM Santa and the Three Bears	Children
		10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Please note this schedule is subject to change.  
Refer to [www.slctv.us](http://www.slctv.us) for any updates.

# Sign of things to come

by Richard Maki

The inaugural meeting of the Sign Bylaw Committee, appointed by Sterling's Board of Selectmen, took place in November.

Members elected Michael Pineo as chair, Robert Protano as vice-chair, and Rosanne Mapp as clerk. Lauren Demerjian and Richard Lane are also members of the Committee.

The Committee identified weaknesses in the current bylaw that relate to its scope, lack of definitions,



(Left to right) Michael Pineo, Richard Lane,  
Robert Protano, and Rosanne Mapp.

and enforcement procedures. Pineo asked members to review the current bylaw, suggestions submitted by Town Administrator Michael Szlosek, and a recent unanimous United States Supreme Court decision. The Reed et al v. Town of Gilbert, Arizona ruling addresses the need for uniform signage requirements that also ensure protection of free speech.

The Committee's goal is to have a new draft bylaw ready for presentation to

voters at the Annual Town Meeting in May.

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[www.VillageGreenPreschool.org](http://www.VillageGreenPreschool.org)

## Toys for Tots still accepting donations

The Sterling Police Department, together with the United States Marine Corps, is collecting new, unwrapped toys and check donations for the 2015 Toys for Tots campaign. Donations may be dropped off at the Sterling Police Station until December 14. Make checks payable to "Toys for Tots." For more information, call Toys for Tots coordinators Detective David Johnson or Officer Scott Johnson at 978-422-7331.

## Seasonal reminders for holiday safety

The Sterling Police and Sterling Fire departments remind residents that holiday decorations, lights, and roaring fireplaces, while beautiful, also pose safety risks. Here are a few pointers to make the holidays happy and safe.

- Fresh trees and greenery need plenty of water. Make sure to replenish water frequently. When trees begin to shed their needles, they're drying out and becoming a fire hazard, and it's time to dispose of them.
- Don't leave candles unattended. Be sure to extinguish all candles when leaving home or going to bed.
- Don't overload electrical cords or plugs.
- Be sure to properly extinguish fireplace fires. Ashes should be placed outdoors and doused with plenty of water.

***Remember, a happy holiday is a safe holiday!***

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## 2016 dog licensing begins in January

The New Year means new dog licenses. The Animal Control Board reminds dog owners that all dogs must be licensed according to local and state laws. The licensing period begins January 1. Residents over 70 are exempt from any dog licensing fee. Proof of rabies vaccination is required for dog licensing.

## Sterling gets mattress recycling grant

State representatives Kimberly N. Ferguson (R-Holden) and Harold P. Naughton, Jr. (D-Clinton) have announced that Sterling has received a grant administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. The \$9,900 grant will fund a mattress recycling initiative for the town. Sterling's grant is part of \$3.57 million in grants that were awarded to 80 cities, towns, regional groups and non-profit organizations to increase the diversion, reuse, composting and recycling of materials in the solid waste stream.

The grant will pay for the cost of recycling residential mattresses that are collected and recycled by one of three mattress recycling companies contracted by the state. Very little mattress recycling currently occurs in Massachusetts, even though about 90 percent of a mattress' components is recyclable. Recycling is a preferred management method since mattresses are bulky and costly to dispose of in landfills and incinerators.

## 5th Annual New Year Open House at the Cider Mill

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Snow date: Sun., Jan. 18, 11am-4pm

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# Monty Tech partners with Habitat for Humanity to build affordable housing

Students and teachers in Monty Tech's building trades were invited to attend the recent dedication ceremony for a house they built last year in partnership with Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts.

The two-story duplex located on Oakland Street in Fitchburg, features three bedrooms and one-and-a-half bathrooms in each unit, with a deck off the back and a front porch.



Contributed PHOTO

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PHOTO by Jamie Chase Galvin

*The Tuesday and Thursday afternoon class from Village Green Preschool recently visited the Senior Center to share songs, gifts, and smiles with appreciative seniors.*

## Monty Tech's National Honor Society holds annual induction

At a ceremony held at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School in November, Sterling resident William Roseberry was one of about 25 students inducted into the school's chapter of the National Honor Society. Roseberry received a certificate and pin, presented by Principal Thomas R. Browne.

## Entrance exams for Monty Tech's Practical Nursing Program

Those interested in enrolling in Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School's Practical Nursing Program for Fall 2016 are required to take the TEAS (Test of Essential Academic Skills) entrance exam. The exam will be given at the school from 6 to 10 p.m. on January 4, February 8, March 7 and 28, and April 25. For more information, visit [montytech.net](http://montytech.net). Applicants may register for the exam at [atitesting.com](http://atitesting.com).

## Meet Applewild's Head of School

This fall, on the first and third Thursday of each month, parents are invited to meet Applewild's sixth Head of School Christie Stover during "Coffee with Christie" at 9 a.m., followed by "Take a Look Morning," an opportunity for parents to see students and teachers at work and study during a school tour. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Crocker Building, 120 Prospect St., Fitchburg. Mid-year admissions are available in some grades.



# Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!



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## Chamber hosts holiday gathering

The Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce will host its annual holiday gathering on Tuesday, December 15, from 6 to 10 p.m. at Tatnuck Country Club, 1222 Pleasant St., Worcester. The event, co-sponsored by Busy Bee Nursery & Landscape Construction, and Miles Funeral Home, will feature a dinner buffet, cash bar and a special guest appearance by a holiday character. The evening's entertainment includes special musical selections provided by students of Pakachoag Music School of Greater Worcester.

Guests are encouraged to offer a gift card or cash donation to benefit NEADS Dogs for Deaf and Disabled Americans. The cost is \$45 per person. Pre-registration is required. To register, visit [wachusettareachamber.org](http://wachusettareachamber.org).

## Free marketing seminar for small business

Leominster Credit Union will host the third of its four free seminars designed to help small businesses maximize their marketing potential through e-marketing and social media. Hosting an event is a powerful way to connect with and support your customer base while working toward achieving your business objectives. Learn how to promote your events in a way that will drive registrations. Explore different types of events, setting goals, effective promotion strategies, and post-event activities.

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required and space is limited.

Sessions will be held on Tuesday, December 15 at 8 a.m., at LCU Headquarters, 20 Adams St., Leominster, and on Wednesday, December 16 at 5:30 p.m., at 910 West Boylston St., Worcester.

Led by Suzan Czajkowski, M.A., online marketing coach, Master Certified Authorized Local Expert for Constant Contact, and owner of TheCommCoach, the seminar will explore ways to leverage social media to engage new and existing customers, identify which promotions work best for your business, and how to drive response from your email and social media posts. For information and registration, visit [leominstercu.com/live-seminars-fall-2015/](http://leominstercu.com/live-seminars-fall-2015/), or email [marketing@leominstercu.com](mailto:marketing@leominstercu.com).

## Free workshops for local entrepreneurs

The North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation, the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, and Hometown Bank are holding two business workshops on Tuesday, January 12, aimed at assisting potential and existing entrepreneurs.

The free workshops are held in cooperation with the

Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (MSBDC), SCORE, City of Fitchburg, City of Leominster, and NewVue Communities (formerly Twin Cities CDC).

Each workshop will be held at the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce, 860 South St., Fitchburg.

Session I: Fundamentals in Planning, Preparing, and Financing Your Business will focus on evaluating and understanding the fundamentals of owning your own business. Information about how to get started, where and how to get financing, and the loan application process will be discussed. Presented by Roland Nutter, AdviCoach. 8:30 to 11 a.m. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Continental breakfast is included.

Session II: Understanding the Purpose of Financial Statements and How They Can Help Determine the Health of Your Business will focus on understanding a balance sheet, income cash flow statements, and explain how a small business owner can anticipate financial needs in order to operate more efficiently. Presented by Robert C. Alario, CPA. 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration begins at 11 a.m. Lunch is included. To register, contact Sandie Cataldo at 978-353-7600, ext. 232 or [Cataldo@massweb.org](mailto:Cataldo@massweb.org), or register online at [northcentralmass.com](http://northcentralmass.com).

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## LOCAL HAPPENINGS

# Tatten reflects on a writing month

by Lex Thomas

If you don't have the ambition yourself to write a novel – preferably a best seller – you probably know someone that does. As a writer, not only do I harbor this ambition myself, but I have constantly thrust upon me people that do. In fact, "I'm writing a book," is one of the most common comments I hear, once people know that I'm a writer and editor. They gravitate as if I can somehow imbue the magic that makes a novel appear.

The fact is that writing is hard work. Whether it's a factual opus as brief as a letter to the editor or a full-fledged exposé, or a work of fiction ranging from a short story to a multi-part novel, the work is grueling. It demands blood. It will shorten your life.

A few of us experienced this during this year's National Novel Writing Month event, popularly dubbed NaNoWriMo. The concept behind NaNoWriMo is that you write 50,000 words during the month of November. Why November is beyond the scope of this article. NaNoWriMo could just as easily be applied to any month, although 31-day months give a slight advantage. Let's not even talk about February.

In Sterling, we are fortunate to have a library staff and Board of Trustees that are enthusiastically committed to the creative endeavors of writers in town and throughout the region. Library Trustee Ray Tatten was thinking about how to incorporate NaNoWriMo into Conant



Raymond Tatten

PHOTO by Lex Thomas

Public Library's roster, when Director Pat Campbell asked him to spearhead the program.

Not only did Tatten coordinate "write-in" gatherings for the six local participants, but he was the only one to complete the project within the month. In fact, he clocked 50,600 words in just 21 days. He believes that coordinating the event was the major reason he completed it. But he also came into it with a story in mind, which he says is a key to success.

"I had a story that had been percolating in my mind for 35 years," he says "I really wanted to tell the story, and NaNoWriMo was the perfect vehicle."

Tatten's story was inspired by a historical marker off of Route 62 in Lancaster commemorating the location where a 16-year-old boy was taken captive by Indians during the early 1700s. The boy and two adult men were transported to Canada, but instead of killing them, the Indians ransomed them to the French governor in Canada. The captives, members of the Sawyer

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## LOCAL HAPPENINGS

family, were among the original settlers in Lancaster, and were mill builders. The Canadian governor offered them their freedom in exchange for building Canada's first mill, which they did in a year. While the adults returned to Lancaster, Elias, the teenager, remained in Canada for an additional year to run the mill before returning home.

Tatten has done extensive research into the history of both Lancaster and Canada to fill in the details of the story, which he tells from Elias's point of view, and to make it as accurate and believable as possible. He's found the process both rewarding and exhilarating.

"I'm a history buff, and I wanted to learn as much as I could about what was going on in the world at the time, as well as in the two countries," he says. "Thinking about what this must have been like for young Elias is amazing. Although there was danger, he probably saw it as an adventure."

For Tatten, getting the 50,600 words down on paper is just the beginning. "The goal of NaNoWriMo is simply to write and to get your thoughts out," he says. "You're not supposed to go back over your work during the writing month. Now I'm going back and getting dialogue punctuated, and correcting spelling errors and

sentence structure.

"I'm also naming my characters. The story is based on history, but it's also fiction. When I was writing, I just used placeholder names, like citizen X or mill worker Y. Now I'm going back, sorting them out and naming them."

Although Tatten has written fiction in the past, he found the process a lot harder than he had expected.

"It takes discipline, and I was also lucky that nothing in my life got in the way during the writing month," he says. "If you get behind, you're probably not going to finish."

He got up early each morning to write, in an effort to avoid the fatigue that would make it more difficult to write later in the day.

"I spend a lot of time driving," he adds, "so I used that time to think about it. At first, I just started typing, but within a few days, the story started to come together."

Tatten believes that the camaraderie that developed between the participants was helpful to getting the job done. The official NaNoWriMo website also connects you with thousands of writers across the country and worldwide.

"Writing can be a very lonely and isolating experience," he says. "But with so much support and interest, you feel like you're a part of something. That helped me tremendously."

Tatten hopes to eventually publish his story. And while he's proud of his achievement, he is adamant that reaching the goal of 50,000 words in 30 days isn't the only marker of NaNoWriMo success.

"Everyone does their best," he says, "but sometimes life gets in the way. It's not always possible to carve out the time you need for something like this. But even if you only got as far as a few thousand words, that's a few thousand words more than you started with, and you can always build on it. It's never a lost cause."

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## LOCAL HAPPENINGS

# Sterling resident has Broadway dreams in Kinky Boots national tour

Continued from page 1

talents he exhibits on stage in Kinky Boots. He says that an audience applauding his performance boosts his energy, increases his confidence, and makes him happy.

His mother, Doreen Picarello, has been his companion on tour for the past year.

"I think we've always had a strong bond," Picarello says of his relationship with his mother. Growing up with older sisters, Anthony spent a lot of time with his mother. Even after months together on the road, they rarely get on each other's nerves. Although initially hesitant to pursue an acting career for her son, Doreen decided to take the chance. "When we saw the long line at a mall kiosk to schedule acting consultations, I thought, 'He's not ready, he's too young,'" she says. "But then I thought, 'What have we got to lose?'" Taking that chance paid off and she is proud of her son's accomplishments. "I'm excited for him. He's a good kid, and I'm happy for him. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. I don't know if he would get this opportunity again," she says.

After connecting with an agent in New York City, Picarello landed roles as an extra in FX's television drama, The Americans, and in two films, Winter's Tale and After the Fall.

He always wanted to be on television, but landing a lead role in his second grade class play boosted his desire to act on stage. Periodically traveling to New York City for classes and auditions, Picarello won the role in Kinky Boots and started the tour in Las Vegas in September 2014. Almost a year-and-a-half later, Picarello is one of the last remaining original cast members of the national tour cast. To date, he's participated in over 430 performances nationwide, and his enthusiasm doesn't seem to be waning.

Picarello speaks with maturity beyond his years, having learned much of the process of being in show business and what it takes behind the scenes to put together a national tour. He maintains professionalism even when things go awry during a performance. During one performance, when a prop didn't work



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## LOCAL HAPPENINGS

correctly, Picarello improvised to make the scene flow smoothly. Afterwards, he was commended for his quick thinking.

Throughout his experiences, Picarello still feels linked to his roots. "I get homesick when I'm doing something fun and I wish my family was here to see it." His father and sisters visit him on tour and he reconnects with family when he has breaks during the schedule. "For my first Christmas on tour, we were in San Francisco, and it was one of the best Christmases of my life. My dad, sisters, and my mom were all there," he says. With the holiday season nearing, he notes that special days on tour are when the cast comes together as a big family, from cast

parties to trick-or-treating at dressing room doors. "I do miss having holidays at home with family, but it's still fun being on the road."

Touring with the show also means keeping up with his studies through online schooling and with an on-location teacher. He also has big goals for the future. His diverse interests include acting and dancing professionally, becoming a DJ, exploring the fashion industry, video game creation, and programming.

One of the themes of *Kinky Boots* is being true to yourself—a lesson Picarello takes to heart. "I started embracing what I like because of this tour. I've embraced who I really am." His mother also sees the positive impact of the tour, which is giving her son worldly experiences that will broaden the possibilities for his future. "This experience is helping to shape him, so he can go out and accomplish what his heart says he wants to do," she says.

As our conversation wound down, Picarello eyed the jungle gym outside the dining area at the orchard. His mother nodded and he eagerly took off, with the spurs jingling on his boots. Even after standing on hundreds of stages across the country, he's still a regular kid who wants to play.

*To catch Kinky Boots on tour, visit [kinkybootsthemusical.com/tour.php](http://kinkybootsthemusical.com/tour.php).*

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## LOCAL HAPPENINGS

# Unsung heroes of the holiday season

Continued from page 1

shows up simply because she loves her job.

"The best thing about being a nursing assistant is offering a helping hand to those who are ill," she says. "I'm a passionate person with a lot of love for life, so working in a place where I can give that to patients is the best thing I could ever ask for. I'm so absorbed and in love with my job that whenever I hear a love song, I think about previous patients I've had and the ones I'll have in future. My life revolves around them and I would do anything to make them smile."

Furmaniuk works in the float pool at St. Elizabeth's in a variety of units which she recognizes will help her once she becomes an RN. "I've worked in the ICU, emergency, maternity unit, psychiatry units, medical surgical floors, and a gastrointestinal unit. I love seeing all the types of nursing I could specialize in. The nurses will usually let me observe or assist with patient procedures because they know I'm in school," she says.

Furmaniuk plans to graduate in May 2017 from Simmons College in Boston where she is currently enrolled in their Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

The hard work of the nursing profession is what drives Furmaniuk's dream. "Sometimes a patient is in so much pain, they can't move or speak," she says. "Seeing people suffer is difficult and my job is to

help them get through it with their physical, mental, and emotional health intact. Even during the worst shifts, I can still push through because I know patients are getting high quality care with all the positivity I can offer them."

Furmaniuk believes that growing up in Sterling offered her the chance to develop the positive attitude she brings to work with her patients every day. "Sterling was a great place to grow up," she says. "I loved being in a small town where all my friends were nearby. People in town always supported me and there was always positivity around me."

During this holiday season, Furmaniuk, and countless other unsung heroes around us, will show up to work for the sheer love of what they do. "Nursing is exhausting," says Furmaniuk. "It takes mental, physical, and emotional strength to be a nurse, but most of all it takes love."



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(Top) Jacob Rousseau enjoys a visit with Santa at the Holiday Tree Lighting on December 5.

(Right) Sterling residents and visitors can enjoy a peaceful moment with our beautiful tree under the gazebo in Memorial Park, behind the Sterling Fire Department.



PHOTO by Lex Thomas

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## **SPECIAL FEATURE**

# **Here come the holidays!**

by Susan West

Each year, the holiday spirit catches people in different ways. For some, it's driving around looking at Christmas lights. For others it's hearing Handel's Messiah.

I never know exactly when the event that kicks off my holiday season will come, but when it hits me – sometime between Thanksgiving Day and Christmas – bam! It makes me jump for joy.

It has to do with me and my need to drive my 1998 Chevy Cavalier. People who know me know the story behind this heap of metal and why I put up with the nuisance of such an old, cheap, rattletrap of a car. My story began in 1985 when I bought my first used Cavalier. It was a good car. It never failed to start, even on the coldest mornings, and the front-wheel drive was a godsend on snow-covered roads. It cost me next to nothing, and all I had to do was throw a couple hundred dollars into it every year. It was such a reliable little car that when it finally died, I replaced it with a 1996 Cavalier that I eventually sold to a man who drove it to Arizona and kept it for another 10 years. The 2002 Cavalier that I bought next was just as good, and only cost me a few bucks here and there, until my son drove over an ice patch and destroyed the chassis.

By this point, it was 2009 and Chevrolet had stopped making Cavaliers in 2005. I'd been driving the same car model for 24 years and I was hooked. I went in search of a "new" old Cavalier. I figured that if I made it to 2015, I must qualify for some 30-year record for driving the same car model. I was thinking big. Maybe even Guinness World Records. After a week of checking out dozens of Cavaliers, I found my perfect "granny car," a 1998 model with 30,000 miles on it that had been owned by



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## SPECIAL FEATURE

one elderly woman who garaged it for most of its life. I drive it to this day.

So, what has my automotive history got to do with launching my holiday season? It's true that every car has idiosyncrasies, and the Cavalier is no exception. Freon leaks out of a hole in the air conditioning at 50,000 miles, so you can forget about a cool ride. The handle breaks on the driver's side mirror control, so you have to roll the window down to make adjustments. Even more unsettling, is that once the car is about eight years old, the hidden wiring to the radio shakes loose somewhere beneath the dashboard. Strangely, this only happens in the spring.

But just like clockwork, when the weather gets cold enough, the wiring reconnects and the radio springs back to life. All it takes is a few good cold weeks and it starts right back up.

In anticipation of this yearly phenomenon, when the weather starts to get chilly, I set the radio to my favorite station and turn the volume knob up to high. Then I wait. Without fail, somewhere, somehow, and sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the radio comes alive as I'm driving down the road. It might happen at night as I'm admiring holiday lights, or during

the day when I'm out Christmas shopping. But in that instant, my holiday spirit kicks into high gear.

So, if you happen to see a middle-aged woman singing her heart out to the radio in her old beat-up Chevrolet Cavalier in December and smiling ear to ear, you'll know why. The holidays are here!



PHOTO by Jamie Chase Galvin

Brooke Galvin holds up her purchase from the Annual Holiday Greens Sale on December 5.

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

# Student audience enjoys the magic of ballet

by Chelsea Dill

"Are you ready?" Paula Meola's voice echoed over the loudspeaker in Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School's auditorium the morning of December 3. She is answered by screams of delight from the excited students who filled every seat. "The Nutcracker is based upon a traditional tale from St. Petersburg, Russia," she explained before giving a short description of Act One. This is the premier of the four 2015 performances of Paula Meola Dance's (PMD) The Nutcracker ballet. It also marks the first of two shows especially for a student audience.

Many of the students came from local elementary schools and for some, seeing The Nutcracker was their first time attending the theatre and experiencing ballet. Meola made the atmosphere festive and welcoming for the audience. As they waited for the show to start, the children sang along to Christmas music that played over the loudspeaker, while snowflakes danced on the screen at the front of the stage. "We want you to enjoy this performance," she tells the audience. "We're not



PHOTO by Chelsea Dill

*Cast members (left to right) Elizabeth Labovitz, Sean Kelleher, and Kimberly Quirk answer questions from the student audience.*

going to ask you to be quiet during the performance. Cheer for the Nutcracker, cheer for the Mouse Queen, clap along as much as you like!"

Backstage, the dancers anticipated the performance just as much as the audience. The production's Sugar Plum Fairy, Kristen Lambert, and the other ballerinas stretched and warmed up. It's cold in the theatre, so they had to ensure their muscles stayed warm to perform without risk of injury. Other dancers, including the children playing party guests, soldiers, and little mice, were already in their costumes, hardly containing their bubbling energy. Though some dancers had pre-performance jitters, anticipating the joyous expressions on their audience's faces reminded them that the show is one of the highlights of dancing with PMD.

As the show began, the lights dimmed and the audi-

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

ence fell silent. Lively energy emanated from everyone on stage throughout the show. Whether a principal or ensemble member, each dancer captured the spirit and magic of The Nutcracker through every movement and facial expression. The dancers have come a long way since the start of rehearsals in October. They are self-assured and exhibit professionalism and joy as they dance. Lambert shines as the Sugar Plum Fairy, and with male lead, Ty Parmenter of Festival Ballet,



PHOTO by Chelsea Dill

Kristen Lambert performs the pas de deux with Ty Parmenter of Festival Ballet, Providence, Rhode Island.

Providence, Rhode Island, the famous pas de deux was a standout performance for both dancers. All the weeks of hard work have paid off. Steps are executed with grace and precision.

One integral part of the school performances is the interactive session with the audience during intermission. Meola took the stage and welcomed cast members Kimberly Quirk, Elizabeth Labovitz, and Sean Kelleher to answer questions from the student audience. Quirk, who played Clara, is the first to take the

question about how she can stand on her toes. "In my shoes, there is a little box so when I go up on my toes, it doesn't hurt," explained 13-year old Quirk, who has been dancing for nine years.

A student then asked Kelleher, "What would you do if you fell down?" Kelleher, dressed in a bright red tunic with gold brocade for his role as a Russian in the Kingdom of the Sweets, smiled and confidently replied, "I would act like nothing happened and just get back up and start dancing."

Finally, Labovitz, who played the Snow Queen, strode carefully down the aisle in her sparkling silver tutu and toe shoes and handed the microphone to a student with a raised hand. "How did you get so good at spinning?" he asked. "You have to practice a lot!" she said.

After the show, as school buses lined up outside, the students filed out of the theatre, just as raucous and overjoyed as when they arrived. Now, with smiles plastered on their faces, they have images of watching the cast members in their shiny costumes dance against a colorful backdrop—memories that will stay with them long after the final bow.



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## Library NEWS

### Children's events at the library

There's fun for kids of all ages throughout the holidays at Conant Public Library, located at 4 Meetinghouse Hill Road, Sterling. Call 978-422-6409 to register for programs.

**Children's matinee** – Tuesday, December 15, 1 p.m., Baker Room. Youth of all ages, accompanied by their caregiver, are invited to join us for two animated holiday classics, *The Snowman* and *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

**Family movie night** – Tuesday, December 15, 6 p.m., Baker Room. *Minions*, the summer's hit animated comedy features the voice talents of Steve Carell, Sandra Bullock, Jon Hamm, Michael Keaton, and many others. Sure to be a laugh-filled night.

**Snowman storytime** – Wednesday, December 16, 10:30 a.m., for ages 18 months to 3 years, and Thursday, December 17, 2 p.m., for ages 3+. Baker Room.

**Wintery drop-in craft** – Monday, December 21, 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Children's Room. Fun winter-themed crafts. All ages welcome. No registration required.

**Cookie decorating** – Tuesday, December 22, 10:30 a.m., for ages 3+, and Wednesday, December 23, 4 p.m., for

grades K+. Baker Room. All creative and jolly young bakers are welcome.

**Family movie night** – Tuesday, December 22, 6 p.m., Baker Room. *Elf* follows Buddy the Elf, played by Will Ferrell, as he journeys from the North Pole to find his place and his father in bustling New York City, with chaotic and hilarious adventures along the way.

**Children's matinee** – Monday, December 28, 1 p.m., Baker Room. Disney's *Monkey Kingdom* follows the story of Maya the monkey and her son Kip as they struggle to survive within the competitive social hierarchy of the troop at Castle Rock. Narrated by Tina Fey. For youth grades K+, accompanied by their caregiver.

**Children's matinee** – Tuesday, December 29, 1 p.m., Baker Room. *Shaun the Sheep*, a light-hearted, funny, and brilliantly animated family movie. This dazzling adventure movie follows Shaun the Sheep taking a simple day off for fun that turns a little more action-packed than he had planned. For youth grades K+, accompanied by their caregiver.

**Henna Tattoos with Amanda Roberge** – Wednesday, December 30, 1:30 p.m. Baker Room. Youth grades 1+ are invited to participate in a creative, fun afternoon of temporary body art crafting. Amanda Roberge is an experienced and certified henna artist who holds workshops for teens, kids, and adults.

**Noon Year's Eve celebration** – Thursday, December 31, 11 a.m. Baker Room. Children ages 3+ are invited to attend our Noon Year's Eve celebration and help us ring in the New Year. New Year's themed crafts, snacks, and stories to celebrate 2016.

### What's cooking at the Cookbook Club?

Conant Public Library's Cookbook Club will be making recipes from *The Complete Vegetarian Cookbook* by America's Test Kitchen on Wednesday, December 16, at 6:30 p.m. Choose a recipe from this beautiful and healthy cookbook, prepare the dish, and bring it with you to the library for an evening of good food and great conversation. Cookbooks are available at the library for checkout. To register, call 978-422-6409.

### Contemporary Book Club

The Contemporary Book Club meets on the third Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m., in the Baker Room. Selection for the book club meeting on Thursday, December 17, is *The Art of Hearing Heartbeats* by Jan-Philipp Sendker, available at the library. No registration required.

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## Recreation NEWS

### Adult coloring program

Conant Public Library is offering an adult coloring program. Discover the stress-reducing and relaxing benefits of coloring. Monday, December 28, at 6:30 p.m., in the Baker Room. No registration required.

### Classics Book Club

The Classics Book Club meets on the first Wednesday of every month, 1 p.m., in the Baker Room. Selection for the book club meeting on Wednesday, January 6, is *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, available at the library. No registration required.

### Author talk with Susan West

If you've ever wondered whether Ayurvedic therapy could improve your health, Conant Public Library is hosting local writer and Sterling Meetinghouse News reporter Susan West, co-author of *Walking with Vaidya: A Journey Into Ayurveda and Preventative Medicine*, Saturday, January 9, at 10:30 a.m. in the Baker Room. West will discuss her experiences with Ayurveda, a preventative medical model that focuses on physical, spiritual, and mental wellness along with eating correctly in an effort to reduce the need for conventional medicine. West will be available to sign copies of her book, which will be available for purchase, following the discussion. To register, call 978-422-6409.



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### Winter fun with Sterling Rec

Sterling Rec has lots of great programs to help all ages to stay in shape throughout the festive season. For more information, visit [SterlingRec.com](http://SterlingRec.com) to learn more about all our programs and to register online, or call 978-422-3041, email [recreation@sterling-ma.gov](mailto:recreation@sterling-ma.gov), or stop by the office at 31 Main St., Sterling.

### Active Kids

**Kids Zumba/Yoga** – Grades 1 to 4. Thursdays, December 17 to January 21, 4 to 5 p.m. 1835 Town Hall. \$35/4-week session.

**After School Ski program** – Grades 3 to 12. Mondays, January 11 to February 29 (no classes January 18 and February 25), 3:15 to 8 p.m. \$128/6-week pass, available at [Wachusett.com](http://Wachusett.com). Transportation \$80.

**Saturday Ski program** – Grades 3 to 12. Saturdays, January 9 to February 20, 8:15 a.m. to 3 p.m. \$230/7-week pass, available at [Wachusett.com](http://Wachusett.com).

**High School Pick-Up Basketball** – Grades 9 to 12. Mondays until March 28, 7:15 to 8:30 p.m. Chocksett Middle School gym. \$25/season Sterling residents, \$30/season non-residents. Must be registered by parent or guardian if under 18.



PHOTO by Mark Barbato

*Dozens of holiday revelers took part in Sterling's annual Holiday Tree Lighting on December 5. They helped to decorate the tree, enjoyed hayrides, sang holiday songs, and visited with celebrities.*

## Recreation / Senior NEWS

### Arts, Creativity and More

**Holiday Ornament and Card Making** – Grades 1 to 4. Monday, December 14, 4 to 5:30 p.m. Houghton Elementary School. \$25.

### Active Adults and Teens at 1835 Town Hall

**Booty Barre** – Thursdays starting January 14, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. \$62/session or \$13/class.

**Gentle Yoga** – Thursdays until January 14, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. \$13/class.

**Yoga for All** – Thursdays until January 14, 7 to 8 p.m. \$13/class.

### Pick-Up Basketball

**Men's Pick-Up Basketball** – Wednesdays, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Chocksett Middle School gym. \$25/season, Sterling residents only.

**Women's Pick-Up Basketball** – Mondays, 6 to 7:15 p.m. Chocksett Middle School gym. \$25/season Sterling residents, \$30/season non-residents.

### Naga Fitness with Gina at 1835 Town Hall

All classes are \$10 each or any 10 classes/\$90 paid in advance.

**Kettlebells** – Wednesdays, 7 to 8 p.m., and Saturdays 8 to 9:15 a.m.

**Power Yoga** – Saturdays, 9:30 to 10:45 a.m.

Beginner/Intermediate Yoga – Wednesdays, 5:30 to 6:45 p.m.

### GPS Passes

**GPS Passes** – Season passes for Wachusett Mountain Ski Area. Ages 6+. Bronze: \$369, Silver: \$429, Gold: \$659. Group name: Sterling GPS, Coordinator: Kristen Dietel.

### \*\*NEW\*\* Holiday House Lighting Tour

Do you love to decorate your home for the holidays? Would you like to share your festive outdoor decorations and lights with the community? Do you have a family tradition of driving around town to find your favorite holiday light displays? The Sterling Recreation Department invites you to take part in a Holiday House Lighting Tour, 6 to 9 p.m. daily through December 23. Share your holiday lighting and decorating display to generate the joy of the holiday with the community. To register your house as part of the tour listed on our website, call 978-422-3041, or e-mail [recreation@sterling-ma.gov](mailto:recreation@sterling-ma.gov).



Contributed PHOTO

*Hayride fun at the Holiday Tree Lighting.*

### Sand for Seniors

Need sand to keep your driveway, stairs, and walkway safe this winter? Call the Senior Center for help. Nickole will gladly deliver sand right to your door.

The Sterling Senior Center is located in the Butterick Municipal Building at 1 Park St. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday to Thursday, and 8:30 a.m. to noon on Friday. For more information or to register for programs call 978-422-3032. There is an answering machine available 24 hours a day.

We serve lunch every day at the Center. Anyone over 60 is welcome to come and eat. Call 978-422-8022 for a reservation the morning before you want to come. Home meal delivery available daily. \$3 suggested donation.

**Wachusett Area Rotary senior breakfast** – Saturday, December 12, 8:30 a.m., at The Manor Restaurant, 42 W. Boylston St., West Boylston. Reservation required. Call the Holden Senior Center at 508-210-5570.

**Christmas party** – Sunday, December 13, 1 p.m. 13th Annual Senior Center Christmas Party. Seasonal music

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## Senior Center NEWS

by Roger Tinknell. Refreshments and gifts, and a visit from Santa.

**Veterans Aid and Attendance Benefit** – Monday, December 14, 12:30 p.m., presented by Comfort Zone Home Care. Many veterans are unaware of the eldercare benefits available. If you or your spouse is a veteran, come for this informational program.

**SHINE counselor** – Thursday, December 17, a counselor will be available to answer health insurance questions. Appointment required.

**Elder Keep Well Clinic** – Thursday, December 17, noon.

**Book Club** – Thursday, December 17, 12:30 p.m. This month's selection is The Christmas Blessing by Donna VanLiere. All are welcome.

**Pancake Breakfast** – Friday, December 18, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., at the Senior Center. Enjoy pancakes, sausages, tea breads, fruit cup, juice, and coffee, hosted by the Friends of the Sterling Seniors. \$2. All are welcome.

**Christmas Jingo** – Monday, December 21, 12:30 p.m. Come and join in this fun game, similar to bingo. Prizes and refreshments.

**Christmas Day** – Friday, December 25. Senior Center closed.

**New Year's Day** – Friday, January 1. Senior Center closed.

### Every week:

**Monday**—Coffee hour, 9 a.m.; Senior Fitness, 10 a.m. Free. Sponsored by Oriol Health Care.

**Tuesday**—Game day, 12:15 p.m.

**Wednesday**—Computer class, 9 a.m. Chair yoga, 9:30 a.m., \$5 per class.

**Thursday**—Gentle yoga for strength and flexibility, 9 a.m., 1835 Town Hall. \$5 per class.

**Friday**—Pilates for Seniors, 9:30 a.m., bring a mat. \$5 per class.



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On Wednesdays, the senior van takes seniors on shopping trips to Walmart, Kmart, The Mall at Whitney Field, and other locations. For more information, call 978-422-3032.

**Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc.**, hosts the Rainbow Lunch Club for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Allies (LGBTQA) Elder Community, 60+. Held at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 90 Holden St., Worcester, on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, at noon, followed by a social hour. Reservations required. Call 508-756-1545, ext. 404.

### Be a good neighbor

Remember to check in on friends, family, and neighbors during the cold weather months, especially those most susceptible to extreme temperatures and power outages, such as seniors and those with access and functional needs.

## Fall Yard Cleanups through December

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## Celebrate the holidays at NEADY Cats

The 14th Annual Lights of Love event takes place at the NEADY Cats shelter on Saturday, December 12, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The shelter is located at 305 Redemption Rock Trail South (Route 140) in Princeton near the Sterling line.

The public is invited to visit with the kitties. Your admission ticket is an item from the shelter's wish list, which is available at [neadcats.org](http://neadcats.org). Items include toy balls and furry mice, Purina Complete adult dry food, canned cat food (favorites are salmon, mixed grill, and ocean white fish), paper towels, and Temptations treats.

A special holiday tree will be decorated with Lights of Love. The ornaments (you provide pet's name) will be hung on the holiday tree when you order a light in honor or in memory of your pet. One hundred percent of your donation will go to the shelter kitties.

For more information call Marilyn at 978-422-5116.

## Holiday fair to benefit Houghton School.

The Houghton Elementary School PTO will hold its holiday fair on Saturday, December 12, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Houghton and Chocksett school cafeterias on Boutelle

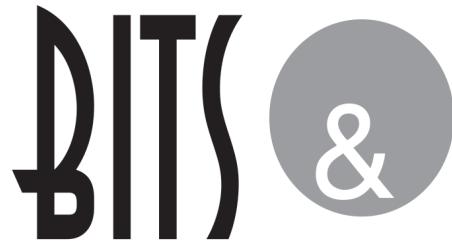
Road. Gift items from over 50 crafters, concessions, raffles, homemade holiday cookies, and much more. Photos with Santa from 10 to 11 a.m., photos with Princess Elsa from Frozen from 11 a.m. to noon, and hayrides will run from noon until 1 p.m. Proceeds from the fair will help to support Houghton Elementary School.

## Heifer Farm Living Gift Market

Heifer Farm, located at 216 Wachusett St., Rutland, will host a Living Gift Market on December 12 and 13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Honor family and friends with gifts that will share joy. Roasted chestnuts, hayrides, and delicious homemade soups, baked goods, and hot cocoa, are all part of the fun. Stop at the Shop@Heifer for fairly-traded gift items. Free admission with donation of a canned food item that will be given to the Worcester County Food Bank. For more information, call 508-886-2221, or email [heifer.farm@heifer.org](mailto:heifer.farm@heifer.org).

## Historical Society Open House

The Sterling Historical Society will hold its Christmas Party Open House on Sunday, December 13, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Museum House, located at 7 Pine St., Sterling. We will share cookies and desserts,



desserts to share are welcome. All are welcome. For more information, call 978-422-6139, or email [info@sterlinghistorical.org](mailto:info@sterlinghistorical.org).

## Last Farmers Market for 2015

The last Sterling Farmers Market for 2015 will be held Friday, December 18, from 3 to 6 p.m., in the First Church in Sterling auditorium, 6 Meetinghouse Hill Road. Vendors include Shamrock Hives Farm, Elzire's Acre Goat Milk Soap, Sunny Knoll Farm Alpacas, Pineo Family Farm, Clearview Farm, Fox Hollow Pie Company, Meadowbrook Orchards, 1885 House of Chocolates, and more. Vendor and crafter applications are currently being accepted for the 2016 markets. For more information, visit Sterling Farmers Market on Facebook or email [sterlingfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:sterlingfarmersmarket@gmail.com).

## Watch the Democratic debate

Sterling residents are invited to watch the Democratic television debate on Saturday, December 19, at 7 p.m. at a Debate Watch event hosted

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# PIECES...

by Barbara Miles at her home, located at 128 Princeton Road, Sterling. Look for the mailbox and sign for the Miles residence off Route 62. The Democratic presidential candidates will be debating in Manchester, New Hampshire.

## Holiday Pops with Thayer Symphony Orchestra

The 42nd annual Holiday Pops concert by the Thayer Symphony Orchestra features members of the Quabbin Valley Pro Musica. The combined orchestra and chorus will perform music from Handel's "Messiah" and "The Polar Express." The orchestra will also perform works by Gabrieli, Tchaikovsky, Delius, and Shostakovich. The TSO Holiday Pops concert will take place Saturday, December 19, 7:30 p.m., at the Dukakis Performing Arts Center at Montachusett Regional Technical High School, 1050 Westminster St. (Rte 2A), Fitchburg. Ticket prices begin at \$10 for students. To purchase tickets, visit [thayersymphony.org](http://thayersymphony.org), or call 978-466-1800.

## Christmas Eve services at Hope Chapel

Hope Chapel, located at 35 Chocksett Road, Sterling, will hold Christmas Eve services on Thursday, December 24 at 4:30 and 6 p.m.

## Christmas Eve services at First Church

First Church in Sterling, located at 6 Meetinghouse Hill Road, Sterling, will hold a hymn sing on Thursday, December 24, at 4:30 p.m., a Family Christmas Service at 5 p.m., and a Candlelight Service at 11 p.m.

## American Legion meeting

There will be a regular meeting of the Hiram O. Taylor Post 189 of the American Legion on Monday, January 4, 7:30 p.m., at the post hall, 32 School St., Sterling.

## Historical Society calendars make great gifts

Sterling Historical Society 2016 calendars are now available, Back in the Day and Images of Walley Pottery. \$10 each, at the Sterling Historical Society Museum, 7 Pine St., Sterling. Open Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon. For more information, email [loret.schur@gmail.com](mailto:loret.schur@gmail.com), or call the Museum at 978-422-6139. Mailing is available for a small additional fee.

## Nar-Anon support group

A Nar-Anon family support group meets every Thursday, from 7:15 to 8:30 p.m., at St. Richard's Downstairs Chapel, 4 Bridge St., Sterling. Nar-Anon is a 12-step group for family and friends of those addicted to drugs.

## Can you make Dinara's holiday wish come true?



Contributed PHOTO

Dinara

Dinara is a 5-year-old brown tiger tabby looking for her forever home. She's a lovely, sweet and quiet cat that loves plenty of attention. Her veterinarian work is completely up to date. She's leukemia negative, spayed, and has a microchip. The adoption fee is \$150. All our cats are placed as indoors-only pets. For more information, or to schedule an appointment to meet Dinara or any of the kitties, email [Marilyn@neadycats.org](mailto:Marilyn@neadycats.org), or call 978-422-5116.

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# Remodel Your Bathroom!

## Make a new years resolution to yourself,

**Let's do it!**

**Call today and get some ideas.**



- Kitchen and Bath Remodeling
- Replacement Windows and Doors
- Interior Trim Repair

*Got a Problem? I Can Fix It!*

**Paul's Fix-It-All**



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- Decks • Porches
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*Free Estimates • Fully Insured • HIC #171108 • References Available • 7 Princeton Rd., Sterling  
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## GROUND CONTROL Corp

5 Chocksett Road • Sterling, MA 01564 • 978-422-6741



### Title V Inspections

Performed by a state-certified system inspector, Title V inspections are required before selling a home, when a home is inherited, if the property goes from residential use to business use and sometimes when building a home addition.

### Septic Pumping

Septic systems are maintained through preventative maintenance, such as septic pumping. When performed on a regular basis, pumping will protect the system and cost dramatically less than a repair or replacement. Without regular septic pumping, solids build up and enter the leaching field, which will lead to clogged pipes and system failure.