

1765 Paxton Community News

PaxtonCommunityNews.com

June 2025

Sterling Greenery Hosts 10th Annual Pond and Garden Tour on June 28th

By Karen Packard

Get ready to dive into one of the area's most beloved summer traditions as Sterling Greenery hosts its 10th Annual Pond and Garden Tour on Saturday, June 28, starting at 9:00 AM. This event promises a morning of natural beauty, beautiful landscapes, and expert insights for garden lovers, koi enthusiasts, and anyone who appreciates the peaceful elegance of water features.

Starting 10 years ago, Mark, owner of Sterling Greenery has delighted visitors with this one-of-a-kind tour, showcasing some of the most stunning koi ponds and water gardens in the region. This year's event, marking a decade of beauty and garden inspiration, is expected to be the biggest and most impressive yet.

Each year, Mark hand picks a group of water gardens in the local community to take part in his favorite event of the year. These homeowners open their yards to the tour for one morning for people to view and enjoy each backyard and their unique water features.

Tickets are \$50 per person and include a guided tour via charter bus, hosted by Mark, Sterling Greenery owner and passionate pond expert. Mark and his wife Karen opened Sterling Greenery 25 years ago. Mark has been building and selling water garden materials to homeowners ever since. Ten years ago, he started the pond tour to showcase some of these amazing water gardens. Some have been built by Mark and his team, while others built their own ponds after attending one of Mark's "Build A Pond" Seminars.

Mark and the team at Sterling Greenery design a new route each year that offers visitors an up-close look at a variety of water features—



The Pond and Garden Tour is coming back on June 28.

Photo Courtesy

from serene backyard escapes to elaborate aquatic gardens full of vibrant koi and spectacular aquatic plants.

"The Pond Tour has always been about more than just ponds," said Packard. "It's about sharing the joy of gardening and inspiring others to bring more beauty and tranquility into their own outdoor spaces. There is nothing like relaxing at the end of the day with the sounds of the waterfall and frogs in my yard each night."

Attendees must purchase tickets ahead and arrive at 8:30am as the Pond Tour begins promptly at 9 AM. Guests will accompany Mark on a comfortable charter bus and set off to visit several private pond and garden sites throughout the local area. Each stop offers a unique

landscape, with homeowners often available to share stories, answer questions, and highlight special features. Attendees will learn about pond construction, maintenance, fish care, and plant selection—all while enjoying a relaxed and social experience surrounded by fellow garden lovers.

The tour will conclude with a special stop at Mark Packard's own home, where guests will enjoy lunch provided on-site and have a chance to explore his personal koi pond—one of the area's biggest water gardens.

Packard's property serves as the perfect finale to the tour, offering not only a delicious meal but also a final dose of inspiration for those considering building a water feature of their own.

Participants are encouraged to

bring a camera, wear comfortable walking shoes, and come prepared to be inspired. The event happens rain or shine, with limited seating available to ensure a comfortable and personalized experience for all.

Sterling Greenery is known for its high-quality landscaping and design services. With a passion for water gardens, Mark and his team have been teaching, building and selling water gardens for 25 years.

Tickets are available now, and advance registration is highly recommended as space is limited. To reserve your spot or learn more about the event, call Sterling Greenery at 978-422-0071 or email sterlinggreenery@gmail.com.

Celebrating ten years of the Sterling Greenery Pond Tour. Join us for a day that's as relaxing as it is inspiring.



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Sumer Music Series Thursday Nights at the Paxton Bandstand 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

July 10th - The Otters

<https://www.facebook.com/funlovingmammals/>

Sponsor: Country Bank

July 17th - Paxton Crossing

<https://www.facebook.com/PaxtonCrossing>

Sponsor: Paxton Women's Club

July 24th - The Vig

<https://www.facebook.com/thevigband>

Sponsor: Country Bank

July 31st - Whiskey Night Band

<https://www.facebook.com/whiskeynightband>

Sponsor: Mass Cultural Council

Aug 7th - Paul Courchaine

<https://www.facebook.com/paulcourchainemusic>

Sponsor: Mass Cultural Council

Aug 21st - The Midnight Riders

<https://www.facebook.com/themidnightridersbandma>

Sponsor: Mass Cultural Council

Special Thanks to Country Bank, Paxton Woman's Club and Mass Cultural Council for sponsoring these bands. Seven Saws will be providing adult beverages, and the snack shack will be open.



PAXTON COA ART SHOW BEST IN SHOW PHOTOGRAPH

The current photographic display in the Paxton Senior Center dining room has concluded. A total of nineteen colorful and scenic photographs were submitted by Mary Baker, Joseph McKay, Desiree Tedford and Emerson Wheeler. During a three month display period, Paxton residents and visitors voted for the photograph they felt was the Best in Show. All participants received numerous votes in favor of several of their submissions with a total of 80 votes being cast.

The winning photograph for Best in Show was "Morning Sunrise, Winter Island, Salem, Massachusetts" by Desiree Tedford.

The runner up photograph was Route 202 Rainbow, Bartlett, NH by Emerson Wheeler. The COA Board wishes to thank all participants for the colorful picturesque presence they gave to the Council on Aging Dining Room Art Gallery for all to enjoy. A new exhibit from several local artists will be presented in the dining room art gallery in early June. We invite Paxton residents and visitors to view the new gallery show which will run until September. The Art Gallery is open from 10AM to 1PM during weekdays.

Amtrak Downeaster for Paxton FOCOA

A delightful way to inaugurate Paxton Seniors one-day bus trips for our 2025 season would be to join us for something new and fun: We are taking Wilson Bus motor coach from Paxton at 7:30 AM on Tuesday, June 24, 2025 to arrive in Haverhill, MA to board the 9:38 AM Amtrak Downeaster train (for the portion of the Boston to Brunswick, ME run from Haverhill to Portland). Amenities on board include (self-purchased) cafe food and snacks and beverage service, WiFi and plush leather seats. There is a bathroom in every car of the train, and you can move around as desired. Brings back memories of days gone by!

In Portland, Wilson's bus will meet us and within 15-20 minutes we will arrive at Portland Pie Company in Falmouth, a local Maine chain of restaurants, for a lovely lunch. We will each have previously chosen one from a choice between six entrees: 10" Personal Cheese Pizza with 1 Topping, Baked Penne Marinara, Baked Macaroni & Cheese, Caesar Salad, Cobb Salad or Cheeseburger. For your dessert, choose between Key Lime Pie, Brownie Sundae with vanilla ice cream or White Chocolate Cheesecake with Blueberry Swirls.

Back on the bus, we will head to the Town of Freeport, Maine, famous as the home of the L.L. Bean Flagship Store as well as upscale and off-price stores nearby. L.L. Bean's main store is under re-construction this year, so they have erected a massive tent-like temporary store they have christened Camp L.L. Bean. The massive tent structure resembles an L.L. Bean Acadia 8-person cabin tent. It was erected early this winter and is expected to remain until sometime in 2026 or later. It houses a fully-functioning store with mens, womens and kids apparel and outerwear. Its unique shopping experience is designed to replicate the L.L. Bean's brand's essence. We will have time to shop there and at a few of the many upscale and off-price stores on streets close by. You are limited only by the amount of walking your feet can handle, much or little, and by time (two hours in Freeport max). We will return to Paxton COA at 8:00 pm., having possibly stopped enroute at the southbound Kennebunk Service Plaza for a quick bite.

This delightful day includes Wilson Bus motor coach to Haverhill, the train ride on the popular Amtrak Downeaster from Haverhill to Portland, delicious lunch at Portland Pie Company in Falmouth, resuming motor coach ride to Freeport, free time to shop at L.L.Bean's temporary store, Camp L.L. Bean, and other stores aboard Wilson Bus Motor Coach.

Tour cost is \$137, due June 3, 2025. Payments are non-refundable unless ticket(s) can be re-sold.

Tour date is Tuesday, June 24, 2025. For reservations, please call Deb Grensavitch at 508.754.6366 or email grensavitchd@aol.com. Please make your payment out to Paxton FOCOA (Paxton Friends of Council on Aging) and send it to Deb Grensavitch at 88 Laurel ST, Paxton, MA 01612-1234.



License your dog before July 1st to Avoid Fines

Does your dog have a 2025 dog license? If not, you currently owe a \$10 late fee on top of the license. On July 1st, the Animal Control Officer will fine all unlicensed dogs \$50.00. License today to avoid the \$50 fine per dog.

Phanessa Fisher Memorial Scholarship

Calling all WRHS Sterling girls in the graduating class of 2025. If you are planning on continuing your education and could use help with the expenses, call Mary Fisher at 978-422-6274 and request a scholarship application. We are again offering \$2,000 this year. The Phanessa Fisher Memorial Scholarship has been granted to graduates for over 22 years. Give us a chance to help you.

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 SterlingMeetinghouseNews@gmail.com or mail to: Sterling Meetinghouse News, 35 Redemption Rock Trail, Sterling, MA 01564.

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Items received after deadline will be included if space is available.

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In This Issue

Letters & Announcements	2
Hometown Heroes	3
Town News	4, 8, 10-11
Business News	5
Gardening Tips	6
Finance News	7, 9
Library News	12

Run with Summer Striders!

For the past three years, siblings Clara, Kate, and Tommy Robinson, have been running a FREE summer running clinic at Thomas Prince School for 1st-6th graders. It's something close to their hearts as they all went to TPS and it's where they first got into running

For more details or to sign up, check out their site:

<https://sites.google.com/view/summerstriders/home>

"Thanks for all the support! We love helping young runners get started and have fun!"



Summer STRIDERS

Who?
Rising 1st - 6th graders
of all abilities.

What?
A free running clinic to show kids the power of running in a fun way.

When?
3 weeks long: 1-2 times a week, from June 19 - July 3

Scan for more info and to sign up!

Bus Trips 2025 by Paxton Area Seniors

What better way to spend a July day than touring Providence's well-known John Brown House and Museum on Brown University grounds, having lunch at downtown Providence's popular local chain Gregg's Restaurant with home-style foods, wonderful pastries and wrapping up the afternoon with a gondola ride, a walk in the park and/or stretch out on a blanket or bench to enjoy the surroundings while waiting for your gondola ride.

This John Brown was the founder of Brown University, the builder of the mansion and a statesman, and gained his fortune in the slave trade, not to be confused with the other John Brown who led a slave revolt! We have heard rave reviews of this museum.

Gregg's Restaurant is part of a local Rhode Island chain of restaurants featuring solid home-style meals and showy, delicious home-baked desserts. Entrees include mashed potatoes and gravy or penne and sauce and Vegetable of the Day (except for the Chicken Caesar Salad). You will have a broad choice between the Chicken Caesar Salad, Chicken Pot Pie, Baked Scrod with Crumb Topping, Steak Tips with Mushrooms and Onions, and Chicken Parmesan. For dessert we'll be treated to Gregg's lovely Chocolate Layer Cake.

The afternoon event is a 20-minute delightful experience with La Gondola Providence on authentic Venetian gondolas from Venice, Italy (traditional flat-bottomed rowing boats, asymmetrical and propelled by a single gondolier (rower) using a sculling technique with an unfastened oar. The gondolas unique shape and asymmetrical design make it maneuverable in narrow waterways. Ride the gondola (six passengers per boat, and there are six such boats).

While waiting for your turn to ride one of the authentic Venetian Gondolas, you may choose to take a walk along the riverside near La Gondola Providence or you may choose to sit on a bench or stretch out on your own blanket and listen to the music provided for us when we ride the gondola. Tour cost is \$147, due by July 2, 2025. Payments are non-refundable unless ticket(s) can be re-sold. Each guest will receive an authentic Italian-style wine biscuit. You may bring your own beverage for La Gondola Providence if you choose.

Tour date is Wed., July 23, 2025. Today's trip includes the guided tour of the John Brown House and Museum, the delicious lunch at Gregg's Restaurant, a ride on the authentic Venetian La Gondola Providence and travel aboard Wilson Bus Motor Coach. Light walking on this trip. We plan to be back at Paxton's COA at 5:00 PM.

Tour cost is \$147, due by July 2, 2025. Payments are non-refundable unless tickets can be re-sold. Tour date is Wed., July 23, 2025. For reservations, please contact Deb Grensavitch at 508.754.6366 or email grensavitchd@aol.com. Please make payment out to Paxton FOCOA and send to Deb at 88 Laurel ST, Paxton, MA 01612-1234.

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An Inside Look at Paxton's Town Charter: You Can Shape the Future of Paxton's Governance

PRESS RELEASE

Since February 12, 1765, when the town of Paxton's first charter was recognized as a municipality within the colony, the people of this town have voiced their thoughts on how we are governed. That same practice has existed for centuries as we have evolved. As a small, yet growing town, it's one of the most unique and honored processes we go through as citizens – to create historical documentation for how we operate at a local level. In simple terms, a municipal charter is the basic document that defines the organization, powers, functions, and essential procedures of the city government.

In September 2024, the Paxton Select Board determined that a review of the Town's Special Acts Charter was due, since it had not been reviewed since 2013. The gap in reviewing our charter has left room for inconsistencies, and misunderstandings in how we are governed and by whom. It has also created significant opportunities for inclusion of the depth of services, boards, committees, agencies, and businesses accessible to residents.

The Committee members were appointed in December 2024 and have been meeting regularly since January 2025 to begin the very rigorous, yet honorable task, of reviewing the current Charter as it exists today and providing recommendations to the Select Board

for how the legislative and executive functions within Paxton should advance. This will be done through the lens of current and future needs for what we believe should be updated, removed, or added so that it reflects the true governing operations of our town.

Committee Members include:

- Steven Rebesco
- David Johnson
- Meaghan Puglisi
- Paul Bertler
- Gary Goldberg
- Chuck Putney

Why YOU Should Care - Your Voice Matters

At town meetings, social media channels, and local establishments we hear the banter and casual conversation about who oversees the budget, who makes town decisions, who does the town moderator report to, why did the Select Board do it that way, is that job elected or appointed and for how long? Understanding how we fundamentally operate should be defined with transparency so we, as citizens, can understand where accountability lies for certain functions within our town.

The process of reviewing our Charter has been interesting and eye-opening, as we have evolved, the Charter hasn't caught up. That's why the committee's mission is important as we seek to refine every detail within the Charter



so it's informative and understandable for anyone reading it and inclusive of everything that matters to how we are governed. We know there may be other things we've overlooked and that's where you come in.

Throughout the year, the Charter Review Committee will be seeking your opinions and thoughts about what should be updated in the Charter. Look for us at the upcoming Paxton Days, submit your thoughts online through the Charter Review page on the Town's website, follow us on Facebook 'Paxton Charter Committee' and attend one of three coffee chats we will have in October 2025 and in January and March of 2026. We will be sharing with you our progress and seeking continual input so that your thoughts are included and represented.

Progress To Date

We've met with over 100 people so far from all town boards and employees and department heads including police,

fire, light, and water departments, Select Board (including incoming candidates), and Veterans Affairs Agents, to name a few. And we will continue interviewing more so that this Charter is fully representative of all who reside or work in our town municipalities.

We have our work cut out as we march towards a May 2026 completion date where we will present a draft of the revised Paxton Town Charter to the Select Board.

Once we have their support, we will bring the revised Charter before you, the people of Paxton, at the May Town Meeting or a Special Town Meeting. If it passes your approval, it will be sent to the legislature for approval.

We hope you will join us over the coming year to help shape how the town is governed. Your voice matters just as much as those very first pioneers who laid the foundation for how we in Paxton are governed over 260 years ago.

That's a historical claim we should all want to be part of.



Pond Tour 2025! June 28th - 9am to 2pm

Bus leaves Sterling at 9am sharp!
Lunch provided!



Bus Tour
Only 50 seats available!
\$50 per person
Lunch provided!
Buy tickets online at
sterlinggreenery.com



Pros and Cons of Renting Your Home Instead of Selling

By Karen Packard

Sometimes homeowners looking to move wonder whether renting their home is better than selling. I put together some pros and cons of renting instead of selling for you to decide if that is something you want to consider.

First step would be to get an estimate of your home's value for selling and the value you could anticipate if you decide to rent. Both rent prices and sale prices in the Wachusett district are strong right now. I would just need to see the house to run the numbers on both scenarios.

Statistics show that the median age of first-time homebuyers nationwide is 35 years old compared to 29 in 1981 making the demand for single-family rentals continue to increase. With the higher interest rates, the rise in home prices and the need to save a significant amount for a down payment and closing costs are forcing people to delay their dream of homeownership and rent for longer.

Today's renters are often looking for more space to raise their families in towns with good school systems. Single family homes have become a very desirable rental and giving homeowners an opportunity to use their home as an investment. The last home I listed for rent in Sterling, I had over 100 people call with inquiries about the property. So, there is a huge demand right now.



Renting out your house could be a money-making proposition if your property brings in more rent than your monthly mortgage payments, taxes, insurance, and other fees. When I work with investors, we analyze the numbers. We put together a list of expenses and then compare it to the potential rent. If you can make 6-10% return after all the expenses are tallied, it might make sense to consider renting your house. Another factor to consider is that your home will continue to gain equity with every mortgage payment you make. So, in the future when you do go to sell, you will have more equity available with each month.

If you decide to rent your home, make sure to consult a tax accountant to take full advantage of tax benefits and to see which apply to your situation. Deductions that can reduce your tax burden include mortgage interest on loans used to improve a rental property, fees paid for professional services, personal property for your rental such as appliances and furniture, or repair costs such as repainting or fixing plumbing issues.

But the flip side is that being a landlord isn't for everyone, so you should examine the pitfalls of tenants living in your home. Most people, when moving, need to sell their home to help them purchase their next one. Keeping your home as a rental does not make sense if you don't have the money for a new property.

Dealing with tenants and their complaints may not fit into your busy schedule or comfort zone. If you don't live nearby or prefer letting someone

Sold Single Family Homes in Paxton April and May 2025

12 Grove St.	Sale Price \$460,000
4 Briarcliff Ln.	Sale Price \$585,000
451 West St.	Sale Price \$620,000
13 Laurel St.	Sale Price \$660,000
929 Pleasant St.	Sale Price \$765,000
9 Squantum Rd.	Sale Price \$1,069,000

else handle the day-to-day issues, hire a property management company to take care of repairs and routine maintenance, screen applicants, collect rent, and even assist with evictions. Expect to pay 8% to 12% of the monthly rental value, but the cost may be worth the savings in time and aggravation.

For the landlords I work with, I handle the application, credit checks and background info and present the options to my clients. Even if we are extremely thorough in doing the background check, you could run into difficult tenants. In the worst-case scenario, you might face a long and costly eviction process. Typically, this can run anywhere from \$500 to \$10,000, depending on various factors like location, legal fees, and lost rent.

You also have to consider what we call the vacancy rate. This is where one tenant moves out and there is a period of time, sometimes a month or two, that the property is empty until we fill it with a new tenant. That is a month or two that you are not collecting rent. If your finances are so tight that a month of two of vacancy will be difficult to sustain, you should not become a landlord. Vacancy is part of being a landlord. From time to time, you will have a turnover in tenants so you need to plan accordingly.

You also need the funds to fix anything to you are responsible for. As a landlord, you are responsible to make sure you are giving your tenants a comfortable place to live with no hazards and no broken appliances. If an appliance needs to be replaced or repaired, you are responsible for taking care of that in a timely manner. You need to make sure there is hot water, heat, and the house is safe for your tenants. Some of the rent should be put aside each month to save for future repair expenses.

My last piece of advice is that if you think you will need to sell your home quickly in the future to cover an unforeseen expense, it can take time to relocate tenants and get the house ready to sell. That might take a few months. If you think you need to sell quickly, renting might not be a smart choice. It can be hard to sell with tenants in the house, it is easier to sell after they move. If you try to sell with your current tenants living there, you need to give proper notice before showings. They may not keep the house in the condition that makes it look its best and they may not move out when you need them to. All this is a deterrent for buyers looking at the house and might affect your final sale price.

If you can sell your house for a great price in the timeframe you need, or if the cons I mentioned make you nervous, you may want to consider forgoing the rental plans and sell your home.

If after evaluating the pros and cons, you still want to consider renting your home. Feel free to reach out to me at kpackardrealtor@gmail.com to discuss your home and what amount of rent you can expect.

Follow me on Facebook and Instagram for more real estate tips and fun facts!

June Seminar

Next Seminar is Landlord 101: What You Need to Know to Be a Landlord in MA.



Thinking of renting a property in MA or already a landlord? Join me on June 24th at 6pm at Karen Packard Real Estate, 35 Redemption Rock Trail in Sterling for an essential seminar designed to help you navigate the complex world of rental laws and property management. We'll cover key legal requirements, tenant rights, fair housing laws, lease agreements, eviction procedures, security deposit regulations, pet fees, and what are you legally allowed to charge for rent and security deposits. Whether you are a first-time landlord or looking to stay compliant and informed, this seminar will provide the tools and confidence you need to manage your rental property effectively and legally. Sign up at www.karenpackard.com or email kpackardrealtor@gmail.com.



Garden Guru: Pond Tour Saturday June 28th!

By Mark Packard



Water Gardening is becoming more and more popular now with people making their yards into their own paradise. If you think about some of the nicest places you have visited, I bet they all had some sort of water feature in the landscape. There is something that draws us to water. We pick a hotel or restaurant with water over one that doesn't have it. We pay more for waterfront property. We feel relaxed and calm on a lake or on the beach for some reason. That's why I have been building koi ponds and water features for over 20 years. Like my customers, I am drawn to water.

There are many reasons to have a water feature in your yard. You can use it to create a focal point. You can build an outdoor habitat for fish and frogs. You can use a water feature as an accent to enhance the look of a house or yard. You can even build a water feature to drown out noise from a street or neighbor. The best thing about a water garden is you never need to weed or water them!

There are many misconceptions about ponds so I figured I would clear some of them up. Many people think water gardens are a lot of maintenance. The truth is, a well-built pond will only take 10 hours of maintenance per year! If you have the proper equipment, the correct number of plants, and the right number of fish, your pond will stay balanced and won't need a lot of work at all. It is nothing like maintaining a swimming pool.

Another misconception is that ponds attract mosquitoes. The fact is, mosquitoes don't breed in moving water so as long as your pond is built correctly, you won't have any stagnant water for mosquitoes to breed. Additionally, most people have fish in their ponds so if mosquitoes do

get in the water the fish would eat them instantly.

Some people think that ponds are not safe. Most ponds are only 2-3 ft deep and they are built with shelves on the sides. The gradual entry makes it safer than a pool. Ponds also create a learning experience where kids are encouraged to play in the pond catching frogs, watching and feeding the fish, or playing in the waterfall on a hot day. If you want the sound of a waterfall but don't want any maintenance, you can build a pondless waterfall. The pondless waterfall doesn't have any standing water and can be turned on and off.

If you are building your own pond, keep it close to the entertaining area and always face the waterfall towards the viewing area. Your pond should have shelves for water plants, a fish cave, and be at least 2ft deep so your fish can survive the winter.

Looking for inspiration? We are hosting our annual pond tour on June 28th from 9-2. The buss will arrive to pick everyone up at 8:30 in Sterling and depart promptly at 9am. We will be visiting some of the areas nicest ponds and gardens and ending at my house for lunch. For more advice on backyard projects email Mark@sterlinggreenery.com



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Running Marathons, Saving Lives: Sue Manero's Journey To Help Raise Awareness

by Gordon Keegan

Marathon runners are a lot different from the rest of us. They're known to get up at dawn, slip into their running shoes, and run six or seven miles before taking their first sip of coffee. They know pain, but they also know glory. And while some do it for personal achievement, others do it to raise money for worthy causes.

Such a person is Sue Manero, a native of Princeton, and a veteran of marathons from London, to Boston, to Chicago and more. Sue runs to raise money for Tedy's Team, a charity named after the famous, and beloved New England Patriot Tedy Bruschi. Tedy's Team was started by Tedy & Heidi Bruschi in 2005, after Tedy Bruschi suffered a stroke at the age of 31 when he was in the prime of life. When Tedy's Team was created, the main goal was to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of stroke, and to break the stigma of who can have a stroke.

Fast forward 19 years, over 1,600 alumni, and Tedy's Team has raised over \$10 million to support stroke and heart disease and help reduce deaths from stroke. A resounding success.

But how did Sue Manero get involved in this venture? As she says, "In 1999, my family's world changed when my 79-year-old father, Angelo Manero suffered his first stroke which was followed by two larger more debilitating strokes that left him paralyzed on his right side and barely able to communicate."

At the time, her father was working

the family business, a very strong, active 79-year-old. After his stroke he was unable to walk. In a brave decision he was able to help us decide. "He wanted to enjoy his time with his family, especially our mom Lee, his wife of 55 years. With all that he had gone through, he did not want to burden us with his in-home care and change mom's daily home life."

But it doesn't end there. According to Sue, "Over those years that he was with us, I felt so useless since there were not many new rehab facilities with stroke recovery. My dad passed in 2003 and in 2006 my cousin Lois suffered a stroke at the age of 59 and because of new medical technology, they were able to save her life. I am happy to say she is still with us!"

At this point, she felt like stroke was all around her. "I started running/training after my dad's stroke to stay healthy and to de-stress. After stroke entered my family's

life, my running took on a new purpose, stroke awareness and education. I joined Tedy's Team in 2007 and have been sharing everything I have learned about stroke, stroke prevention, education, and awareness. I run my miles in memory and honor of my family members, friends, and other stroke heroes."

Since her dad's stroke in 1999, so much is now available to stroke survivors and their families because of organizations like Tedy's Team. "We continue to raise awareness for stroke and heart disease while supporting



Sue Manero after running the London Marathon.

Photo Contributed

survivors through the Comeback Program, the Tedy's Team Center of Excellence in Stroke Recovery, and the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab. For all this I am grateful," Sue adds.

To date, Sue has run over 8 marathons and her next race will be Disney 2026-The Disney Dopey Challenge. She will be running a 5K, 10K, half-marathon and then a full marathon-over 50 miles is four consecutive days.

Sue's dedication isn't just about running. It's about building a community—one that stretches from the starting line to the finish, and beyond. Every race is a chance to remember her loved ones, connect with other survivors and their families, and shine a spotlight on stories that don't always get heard. "Everyone on Tedy's Team has a reason to run," she says. Some are survivors themselves. Others run for parents, siblings, or friends. The team becomes a family, united by heartbreak, hope, and the drive

to make a difference. For Sue, the miles have added up. She's completed more than a dozen marathons—each one a physical challenge, but also a tribute. "Crossing the finish line, it's emotional," Sue says. "I think about my dad, my cousin, all the people who can't run. I run for them." The impact of Tedy's Team isn't measured just in dollars raised or races finished. It's seen in the lives touched, the conversations started, and the knowledge shared. Stroke doesn't discriminate by age or background. Raising awareness, supporting research, and making sure survivors get the best possible care—these are victories that matter just as much as any medal. And Sue Manero? She's already lacing up for her next race, determined to keep running, keep remembering, and keep fighting for a world where fewer families have to face what hers did.

For additional information on Tedy's Team go to Tedyteam.org.

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Paxton Police Department Promotes Jason Silvestri to Sergeant

By Matt LaBarre

The Paxton Police Department has announced that Detective Jason Silvestri has been promoted to sergeant.

Sergeant Silvestri grew up in Salem, New Hampshire, and from an early age, he decided to pursue a career in law enforcement. Silvestri wanted to attend a small college, and his school advisor suggested he look at Anna Maria and the school's Criminal Justice Program, which did, and does, have an outstanding reputation. Silvestri was accepted at Anna Maria, and received a Bachelor Degree then a Master's Degree from the school. Some of the instructors in the program were active or retired police officers who related their experiences as well as concepts, which Silvestri found helpful and affected his future vocation.

His police career began in Rutland, where he served from 1997 to 2003, when he accepted a position with the Paxton Police Department. While serving in Paxton, then Chief Robert Desrosiers suggested he teach at Anna Maria College, which he did, and he still teaches Criminal Justice classes today.

"Growing up, I was inspired to become a police officer because they helped people, and because I love solving puzzles," Silvestri says. So, along with patrol work, Chief Desrosiers was allowed to create a detective position in the department which was a fit for Silvestri.

Silvestri began attending trainings in interviewing and interrogation, and he still attends training, learns from training videos, as well as books on the subjects. "There is a lot of psychology involved, and I learned how you treat people is very important and interesting," Silvestri explains. "In fact, many psychology students take my courses at Anna Maria." He is also very involved with processing crime scenes, as well as fingerprinting.

Scams, especially scams where elderly individuals are targeted, are crimes that have risen in communities around Central Mass and around the country. "We deal

with many scams where seniors, who are most vulnerable, are victimized, sometimes with the thieves getting away with a person's lifetime savings," Silvestri states. "It can be very difficult to track down scammers because they make up false accounts and use throw-away telephones."

According to Silvestri among the most common scams include seniors getting a telephone call stating that a family member, usually a grand-child, has been arrested for something like drug possession and to make bail, they need to get an amount in gift cards, read the card numbers over the telephone to the caller (who generally never hangs up), and the amount in gift cards to make bail is usually in the thousands of dollars. "Scammers learn a

lot about any of us and our families through social media," Silvestri continues. "They know names, where children and grandchildren live, go to school and work, just so much information that the scammer can use."

"Anyone asking for money through a gift card, just don't do it!" Silvestri exclaims. "Call police headquarters and report it right away."

A very common and dangerous scam is when you receive a message online - usually with lights flashing - telling you that your computer is infected with a virus! The "company" telling you this can fix it, usually for a relatively small fee, and all you have to do is allow the "company" access to your computer and online accounts. "Never do this!" Silvestri pleads. "Allowing these scammers access to your computer gives them access to your social security number, and to your bank accounts!"

Another prevalent scam right now is the "dating scam." Individuals, and again seniors tend to be more trusting hence targets, join a dating site online or in person. Someone they meet, online or in person, initiates a relationship, and eventually wants to be with the intended target, but just needs money until they sell their business or home before they can be with the victim. Silvestri has dealt



Mending Wings is a place to find healing.

Photo Contributed

with seniors who have lost all their savings and retirement funds because of this scam, when well intentioned seniors who believe that this money is all that stands between them and the person they hope to spend the rest of their life with, are robbed.

Because so many seniors are victimized by scams, Silvestri suggested that the department could use a Senior Liaison Officer, and he was appointed. Silvestri and other officers make presentations at the Senior Center to educate people there about the most recent

types of scams. Silvestri also goes occasionally to lunches at the Senior Center just so people get to know him and might feel more comfortable if they become a victim of one of these scams.

Silvestri's new role makes him responsible for overnight operations and patrols, as well as supervising detectives. "I am able to help out with detective work as well as doing patrol work, both aspects of the work that I enjoy," He concludes. "I like what I'm doing and find what I'm doing very fulfilling."

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Tax Talks

with Jennifer Lovett, IRS Enrolled Agent (EA)

(Owner/operator of Liberty Tax Service in Holden, Clinton, Framingham, Marlborough, Worcester, Spencer and Athol)

The "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," a sweeping legislative package recently passed by the House and currently under Senate review, proposes significant changes to the federal tax landscape. If enacted, these provisions could have notable implications. Here's a breakdown of the key tax-related aspects of the bill.

The key for this bill is the extension of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The bill seeks to make several permanent provisions from the 2017 tax reform, including maintaining a 21% Corporate Tax Rate. Preserving the current individual tax brackets, preventing scheduled increases as well as keeping the higher standard deduction levels, which were set to decrease in 2026. Finally, to continue the increased estate tax exemption, preventing it from reverting to lower levels.

A very debated topic with the SALT cap (State and Local Income Taxes). The bill proposes raising the SALT deduction cap to \$40,000 for taxpayers with incomes below \$500,000. This change would primarily benefit residents in high-tax states like Massachusetts, where the previous \$10,000 cap was a significant limitation. However, the benefit phases out for higher-income earners, potentially excluding some Massachusetts residents from full advantage. This would create a large shift for residents currently stuck claiming the standard deduction.

Two newsworthy provision is the elimination of taxes on overtime pay for individuals earning under \$160,000 annually and taxation of tips. This change is particularly beneficial for public service workers, such as firefighters, and other employees who regularly work overtime. The International Association of Fire Fighters has endorsed this aspect of the bill, highlighting its positive impact on their members. The bill includes provisions to eliminate taxes on tips, benefiting service industry workers.

The bill also proposes increasing the Child Tax Credit to \$2,500 per child



through 2028, after which it would revert to \$2,000. This adjustment aims to provide additional financial relief to families. However, the temporary nature of the increase may limit long-term planning benefits. Pre-TCJA the credit was \$1,000 without this bill it would have been set to revert back.

A new savings account, termed "Money Accounts for Growth and Investment" (MAGA), is proposed. This account would provide \$1,000 per child, intended to encourage savings and investment for future generations. The specifics of the account's structure and benefits are still under discussion.

The bill has passed the House and is currently under review in the Senate. Senate Majority Leader John Thune has indicated plans to amend the bill to introduce more permanent tax cuts and additional savings before sending it to President Trump. However, fiscal conservatives within the Senate, such as Senators Rand Paul and Ron Johnson, are advocating for more spending cuts to offset the proposed tax reductions. The outcome of these negotiations will determine the final provisions of the bill. It's important to stay informed about the progress of the bill and consult with tax professionals to understand how these changes may impact your specific situation.

Massachusetts 4-H Youth Development Program Builds Skills, Confidence, and Community

By Matt LaBarre

If you're searching for an exciting and fun learning experience for your child, consider a local Massachusetts 4-H club!

The Massachusetts 4-H Youth Development Program reaches over 27,000 youngsters, boys and girls, in the Commonwealth through community clubs, as well as in-school and after school clubs. 4-H offers a wide range of projects, activities, and programs to young people between the ages of 5 years old to 18 years old.

According to Shelby Robin, 4-H Educator for the Central Region, 4-H provides young people an opportunity to learn, develop new interests, and have fun at the same time. "We offer programs in many areas including robotics, foods, consumer science, career exploration, community service, photography, animal science, growing flowers and vegetables, canning, embroidery, and leadership development, just to name a few!" Robin explains.

Different clubs may also focus on certain activities. For instance, the Lancaster 4-H Club is primarily focused on community service, as well as raising and caring for goats and cows. Participants in the Lancaster Club don't have to own their own animals, as 4-H volunteers who do own the animals work with the young people. There is a horse lovers project, and other clubs determine what emphasis to focus on.

"We are also very involved with

organizing the 75th Annual Diamond Jubilee Worcester County 4-H Fair!" Robin exclaims. "The year it will be held at the Spencer Fair Grounds on July 25th through July 27th." This Fair is separate from the other area fairs like the Spencer and Bolton Fairs, which 4-H Clubs and members sometimes participate in.

"The Worcester County Fair involves many of our clubs, and many activities," Robin continues. "Some of the activities at the Fair include animal exhibits and live stock shows, working exhibits in areas such as canning, photography, and embroidery, and gardening."

The Fair also includes a Beef Cook-Off, and other opportunities to learn about cooking, as well as enjoying great food! "We're expanding the number of clubs in Central Mass and across the state, and are looking for volunteers who may be interested in starting a club or joining an existing club!" Robin says.

Robin's role with 4-H in the area is to coordinate, train, and support volunteers and clubs. She supplies clubs with 4-H materials, and assists with events.

Anyone interested in learning more about local 4-H or volunteer opportunities can connect with Shelby Robin via the Massachusetts 4-H website, or the Massachusetts 4-H Facebook page. While many of us still think of 4-H as an organization just focused on animal care and science, 4-H is so much more today!



Top Photo: Worcester County 4-H Fair dairy goats.

Bottom Photo: Worcester County 4-H Fair veggie display.

Photos Contributed





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Questions To Ask Your Financial Advisor

You should always be able to ask as many questions as you'd like when working with your financial advisor. So, before you have your annual review, think carefully about what you'd like to ask.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Are my goals still realistic? When you first began working with your financial advisor, you may well have articulated several financial goals. For example, you might have said that you wanted to pay for most of your children's college education, or that you'd like to retire at age 55, or that you hope to travel internationally every year during retirement. In fact, you could have many different goals for which you're saving and investing. When you meet with your financial advisor, you'll certainly want to ask whether you're still on track toward meeting these goals. If you are, you can continue with the financial strategies you've been following; but if you aren't, you may need to adjust them. The same is true if your goals have changed. You and your financial advisor will want to build a strategy to address any new or different goals such as emergency cash needs, having adequate insurance protection or estate planning.
- Am I taking on too much — or too little — risk? Put market declines in perspective. The financial markets always fluctuate, and these movements will affect the value of your investment portfolio. Suppose you watch the markets closely every day and track their impact on your investments. You may find yourself fretting over their value and wondering whether you're taking on too much investment risk for your comfort level. Conversely, if during an extended period of market gains your own portfolio appears to be lagging, you might feel that you should be investing more aggressively, which entails greater risk. In any case, it's important to consult with your

financial advisor to determine your risk tolerance and use it as a guideline for making investment choices.

- How will changes in my life affect my investment strategy? Your life is not static. Over the years, you may experience any number of major events, such as marriage, remarriage, loss of a spouse, birth of children or grandchildren, changing jobs or illness leading to early retirement. When you meet with your financial advisor, you will want to discuss these types of changes, because they can affect your long-term goals and your investment decisions.

- How are external forces affecting my investment portfolio? Generally speaking, you will want to create an investment strategy based on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. And, as mentioned, you may need to adjust your strategy based on changes in your life. But should you also make changes based on outside forces, such as interest rate movements, political events, inflation, new tax legislation or news affecting industries in which you have invested substantially? Try not to make long-term investment decisions based on short-term news. Yet, talk with your financial advisor to make sure your investment portfolio and spending strategy are not out of alignment with relevant external factors.

By making these and other inquiries, you can help yourself stay informed about your overall investment picture and what moves, if any, you should make to keep advancing toward your goals. A financial advisor is there to provide you with valuable guidance — so take full advantage of it.

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STEP 2

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STEP 3

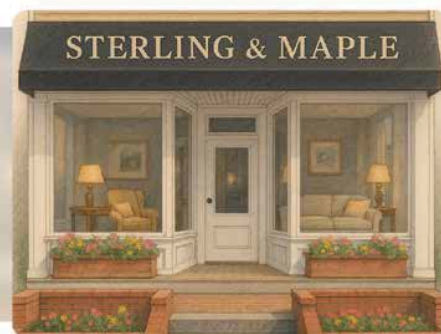
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Ticks: They're Back!

By Carol Houde, Guest Contributor

"Rabbit ticks" which are common in Maine are reported recently by UMass Amherst researchers to be carrying a new strain of bacteria that causes life-threatening spotted fever in humans. The bacteria is a "rickettsia" species causing "Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever" (*Rickettsia* sp. ME2023).

During my tenure as supervisor of a hospital laboratory not far from Boston, we began to see microscopic evidence of tick-borne infections from samples collected in the Emergency Department (ED) in the early 1990s. Steadily, cases began to rise over the next 3 decades, and beyond.

With ticks it's "always something" (a favorite phrase of the late beloved Gilda Radner). There are approximately 90 different tick species in the US, divided into two families, but only the

Heartland virus disease, and transmits the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*, the cause of Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The antibiotic of choice is Gentamicin, over the historically used Streptomycin because of ototoxicity.

After hatching the newborn tick is called a "larva"...it soon matures into a "nymph". Often it's the nymph seen "questing" from an advantage point to grab onto unsuspecting passers-by. The nymph will also feed on migrating birds, which increases spread of disease elsewhere. Adults ticks feed, and also reproduce.

Black-legged ticks here carry three types of organisms:

- Spirochetes/rickettsia which are bacteria
- At least 4 named virus species to date
- A protozoan organism called Babesia.



hard ticks (Ixodidae) carry most of the diseases affecting mammals and birds.

Here in Mass, the "deer tick," *Ixodes scapularis* is considered the vector for seven tick-borne pathogens. The other family are the soft ticks called, Argasidae.

Reportedly, the lone star tick, historically said to have been found in Russia made its way to Canada, and from there into the US initially to the middle of the country. Over a few decades, it has made its way to all New England states, and to Cape Cod and the islands. A bite from the lone star causes a strange syndrome called Alpha-gal leaving the victim intolerant of red meat.

This tick also transmits ehrlichiosis, Southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI), Bourbon virus disease,

In the lab we jokingly called this tick-borne protozoa, "New England malaria" (which it isn't), because the victim's red cells depict the small rings of Babesia inside them.

Ring forms are also common in malaria. Babesia is also treated with the same drugs commonly used against malaria. The rings are readily detected by examination of the patient's blood smear by a laboratory scientist, upon request.

Not all rickettsias are spirochetes (cork-screw shaped). The corkscrew shaped ones are in the *Borrelia* family. The same organism that causes Lyme disease, *B. burgdorferi*. Another *Borrelia* called *B. mayonii* also causes Lyme disease and is found in the upper Midwest.

The rickettsial (bacterial) diseases



such as Lyme, Anaplasmosis, and ehrlichiosis respond to antibiotic treatment; erythromycin, azithromycin and also with doxycycline, the antibiotic of choice.

Another *Borrelia* species, called *miyamotoi* has an interesting old story shared among laboratory professionals. An 80 yr. old woman generally considered, mentally "sharp as a tack" by her daughter, suddenly began to exhibit dementia symptoms.

Worried she may be having a stroke, she brought her to the ED.

The Lab scientist, while examining a slide of this patient's spinal fluid noticed a cork-screw shaped organism "swimming" through the fluid. At that time, there was no special test called "PCR", and also the organism couldn't be cultured; grown in the lab. She was given doxycycline and sent home. She returned to her "old self" several days later.

Anaplasmosis is a serious bacterial infection and should be treated, once detected inside the white cells on a blood-smear by laboratory staff. It's not safe to wait for antibody tests or a confirmatory "PCR".

Some other diseases, carried by ticks can be life-threatening, especially the viruses, because there is no treatment. Not all of the named viruses are found in New England, yet.

At the laboratory we began to occasionally see what we called, the "Three Musketeers", especially in seniors. These patients were infected with three tick-borne organisms at the same time. They had Anaplasmosis, Babesia, and Lyme disease. Although, more commonly, we saw two diseases in seniors, and also in other age groups.

The viruses are a challenge because they are untreatable and some are deadly. The ones currently named are: Bourbon Virus, Powassan Virus,

Heartland Virus and Colorado tick fever. Physicians can only offer clinical support to make the patient comfortable.

In these days of frequent travel with pets, there are worries for "spillover", whereas one tick that commonly carries a certain disease bites wildlife that is already ill, or carrying a different pathogen. Wildlife may then transmit the pathogen to domestic animals and humans.

There are blood tests to specifically identify the causative organisms, but they must be ordered at the right time. It takes at least 2 weeks for the body to produce antibodies. So if the test selected is antibody-based, it will be negative if ordered too soon. Special tests called "PCR" may be ordered earlier but they are expensive.

What to do if bitten by a tick: Call your physician immediately to have it removed.

When a tick is attached over an unknown time-frame, bloodwork is needed

Liver function tests will be high if infection has been transmitted


CBC: Platelet count will be lower than your usual result, or abnormally low.

White blood cells (WBC) will be lower than normal.

BUN (kidney test) will be elevated in Babesia infection. Red cells may be low.

The deer is a traveling singles bar for black-legged ticks. The "pregnant" tick falls into the leaf-litter where she lays 2,000-4000 eggs. When the eggs hatch these newborn larva are looking to feed. The most common mammal to provide a feeding is the white-footed mouse. The larva remain on the mouse's head primarily, until they mature into a nymph.

Now they are looking for a mammal for a feast. It could be you!



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Richards Memorial Library Programs

June & July 2025 Events

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For more information about their events please call 508-754-0793 • Website: <https://rmlpaxton.org/>

All month

June Adult Book Display: Read the Rainbow- Drop-in Crafts for Youth: Summer Reading-themed "Stick Together" poster. Add sticker squares to our community poster to reveal the Summer Reading mascot.

Events

Color Me Happy! - Thursday 6/12 6:30-7:30pm - Join us for a relaxing evening of painting! These pre-drawn canvases are stress-free. We supply the canvases, acrylic paints, brushes and water containers. You pick your color palette! Some color ideas will be available, or go your own way. Audience: Adults and teens 12 and older. Registration is required to ensure we have enough supplies and space. Registration is required: <https://tinyurl.com/RMLHappy>

Balloon Animals @ Paxton Days - sponsored by Friends of RML - Saturday 6/14 11am-1pm - Visit the Youth Services Librarian Kristin and the Friends of Richards Memorial Library's table at Paxton Days 10am-2pm. Dave the Balloon Guy will be there from 11am-1pm.

Annual Town Meeting - Monday 6/16 7pm - Location: Zecco Auditorium, Anna Maria College, 50 Sunset Lane, Paxton, MA 01612. Here's an online Guide to Town Meetings from the Massachusetts Secretary of State https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/cis/download/Guide_to_Town_Meetings.pdf

Thursday 6/19 - Library is closed. The library is closed on holidays observed by the Town of Paxton.

Summer Reading Ice Cream Treat - Friday 6/20 2:30-4pm - Celebrate the first week of Summer Reading with the Fidelity Frosty Flyer truck! Drop by anytime 2:30-4pm, register for Summer Reading or report your hours, and get a sweet treat.

Friends of RML - Tuesday 6/24 7-8pm - Friends of Richards Memorial Library Board meeting.

Music and Movement Storytime w/Julie Stepanek Murray - Wednesday 6/25 and 7/2 10:30-11:15am - March, stomp, sing, and stretch in these interactive, musical storytimes for young children and their caregivers.

Intergenerational Hooping w/WildKat Hoops - Thursday 6/26 6-7pm - Dust off those dancing shoes for an unforgettable workshop of hula hoop magic! No prior hooping experience needed. All welcome!

Summer Reading Programs Begin Tuesday 6/17

Youth (Children, Tweens, & Teens): 6/17 - 8/1

Level Up At Your Library is based around puzzles and games. - Whether you're hula hooping, learning to code, or reading and earning prizes with a gamified reading log, Summer Reading 2025 is a reminder that libraries are a place for knowledge AND fun!

Visit the library during open hours for new drop in activities each week, including Indoor Giant Tic-Tac-Toe and Sudoku, a Scavenger Hunt, and a Sidewalk Obstacle Course during the month of June. Receive a detailed schedule of events when you register for Summer Reading on or after June 17.

Adults: 6/17 - 8/1

Adult Summer Reading Program - Each day you check out books, you will receive an entry ticket. No registration required! After the winner is drawn, we will start over, so come in often. You may win only one time this summer. Please keep your CWMars account up to date. Sponsored by the Friends of Richards Memorial Library (FRML).

Gift card the week of June 23: Sterling Greenery Too

Future dates and gift cards will be announced after July 1.

Edible Garden Club for Ages 7-12 - ongoing - The Edible Garden Club will meet as needed in June to care for plant seedlings, prepare the garden bed, transplant seedlings, and tend the library's first edible garden. Register to receive email alerts about meetings and tasks: bit.ly/RMLEdibleGardenClub

Looking Ahead

Closed: Friday 7/4 & Saturday 7/5

Tuesday 7/29 6:30pm - Henna for Teens - <https://tinyurl.com/RMLHenna>



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