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March 8, 2017

Approval sought for repairs to 1835 Town Hall

by Richard Maki

On February 15, the 1835 Town Hall Committee held a public meeting at which Thomas P. Hopkins, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, presented the work of his board in resolving access issues in older public facilities.

"Massachusetts is a very old place," Hopkins stated, as he described the history and legal foundation of the board's authority and provided past examples of accommodations to historic public buildings. According to Hopkins, regardless of the vintage of buildings open to the public, renovations must comply with the building code of the time. He confirmed the access regulation previously cited by 1835 Committee chairman Robert McKay Jones, that renovations exceeding \$100,000 and 30 percent of the value of the structure trigger a requirement to bring the entire facility up to the current building code.

In the case of the 1835 Town Hall, plumbing, electrical and access issues providing for public access to the second floor would need to be addressed. While compliance to building codes is paramount, Hopkins stated that, "we work with people over these things." Specifically, he described situations in



Thomas P. Hopkins, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, addressing town officials and residents.

PHOTO by Richard Maki

which his board approved variances and encouraged "thinking outside the box" to resolve access-related concerns. He indicated that the issue of public access to the second floor could be solved without the construction of an expensive elevator, and that other less costly and more feasible lift devices were acceptable accommodations for the wheelchair-bound. Other variances

regarding time limits for compliance would also be considered by the board. Technical feasibility of repairs and excess cost of the accommodation are also factored into the board's review of variance requests.

"Everything we do is on a case-by-case basis," said Hopkins. However, he added that it is a "myth" that renovations to historic buildings don't need to comply

with current building codes.

Hopkins described the process to request a variance and answered related questions from members of the 1835 Town Hall Committee, and selectmen Richard Lane and Maureen Cranson.

The 1835 Committee is hoping to gain town support for a series of multi-year renovations to the historic building and has discussed the initial phase of rebuilding the endangered roof with the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen. Initial cost estimates to repair and replace elements of the roof are in the neighborhood of \$300,000, with smaller investments spread out over several years.

1835 Committee chairman Robert McKay Jones has stated that the 1835 Town Hall Committee strongly supports and is working hard to achieve universal access to the building, and will seek town, donor and grant funding to bring it to fruition in the near future.

"We are hopeful that armed with Mr. Hopkins's information we will be able to obtain variances in time and code so that we can accomplish this important mission thoughtfully, effectively and permanently all the while maintaining the historical character of the Town Hall," he said.

Art exhibit at Senior Center

by Lex Thomas

The Sterling Senior Center is currently exhibiting the paintings of artist Carleen DeBlois, a Leominster resident who took her first art class when she retired 16 years ago at the age of 68 from her position as a senior executive secretary at ITT Surprenant, a position she held for 22 years.

"I saw an advertisement for an art class at the senior center in Clinton," she says. "It was a still life class, and it was the first art class I had ever taken, and I haven't stopped painting ever since."

DeBlois started with acrylics, then later moved on to oils. She has had one-woman shows in several local venues, including the Bartlett Gallery in Lancaster and Bigelow Library in Clinton, and has exhibited works at the Worcester Art Museum, the Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, and others.

DeBlois says she sets up challenges



(Center left) Artist Carleen DeBlois greets guests at Senior Center.

PHOTO by Richard Maki

for herself, which helps her to learn new techniques and keeps her work fresh.

"These days, I'm challenging myself by painting glass objects," she says. "It's difficult to make glass look real in a painting."

She also likes to combine elements from different photographs, coming up with her own unique composition. Her inspirations come from her many interests, including her love of travel. She especially enjoys painting the ocean and seascapes in Ogunquit, Maine, where she spends several weeks each year. She has set up her easel along the Margin-

al Way in Maine, and painted in Tuscany.

Despite her prolific creative output, DeBlois doesn't paint every day. She belongs to a garden club, cares for the flowers at her church, and plays bocce. She enjoys spending time with her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and friends.

Some days, there's simply not enough time left over to paint.

Her exhibit at the Sterling Senior Center includes 44 oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings, ranging from still life and landscapes, to dramatic ocean scenes and mood pieces. Her palette is bright and colorful, and her composition is often intriguing. All pieces are available for sale.

DeBlois is especially delighted to exhibit in Sterling, because her daughter lived here for 20 years. "Sterling is special to me," she says.

She's also pleased to exhibit at the Senior Center, and doesn't hide her own age, a venerable 84 years. "I want seniors to know there's lots to do other than watch television," she says. "It's never too late to try something new, something

different."

For DeBlois, that has meant launching an unexpected and thoroughly gratifying new career.

DeBlois' exhibit, "Brush Strokes, Paint and Pallet," is on display until April 30 at the Sterling Senior Center, 36 Muddy Pond Road, Sterling. Free and open to the public.

Nomination papers are now available in the Town Clerk's Office for the annual town election on May 8. Deadline to file nomination papers is March 20.

SterlingMeetinghouseNews.com

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DeBlois uses color and texture to bring her work to life.

PHOTO by Lex Thomas



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Book signing success

Thank you to the Sterling Senior Center and to all the people that took the time to come to my book signing at the Senior Center on January 25. We had to expand somewhat, but with more chairs, everyone had a place to sit. The cake supplied by the Senior Center with my book title printed on the frosting was outstanding. The strangers that showed up were friends when they left. If your friends are a measure of your wealth, I'm a rich man. Thank you!

Larry Stoddard- Author, *Blood in the Water*
Laurelwood Road, Sterling



PHOTO by Richard Maki

Author Larry Stoddard (right) signs book for Sterling resident and fellow veteran Charlie Morris.

Dog licenses due

It's time to license your dog. Fee is \$12 per dog for intact males and females, and \$8 per dog for neutered males and spayed females. Include a copy of rabies certificate. Payment can be made in person, dropped into the box outside the Butterick Municipal Building, or mailed to the Town Clerk's Office, 1 Park St., Sterling, MA 01564. Add \$2 to have tag(s) mailed back to you. Licensing fee waived for residents over 70, but rabies certificates and tags are still required. Inform the Town Clerk's Office if dog is deceased, so information can be removed from computer database. Failure to obtain a license by April 15 will result in a \$25 fine in addition to the cost of the license. For more information, call 978-422-8111, ext. 2307.

Curbside trash/recycling schedule for April

The DPW will be closed on Monday, April 17, in observance of Patriots' Day. Trash will be picked up on a regular schedule for the week of April 17. The holiday will not affect the curbside trash/recycle pick up schedule for that week. Have your trash/recycle curbside by 7 a.m. on your regularly scheduled pickup day.

Hydrant flushing

Flushing of the town's distribution system will begin at the end of March, weather permitting, and will continue throughout April, May and June. Users of the public water supply may temporarily experience low water pressure and/or dirty water. Town-wide flushing is performed in order to improve the quality of potable water. For more information, call the DPW at 978-422-6767.

Recycling Center news

The Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center is now open Thursday nights, from 5 to 7p.m. Free document shredding is available on Saturday, March 18, 8 to 11 a.m. Only bring paper with confidential information to the shredding truck. Non-confidential paper products can be deposited in the paper recycling dumpster. Due to the Easter holiday, the first

household hazardous product collection will take place on Saturday April 1, 8 a.m. to noon.

For more information, call 978-464-2854 or visit wachusettearthday.org.

First Worcester District awarded fire education grants

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security has awarded grants to fund the Student Awareness Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) and Senior SAFE programs for the fiscal year 2017. All six towns in the First Worcester District received awards. Sterling Fire Department received \$3,951 for the S.A.F.E. program, and \$2,596 for the Senior Safe program.

State Democratic Convention delegates elected

Sterling Democrats caucused on February 27 to elect delegates to the State Democratic Convention to be held in Lowell on June 3. Elected delegates are Patricia Ward, Bob Sarafconn, Catherine Ryan and Steve Miles (ex officio as co-chair of the Sterling Democratic Committee). Maryanne MacLeod, Carol Sarafconn, Barbara Davidson Miles and Frank Cummings were elected alternates. The convention will craft the platform of the Massachusetts Democratic Party for the coming year. Additional delegate seats may be selected by the State Democratic Committee for youth (under 35), minority and disabled voters. The state party can also waive all or part of the registration fee in case of financial need. For more information, contact SterlingDems@gmail.com or call 617-939-0800.



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The next issue will publish April 19. The advertising and copy deadline is Monday, April 10. Items received after deadline will be included if space is available.

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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.

Letters to the Editor

Letters should be no more than 300 words, and must include the writer's name, address, phone number and signature. Only name, street name and town will be printed. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. On occasion, letters up to 500 words may be published as opinion pieces, at the editor's discretion. Send email to lex@sterlingmeetinghousenews.com

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New town administrator sworn in

Ross Perry, a resident of Stow, former Stow selectman, and former member of a planning board, was sworn in as Sterling's Town Administrator on February 14 by Town Clerk Dawn Michanowicz.

(right) Town Administrator Ross Perry takes the oath of office administered by Town Clerk Dawn Michanowicz.

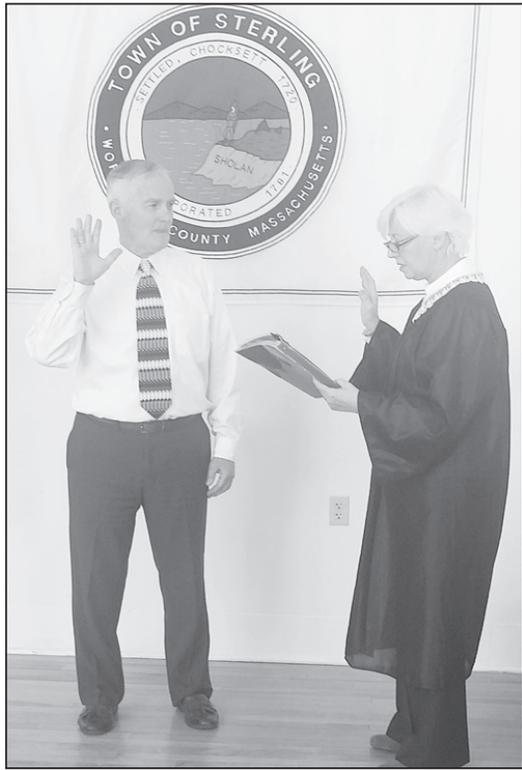


PHOTO by Lex Thomas

(below, Left to right) Town Clerk Dawn Michanowicz reads the achievement award to recipient Assistant Town Clerk Jeanne Survell.



PHOTO by Richard Maki

Nomination papers available for 2017 town candidates

Nomination papers are now available in the Town Clerk's Office for the annual town election on May 8. Only 37 certified voters' signatures are required to have your name placed on the ballot. The following seats are available:

- (1) Board of Assessors – 3-year term
- (1) Board of Health – 3-year term
- (2) Library Board of Trustees – 3-year term
- (1) Board of Selectmen – 3-year term
- (1) Constable – 3-year term
- (1) DPW Board – 3-year term
- (1) Planning Board – 5-year term
- (1) Sterling Housing Authority – 4-year term
- (1) Sterling Municipal Light Board – 3-year term
- (2) Wachusett Regional School District Committee – 3-year term

Deadline to file the signature sheets with the town clerk is March 20. Deadline to withdraw from the race is April 5. For more information, contact Dawn Michanowicz, Town Clerk, at 978-422-811, ext. 2308.

Candidates for upcoming town election

As of our editorial deadline, candidates slated to appear on this year's ballot are:

- Donna M. Clark** for re-election to one available seat on the Board of Health for a 3-year term.
- Marion Mahar** for re-election to one of two available seats on the Board of Library Trustees for a 3-year term.
- John F. Kilcoyne** for re-election to one available seat on the Board of Selectmen for a 3-year term.
- Lawrence R. Favreau** for re-election to one available seat on the DPW Board for a 3-year term.
- John J. Santoro** for re-election to one available seat on the Planning Board for

- a 5-year term.
- Brian Pierce** for re-election to one available seat on the Sterling Municipal Light Board for a 3-year term.
- Susan T. Hitchcock** for re-election to one of two available seats on the Wachusett Regional School Committee for a 3-year term.
- Stephen R. Godbout** for election to one of two available seats on the Wachusett Regional School Committee for a 3-year term.

Deadline for voter registration

Tuesday, April 11 is late night voter registration. That's the deadline to register for the Annual Town Meeting (Monday, May 1) and town election (Monday, May 8). If you are new to town or have recently moved, you may come by the Town Clerk's Office which will be open on April 11 until 8 p.m. to conduct any town business, such as filing a marriage license, dog license, or changing your political party. For information, call 978-422-8111, ext. 2307, or email TownClerk@Sterling-ma.gov.

Save these dates!
Monday, May 1
Annual Town Meeting
Monday, May 8
Town Election

Census forms are due

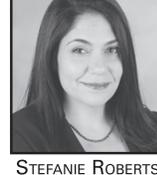
Residents can drop off their completed form in the outside box in front of the Butterick Municipal Building, or mail it to the Town Clerk's Office, 1 Park St., Sterling, MA 01564. If someone has moved, they cannot be removed from the voting list unless their signature is on file with their new address. Census information is used by the state to allocate funds for schools, roads, and other aid, and by local police and fire departments to obtain accurate household information for public safety.

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Sterling-Lancaster Community TV

Broadcast Schedule Mar 11th - Mar 17th, 2017

Comcast Channel 8

Saturday	Genre
12:00 AM Public Domain Theatre Girls - A Star is Born	Entertainment
4:00 AM Public Domain Theatre Girls - A Star is Born	Entertainment
6:30 AM Barbara and You	Interview
8:00 AM Village Church Service	Religion
10:00 AM AUC College Service	Religion
12:00 PM All Aboard - Search for Narrow Gauge Mikados	Hobby
1:00 PM Focus On Europe - Ep.11	Documentaries
2:00 PM Tyrods - A Look at the Classics	Local
3:00 PM All Aboard - Search for Narrow Gauge Mikados	Hobby
4:00 PM The Adventures of Donkey Ollie - Bad Company	Children
5:00 PM Valley Homegrown - The Surly Temple	Music
6:00 PM Springfield Concerts - Joey DeFrancesco Trio	Music
7:00 PM Focus On Europe - Ep.11	Documentaries
8:00 PM Tyrods - A Look at the Classics	Local
9:00 PM All Aboard - Search for Narrow Gauge Mikados	Hobby
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Sunday

12:00 AM Public Domain Theatre Girls - A Star is Born	Entertainment
4:00 AM Public Domain Theatre Girls - A Star is Born	Entertainment
7:00 AM Trinity Bolton Church Service	Religion
9:00 AM ECC Church Service	Religion
11:00 AM Trinity Lutheran Church Service	Religion
12:00 PM All Aboard - Search for Narrow Gauge Mikados	Hobby
1:00 PM Focus On Europe - Ep.11	Documentaries
2:00 PM Tyrods - A Look at the Classics	Local
3:00 PM All Aboard - Search for Narrow Gauge Mikados	Hobby
4:00 PM The Adventures of Donkey Ollie - Bad Company	Children
5:00 PM Valley Homegrown - The Surly Temple	Music
6:00 PM Springfield Concerts - Joey DeFrancesco Trio	Music
7:00 PM Focus On Europe - Ep.11	Documentaries
8:00 PM Tyrods - A Look at the Classics	Local
9:00 PM All Aboard - Search for Narrow Gauge Mikados	Hobby
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Monday-Friday

12:00 AM Public Domain Theatre - Scrooge	Entertainment
4:00 AM Public Domain Theatre - Scrooge	Entertainment
7:30 AM Barbara and You	Interview
9:00 AM Cooking in the Merrimack Valley - Cavati al Forno	Cooking
10:00 AM High Five Fitness - Ep21	Health
11:00 AM First Day - An Original Senior Class Play	Local
11:25 AM Your Right to Know - Protecting Your Home	Documentaries
12:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
12:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
1:00 PM Euromaxx - Detailed Designs	Documentaries
2:00 PM Church Service	Religion
4:00 PM The Adventures of Donkey Ollie - Off To Rome	Children
5:00 PM Soul School - Kool Mo Dee	Music
6:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Taking Back Eden	Music
7:00 PM Euromaxx - Detailed Designs	Documentaries
8:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
8:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
9:00 PM First Day - An Original Senior Class Play	Local
9:25 PM Your Right to Know - Protecting Your Home	Documentaries
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Broadcast Schedule March 18 - March 24, 2017

Comcast Channel 8

Saturday	Genre
12:00 AM Public Domain Theatre - Scrooge	Entertainment
4:00 AM Public Domain Theatre - Scrooge	Entertainment
6:30 AM Barbara and You	Interview
8:00 AM Village Church Service	Religion
10:00 AM AUC College Church Service	Religion
12:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
12:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
1:00 PM Euromaxx - Detailed Designs	Documentaries
2:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
2:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
3:00 PM First Day - An Original Senior Class Play	Local
3:25 PM Your Right to Know - Protecting Your Home	Documentaries
4:00 PM The Adventures of Donkey Ollie - Off To Rome	Children
5:00 PM Soul School - Kool Mo Dee	Music
6:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Taking Back Eden	Music
7:00 PM Euromaxx - Detailed Designs	Documentaries
8:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
8:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
9:00 PM First Day - An Original Senior Class Play	Local
9:25 PM Your Right to Know - Protecting Your Home	Documentaries
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Sunday

12:00 AM Public Domain Theatre - Scrooge	Entertainment
4:00 AM Public Domain Theatre - Scrooge	Entertainment
7:00 AM Trinity Bolton Church Service	Religion
9:00 AM ECC Service	Religion
11:00 AM Trinity Lutheran Church Service	Religion
12:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
12:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
1:00 PM Euromaxx - Detailed Designs	Documentaries
2:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
2:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
3:00 PM First Day - An Original Senior Class Play	Local
3:25 PM Your Right to Know - Protecting Your Home	Documentaries
4:00 PM The Adventures of Donkey Ollie - Off To Rome	Children
5:00 PM Soul School - Kool Mo Dee	Music
6:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Taking Back Eden	Music
7:00 PM Euromaxx - Detailed Designs	Documentaries
8:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
8:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
9:00 PM First Day - An Original Senior Class Play	Local
9:25 PM Your Right to Know - Protecting Your Home	Documentaries
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Monday-Friday

12:00 AM Public Domain Theatre - Snow Queen	Entertainment
4:00 AM Public Domain Theatre - Snow Queen	Entertainment
7:30 AM Barbara and You	Interview
9:00 AM Recipes for Better Living - Ep 28 Vegan Spaghetti	Cooking
10:00 AM Body Sculpt with Elizabeth - Ep 13 Abtastic Blast	Health
11:00 AM Laura Cortese And Dance Cards - New Revival	Local Music
1:00 PM Tomorrow Today - Fearing for Frogs	Documentaries
2:00 PM Church Services	Religion
4:00 PM The Adventures of Donkey Ollie - No Way Out	Children
5:00 PM Soul School - Tom Brown	Music
6:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Stephen Page Trio	Music
7:00 PM Tomorrow Today - Fearing for Frogs	Documentaries
8:00 PM Laura Cortese And Dance Cards - New Revival	Local Music
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Please note this schedule is subject to change. Refer to www.slctv.us for any updates.

School NEWS

Applewild announces innovative tuition model

Applewild School, a K-8 independent school, is implementing an innovative tuition model for the 2017-18 school year designed to be responsive to individual family circumstances. The new model, Access Applewild, focuses on the contribution every family is able to make toward tuition, recognizing that all families stretch to afford an Applewild education. As further demonstration of Applewild's commitment to affordability, the highest tuition rates will be frozen for the next two years. For more information, visit applewild.org, or call Jen Wing, Director of Admission and Access Applewild, at 978-342-6053, ext. 110.

Academic Center of Excellence (ACE) at Hope Chapel

As part of their mission to support the growth of students toward academic excellence, Hope Chapel in Sterling is offering a new opportunity to Wachusett district junior and senior high school students, whether they are struggling to pass their courses or are excelling and seek to be challenged to their full potential. Free tutoring, SAT prep, and mentorship to students in math and science are provided every other Thursday. Volunteers are from the community and represent professionals and college students, including an MD/PhD Associate Professor of Medicine at UMass Medical School, a Senior Program Manager at Draper Laboratory in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a graduate student at WPI who directs the campus tutoring center for math and science, an Assistant Vice President at Leominster Credit Union and former high school math teacher, and a PhD Professor of Psychology at Fitchburg State University and expert in the psychology of learning. Students will be matched with tutors depending on their specific needs, from homework help to test prep, advanced conceptual understanding, and career mentorship. While these tutoring services will be provided in the church facilities, no religious outreach is scheduled during the program. Students are asked to sign up for a 2 month block (four sessions). If there is sufficient interest, Hope Chapel plans to offer additional subjects like literature, history, languages, and others in future, as well as recruiting talented students to help tutor younger students. Hope Chapel is located at 35 Chocksett Road, Sterling. For more information, call 978-422-6684, or visit hopechapelsterling.org.

Sterling/Princeton girls softball registration

Registration for Sterling/Princeton Girls Softball closes on March 15. Sterling/Princeton recreational softball is open to girls ages 5 to 16 (birth years 2000 to 2012). For details and to register online, visit sterlingsoftball.org/content/registration.htm. For information, email sterling-girlssoftball@gmail.com.



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Chocksett honor roll

Chocksett Middle School has released the honor roll for the second quarter of the 2016-17 school year.

The following grade 7 students have earned high honors: Anne Conway, Leena Elbayoumi, Ella Glow, Harrison Graffam, Kylie Grebinar, Oliver Hoang, Douglas Jepson, Cassandra Lundgren, Julia Martel, Lea Mathews, Kael McManus, Jillian Peto, Isabella Philbin, Abigail Pousland, Liam Quinn, Jenna Schwarz, Theodore Stangas.

The following grade 7 students have earned honors: Madelyn Bailey, Anna Bavosi, Jamie Brown, Owen Carney, Jake Cherubini, Megan Cumming, Maya Davidson, Nolan Davis, Sierra Demerjian, Madelyn Fisher, Thomas Foley, Jonathan Godbout, Sedona Iaftrati, Paige Keneally, Reilly Laitala, Steven Layton, Hannah McCall, Karlen Michalak, Sydney Morrissey, Kyla Ormsbee, Noah Pavlowich, Stephanie Silva, Mitchell Thoday, Ava Willman.

The following grade 8 students have earned high honors: Jared Bailey, Megan Bardis, Zachary Brennan, Evan Conti, Thomas Cox, Emma Croce, Isabella DelNegro, Natalie Frantz, Abigail Gibson, Noah Hajdu, Kelsey Harris, Sara Harvey, Heather LeClair, Natalie Ward, McKenzie Wright.

The following grade 8 students have earned honors: Sarah Austin, James Barone, Aili Bauman, Evan Blumer, Luke Boardman, Rocco Bovenzi, Connor Brassard, Jacob Brennan, Megan Carney, Nathan Coughlin, Kylie Decelles, Colman Dyer, Evan Gonsorcik, Michael Iacaboni, Dylan Joerres, Cailin Joyce, Sofija Juodaitis, Quinn Kneeland, Megan McDowell-Arnold, Maria-Rose Mello, Zachary Melzar, Mia Monahan, John Papandrea, Jillian Pauplis, Maria Piscione, Evan Queeney, Matthew Regan, Rebecca Reynolds, Haley Sanders, Luke Stelmach, Noah Sutherland.



PHOTO by Richard Maki

Sterling, West Boylston, and Holden fire departments responded to an interior smoke condition at Chocksett Middle School at approximately 3:10 p.m. on February 17. The source was believed to be within the heating system.

Sterling Women's Club accepting scholarship applications

The Sterling Women's Club is now accepting scholarship applications from high school seniors that are Sterling residents and entering college in the fall. Applications are available at sterling-womensclub.info, Conant Public Library, the guidance office of area high schools, and by email at SWC01564@gmail.com. Completed applications must be postmarked by April 1.

Village Green Preschool announces 13th Annual Scholarship

Village Green Preschool in Sterling is now accepting applications for a \$1,000 scholarship awarded to a graduating senior who attended the preschool and plans to attend a two- or four-year

accredited college or university. Applications are available in the guidance department of local high schools and by email from the preschool office. For more information, contact Preschool Director Linda Greene at 978-422-8256 or sterlingvgp@gmail.com, or Scholarship Committee Chair Mandy Roberts-Crowley at 508-320-3612 or Mandela24@gmail.com. Completed applications must be postmarked by April 1.

Sterling EMS accepting scholarship applications

Sterling EMS, Inc. offers two annual scholarships. The \$500 Standard Scholarship is awarded to a Sterling resident enrolled in a medically-related training program. The \$1,500 Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a Sterling resident entering an undergraduate post-secondary educational program in a medically-related field. Applicants must

be graduates or upcoming graduates of an accredited high school, possess a GED (or alternative), or have taken the Commonwealth of Massachusetts competency test for home schooled/alternatively schooled individuals. Applications are available at the Sterling Fire Department, Conant Public Library, and Butterick Municipal Building in Sterling, as well as in the guidance department of area high schools. Application deadline is April 30.

Holden Grange announces scholarship

Holden Grange is offering its \$800 W. Sumner and Howard L. Jordan Scholarship to a graduating high school senior or student attending any recognized institution of learning beyond high school. Any applicant who does not belong to Holden Grange must reside in Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, or Sterling and be pursuing a course of study in agriculture/horticulture, veterinary science, or conservation/environment. A Holden Grange member in good standing for at least one year preceding the date of application is eligible to pursue any course of study. Scholarship recipient will be named in June, and funds will be awarded upon successful completion of the first semester with at least a 3.0 grade point average. A letter of intent, stating future educational goals and a description of three community activities or three Grange activities in which the applicant is involved must be accompanied by an official transcript and a letter of recommendation, and postmarked by May 1 to Holden Grange, 26 Glenwood Place, Rutland, MA 01543. For more information, contact 508-886-2341 or holdengrange78@gmail.com.

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Top honors for local realtor



Contributed PHOTO

Caryn Gorczynski, a real estate broker with Century 21 Center Home Team, has received top honors by receiving the Centurion Award from Century 21.

This award is given to the top producers. Caryn has also been named in the Top 100 Century 21 Brokers in Eastern New England, with a ranking at #18. She has shown top sales in her field of real estate. Caryn is a broker at Century 21 Center Home Team at 27 Main St., Sterling.

LCU announces promotion



Contributed PHOTO

Leominster Credit Union recently announced the promotion of Ellen Coughlin of Sterling to the position of AVP, Human Resources. Originally hired as a

teller in the Worcester office, Coughlin was promoted to the loan servicing area before moving into Human Resources in 2004. Coughlin is responsible for policy administration, performance management programs, recruiting initiatives, compensation/salary administration and employee relations. Coughlin received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Worcester State College in Spanish and a minor in Health Sciences. She went on to receive her master's degree from Emmanuel College, with a concentration in Human Resources. She has also received her Professional Human Resources designation from the HR Certification Institute. Coughlin resides in Sterling with her husband and daughter.

Travel to Ireland in November

The Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce will host a travel information session for a planned trip to Ireland in November. Information session takes place on Tuesday, March 28, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at The Manor Banquet Facilities, 42 West Boylston St., West Boylston. For travel details and itinerary, visit wachusettareachamber.org.

Is it time to retire your 401K?

Do you have a 401K? Is your financial strategy working to its full potential? Why is the 401K called "America's retirement disaster"? The Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce is holding a business development discuss to discuss strategies to optimize your 401K on Wednesday, March 15, 8 to 9:30 a.m., at Clearly Coworking, 474 Grove St., Worcester. Featured speaker is Tom Valentine, President and Financial Advisor, Forward Financial Services. Members free, non-members \$5. Refreshments provided by The Bagel Inn.

Chamber Business After Hours

The Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce will host a Business After Hours networking event on Tuesday, March 21, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Draught House Bar & Grill, located at 42 West Boylston St., West Boylston. The event, sponsored by The Stone Cobblers will feature networking, hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar and door prizes. Chamber members \$15, non-members \$20. To register, visit wachusettareachamber.org.

Wachusett Greenways upcoming events

Wachusett Greenways Hike at Wachusett Meadow on Friday, March 10, 10 a.m. to noon. A talk about the sanctuary will precede a hike to explore a network of trails on level ground, which lead through wooded forests, pass beaver ponds, and go over open fields. See an active beaver pond and lodge, an intricate network of stone walls, and open fields, used by a variety of animal species. To register, contact Joe Reynolds at 978-424-6293 or reynoljoe@gmail.com. Limited to 15 participants.

Wachusett Greenways Trail Clearing on Saturday, March 18, 8:30 to 11 a.m. Trail maintenance on the Mass Central Rail Trail. To sign up, contact Colleen Abrams at 508-479-2123 or colleen.abrams@verizon.net.

Wachusett Greenways annual gathering will take place on Thursday, April 27, at 6 p.m., at Holden Senior Center. Swap trail tales and enjoy good food and fellowship.

Tables still available for Indoor Yard Sale

The annual First Church Indoor Yard Sale is on Saturday, March 25, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There are still a few tables left for rent. Cost is \$20. To reserve a table, contact Helen at 978-422-6657.

Applications open for 2017 farmers market

Vendor and crafter applications are currently being accepted for the 2017 season of the Sterling Farmers Market. 'Like' Sterling Farmers Market on Facebook for contact and up-to-date information, or email sterlingfarmersmarket@gmail.com.

Register for Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition events

Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC) hold its annual statewide Against the Tide Swim, Kayak, Walk, Run and/or Aquathon fundraising events again in 2017. Proceeds benefit MBCC, the state's leading breast cancer organization that seeks to understand the causes of breast cancer and find ways to prevent the disease.

The Statewide Metro-Boston Against the Tide will be held for the 25th commemorative year at DCR's Hopkinton State Park on Saturday, June 17. The statewide Cape Cod Against the Tide will be held for the 18th year at DCR's Nickerson State Park (Brewster, Massachusetts) on Saturday, August 19. Both events consist of several components: competitive and recreational swims, recreational kayak, a fitness walk, and USA Track & Field certified 5K and 10K runs. Participants of all ages and abilities can choose one, two, or three of these activities. The event also offers an Aquathon "Splash and Dash" component, where participants "splash" in the competitive 1-mile swim and immediately "dash" in the 5K or 10K run (chosen by the participant). To register for one or both events, visit mbcc.org/swim, or call 1-800-649-MBCC (6222). Those who cannot attend are invited to make a pledge to a registered participant or team. Participants may register as an individual or as part of a team. Registration is \$40 per adult per activity (\$80 for Aquathon) and \$25 per student per activity (\$50 for Aquathon), up to a maximum of three events. Participants are encouraged to fundraise beyond the registration minimum, as all proceeds support the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. Prizes will be awarded to the podium finishers and top fundraisers.

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Critical repairs for local homeowner

Habitat for Humanity North Central MA in partnership with First Church in Sterling, is providing financial assistance for low income homeowners whose homes need critical repairs through their Critical Home Repair Program. A critical repair is one needed to ensure health, safety, or accessibility. Low income homeowner applicants who lack necessary funds must meet Habitat's income guidelines, be able to repay the no-interest loan (which can be long term) provided by Habitat, and be willing to work with Habitat volunteers on their house repair or on other Habitat endeavors. For details about the program, visit ncmhfh.org/critical-repair or call 978-348-2749. For more information or to make a contribution, call First Church at 978-422-6657.



Volunteers braved frigid temperatures to get the job done.

PHOTOS by Linda Davis



Habitat for Humanity and local volunteers unload supplies to repair a home in Sterling.



Habitat for Humanity volunteers prepare to repair stairs.

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Winter fun at the Library

Activities abound for all ages at Conant Public Library, located at 4 Meetinghouse Hill Road, Sterling. Call 978-422-6409 to register for programs.

Especially for kids

Middle School Book Club – Youth in grades 5 to 8 are invited to attend on Thursday, March 9, at 3:30 p.m. to discuss *Out of My Mind*, a mystery novel by Sharon Draper. Read the book ahead of time, then come to the meeting to discuss it and participate in a themed activity. Book copies are available at the library. Registration required.

Family Movie Night – Wednesday, March 15, 6 p.m. Disney's *Moana*, *Moana* is rated PG and follows the story of Moana (Auli'i Cravalho), who joins the ancient demigod Maui (Dwayne Johnson) on a journey across the ocean for an action-packed adventure. Patrons ages 17 and under are welcome. Children under 9 must be accompanied by an adult caregiver. Registration required.

Picture Book Club – Thursday, March 16, 4 p.m. Youth grades K through 2 are invited to read *Jumanji* by Chris Van Allsburg, then join us for a themed snack and activity. Book copies are available at the library. Registration required.

Drop-in craft – Monday, March 20, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., for children of all ages. Children's room. Staff and volunteers will be on hand to assist. No registration required.

LEGO Club – Master builders grades K and up are invited to attend on Thursday, March 23, at 4 p.m. Registration required.

Artopia – Youth in grades 5 and up are invited to join a new monthly art club on Thursday, March 30, at 6:30 p.m. Challenge your creativity each month with a different craft. This month's meeting will feature embroidery thread friendship bracelets. Supplies and snacks provided. No registration required.

Beading Makerspace – Create your own unique item using thousands of colorful beads on Saturday, April 1, at 1 p.m. Artist Mandy Roberge will be on hand to guide and support children in grades 4 through 12 to create a one-of-a-kind keychain, bracelet or pair of earrings. Registration required.

Kids Cook – Kids Cook is a new monthly cookbook club for youth in grades 5 and up. This month we will be making recipes from *Complete Children's Cookbook*, filled with easy, delicious recipes and colorful pictures. Each participant chooses a different recipe from the book, prepares the dish at home, and brings it with them

to the library for an evening of good food and good fun. Thursday, April 20, at 6 p.m. Cookbook copies are available at the library for checkout. Registration is required.

Adult coloring March/April

Discover the stress-reducing and relaxing benefits of coloring at Conant Public Library's adult coloring program. Wednesday, March 8; Monday, March 27; Wednesday, April 12; and Monday, April 24. All sessions 6:30 p.m. Supplies available or bring your own. No registration required.

What's cooking at the Cookbook Club?

Warm up with Conant Public Library's Cookbook Club with flavorful recipes from *Sheet Pan Suppers* by Molly Gilbert on Wednesday, March 29, 6:30 p.m. Choose a recipe, prepare the dish, and bring it to the library for an evening of good food, great conversation, and new recipes. Cookbooks are available at the library for checkout. Call 978-422-6409 to register.

Parent's Night Out Book Club

Are you a parent who loves to read and talk about books? Let's read some family- and parenting-themed contemporary fiction together. Wednesday, April 5, 6:30

p.m., *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. Books are available at the library. No registration required.

Getting started homeschooling

Whether you're actively considering home education or are just curious about how it's done, you are invited to attend *Getting Started Homeschooling* on Thursday, May 4, 6:30 p.m., at Conant Public Library, 4 Meetinghouse Hill Road, Sterling. Topics include an overview of homeschooling, getting started, methods, resources, and homeschooling support. Informational handouts will be available and an opportunity for questions will follow the presentation.

The program will be presented by Milva McDonald and Tracy Ventola. Milva McDonald is a founder of Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc., a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable educational organization that gathers and disseminates information about homeschooling in Massachusetts through education, advocacy, and events. Tracy Ventola is an AHEM volunteer and a former elementary school teacher now homeschooling her two children. For more info on AHEM, visit AHEM.info. Admission is free, but registration is required. Call 978-422-6409 to register.

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Sterling Rec hosts road race

Join the Sterling Recreation Department in welcoming spring by participating in their first annual road race on Saturday, April 1. Races are 5K (\$25 fee) or 10K (\$35 fee). The races will start and finish at the Griffin Road Athletic Complex behind Chocksett Middle School. All races begin at 9 a.m. Registration 8 to 8:45 a.m. Walkers are welcome to take part in the 5K, which will start at 9:15 a.m. (\$20 fee). Walkers will not receive timing chips. Additional \$5 fee for day-of registrations, or visit sterlingrecruncs.racewire.com to register in advance.

"Sterling Rec is continually looking for new and exciting ways to engage the community," says Sterling Recreation Department Director Kristen Diemel. "Our goal is always to come up with programs for the varying interests of our community, and we think that this race, something that we have never done before, is a great new addition to the list of activities that we offer. We hope to provide a challenging and quality race for running enthusiasts."

Sterling residents are advised that the road race route will affect Griffin Road, Muddy Pond, Boutelle Road, Greenland Road, Reed Road, Princeton Road, Jewett Road.

For more information, contact the Sterling Recreation Department at 978-422-3041.

Enjoy winter's end with Sterling Rec

Spring is coming! Stay fit and have fun with Sterling Rec. For program information and to register, visit SterlingRec.com, call 978-422-3041, email recreation@sterling-ma.gov, or stop by the office at 31 Main St., Sterling. Like Sterling Recreation Department on Facebook for up-to-date program and event information.

Active Kids

Tiny Tots Playtime – Infant to age 4, 5-year-old siblings welcome. Wednesdays, April 5 to June 21, 9 to 11 a.m. 1835 Town Hall. \$30/3-months/family or \$3/day.

Kids Zumba/Yoga – Session VI, grades 1+. Thursdays, March 16 to April 13, 4 to 5 p.m. 1835 Town Hall. \$35/ session.

Flag Football – Grades K to 2 and 3 to 6. Sundays, April 23 to June 18, noon to 3 p.m. Houghton Elementary School field. \$50/player, \$110 family cap (\$20 late fee after April 1).

Archery – Grades 5 to 8. Wednesdays, April 24 to May 31, 3:15 to 4:15 p.m. Muddy Pond t-ball field. \$115.

After School Tennis – Grades 5 to 8. Mondays, May 1 to June 5, 3:15 to 4:15 p.m. Chocksett Middle School gym. \$85.

Art and Creativity for Kids

After School Art Studio – Grades 1 to 4. Mondays, March 20 to April 24, 4 to 5:30 p.m. Houghton Elementary School cafeteria. \$65.

Music and Movement – Infant to age 5. Mondays, March 27 to June 19, 10 to 10:45 a.m. 1835 Town Hall. Register at pakmusic.org.

Babysitting and First Aid – Grades 5 to 8. Thursday, April 6, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sterling Senior Center. \$85.

Jedi Engineering with Lego – Grades K to 2. April 17 to 21, 9 a.m. to noon. 1835 Town Hall. \$140.

Jedi Master Engineering with Lego – Grades 3 to 5. April 17 to 21, 1 to 4 p.m. 1835 Town Hall. \$140.

Cooking – Grades 5 to 8. Tuesdays, April 25 to May 16, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Chocksett Middle School cafeteria. \$120.

Sewing – Grades 5 to 8. Thursdays, April

27 to May 11, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Chocksett Middle School art room. \$100 (includes materials).

Drive Pre-School Soccer – Pre-school age with parent. Saturdays, April 29 to June 3, 8 to 9 a.m. Houghton Elementary School field. \$75.

Wicked Cool Half-Days – Grades 1 to 4. Thursday, May 9, 1 to 3:30 p.m. Sterling Senior Center. \$40.

Active Adults and Teens

Head to Toe Workout – Ages 16+. Mondays, April 24 to June 19, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., or Fridays, April 28 to June 23, 8:45 to 9:45 a.m. 1835 Town Hall. Mondays \$96, Fridays \$108.

A.M. Boot Camp – Ages 16+. Wednesdays, April 26 to June 21, 5:30 to 6:30 a.m. 1835 Town Hall. \$108.

Gentle Yoga – Thursdays to April 6, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. 1835 Town Hall. \$13/class.

Yoga for All Levels – Thursday to April 6, 7 to 8 p.m. 1835 Town Hall. \$13/class.

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

Ladies' Pick-Up Basketball – Ages 18+. Mondays, 6 to 7:15 p.m. Chocksett Middle School gym. \$25/season Sterling residents, \$30 non-residents.

High School Pick-Up Basketball – Grades 9 to 10, Tuesdays to March 28, 7:30 to 8:45 p.m. Grades 11 to 12, Mondays to March 27, 7:15 to 8:30 p.m. Chocksett Middle School gym. \$25/player.

Naga Fitness with Gina at 1835 Town Hall

All classes are \$10 each or \$90/10 classes 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.

Join Sterling Rec at Foxwoods

Reserve your spot for a great night at Foxwoods Resort and Casino on Saturday, March 25. The group will leave from Butterick Municipal Building at 4 p.m., returning around midnight. \$30/person includes roundtrip transportation, buffet voucher, and \$10 slot bonus play. Reservation required.

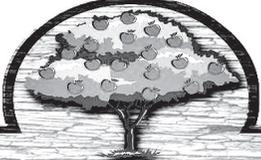
Get to know your Senior Center

Located at 36 Muddy Pond Road, the Sterling Senior Center is open Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Thursday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and Friday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information or to register for programs, call 978-422-3032. There is an answering machine available at all times.

Drop in for coffee Monday to Friday, 8 to 11:30 a.m. The Sterling Senior Center serves lunch at 11:30 daily. Anyone over 60 is welcome. Check the Sterling Council on Aging monthly newsletter for daily menu. Call 978-422-8022 for a reservation the morning before you want to come. Home meal delivery available daily. \$3 suggested donation.

Volunteer at the Senior Center

The Senior Center couldn't run without its volunteers. If you have a few hours to spare during the week, consider joining their team. Call 978-422-3032 for information.



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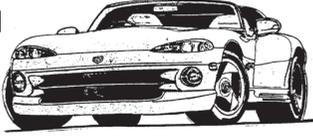
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Get your tickets for Taste of Sterling

Local food vendors will provide an array of tasty treats at this year's Taste of Sterling on Sunday, March 19, from 4 to 6 p.m. Once again, this event is generously hosted by the Sterling National Country Club, located at 33 Albright Road, Sterling. Tickets are \$15 adults, \$10 children under 12. All proceeds benefit Friends of Sterling Seniors. Tickets available at the Sterling Senior Center, or by calling Pam Dell at 978-422-8863 or Maureen Cranson at 978-422-9727.

Upcoming Events

- Santander Bank's Luncheon** – Wednesday, March 8, 11 a.m. Learn how to spend your money wisely in your retirement years and be treated to a free lunch courtesy of the Sterling branch of Santander Bank. Sign-up required.
- Foot clinic** – Thursday, March 9, 9 a.m.

Certified Foot Care Nurse. By appointment only. \$35.

March birthday cake – Friday, March 10, 12:15 p.m. Cake for everyone celebrating their March birthday.

Elder Keep Well Clinic – Tuesday, March 14, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Get medical and prescription questions answered and blood pressure checks by a VNA nurse.

Homemade lunch – Wednesday, March 15, 11:30 a.m. Homemade American chop suey. \$3 donation. Sign-up required.

St. Patty's Day celebration – Thursday, March 16, 11:30 a.m. Corned beef dinner, followed by Irish step dancers. \$3 donation. Sign-up required.

Potluck – Thursday, March 16, 6 p.m. Bring a favorite dish to share. Belly dancing entertainment by the Gypsy Moon Dance Company. Sign-up required.

Guided meditation with Bob Stickle – Friday, March 17, 8:30 a.m. \$5.

Newcomers Welcome Lunch – Wednesday, March 22, 11:30 a.m. Turkey dinner. Sign-up required.

Foot clinic – Thursday, March 23, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Certified Foot Care Nurse. By appointment only. \$35.

Book club – Thursday, March 23, 12:30 p.m., featuring *The Art Forger* by B.A. Shapiro. This year's selection for the 11th Annual One Book, One Sterling program, the book chronicles the infamous art heist at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, which remains the largest unsolved art theft in history.

Spring makeover – Tuesday, March 28, 10:30 a.m., courtesy of Fallon NaviCare.

Safety presentation – Wednesday, March 29, 11 a.m. Sterling Fire Chief David Hurlbut will talk about the Sterling Fire Department and make safety recommendations.

Homemade lunch – Wednesday, March 29, 11:30 a.m. Homemade chicken Alfredo. \$3 donation. Sign-up required.

Pancake Breakfast – Friday, March 31, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Enjoy plain or surprise pancakes, sausages or spiral ham, scram-

bled eggs, fruit cup, juice, and coffee, sponsored by the Friends of Sterling Seniors. \$3. All ages welcome.

Friday flicks – Friday, March 31, 12:30 p.m. West Boylston Cinema.

Daily events

A host of exciting programs and daily events are underway at the Senior Center. Call 978-422-3032 to sign up, or drop in to pick up a detailed newsletter and calendar of events.

Wachusett Food Pantry delivery available for seniors

Are you a Sterling Senior (65+) unable to get to the food pantry? We can help by delivering to you. Monthly distribution items available include pasta sauce, peanut butter, tuna fish, beans, cereal, milk, juice, meat, vegetables, eggs, cheese and bread, as well as personal care and paper products. For more information or to register, call 978-422-3032. Proof of age and residency is required. Senior distribution is the Friday before the third Saturday of each month.

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The cast of "Ain't Nothing But a Werewolf" hamming it up.

Drama club performance

The Luther Burbank Middle School Drama Club will present *You Ain't Nothing But A Werewolf* on Friday, March 31, and Saturday, April 1, at 6:30 p.m., at the Mary Rowlandson Elementary School auditorium, 103 Hollywood Drive, Lancaster. Tickets available at the door, \$6 adults, \$4 students and seniors. For more information, email lbdmsdramaclub@gmail.com.

11th Annual Easter Egg Hunt

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Meat raffle

The Hiram O. Taylor Post 189 of the American Legion will hold a meat raffle on Sunday, March 12, 1 p.m., at the Eight Points Sportsmen's Club, 147 Beaman Road, Sterling.

Writing workshop

Seven Bridge Writers Collaborative presents The Power of Figurative Language with John Stazinski, on Saturday, March 18, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Thayer Memorial Library, 717 Main St., Lancaster. In this hands-on workshop, participants will explore the way figurative language functions to enrich the style and themes of stories. Stazinski teaches writing and literature at Quinsigamond Community College. For more information, email 7bridgewriterscollaborative@gmail.com or visit sevenbridgewriters.blogspot.com.

Kiss Me Kate coming to Nashoba Regional High School

Performances of this sizzling musical will take place on March 24 at 7:30 p.m., and March 25 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. NRHS auditorium, 12 Green Road, Bolton. To order tickets in advance, visit NashobaDrama.com.

Workshop for parents and grandparents

Ever wondered if you're being a good parent or grandparent, what's "normal" for your child's age, and what can you do to prepare them for the next stage in life? Hope Chapel, located at 35 Chocksett Road, Sterling, will hold a workshop for parents and grandparents on Saturday, March 25, 8:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Lunch will be provided. View speakers and schedule at hopechapelsterling.org. To register, go to hopechapelsterling.org/parenting-workshop.

Irish celebration in Princeton

Join award-winning singer, songwriter, harper, poet, and storyteller Kate Chadbourne for a lively, fun, and spirited celebration of all things Irish. Stories, songs, and the sounds of the harp, Irish flute, and tin whistle, well raise hearts and spirits This event is made possible by a grant from the Princeton Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Sunday, March 26, 2 p.m., First Congregational Church Fellowship Hall, 14 Mountain Road, Princeton. Free.

Sterling Democratic Committee meeting

The Sterling Democratic Committee will meet on Monday, March 27, 6:30 to 8 p.m., Room 205, Butterick Municipal Building, 1 Park St., Sterling. The agenda will include updated information for Sterling delegates to the State Democratic Platform Convention in June, as well as planning of local programs in support of democratic values. All Sterling registered Democrats and interested Unenrolled voters are welcome.

Calling all poets

The Seven Bridge Writers Collaborative will host a monthly gathering designed to bring poets together in a relaxed, welcoming venue. The Poetry Room offers local poets a chance to share work, discuss craft and support each other in the creative process on the fourth Monday of every month. Monday, March 27, 6:30 to 8 p.m., The Parlor, First Church, 725 Main St., Lancaster. For more information, email 7bridgewriterscollaborative@gmail.com or visit sevenbridgewriters.blogspot.com.

First Church community lunch

First Church in Sterling will host their next community lunch on Saturday, April 1, at noon. Free, no reservation required. The goal is to provide a free, tasty meal once a month in a hospitable, respectful and welcoming setting to people in the community who find it hard to provide or prepare a good meal, or who would enjoy eating a meal prepared by others in a communal setting. All are welcome. For information, or to volunteer, call 978-422-6657.

American Legion meeting

There will be a regular meeting of the Hiram O. Taylor Post 189 of the American Legion on Monday, April 3, 7:30 p.m., at the post hall, 32 School St., Sterling.

Register now for spring creative writing groups

Registration is now open for the Seven Bridge Writers Collaborative spring writing groups, which begin during the week of March 20 and run for 10 weeks. For writing group descriptions, visit sevenbridgewriters.blogspot.com/p/writing-groups.html. To register for a group, go to goo.gl/forms/ZH8mBKLgZjql-HdN62. Groups are filled on a first come, first served basis. For more information, email 7bridgewriterscollaborative@gmail.com

Sterling Garden Club features Joe Rajunas

Joe Rajunas of Holliston will be the featured speaker on the subject of cold frames at the Sterling Garden Club's meeting on Thursday, April 20, 9:15 a.m., at First Church in Sterling, Houghton Room. Learn how to build a cold frame, which is a simple structure that utilizes solar energy and insulation to create a microclimate within your garden. It can be used to start seeds early in the spring, harden off plants, extend the growing season and overwinter plants. Rajunas is a retired chemist and has been gardening since he was 5 years old. In addition to a small backyard garden, Joe built his own greenhouse in which he grows orchids year-round and practices plant propagation techniques. He became a Master Gardener in 2003 and he is a lecturer on plant propagation for the Association's Master Gardener classes. Free. For information about the Sterling Garden Club, contact Sheila Battles at 978-422-8527 or email sterlinggardenclub1234@gmail.com.

Treasures of the Community Gala

First Church in Sterling's 11th Annual Treasures of the Community Gala will take place on Saturday, May 20, at Devens Common Center, 31 Andrews Parkway, Devens. Tickets are \$65 per person and on sale until May 1. As an added incentive, reserve and prepay a table for eight by April 9 and save \$10 saving per ticket. The event features live and silent auctions. Auction preview and cash bar cocktail hour with appetizers begins at 5 p.m., followed by a buffet dinner at 6:30 p.m. Auctioneer Ron D'Auteuil from Old Tyme Stuff Auction, Worcester, will begin the live auction at 7:40 p.m. sharp. Auction items include sporting event tickets, home décor services, IT support, tutoring, spa and wellness services, homeowner services, handcrafted items, antiques, theme gift packages, vacation adventures, weekend getaways, restaurant gift certificates, and fine wines. View items in advance at fcstreasures.com. The Treasures of the Community Gala has raised over \$220,000 over 10 years. This year's goal is \$40,000 to benefit First Church in Sterling's events, community lunches, and other programs; Neighbor to Neighbor, a fund that assists individuals and families in Sterling that have demonstrated financial need with payments toward housing, food, utilities, clothing and other essential living costs; Interfaith Hospitality Network, an organization that serves homeless families in

the Worcester area; and the La Romana mission trip, which has travelled to the Dominican Republic for the past 24 years to build the Good Samaritan General Hospital and provide health care and access to clean water to thousands of poor in remote cane cutter villages.

For information about participation and item donation, contact Phil Holman at 508-868-9245 or philsterl@comcast.net. To advertise in the gala catalogue, contact Linda Holman at lady mantle@comcast.net. To volunteer, contact Pam Guild at 978-422-6078 or pam@pobox282.com; or contact Treasures of the Community Gala, First Church in Sterling, PO Box 1073, Sterling, MA 01564-1073.

Free watercolor classes

Weekly art instruction is offered by Charlie Gray, a Rutland resident with years of experience in the field of making, teaching, and selling art. To see some of his work, visit charlesgrayfinearts.blogspot.com. Free. Supply your own materials after the first session. Mondays, 9 to 11 a.m., First Church in Sterling Parish Hall, Room 2.

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.

Looking for a family pet?



Contributed PHOTO

Tina

Two-year-old Tina is a pretty brown tabby with big green eyes. She's very friendly and loves attention, and would be a perfect family

pet. All of Tina's veterinary work is complete. She is leukemia negative, spayed, and has a microchip. Adoption fee \$150. All cats are placed as indoors-only pets. NEADY Cats is now located in Sterling, and is always on the lookout for dedicated volunteers. For more information about volunteer opportunities, or to schedule an appointment to meet Tina or any of the kitties, email Marilyn@neadycats.org, or call 978-422-5116.

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