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Meet the candidates

A Special State Primary on November 7 and a Special State Election on December 5 will be held to choose a full-time state senator for the Worcester and Middlesex District to replace state Senator Jennifer L. Flanagan, who has resigned her senate seat to become Governor Charlie Baker's appointee to the state's Cannabis Control Commission. Each of the four senatorial candidates participating in the Special State Primary and the Special State Election was invited to submit a statement and/or answer questions posed by Sterling Meetinghouse News. Candidates were asked the following questions:

What are your top priority issues that you feel are challenges for our district? What are strategies that you would propose to bring about improvements?

Do you support an improved Medicare for All health insurance system? Please explain why or why not.

Do you support a \$15 minimum wage?

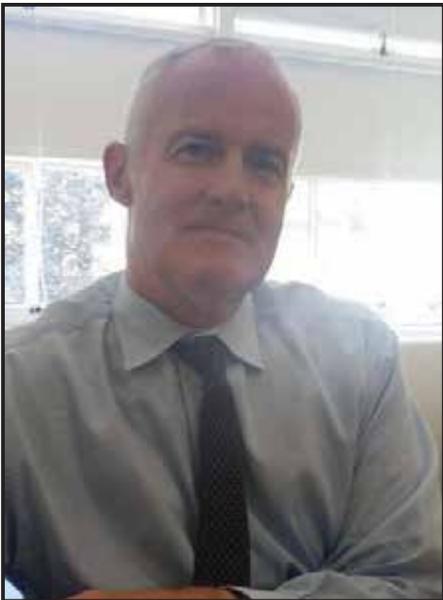
How will you help those with crippling student loan debt? Would you support tuition-free state colleges in Massachusetts?

See page 5 for candidates and their responses

Sterling gears up for Special Town Meeting

by Lex Thomas

A Special Town Meeting in Sterling is scheduled for Tuesday, November 14. The predominant issue prompting the meeting is a pilot agreement for the Sterling Municipal Lighting Department to move forward with installation



Town Administrator Ross Perry

of a solar and battery storage project on Chocksett Road. A town meeting vote is necessary in order to implement the project.

As well, there are four additional items that may be raised, according to Sterling Town Administrator Ross Perry.

One likely article to be included is approval of the police union contract, which has been negotiated and is awaiting approval at the next town meeting. Another article concerns an amendment to the bylaw regarding marijuana establishments, proposed by the Planning Board. A public hearing will take place regarding this issue on October 24.

Other possible articles include a proposal for additional funding for a basement retrofit at the Butterick Municipal Building, and a sewer line feasibility study for the 1835 Town Hall, each of which require "a couple of thousand dollars," according to Perry.

However, Town Moderator Amrith Kumar has challenged the wisdom of including more items on the Special

Town Meeting warrant than are absolutely necessary.

"There has been a change in Massachusetts law that makes a Special Town Meeting necessary to vote on the SMLD pilot project," Kumar says. "But there's no urgency about the other items. There's nothing that can't wait for the Annual Town Meeting."

Kumar's concern stems from traditionally poor attendance at special town meetings, significantly worse than attendance at the regular Annual Town Meeting in May. He feels that adding items to the Special Town Meeting that could wait until May deprives voters of the opportunity to participate in decisions that involve the town, and could well undermine future attendance at regular town meetings.

"Clearly, we're not preventing people from attending the Special Town Meeting," says Kumar. "But I feel we're depriving them of the opportunity to vote on issues at the Annual Town Meeting, by dealing with them unnecessarily early." He contends that town moderators are

increasingly calling for special town meetings to deal strictly with imperative issues that can't wait for an annual town meeting.

But Perry contends that town residents aren't being denied their opportunity to vote. "Town voters always have the opportunity to vote," he says. "Dealing with these issues at a special town meeting is simply part of keeping town operations moving forward," adding that the special town meeting could help both the Butterick Municipal Building and 1835 Town Hall proposals be

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING pg 6

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Special State Primary – Tuesday, November 7

Special State Election – Tuesday, December 5

Houghton Elementary School, 42 Boutelle Road

Deadline to register to vote is Wednesday, October 18, 8 p.m., at the Town Clerk's Office, Butterick Municipal Building. 2017 registration will be available for

Democrats, Republicans and Libertarians.

Deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is Monday, November 6, 12 noon.

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Town Wide Yard Sale a great success

We'd like to send out a big thank you to the greater Sterling community for their overwhelming support of the 12th Annual Sterling Town Wide Yard Sale on September 16. Locations all around Sterling were bustling with shoppers. The shopping energy, excitement and perfect weather all helped make the event a huge success. Our thanks go out to those who supported the event by registering your yard sale to be on the map, and to those who bought a map and enjoyed a day of shopping bargains at the 65 yard sale sites around town. We'd also like to thank all the volunteers who helped blow up balloons and sell maps, as well as the Sterling Police officers who helped us close off Park Street. This year, we raised almost \$2,000 through site registration fees and map sales. These funds will be used to support educational programs and scholarships for both adults and youth at First Church in Sterling. Now we start planning for next year's event. Be sure to save the (tentative) date – Saturday, September 15, 2018.

Pam Guild and Linda Davis,
on behalf of
The Christian Education Ministry
Leadership Team
First Church in Sterling

Thank you, Y.A.H.O.O.

They are known as the Y.A.H.O.O. (Young Adults Helping Out Others) group in Sterling, youngsters between the ages of 13 and 17 who give up their Saturday mornings every spring and fall to do yard work for seniors and disabled people in Sterling. This program was started over 15 years ago by Kevin Beaupre. What a blessing it has turned out to be for the elderly who can no longer rake, spread mulch and do yardwork. Many thanks go to Selectman Rich Lane for taking over the running of the program, which takes many hours to organize and get things done. From 9 to 11 a.m., you can ride around town and see dozens of these young adults wearing orange sweatshirts, raking and taking a great deal of pride in what they are doing. One has to be a recipient of this project to appreciate the wonderful work they are doing. Ask any senior about our youth and we have nothing but praise and admiration for them. They are so enjoyable to have around, making it a very pleasant two hours for us. Many parents and older volunteers work alongside them setting a wonderful example. There is no financial reward to these kids. They do it from their hearts and their thanks come from the smiles and tears of thanks from those they help. And there's no cost for the seniors. We, the seniors, have named them our "Orange Angels." Honk your horn and wave when you see them at work. Show them you're proud of them and what they are doing.

Irene E. Camerano
Beaman Road, Sterling

Take care of your town

Recently, I stopped by the soccer field off Muddy Pond Road to watch my granddaughter. I was surprised to see litter strewn about the edge of the field. Some was cut up and mangled, and had obviously been in the path of a brush cutter or mower. More was scattered about and around overflowing trash bins. Someone apparently tried to corral some, leaving it in a pile on the ground. This was surely a teachable moment. At the end of the games, adults and children would do well to make sure the fields are cleared of trash before leaving. Coaches and other adults have an opportunity to instill a sense of caring for the planet in their young charges. If you live in this town, take pride in your natural surroundings. Pick up your own wrappers and empty bottles. Either take them home, or discard in nearby trash receptacles. If you see someone else's refuse, do the same. Perhaps the town department in charge of waste collection could remind Casella to check the bins in the field areas more frequently. The phrase, "Think globally, act locally," has merit. It's your town. Show some "townism" and take care of it.

Carol Houde
Smith Avenue, Sterling

Support for Kushmerek in upcoming elections

I write to encourage residents of the Worcester and Middlesex Senate district to join me in seizing our opportunity to support Michael Kushmerek in the primary election on November 7 and the special election on December 5. As a colleague of Mike's at WPI, I know him to be trustworthy and diligent, committed to his work and passionate about the cause of higher education. Mike arrived at our university and instantly proved effective at managing a large team and leading it to unprecedented success. He is a team builder who leads by example and has cultivated meaningful relationships with alumni across the world. Those of us privileged to work with him see an energetic, principled professional with the ability to analyze and respond to all manner of challenges. The skills Mike has put to such effective use at WPI will make him a stellar advocate for all of us in the Worcester and Middlesex District. I hope my fellow residents will join me in supporting him on November 7 and December 5.

Arden Sonnenberg
North Row Road, Sterling

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 or mail to: Sterling Meetinghouse News, PO Box 914, Sterling, MA 01564.

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Evangelidis to head Massport board



Contributed PHOTO

Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis

The Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) Board has unanimously elected Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis to head the seven-member board. Evangelidis was appointed to the board by Governor Charlie Baker, and is taking over the chairman's seat from Worcester attorney Michael Angelini whose term has ended.

Evangelidis announces grant to combat opioid epidemic

Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis has announced the Worcester County House of Correction has been selected by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to be the recipient of a \$100,000 grant to fund addiction treatment and services for incarcerated individuals with an opioid use disorder

who are within two months of release. The new program known as Medication Assisted Treatment Re-entry Initiative for Houses of Correction (MATRI-HOC) will provide support services and access to medication-assisted treatment as well as community-based resources. The grant was one of five awarded to Massachusetts jails to help inmates suffering from opioid addiction. The funding will provide the Worcester County House of Correction with the increased ability to place diagnosed opioid dependent inmates in a medication-assisted program including case management and counseling to help reinforce recovery and re-entry into society.

Wachusett Food Pantry October and November distribution

Friday, October 20 for seniors, and Saturday, October 21 for the public, 9 to 11 a.m. Friday, November 17 for seniors, and Saturday, November 18 for the public, 9 to 11 a.m. Residents of Sterling, Holden, Paxton, Princeton, and Rutland are eligible. Proof of residency required. Located in the Cream Crock Distribution Building, 50 Worcester Road (Route 12), Sterling. The WFP is a 100 percent volunteer-run year-round operation that provides monthly three- to five-day supply of emergency food to any family with either a short- or long-term need. New and current volunteers are encouraged to arrive at 8:15 a.m. to help with distribution. For information, call 978-563-1064, email wfp@wachusettfoodpantry.org, or visit wachusettfoodpantry.org.

Free document shredding

Wachusett Regional Recycling Center will offer free document shredding with a document shredding truck on site, on

Saturday, October 21, from 8 to 11 a.m. Also accepting all bulk, recycle, reuse and electronics (some with fee). Located at 131 Raymond Huntington Highway, West Boylston. For more information and hours, call 978-464-2854 or visit wachusettearthday.org.

Fall brush dump schedule

The brush dump located behind the Sterling Police Department on George Peeso Lane will be open Saturdays, October 21, October 28, November 4, November 11, and November 18, from 8 a.m. to noon. Sterling residents only. For more information, visit the DPW page at sterling-ma.gov.

Household hazardous products collection

Wachusett Regional Recycling Center will offer household hazardous products collection, including chemicals and paints, on Saturday, November 18, 8 a.m. to noon. Also accepting all bulk, recycle, reuse and electronics (some with fee). Located at 131 Raymond Huntington Highway, West Boylston. For more information and hours, call 978-464-2854 or visit wachusettearthday.org.

Moose alert

Sterling Animal Control Officer Louis Massa reminds residents that while moose hunting is illegal in Massachusetts, there have been several recent moose sightings from Worcester to Lancaster, including in Sterling. This is their breeding season and they are active. Use care and caution if you encounter a moose. While these animals may appear docile, they will react if they feel challenged or in danger.

Recycling Center seeking volunteers

If you have a passion for reuse, recycling and reducing the waste stream, and can spare several hours a month or even every week to the cause, the Wachusett Watershed Regional Recycling Center needs you. Volunteer opportunities are available every day of the week (except Sunday), and at all levels of physical activity. For more information, visit wachusettearthday.org, or call 508-464-2854 and leave a message with your name and phone number.



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Wachusett Chamber Salute Breakfast

The Wachusett Area Chamber of Commerce will host its annual Salute Breakfast on Wednesday, October 25, from 7:30 to 9 a.m., at the Holden Senior Center, 1130 Main St., Holden. This year's honorees are Dr. Danielle Friend, Holden Veterinary Clinic; Paula Stidsen, Rutland Food Pantry; and Ralph and Deb Thibodeau, founders of The Josh Thibodeau Helping Hearts Foundation. In addition, the Chamber will present its "Public Safety Persons of the Year" award to Officer Brent Carpenter and Officer Samuel Perotto of the Rutland Police Department. The event is sponsored by Christopher House of Worcester. Each year the Wachusett Area Chamber salutes businesses, individuals and organizations that have made their community a better place to live. The Chamber salutes Dr. Danielle Friend for her efforts to provide free veterinary care to service dogs. Paula Stidsen is being honored for her many contributions throughout the years to the Rutland Food Pantry. Ralph and Deb Thibodeau are being recognized for their efforts to raise awareness of sudden cardiac death in children and adolescents. Officer Brent Carpenter and Officer Samuel Perotto are being recognized for their efforts above and beyond the call of duty. \$20 for Chamber members, \$25 for non-members. To register, visit wachusettareachamber.org.

Free small business counseling

Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce offers business counseling services through the Massachusetts Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) and SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives). Both agencies provide free one-to-one management and technical assistance counseling for prospective and existing small businesses. Counselors are available on Tuesdays by appointment only. To schedule an appointment, call 978-425-5761.



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ARE YOU COVERED?

Special State Primary and Election

There will be a Special State Primary on Tuesday, November 7, at Houghton Elementary School for the political parties to select candidates to run in the Special State Election on Tuesday, December 5. You must be a Sterling resident and registered voter to vote in this election. The deadline to register to vote is Wednesday, October 18, at 8 p.m. at the Office of the Town Clerk, Butterick Municipal Building. 2017 registration will be available for Democrats, Republicans and Libertarians.

If you will be out of town on election day, you may request an absentee ballot from the Office of the Town Clerk. Deadline to apply is Wednesday, November 6, at 12 noon.

For more information about the Special State Primary and Election, call 978-422-8111, ext. 2307 or email Townclerk@sterling-ma.gov.

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Sue Chalifoux Zephir



Sue Chalifoux Zephir

Sue Chalifoux Zephir, a Democrat, has served as Councilor At-large in Leominster since 2009, and was formerly a Ward 4 City Councilor.

1) My priorities as State Senator will be:

Improve funding for our public schools. We have to fix the funding formula, which is why I support the Fair Share Amendment. Cities and towns cannot continue to rely on local property taxes as the primary funding source for our schools. The current model is not sustainable and we must invest in our future. The Fair Share Amendment would also allow us to invest in transportation infrastructure which is sorely needed. We need to fix our roads and alleviate traffic congestion by investing in public transportation.

Improve access to affordable health-care. We need to tackle the high cost of prescription drugs and make sure that high deductibles and co-pays don't preclude people from getting the treatment they need. We should reduce the cost of prescription drugs by negotiating pricing with big pharmaceutical companies.

Ensure that anyone who needs addiction treatment or mental health services gets the care they need. We need to add beds to take care of those who need longer term treatment.

2) I support Representative Jennifer Benson's proposal H.596 that would establish effective health care cost control as a step toward a single payer or Medicare for All insurance system.

3) I support a \$15 minimum wage.

4) I understand that many young people today graduate with enormous student loans. I believe that Massachusetts' students should be able to graduate from a state college or university without thousands of dollars of debt. I would propose that the first two years of education after high school be tuition-free. My proposal would include state college and university tuition, or technical and vocational training costs.

Dean Tran



Dean Tran

Dean Tran, a Republican, is Councilor At-large in Fitchburg, elected in 2006.

Thank you Sterling Meetinghouse News for this opportunity to introduce myself to your readers. My name is Dean Tran and I'm a candidate to be your next full-time state senator for the Worcester and Middlesex District.

I have faced adversity since I was 2 years old when my family fled Vietnam to escape a communist regime and then spent 2 years in a Thailand refugee camp before emigrating to Clinton, Massachusetts. Among the challenges was to learn English, which is now my primary language. I want to make sure the American dream continues to be available to the people of our district and our country.

I earned a bachelor's degree from Brandeis University, then began my career in information technology and computer software development. I have spent the last 23 years in the private sector. I managed personnel and oversaw projects on three continents. I understand the issues facing family-owned businesses and multinational corporations.

Currently, I'm a city-wide elected Fitchburg city councilor. Since 2006, I have served as an at-large councilor; as vice president of the city council; chaired the Legislative and City Property committees; and prior, a four-year member of the planning board; a member of the Fitchburg Cable Television Oversight Committee; and trustee of George R. Wallace Jr. Civic Center. I'm a proud member of the Board of Trustees of Mount Wachusett Community College, the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America - Nashua Valley Council, and the Corporator's Board of the YMCA of Central Massachusetts.

- My platform is to:
1. Confront and address the opioid addiction crisis and mental health issues.
 2. Support our public schools: My four children attend public schools.
 3. Support road and bridge funding: We must spend more money to fix our roads and bridges.
 4. Tax relief and economic growth: We must create living wage jobs.
 5. Veteran and senior care: Specialized programs to promote their health and welfare are vital.
 6. Police and firefighter funding: Public safety employees must have the resources to keep us safe.
 7. Constituent services: Returning all my calls and emails.

Finally, my record in Fitchburg demonstrates my ability to listen and work for my constituents. The people of this district deserve someone who will say no to political pay raises, respect transparency and believe in the will of the people. I'm asking for your vote on December 5. Please visit my website at deantran.com.

Michael Kushmerek



Michael Kushmerek

Michael Kushmerek, a Democrat, is serving his second term on Fitchburg City Council, and is currently its president.

My father was a union carpenter and my mother a homemaker, and I saw them rely on a variety of public services to provide a better future for their five children. I am running for office because I want to ensure economic mobility for hardworking families that deserve the opportunity to succeed. I want to create conditions that provide a robust economy in which our residents can live, work and invest in their communities.

Education is a key element in creating those opportunities. We are fortunate in this senate district to have Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State University, which provide professional training programs and work closely with industry to support their needs. I will also advocate for expanded state support of our public higher education institutions to move toward a tuition-free system that would lessen the debt burden facing graduates who remain in Massachusetts and represent the future of our commonwealth.

We must also consider the needs of those working for minimum wage. I support raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, but we must be cautious in its implementation so as not to create undue hardships for our small business owners and their employees. We don't want to see small businesses forced to lay off workers to make ends meet.

As state senator, I will work to promote economic development through strengthened public-private partnerships. We can promote investment in the district through infrastructure improvements like expanded broadband internet access, as I have been able to achieve in my time on the Fitchburg City Council by working with providers.

Of course, as important as opportunity is, preserving the public health must also be a priority. As caregiver to my mother, and being married to a social worker, I face these issues every day and know how they affect so many of families across the district. I support pursuing a single-payer health care system and believe Massachusetts can continue to play a leadership role in this endeavor.

Mike Mahan



Mike Mahan

Mike Mahan, a Democrat, is a Fitchburg State University and HealthAlliance Hospital trustee. He is a member of Leominster's Planning Board, and has served on the Democratic State Committee.

For me, public service is a calling. The values of hard work and helping others were instilled in me from a young age, as well as a commitment to the community. I watched my father serve as Mayor of Leominster, my mother serve as City Clerk, and saw the legacy of my grandfather as a State Representative. I was born and brought up in Leominster, where I still live with my wife Heather and my daughters, Finna, 5, and Merrick, 2. I have based my career on giving back to the communities that have provided my family with strong roots and great opportunity. As your Senator, my highest priorities will be economic development, public health, and education.

I would focus on growing economic opportunities for Central Massachusetts, like attracting more businesses and bolstering infrastructure and housing resources, and ensuring smart investments with our taxpayer dollars.

I am incredibly passionate about public health, serving on the HealthAlliance Hospital Board of Trustees, focusing our resources on quality improvements to care and community outreach strategies. I am also keenly interested in providing critical services for seniors, veterans, and children at risk, and in tackling the opioid crisis, including a renewed focus on intervention, education and treatment.

And finally, quality education - both at the beginning and end of academic careers. We need to focus on quality preschool education to ensure that all students can have a head start that leads to success later in life. We also need to increase the capacity of post-high school vocational programs in high growth job areas. As a member of the Board of Trustees Fitchburg State University, we have maintained affordable fees for students to ensure access to quality education, and achieved greater diversity than ever before.

I respectfully ask for your vote on Tuesday, November 7.

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Opioid crisis hits close to home

by Lex Thomas

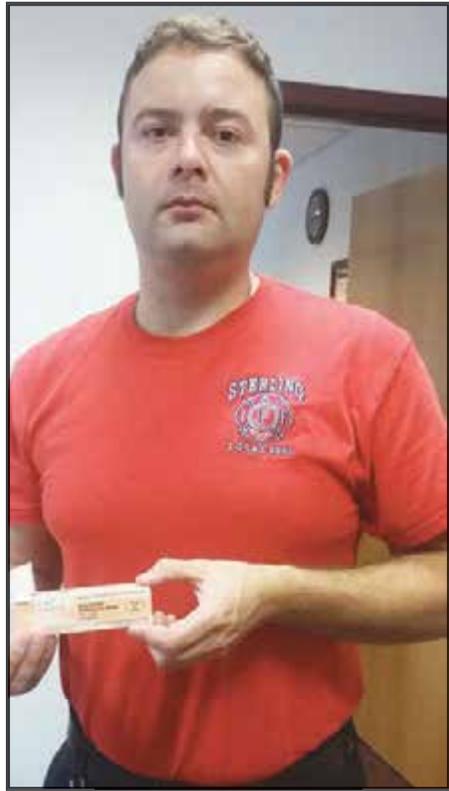


PHOTO by Lex Thomas

Paramedic Erik Ares carries Narcan when responding to a suspected drug overdose.

Brunelle died of a drug overdose on May 12, 2016, believes that those living in small, affluent communities may be especially vulnerable, simply because they have the freedom, and financial wherewithal to experiment with substances that can quickly lead to abuse and, ultimately, addiction.

Sterling Police Chief Gary Chamberland says the problem in small communities is still largely hidden. Sterling police officers have dispensed "four or five" doses of Narcan, a medication used to block the effects of opioids, especially in overdose, over the past couple of years, but adds that police officers are not usually the first responders in suspected overdose cases.

Paramedic Erik Ares, EMS Coordinator for the Sterling Fire Department, is part of the first responder team that deals with suspected overdoses. Team members are available 24/7, and always carry Narcan with them. He says that while the number of opioid overdose occurrences in Sterling is relatively small (although they have resulted in two deaths), Clinton and Leominster, where Sterling's EMTs provide mutual aid, are much more active.

Chamberland warns that, because opioid use is an expensive habit, family members need to be vigilant about valuable items that go missing. "Sometimes people notice things missing from home," he says. "Jewelry, medicines, and cash are all useful for raising enough money to buy drugs."

To help people dispose of prescription medications and possible drug paraphernalia in a safe and anonymous



PHOTO by Lex Thomas

Drug disposal kiosk located at the Sterling Police Station.

manner, the police department has set up two kiosks in the lobby of the Sterling Police Station, located at 135 Leominster Road. One kiosk is for medications, and the other is for disposal of needles. According to Chamberland, both kiosks, which were installed two years ago, get a lot of use.

Ares says that most suspected overdose calls come in because someone is unresponsive or unconscious. "Sometimes when people call in an emergency, they don't know what they're dealing with, whether it's a drug overdose or not," he says. "You can also tell by looking at the pupils of the eyes. They'll be like pinpoints."

Once on the scene, the EMT's priority is to maintain open airways and administer Narcan.

"Preferably the patient will agree to be hospitalized," says Ares, "but they don't always want to go." Hospitalization is recommended because a

patient can re-overdose, not from consuming more drugs, but because Narcan wears off fairly quickly, which allows for the original overdose to take effect again.

Ares says that most of the drug-related cases his team treats are due to opiates. He believes it's already at a crisis level, highly prevalent and spreading throughout communities large and small. He's also given thought to why opioid addiction is notoriously tough to overcome. "It can be daunting for people to get help," he says. "Helping them to get the help they need is the big challenge. There's such a stigma, and it's so unfair. Most are good people in a bad situation. They need assistance, and they need support. That's how you get back to the real person."

It's hard these days to read or watch the news without encountering reports of medical emergencies and deaths due to opioid overdoses. While most reports focus on young victims, it would be a mistake to assume the opioid addiction, which is growing at an alarming rate nationwide, affects only the young, or that it's restricted to large urban or economically depressed areas. In fact, Sterling resident Tammy Brunelle, whose 27-year-old son Ryan

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Special Town Meeting

continued from page 1



PHOTO by Richard Maki

Town Moderator Amrith Kumar

completed by July 1.

Perry says that no one wanted to hold a special town meeting until the timing of the SMLD pilot project made it necessary. "If we have to do it anyway, why not do as much as we can at the same time?" he says.

Kumar has delivered the following letter to the Board of Selectmen:

"Members of the Board of Selectmen, I received word from Mr. Perry of the proposed Special Town Meeting on November 14, 2017. After a brief conversation with him about the proposed business before the meeting, I wish to also place before you my reservations about this meeting.

As you know, the town has relatively poor attendance at STMs, one that is considerably worse than the attendance at Annual Town Meeting. Proposed

topics like the marijuana prohibition, additional funding for the 1835 Town Hall project, and the renovation of the Butterick Building, will most definitely generate significant debate at the ATM. By adding them to the STM, you will deprive the town's voters of an opportunity to deliberate and vote on them. Furthermore, nothing requires that these matters be acted upon before the ATM.

If the SMLD pilot project warrants an STM, I strongly urge you to confine that agenda to the primary business, the proposed SMLD pilot agreement, and any other statutorily required business."

The Board of Selectmen will decide on the contents of the Special Town Meeting warrant at their October 18 meeting.

Public Hearing Notice

The Sterling Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 24, at 7 p.m. in Room 202, Butterick Municipal Building, 1 Park St., Sterling, for the purpose of amending the Town of Sterling Protective By-Laws relative to marijuana establishments.

Copies of the amendments may be viewed at the Town Clerk's Office during regular business hours.



PHOTO by Richard Maki

Jim Simpson, Sr., with his vintage Corvette at the classic car show held at the Sterling Senior Center on September 22.

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Happy birthday, Rail Trail



Contributed PHOTOS

Wachusett Greenways celebrated the 20th birthday of the Mass Central Rail Trail on October 1 at the West Boylston entrance to the rail trail where the first section of the trail was dedicated in October, 1997. Participants enjoyed more than 20 birthday cakes and expressed gratitude to everyone who helped to build, steward and enjoy the trail for two decades. Wachusett Greenways president Colleen Abrams opened the birthday party by thanking all partners and supporters. West Boylston Selectman John Hadley and Town Administrator Anita Scheipers expressed their appreciation for the Mass Central Rail Trail as a special resource for all to enjoy. Holden Town Manager Peter Lukes spoke of his long history enjoying the MCRT in West Boylston and Holden. Representative Jim O'Day greeted everyone on behalf of the region's legislators with a proclamation of their unified and constant support for the Mass Central Rail Trail and its stewards. John Scannell, Regional Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Water Supply Direction, spoke of the strong partnership that DCR has shared with Wachusett Greenways and the region's communities in developing the MCRT. Sheriff Lew Evangelidis presented a declaration of his deep appreciation for the MCRT and all those who share in this community service. Twenty supporters helped cut the ribbon signifying 20 years of caring for the Mass Central Rail Trail. Following the birthday party, Wachusett Greenways hosted the Springdale Mill Celebration at the historic woolen mill site where visitors continued to enjoy the music of Shindig and the Urquhart brothers along with WooRides pedicabs, face painting, hula-hoops, art, games, and food.



Rail Trail fall clearing

Volunteers are needed to help with fall trail clearing and drainage ditch cleaning on the Mass Central Rail Trail on Saturday, October 21 and October 28, 9 a.m. to noon; and Saturday, November 11, morning or afternoon. To sign up, visit wachusettgreenways.org.

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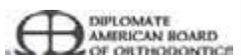
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Houghton's library flourishes under volunteer management

by Jamie Chase Galvin

Approximately eight years ago, budget cuts forced the elimination of library aides in all elementary and middle schools district wide. Houghton Elementary School wasn't any different, but the determination to keep the library running was met head on by the administration. Administrators put out a call for help to the school's Parent Teacher Organization, and eight years later, the school's library is flourishing under volunteer management.

"Our library has served as a hub for teaching and a learning resource for 17 years," says Houghton principal Anthony Cipro. "It's highly valued by all staff. A small cadre of volunteers assisted our library aide for many years. I then called upon our PTO to keep our library fully operational when budget cuts eliminated library aides in our district's elementary and middle schools."

Parent volunteer coordinator Jennifer Gorham, her assistant Alisa Iannucci, and the nearly 30 volunteers from the community responded to that call for help for this school year. Their work behind the scenes, driven by the belief that the importance of literacy for young minds should not go unheeded due to budget cuts, keeps the library thriving.

"Research supports that reading literacy at the third grade level is highly connected to a child's success later in life," says Gorham. "Reading fiction and narrative have been shown to support a child's development of empathy, strongly rooting them in emotional connections

and community. Having time in the library when a student can find books that are not connected to their academic development promotes growth of those skills, particularly when students find reading what's required

seeking out libraries, during and after the time they're in school, as peaceful and welcoming places to work, learn, and dream."

Children have a regularly scheduled library time that runs approximately 45 minutes once a week on Tuesdays through Fridays. Volunteers are present during those times, and the library is open to teachers and students for special projects on Mondays. Volunteers undergo training prior to the start of the school year and keep the library operations running smoothly for all grade levels.

"Volunteers check books in and out, reshelve books, and build relationships with the kids and teachers by helping students find books or reading aloud to classes," says Gorham.

The value of their work isn't lost on Houghton's administration or on the volunteers that serve the Houghton community. Cipro credits Gorham, who has served as volunteer coordinator for the past two years, for doing a remarkable job in scheduling volunteers for various grade level classes.

"Libraries are a gateway to the global world of learning," says Gorham. "This is where imagination, creativity and learning can take root, as students learn that books can be tailored to their likes and dislikes as well as provide new adventures and experiences. While students are young, being in the library teaches them that they have access to information beyond themselves and our little community. We are happy to serve the students of Houghton in this way."



Houghton Elementary School library

PHOTO by James Barbato

for school is a challenge. It's an important supplement to the work that teachers do in the classroom."

Assistant parent volunteer coordinator Alisa Iannucci agrees. "We're trying to expose students to their library so that they'll value all libraries, and someday support or even just take advantage of the great resources that are offered by public libraries. I hope that students' time in the Houghton library leads them to continue

Dogs and cats from storm-ravaged Puerto Rico arrive in Sterling



Over the past several weeks multiple animal shelters and rescue groups throughout New England who've had long-standing partnerships with the animal rescuers at All Sato Rescue in Puerto Rico have been working tirelessly to transport hundreds of dogs and cats – hurricane survivors from Puerto Rico – to safety and new homes. The island was devastated by back-to-back catastrophic disasters in September, when it was hit with hurricanes Irma and Maria less than two weeks apart, completely destroying the island's infrastructure. Through all the devastation, the dedicated animal rescuers from All Sato Rescue based in San Juan, braved the storms despite mandatory "shelter in place" requirements, and continued their mission to rescue abandoned, stray, and unwanted animals. Three of their rescues were dogs that gave birth safely inside rescuers' homes, all within hours of hurricane Maria destroying the island.

Once aware of the devastation, several animal welfare organizations throughout New England, including Sterling Animal Shelter, started looking for a way to help. Within days, a group of pilots from Wings of Rescue offered to donate their flying time and a plane to

airlift the stranded animals to safety. Fundraising to secure the \$80,000 needed for jet fuel to transport almost 200 dogs and cats along multiple routes, culminating at Worcester Regional Airport, was started by Mission Miracle K9 Rescue and ILoveMyDogSoMuch.com. The animals arrived safely in Worcester late on Wednesday, October 11, and were immediately transported and quarantined at shelters in New England to receive veterinary care, including spaying and neutering, before being put up for adoption.

"Sadly, for those of us involved in animal welfare, when we see disasters we cringe, as we know all too often in these disasters animals are the

ones who suffer the most, and receive the least amount of help," says Leigh Grady, Executive Director of the Animal Shelter Inc. of Sterling, MA, which has been rescuing animals from Puerto Rico since 1999. Fundraising is continuing in order to make more rescue transport missions in the near future.

To learn more about this life-saving mission, make a donation, or adopt one of these hurricane survivors visit sterlingshelter.org or follow Sterling Animal Shelter on Facebook for details and updates.

PHOTO by Lex Thomas

One of the dogs from hurricane-stricken Puerto Rico available for adoption at the Sterling Animal Shelter

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Y.A.H.O.O. Youth Board. (Front row, left to right) Kyla Ormsbee, Emily Chapman. (Back row, left to right) Theresa Page, Emma Rivers, Siobhan Moisan, Aiden Moisan.

Y.A.H.O.O. donates to Wachusett Food Pantry

Every year, Sterling Y.A.H.O.O. donates to a local charity or organization. This year, the Wachusett Food Pantry was chosen. The donation will allow the food pantry to supplement their donations with items they fall short on during any given month. The sizable donation was made by a dedicated group of teens that add to the donation jar on Saturday mornings. Y.A.H.O.O. would like to thank everyone who donated, and remind everyone that Y.A.H.O.O., a Sterling-based program in which teen volunteers assist those unable to do yardwork, is back for its fall season. Volunteers in grades 7 to 12 are encouraged to sign up online at sterlingyahoo.org

Chocksett Food Truck Festival

Chocksett Middle School will host its annual Chocksett Food Truck Festival on Saturday, November 4, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Everyone is welcome to enjoy Food from Big T's, Sabor Latino, Soop Dogs, and Jackson Effie Coffee Cabin, raffles and bubble soccer. Live music is tentatively planned. For more information, email Amy Davis at amymikelonis@hotmail.com.

Annual Community Spooky Walk and Halloween Party

Children of all ages are invited to the Annual Community Spooky Walk and Halloween Party hosted by the Village Green Preschool. This event, which is open to families in Sterling and the surrounding communities, will be held on Monday, October 23, from 5 to 7:30 p.m. (rain or shine). Plan to arrive in costume and bring a bag for trick-or-treating along the parade route. The parade will begin promptly at 5 p.m. at the gazebo behind the Sterling fire station and will proceed down Main Street

to First Church, where the Halloween party will be held. The party will include interactive games and crafts, including the "magic mirror," pizza, snacks, and baked goods. Parents are required to stay for the entire event. Tickets for the party are \$5 per person (under 1 year free). Proceeds go to the preschool's playground maintenance fund. Tickets, which are limited, can be purchased at Appletown Market in Sterling and at the Village Green Preschool office, located in First Church of Sterling.



Contributed PHOTO

"Mike The Bubble Man" and Emily Zumwalt entertained the audience at Sterling Village Green Preschool's annual Family Night on September 29. Families of preschoolers brought non-perishable food and personal grooming items that were donated to the Wachusett Food Pantry and enjoyed homemade baked goods.



PHOTOS by Richard Maki

Houghton Elementary School students sing a song of peace at the Peace Pole celebration.



Students, teachers and parents at the 15th annual Houghton Elementary School Peace Pole celebration.

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Meet the Democratic candidates

The Sterling Democratic Committee will sponsor a Candidates Night on Sunday, October 22, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., at the Sterling Senior Center, located at 36 Muddy Pond Road. Meet candidates Sue Chalifoux Zephir, Michael Kushmerek and Mike Mahan, who will be running in the November 7 primary election to fill the seat formerly held by State Senator Jennifer Flanagan. After the candidates present their statements, voters will have an opportunity to pose questions. The forum will be moderated by Lex Thomas, editor of Sterling Meetinghouse News, and is expected to be rebroadcast by Sterling-Lancaster Community Television. This event is free, open to the public, and handicapped accessible.

Boy Scout bottle and can Drive

Sterling Boy Scout Troop 189 is holding a bottle and can drive on Saturday, October 28, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Sterling Municipal Light Department, 50 Main St. (Route 12), Sterling. All MA returnable bottles and cans are accepted. All proceeds from the drive stay in the Troop and help fund camping trips, purchasing and maintenance of equipment, and administrative costs. Troop 189 community service and Eagle Scout projects have included fire hydrant painting, roadway trash pick-up, installation of benches at Memorial Park, cleaning and marking of hiking trails at the Wekepeke Reservoir, playground improvements at Chocksett Middle School, and resetting gravestones at historical cemeteries. To arrange pick-up of bottles and cans, or for more information about scouting, call Mike at 978-422-7756.

Annual Holiday Greens Sale



Contributed PHOTO

Nina Kaupp of the Sterling Garden Club displays one of the decorated wreaths that will be available at the Holiday Greens Sale.

The Sterling Garden Club's Annual Holiday Greens Sale will take place on Saturday, December 2 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Sterling Historical Society Barn. Located on the corner of School and Maple streets, the barn will be filled with elegantly decorated wreaths, kissing balls, door swags, centerpieces, table arrangements, boxwood trees, mailbox swags, birch log bundles, and outdoor arrangements handmade by club members. Boxes filled with greens will also be available at 8:30 a.m. Prices range from \$10 for birch log bundles to \$40 for a mailbox swag, with the average price around \$25. No two items are alike, but matching wreaths, kissing balls and door swags can be

pre-ordered by calling Pat Thomas at 978-422-3566 by November 23. Because only fresh-cut greens are used, an abundance of greens is needed. If you would like to donate greens, club members will trim shrubs and trees at your home and remove the trimmings. For more information on donating greens, call Pat Thomas at 978-422-3566 before November 23.

Proceeds from the sale support civic beautification projects in Sterling, education enrichment programs for students and other activities sponsored by the Sterling Garden Club. For more information, visit gcfm.org/sterlinggardclub or 'like' Sterling Garden Club on Facebook.

Last call for Farmers Market

Friday, October 20, from 3 to 6:30 p.m. Located at 1 Park St., (in front of the Butterick Municipal Building), downtown Sterling. Live music, crafters, and a wide variety of local vendors offering fresh, home grown and home-made products. Vendors include B & B Farm, Meadowbrook Orchards, Minute-man Kettle Corn, Pineo Family Farm, Shamrock Hives Farm, Thompson's Maple Farm, try a Little Whoopie (featuring Fox Hollow Pie Company baked goods), and more. For more information, 'like' Sterling Farmers Market on Facebook or email sterlingfarmersmarket@gmail.com.

Get creative with Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts and 6 Bridges Gallery in Maynard invite all area artists to submit pieces for an art show and online auction and encourage everyone to visit and bid on pieces. The Art Show, titled "Home is Where the Art Is," centers around recycled art, and will feature "reclaimed" and "repurposed" objects transformed into unique art pieces by local artists. Artwork will be displayed at 6 Bridges Gallery from January 12 through February 3, 2018. Registration is free. The event is being held to raise funds for ongoing Habitat home construction and repair in the 25 towns served by the organization. For more information and to download a registration form, visit NCMHabitat.org and 6BridgesGallery.com.

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Spooks and books 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

StoryWalk – StoryWalk, presented by the Conant Public Library and welcomed by the Sterling Recreation Department will be open through Thursday, October 26 at the Sterling Greenery Community Park, 36 Muddy Pond Road. This StoryWalk will feature *In the Middle of Fall* by Kevin Henkes. For more information, call 978-422-6409.

Picture Book Club – Children in grades K to 2 will read *Fright Club* by Ethan Long on Thursday, October 19, at 4 p.m. Read the book ahead of time, then come for a snack, book discussion and themed activity. Copies of the book are available at the library for check out. Registration is required.

Storytime – Sign-up starts Monday, October 23, at 10 a.m., for the next 6-week storytime series starting the week of November 6 and running through the week of December 11. Mondays at 2 p.m., ages 3 to K. Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m., ages 18 months to 3 years. Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., ages 3 to K. Thursdays at 10:30 a.m., Drop-in baby storytime, birth to 18 months (no registration required). Registration is limited.

Not-So-Spooky Storytime – Get in the Halloween spirit with some not-so-spooky stories. Tuesday, October 24, at 2 p.m. for children ages 3 and up, and Wednesday, October 25, at 10:30 a.m. for children ages 18 months and up. Registration is required.

Spooky Kids Cook & Stories – Children in grades 3 and up are invited for a spooky edition of Kids Cook on Thursday, October 26, at 2 p.m. Make and bring a recipe to share from *Ghoulish Goodies*, eat some

spooky treats, and listen to some scary stories. Copies of the cookbook are available at the library for checkout. Registration is required.

Family Movie Night – Get your engines revving for the animated hit *Cars 3* on Wednesday, November 8, at 6 p.m. *Cars 3* is rated G and follows Lightning McQueen as he trains to get himself back into racing. Children ages 17 and under are invited to attend; children under 10 must be accompanied by a caregiver. Registration is required.

Slime Time with Mandy Roberge – Children ages 8 and up are invited to attend Slime Time with Mandy Roberge on Thursday, November 9, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Kids will learn how to make slime and leave with three containers of their own unique slime. Sponsored by the Friends of the Conant Public Library. Registration is required.

Middle School Book Club – Youth in grades 5 to 8 are invited to attend on Wednesday, November 15, at 6:30 p.m. to discuss *The Fourteenth Goldfish* by Jennifer Holm. 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.

Thanksgiving No-Bake Dessert – Wednesday, November 22, 1 p.m. Children grades 3 and up. Registration required.

What's cooking at the Cookbook Club?

Enjoy great food and discover new recipes for easy, tasty appetizers from *Martha Stewart's Appetizers*, on Wednesday, October 25, at 6:30 p.m. Prepare a 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. To register, call 978-422-6409.

Adult coloring

Discover the stress-reducing and relaxing benefits of coloring at Conant Public Library's adult coloring program. Monday, October 30, at 6:30 p.m. Supplies available or bring your own. No registration required.

Open Mic

Friday, October 27, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Thayer Memorial Library, 717 Main St., Lancaster. An opportunity for local writers to share their work with other writers and the community. Five-minute limit to readings. All are welcome. For more information, visit sevenbridge.org.

Parent's Night Out Book Club

Enjoy an evening out with a good book and good company. The Parent's Night Out Book Club features different family- and parenting- themed reads each month. Wednesday, November 1, at 6:30 p.m., we'll read *House Rules* by Jodi Picoult, the story of a young boy with Asperger's syndrome who is accused of murder. Books available at the library. No registration required.

Hungrytown coming to Sterling

Conant Public Library presents the internationally-acclaimed acoustic duo Hungrytown on Thursday, November 2, at 6:30 p.m., at the Chocksett Middle School Theatre, 40 Boutelle Road, Sterling. Folk duo Rebecca Hall and Ken Anderson have toured professionally for 15 years. Their third and latest album, *Further West*, made the top 10 on the American Folk DJ charts for two months, and at least 14 "Best of 2015" lists. Hungrytown is known for the quality and authenticity of their songwriting and their vocal harmonies. Free. Non-perishable food donations to the Wachusett Food Pantry will be collected at the event.

Holiday card and gift tag workshop

Conant Public Library will host an art class for adults on Thursday, December 7, at 6 p.m. Join Suzanne Hauerstein for a watercolor holiday card and gift tag workshop. Participants will learn basic watercolor techniques including wet on wet, resist and using salt to design their own cards and tags, as well as learning to create origami-style envelopes. Registration is required and space is limited. To register, call 978-422-6409.

Download Conant Public Library app

Conant Public Library has a new app! The free app provides access to a mobile-friendly catalog, your CWMARS account, as well as Overdrive and other library services. The Conant Public Library app is available to download through the App Store and the Google Play Store. Search for CWMARS, then download. For more information, call 978-422-6409.

Suspense writing workshop

How do you keep an audience riveted throughout your poem, song, or play, or keep a reader turning the pages of your novel or short story? Seven Bridge Writers' Collaborative presents *Suspense on Stage and Page* with James B. Nicola on Saturday, October 21, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Thayer Memorial Library, 717 Main St., Lancaster. Learn how to create suspense with plot and character development, and devices like word choice, repetition, tension and conflict, mystery, danger, voice, wonder, nuance, and restraint. For more information, visit sevenbridge.org.



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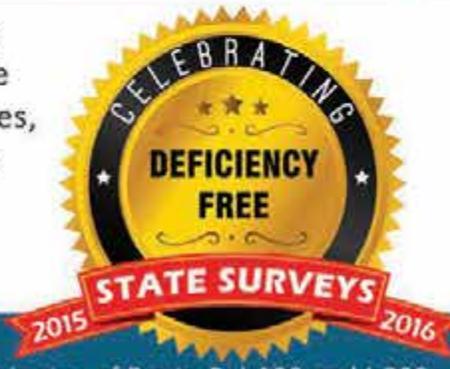
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Looking for the Sterling Recreation office?

It's now in the basement of the Butterick Municipal Building, 1 Park St., Sterling. Programs will continue to take place in the 1835 Town Hall. For more information, call 978-422-3041 or email recreation@sterling-ma.gov.

Fall fitness and fun

Stay fit and have fun throughout the fall. For program information and to register online, visit SterlingRec.com, call 978-422-3041, email recreation@sterling-ma.gov, or stop by the office at 1 Park St., Sterling. 'Like' Sterling Recreation Department on Facebook for the most up-to-date information.

Active Kids

Sterling Rec Basketball – Grades 1 to 8. Divisions I, II, III and IV: \$100 before November 1, \$110 after November 1. Division V: \$100 before December 1, \$110 after December 1. Family cap \$250. Register at SterlingRec.com or at the Sterling Recreation office. Season mid-November to early February/March, depending on division. Interested in coaching your child's team? Coaches needed. Contact Sterling Recreation.

Tiny Tots Playtime – Infant to age 4, 5-year-old siblings welcome. Wednesdays to December 27, 9 to 11 a.m. 1835

Town Hall. \$30/3-months/family or \$3/day.

Wicked Cool Half Days – LEGO Robotics. Grades 1 to 4. Thursday, October 26, 1 to 3:30 p.m. Sterling Senior Center. \$50.

Kids Zumba/Yoga – Grades 1 to 5. Mondays, November 6 to 27, 4 to 5 p.m. Houghton Elementary School gym. \$35/4-week session.

Kinderball – Kindergarten. Saturdays, December 2 to January 20, 8 to 9 a.m. Chocksett Middle School gym. \$75.

Art and Creativity for Kids Music and Movement – Infant to age 5. Mondays to December 18, 10 to 10:45 a.m. 1835 Town Hall. Register at pakmusic.org.

Cooking – Grades 5 to 8. Tuesdays, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Session III: November 28 to December 19. Chocksett Middle School cafeteria. \$120/session.

Holiday Cookies Workshop – Grades 5 to 8. Thursday, December 14, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Chocksett Middle School cafeteria. \$35.

Active Adults and Teens at 1835 Town Hall

Head to Toe & Core Pilates – Mondays, January 8 to April 9, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., or Fridays, January 5 to April 13, 8:45 to 9:45 a.m. Mondays: \$144. Fridays: \$168.

Boot Camp – Wednesdays, January 3 to April 11, 5:30 to 6:30 a.m. \$168.

Gentle Yoga – Thursdays, November 30 to February 1, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. \$80/session or \$13/class.

Yoga for All – Thursdays, November 30 to February 1, 7 to 8 p.m. \$80/session or \$13/class.

Adult Cooking Workshop – Ages 16+. Schedule according to interest.

High School Pick-Up Basketball – Grades 9 to 10, Tuesdays, December 5 to April 24, 7:30 to 8:45 p.m. Grades 11 to 12, Mondays, December 4 to April 23, 7:15 to 8:30 p.m. Chocksett Middle School gym. \$25/player.

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

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

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.

GPS Passes – Season passes for Wachusett Mountain Ski Area. Ages 6+. Bronze: \$269, Silver: \$329, Gold: \$559. All prices increase \$100 on November 15. Group name: Sterling GPS. Coordinator: Kristen Dietel.

Monday After School Ski & Snowboard – Grades 3 to 12. Mondays, January 9 to February 27, 3:15 to 8 p.m., Wachusett Mountain Ski Area. Six-week pass \$120 before December 2, \$130 after December 2. Optional transportation package \$80.

Bruins tickets – Thursday, February 1, 2018, 7 p.m. Boston Bruins vs. St. Louis Blues, TD Garden, Promenade seating. Tickets are limited. \$90/ticket.

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Critical Home Repair Program helps seniors stay in their homes

by Lex Thomas



PHOTO by Linda Davis

Habitat for Humanity volunteers work to make critical repairs that allow seniors to remain in their homes.

and that they allow seniors to stay in their own homes," says NCM Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Carolyn Read.

Seniors who would benefit from the Critical Repair Program and who believe they would qualify for assistance are encouraged to fill out an application form available at the Sterling Senior Center, at Habitat for Humanity offices, or online. Once an application is received, the process

takes at least two weeks to complete before work can begin, but it may be shorter depending on the nature and urgency of the repair. The process includes family selection, "to ensure that recipients are set up for success and that they can, in fact, stay in the house," says Read. "If there are outstanding taxes or other issues, Habitat can help homeowners to sort them out."

In addition, a site supervisor or construction manager will visit the house and provide an estimate of the costs and resources needed to do the job, which vary from case to case. For example, roof work on a single-story house can be completed with a volunteer crew, whereas roof work on a 2-story house requires a roofing company.

All construction or repair work takes place from Wednesdays to Saturdays, weather permitting (in the case of outdoor jobs). Completion time varies depending on the job. A ramp or staircase can be done in about a week. Roof replacement takes from two to four weeks. Work crews never exceed eight people, and in most cases, homeowners can remain at home for the duration of the repairs. Workers provide their own food and water. Use of a bathroom in the house is appreciated, but not mandatory.

"One of the real joys of helping people to access the Critical Repair Program is the social contact it provides for seniors who might feel lonely or isolated," says Don Capman. "And the best part is knowing the program helps people to stay in their own homes, and that those homes are safe."

For more information, visit ncmhabitat.org/critical-repair, call 978-348-2749, or pick up an application form at the Sterling Senior Center or First Church in Sterling. To volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, visit ncmhabitat.org.

In 2015, Habitat for Humanity of North Central Massachusetts launched their Critical Home Repair Program, a home preservation initiative that provides needed interior and exterior repairs for low-income homeowners to maintain a safe, decent, and affordable place to live. The program focuses on safety, security, accessibility, weatherization, and keeping houses up to city codes.

The program is also vital for seniors who may be physically unable, or lack the financial resources, to maintain their homes. In Sterling, NCM Habitat for Humanity is working together with First Church of Sterling and the Sterling Senior Center to identify seniors that would benefit from their assistance.

According to Don Capman, a volunteer with both Habitat for Humanity and the Sterling Senior Center who serves as a liaison between the two organizations, the biggest challenge they face is simply identifying seniors that need help.

"We know there are seniors who live on their own in Sterling. We know there are seniors in Sterling who may be in peril living in homes that pose risks to their safety, and we know there are seniors in Sterling who don't know how to reach out to get the help they need, or who may be reluctant or embarrassed to do so," says Capman. "But when problems are ignored, they get worse."

Critical repairs include everything from weatherstripping and mending windows and doors or replacing a roof, to installing a ramp or fixing a dilapidated porch or stairs, upgrading or replacing heating and electrical systems or plumbing, and much more.

"The most important thing is that the repairs make homes safe for local seniors,

Volunteer at the Senior Center

The Senior Center couldn't run without our volunteers. If you have a few hours to spare during the week, consider joining our team. To volunteer, call 978-422-3032.

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 60+ is welcome. Check the Sterling Council on Aging newsletter for daily menu. Call 978-422-3032 for a reservation the day before you want to come. Home meal delivery available daily. \$3 suggested donation.

November event highlights

Kevin Lowe and family will once again serve a free traditional Thanksgiving dinner for those who may be alone or in need of a meal. Dinner will be served on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 23, at noon, at the Senior Center. For reservations, call the Senior Center at 978-422-3032 by Monday, November 20, at noon.

Educational programs

Lunch & Learn Medicare Open Enrollment – Friday, November 3, 12:30 p.m. Presentation will help you understand your Medicare.

Application Assistance for Fuel Assistance – Tuesday, November 28, 9 a.m.

Wellness programs

De-Stress Your Life – Wednesday, November 1, 10:30 a.m. Sponsored by Summit ElderCare.

Guided meditation with Bob Stickle – Friday, November 3, 8:30 a.m. Drop-in \$5.

Guided meditation with Bob Stickle – Friday, November 17, 8:30 a.m. Drop-in \$5.

After Thanksgiving Try-It-Out-For-Free Zumba – Monday, November 27, 12:30 p.m.

Special events

Artist's Reception – Thursday, November 2, 6 to 8 p.m. Featuring Diane Pedersen.

Veterans Day Luncheon – Wednesday, November 8, 11:30 a.m.

Pancake Breakfast – Friday, November 17, 7:30 to 9 a.m. Enjoy plain or surprise pancakes, sausages or spiral ham, scrambled eggs, fruit cup, juice, and coffee, sponsored by the Friends of Sterling Seniors. \$3 per plate. All ages welcome.

Thanksgiving Dinner – Thursday, November 23, noon. Served by the Lowe family.

Make & Take

Moravian Stars with Karen Keefe – Monday, November 6, 2:30 p.m. Create two Moravian Stars, perfect holiday decoration. \$5 includes supplies.

Thanksgiving Centerpiece by Lilac's – Monday, November 13, 2 p.m. Design a mini cornucopia centerpiece perfect for your Thanksgiving table. Sign up by November 9.

For a complete listing of senior center calendar events, visit sterling-ma.gov/senior-center or pick up a newsletter at the Senior Center.

Greendale YMCA partners with Sterling Senior Center

The Greendale YMCA and the Sterling Senior Center have partnered to enable Sterling seniors to join the Y at half the regular cost of membership. Payments can be made on a monthly basis. This partnership was forged in response to seniors requesting programs using exercise equipment and the pool. The partnership entitles participating seniors to full membership privileges.

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.

Happy Travelers offer exciting trips

The Happy Travelers, bus trips for the 50+ traveler, offers an exciting roster of day trips throughout 2017. All day trip pricing includes driver, escort, and gratuity. A \$5 cancellation waiver has been added to the cost of day trips to cover any cancellation up to seven days prior to the trip (refund will be minus the cancellation waiver). Refunds for cancellations less than seven days prior to the trip will only be made if space can be filled. To request a copy of the 2017 schedule, call 508-835-4312 or 508-612-5312, or email glady2@verizon.net. Flyers available at the Sterling Senior Center.



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Habitat's Toast to Hope

Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts A Toast to Hope event takes place on Thursday, October 19, at the Devens Common Center, 31 Andrews Parkway, Devens. The wine, whiskey, craft beer, food and chocolate tasting event will be held from 6 to 8 p.m., and features local distributors, chocolatiers, restaurants and breweries pouring and sharing some of the area's finest spirits, cuisine, and desserts, as well as a silent auction.

\$30 per person. To purchase tickets, visit ncmhabitat.org, or call 978-348-2749. Attendees must be 21+ for featured pourings.

First Church turkey supper

All are welcome at First Church in Sterling for our annual turkey supper on Saturday, October 21, at 6 p.m. Turkey, stuffing and all the trimmings with apple crisp for dessert. Dine in or take-out. Adults \$12, children (12 and under) \$8, maximum per family \$35. For tickets, call 978-422-6657.

Sterling Democratic Committee meeting

The Sterling Democratic Committee will meet on Monday, October 23, 6:30 to 8 p.m., Room 205, Butterick Municipal Building, 1 Park St., Sterling. The agenda will include a recap of State Senatorial Candidates night, as well as old and new business. All Sterling registered Democrats and interested Unenrolled voters are welcome.

Fall band concert

Nashoba Regional High School's Fall Band Concert will take place on Friday, October 27, at 7 p.m., in the NRHS Auditorium, 12 Green St., Bolton. Featuring intermediate and advanced jazz bands, and the concert band. All are welcome.

Sterling Grange craft fair

Sterling Grange craft fair on Saturday, October 28, at the Eight Point Sportsmen's Club, 147 Beaman Road, Sterling, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Vendors, lunch, and home-baked goods.

Genealogy workshop

Capt. John Joslin, Jr. Chapter NSDAR and Massachusetts Daughters of the American Revolution, will present a free genealogy workshop on Saturday, October 28, at Oxford Police Department Community Room, 503 Main St., Oxford. Genealogy 101 (basics of genealogical research) will begin at 1:15 p.m. Appointments with genealogists 2:15 to 2:45 p.m. To schedule an appointment, contact Erica Milano at permilan88@gmail.com or call 978-413-6828. Bring any useful data about your family,

including birth, marriage, and death certificates, Bible records, land probate, will records, census records and obituaries.

New England Symphony Orchestra concert

The New England Symphony Orchestra will present a concert featuring its European Salon Orchestra on Saturday, October 28, at 7:30 p.m., in the Stratos Dukakis Performing Arts Center at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School, 1050 Westminster St., Fitchburg. General admission \$35, seniors \$32. To purchase tickets, visit newenglandsymphony.org, or call 978-466-1800.

First Church community lunches are back

First Church in Sterling will host their next community lunch on Saturday, November 4, at noon. Free, no reservation required. First Church provides a free, tasty meal once a month in a hospitable, respectful and welcoming setting for people in the community who find it hard to provide or prepare a good meal, or who would enjoy eating a meal in a communal setting. All are welcome. For information, or to volunteer, call 978-422-6657. To view volunteer opportunities, visit signup.com/go/3uwLNT.

DAR honors Vietnam surviving spouses

Capt. John Joslin, Jr. Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, a Commemorative Partner of the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration, will present Certificates of Honor and pins to surviving spouses, at time of death, of a veteran who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975, regardless of location of service, on Saturday, November 4, at 1 p.m., at the Leominster Veteran's Center, 100 West St., Leominster. For information, contact Regent Cathy Eska at ceska4me@aol.com or 978-290-0118.

Pitch party

A public pitch party sponsored by Sterling Grange will be held on Saturday, November 4, 6:30 p.m., at the Sterling Senior Center. Admission \$4. Refreshments will be served. For more information, email sterlinggrange53@gmail.com or call 978-563-1437. All are welcome.

American Legion meeting

The November meeting of the Hiram O. Taylor Post 189 of the American Legion will take place on Monday, November 6, at 7:30 p.m. E-board at 6 p.m. Hot dogs served at 6:30 p.m.

Holiday craft fair to benefit Sterling library

The Friends of the Conant Public Library Arts & Crafts Show will be held on Saturday, November 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the First Church in Sterling, 6 Meetinghouse Hill Road. Craftspeople will offer a broad range of affordable, high-quality gift items, including photography, pottery, glass ornaments, wood products, jewelry, quilted items, knitted and crocheted items, children's items, succulent dish gardens, soap and herbal items, caned chairs, note cards, alpaca apparel and fiber, and hand-dyed batik clothing for adults and children.

The arts and crafts show will also include a homemade lunch café, bake sale, and raffle. Proceeds from this juried fair will support the library's Summer Reading Program for children. Members of the Friends appreciate help at the craft fair from Boy Scout Troop 1, as well as CCD students from St. Richard's parish. They help to set up and break down the fair, and assist in the kitchen. Interested in being a vendor? Email friendsofconant@gmail.com.

2018 Medical Mission Trip to La Romana is gearing up

Volunteers from First Church in Sterling, central Massachusetts, Maine and as far away as Virginia are teaming up and traveling to La Romana, Dominican Republic, from March 2 to 11 to provide medical, dental, and vision services to impoverished Haitian workers and families living in the bateys of the Dominican Republic. They are also working to complete the building of a hospital to serve the same population. For almost 20 years, with the help of many volunteers and supporters, this mission has been able to make a difference in the lives of countless people. They are currently seeking volunteers to join this effort. Anyone interested in volunteering to be a part of this adventure as a traveler or a support volunteer, contact Doug Davis at 978-265-7547.

St. Richard's breakfast supports sister village

St. Richard's Church in Sterling hosts a Community Sunday Morning Breakfast that is open to the public every Sunday from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Proceeds from the breakfast support St. Richard's "Sister Village" of Los Patzanes, Guatemala. Everyone is welcome to enjoy a delicious breakfast. For information, call 978-422-8881.

ReStore seeks donations

Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts is looking for donations for their ReStore, located in Leominster.

ReStore sells donated new and gently used furniture, home improvement and building materials at a fraction of the original retail value. All profits go to support home ownership for hard working families in North Central Massachusetts, while keeping good reusable materials in use and out of the landfill.

To donate gently used items, visit the store anytime Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Staff available to assist with offloading items. You can also contact the store at 978-227-5556, or visit restorencm.org/donate to schedule a donation pick-up. Donations are picked up Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Unleash your inner artist

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.

Fur baby



Eclipse

Two-year-old Eclipse is a stunning long-haired black and white lady. She's sweet and gentle, and will make a wonderful companion for some lucky person. All of Eclipse's veterinary work is complete. She's leukemia negative, spayed, and has a microchip. All cats are placed as indoors-only pets. Adoption fee \$150. NEADY Cats is now located in Sterling, and welcomes dedicated volunteers. For more information about volunteer opportunities, or to schedule an appointment to meet Eclipse or any of the kitties, email Marilyn@neadycats.org, or call 978-422-5116.

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Sterling-Lancaster Community TV

Broadcast Schedule Oct 21 to Oct 27, 2017

Comcast Channel 8

Saturday	Genre
12:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx FREAKS	Entertainment
4:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx FREAKS	Entertainment
7:30 AM Barbara and You - New Players Theater Guild	Interview
8:00 AM Village Church Service	Religion
10:00 AM College Church Service	Religion
12:00 PM Eat Well Be Happy - South American Chicken Stew	Cooking
12:30 PM Talk Me Healthy - Ep 6 Integrative Medicine	Health
1:00 PM DW Tomorrow Today - Particulate Pollution	Documentaries
2:00 PM Mass Walking Tour (Stow)	Local
4:00 PM Childrens Corner - Elephant Extravaganza	Children
5:00 PM Soul School - Sly and The Family Stone	Music
6:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Carinae	Music
7:15 PM DW Tomorrow Today - Particulate Pollution	Documentaries
8:00 PM Mass Walking Tour (Stow)	Local
10:00 PM Barbara and You - New Players Theater Guild	Interview

Sunday

12:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx FREAKS	Entertainment
4:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx FREAKS	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 Eat Well Be Happy - South American Chicken Stew	Cooking
12:30 PM Talk Me Healthy - Ep 6 Integrative Medicine	Health
1:00 PM DW Tomorrow Today - Particulate Pollution	Documentaries
2:00 PM Mass Walking Tour (Stow)	Local
4:00 PM Childrens Corner - Elephant Extravaganza	Children
5:00 PM Soul School - Sly and The Family Stone	Music
6:00 PM Valley Homegrown - Carinae	Music
7:15 PM DW Tomorrow Today - Particulate Pollution	Documentaries
8:00 PM Mass Walking Tour (Stow)	Local
10:00 PM Barbara and You - New Players Theater Guild	Interview

Monday - Friday

12:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx SCVM	Entertainment
4:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx SCVM	Entertainment
7:30 AM Barbara and You	Interview
9:00 AM Small Things Greatly - Making Barks	Cooking
10:00 AM Physician Focus - Cold and Flu	Health
11:00 AM Car Guy Channel - Antique Autos in History	Hobby
12:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
12:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
1:00 PM In Good Shape - A Sty in the Eye	Documentaries
2:00 PM Church Services	Religion
4:00 PM Childrens Corner - Movieman	Children
5:00 PM Guy Van Duser and Billy Novick	Music
7:00 PM In Good Shape - A Sty in the Eye	Documentaries
8:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
8:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
9:00 PM Car Guy Channel - Antique Autos in History	Hobby
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Broadcast Schedule October 28 to November 3, 2017

Comcast Channel 8

Saturday	Genre
12:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx SCVM	Entertainment
4:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx SCVM	Entertainment
6:30 AM Barbara and You	Interview
8:00 AM Village Church Service	Religion
10:00 AM College Church Service	Religion
12:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
12:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
1:00 PM DW In Good Shape - A Sty in the Eye	Documentaries
2:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
2:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
3:00 PM Car Guy Channel - Antique Autos in History	Hobby
4:00 PM Childrens Corner - Movieman	Children
5:00 PM Guy Van Duser and Billy Novick	Music
7:00 PM DW In Good Shape - A Sty in the Eye	Documentaries
8:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
8:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
9:00 PM Car Guy Channel - Antique Autos in History	Hobby
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Sunday

12:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx SCVM	Entertainment
4:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx SCVM	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 Channel 8 Community Updates	News
12:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
1:00 PM DW In Good Shape - A Sty in the Eye	Documentaries
2:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
2:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
3:00 PM Car Guy Channel - Antique Autos in History	Hobby
4:00 PM Childrens Corner - Movieman	Children
5:00 PM Guy Van Duser and Billy Novick	Music
7:00 PM DW In Good Shape - A Sty in the Eye	Documentaries
8:00 PM Channel 8 Community Updates	News
8:30 PM Pawdoption	Animals
9:00 PM Car Guy Channel - Antique Autos in History	Hobby
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

Monday-Friday

12:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx NLD	Entertainment
4:00 AM Haven Falls Horror Fixx NLD	Entertainment
7:30 AM Barbara and You	Interview
9:00 AM Cathy Neptune's Kitchen - Herbal Pork	Cooking
10:00 AM Body Sculpt with Elizabeth - Medicine Ball	Health
10:45 AM Lucky Pro Wrestling - Summer Sizzle Aug 2017	Local
1:00 PM Global 3000 - Flint Michigan	Documentaries
2:00 PM Church Service	Religion
4:00 PM Childrens Corner - Lovin' Lobster	Children
5:00 PM 2017 Jazz Camp Concert	Music
7:00 PM Global 3000 - Flint Michigan	Documentaries
7:45 PM Lucky Pro Wrestling - Summer Sizzle Aug 2017	Local
10:00 PM Barbara and You	Interview

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