

# 1765 Paxton Community News

PaxtonCommunityNews.com

May 2025

## How C. L. A. S. P. Goes All Out to Help Those in Need

By Gordon Keegan

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." So said Margaret Mead, many years ago. It held truth then, and it holds truth today. Perhaps even more so in 2025, when the pressures of the modern world often leave us little time to reflect on our own problems, let alone those of others. But there is one small group of folks who are committed to doing just that – it's the Community Love and Support Project, located in Princeton, MA.

Operated entirely by volunteers, this grassroots organization (also known as CLASP) has become a beacon of hope throughout Worcester County, providing essential support to families in need, and individuals experiencing homelessness. From their modest headquarters on Beaman Road, in Princeton, they coordinate a remarkable network of community aid, proving that Margaret Mead's words still ring true in our modern age.

This grassroots organization has become a vital lifeline throughout Worcester County. They've taken on the crucial mission of supporting families in need and individuals experiencing homelessness. What makes their work particularly remarkable is how they respond to both everyday challenges and unexpected crises. When hurricanes devastated the Carolinas, for instance, CLASP stepped up to coordinate relief efforts, collecting and delivering essential supplies to those affected. It's this kind of nimble, compassionate response that exemplifies Margaret Mead's wisdom about the power of committed citizens. The organization's impact continues to grow, even as



Photo taken from C.L.A.S.P.'s Facebook page.

they face increasing demands for their services. In recent months, they've been working tirelessly, managing an overwhelming flow of requests while coordinating collections and distributing donations to those who need them most. Under the leadership of dedicated individuals like Amy Leigh Wesson, CLASP demonstrates how local action can create ripples of positive change throughout an entire region.

One recent example demonstrates how involved CLASP is. It has partnered with Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School to enhance The Nook food pantry. The Nook offers fresh, frozen, and non-

perishable foods to students facing food insecurity. Students are welcome to choose items to take home. CLASP also hopes to provide laundry detergents and toiletries to The Nook. The collection will run until 4/30. Like to help? CLASP asks that perishable items be dropped off at 209 Beaman Road,

Princeton, and that you contact them at 978-235-4466 to schedule a convenient drop-off time.

All other items can be dropped off at one of their eight designated locations including Princeton Public Library - Main Entrance-Sterling Community Center - Front Office Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School

- Main Office Westminster Town Hall  
- Lobby Hubbardston Public Safety Complex  
Gardner City Hall - First Floor  
Rutland Community Center Holden.

CLASP notes that all locations are open Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. For weekend donations, please use the secure drop boxes available at the Princeton and Sterling locations. When dropping off items, please ensure all non-perishable foods are unopened and within their expiration dates. For toiletries and laundry supplies, they request new, unopened items only.

For additional information you can check their Facebook/Meta page.



Open 8-6  
Every Day!  
242 Pleasant St.  
Paxton





LETTERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us for the annual Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony  
Monday, May 26, 2025, at 10:00 on Town Common (rain location will be at the Paxton Center School)  
Starting at 8:00 AM join the Paxton Boy Scouts Pack 105 for breakfast at the 1st Congregational Church. Beginning at 10 AM, the parade will start at the Public Safety Building to the Town Common, with the ceremony to follow.  
After the ceremony, please join the Paxton American Legion Post 306 in paying respect (gun salute) at each of the three cemeteries in town:  
1. Old Cemetery behind Congregational Church  
2. Mooreland Cemetery at WWII Memorial  
3. Worcester County Memorial Park (WCMP)  
Paxton American Legion Post 306 invites everyone to the Legion Hall for a luncheon following the last gun salute at WCMP.

Correction

Last month we ran an article on the Good Citizenship Project. We apologize for a missprint. The owner is Leigh Anne Bianchi and the email to reach Leigh Anne is thegoodcitizenshipproject@gmail.com. Please check her Facebook pages The Good Citizenship Project and Phoenix Rising Farm for more information.

4th Annual Summer Running Clinic:  
Princeton 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



**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!

Paxton Woman’s Club Scholarship Dinner

The 2025 annual meeting of the Paxton Woman’s Club was held at Peppercorn’s restaurant in Worcester on May 1st. It featured the awarding of a scholarship to a Paxton Wachusett Regional High School graduating senior. John McDonald is the son of John and Meghan McDonald. He will be attending the University of Utah and is planning a career in finance.




PHOTO from Helen Urbanovitch  
Pat Belsito (scholarship committee co-chair), John McDonald, Meghan McDonald, and Kerrie Flynn (scholarship committee co-chair)

CALL TO ARTISTS:  
Paxton Summer Jam 2025

The 39th Annual Paxton Summer Jam, Paxton’s annual showcase for local amateur talent, is scheduled to take place Saturday June 14, from noon to 8 pm at the bandstand at the Paxton Center Sports Fields in conjunction with Paxton Days. This unique event, sponsored by Paxton Recreation, features Wachusett -area musicians performing outdoors in a classic small New England -town setting. Interested artists please call 508-340-5012 to find out how you can be part of it!

The Secret Life of Bees at the Paxton Senior Center  
(John Bauer Senior Center, 17 West Street, Paxton, MA 01612

**THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES**  
COA board member Martha Akstin, an expert in beekeeping, presents a revealing program on the life of bees on  
**Thursday, May 15 at 10:30 am.**  
Learn about beekeeping gear and how it’s used ... the types of bees ... action inside the hives ... and all about pollination and honey production. Their life cycle is intriguing, as you’ll see. Martha has been involved in beekeeping for more than 30 years and prepares honey for sale.



**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](mailto:SterlingMeetinghouseNews@gmail.com) or mail to: Sterling Meetinghouse News, 35 Redemption Rock Trail, Sterling, MA 01564.

1765 Paxton Community News

Paxton Community News is published by Sterling Media Inc.  
35 Redemption Rock Trail, Sterling, MA 01564  
[PaxtonCommunityNews.com](http://PaxtonCommunityNews.com)  
978-407-2568  
[SterlingMeetinghouseNews@gmail.com](mailto:SterlingMeetinghouseNews@gmail.com)  
For advertising information send email to: [SterlingMeetinghouseNews@gmail.com](mailto:SterlingMeetinghouseNews@gmail.com)

The next issue will publish in June 2025.  
Copy deadline is the first of each month.  
Items received after deadline will be included if space is available.

Publishers • Mark and Karen Packard  
Editor, Designer • Emmanuel Ortiz  
Contributors •  
Gordon Keegan, Matt LaBarre, Samantha Vanderwalker

Sterling Meetinghouse News is mailed free of charge to all postal patrons of Sterling.  
We are not liable for typographical errors in advertisements.

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



# Local Boy Aids Victims of Hurricane Helene



Chocksett Middle School student Maddox with his father.

Photo Courtesy

By Gordon Keegan

When Hurricane Helene roared through North Carolina in September, 2024, it brought virtually complete devastation to

the western part of the state. Hundreds of thousands were without power for weeks, Helene's high winds and flooding killed more than 230 people, making it the

deadliest hurricane to strike the U.S. since Hurricane Maria ravaged Puerto Rico in 2017. Some estimates put the economic impact of the storm, including property and infrastructure damage, as high as \$200 billion, making Helene the costliest storm in U.S. history. The devastation was complete, and even today, thousands of people are still homeless, and thousands of businesses have not reopened.

New Englanders, who have experienced a few hurricanes in their lifetimes, pitched in to help. A number of local charities and businesses stepped up to provide aid in the form of money, food and needed supplies. One such organization was Soul to Soles' Disaster Relief Fund. Its mission has been to provide boots on the ground for compassionate care, committed to working alongside those in need, ensuring they feel the warmth of a community that cares. Through donations and volunteer efforts, Soul to Soles' Disaster Relief Fund helps turn the devastation of disaster into hope, one family at a time. Betty Muir, a lifelong resident of Rutland is in charge of the operation, and one of her key volunteers is Mary Schoolcraft.

Mary threw herself into the effort, and her enthusiasm for the project apparently was contagious. Her young grandson, Maddox, overheard her talking about Soul to Soles' and it piqued his interest. Maddox is an eighth grader at a Chocksett Middle School in Sterling. He's a peer leader, played on the Chocksett Middle School soccer team, and is an honor roll student.

According to Mary, "Maddox heard me talk about Soul to Soles' a few times and decided on his own to go through things in his bedroom. He put together a box of toys, Lego sets, backpacks, Star Wars items, stuffed animals, plus some of his collection of baseball caps. He also rounded up clothes that no longer fit him. He gave them to me and asked me to please mail them to the families of the disaster. He also had a very heavy race car track that he wanted to donate."

When Mary mentioned it might be expensive to ship, Maddox replied, "Grandma, please take back anything you got me for Christmas and use that money to ship the item. I really want to help them. I don't need anything."

At that point Maddox's dad, Louis Schoolcraft stepped into the picture. He arranged to have the packages sent through his company, Ti-SALES in Sudbury, MA, at no cost to Maddox or Soul to Soles'. "Maddox was so excited about it, that I wanted to play my part, too," Louis said.

Maddox toys were gathered and sorted into theme baskets made for the children of North Carolina and according to Betty Muir, "When they arrived it was awesome; it matched so many items on our families' wish lists. We called him our hero. His kindness, on his own, is a powerful thing."

If you'd like more information on Soul to Soles' Disaster Relief you can visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61568576423242>.

## KAREN PACKARD REAL ESTATE

The local expert you deserve when selling your most valuable asset



**215 Legate Hill Rd  
Leominster • \$579,900**



**4 Nichols St. Unit 3  
Holden • \$349,900**

Book a listing appointment today at  
[www.karenpackard.com](http://www.karenpackard.com)  
978-407-2568  
[kpackardrealtor@gmail.com](mailto:kpackardrealtor@gmail.com)



# Non-Profit's Public Info Hijacked in Paw Haven Fraud



Founder Richard Clark with picture of Sweetpea's namesake dog  
Photo Contributed

**By Craig Reise, Guest Contributor**  
Sweetpea Friends of Rutland Animals, a no-kill animal rescue in Paxton, Massachusetts, has been part of the Central Massachusetts community since 2001. Dedicated to rescuing and rehoming stray, abandoned, and surrendered animals, Sweetpea has overcome challenges, including a 2015 fire that destroyed their shelter. Supported by volunteers, board members, and donors, they continue rebuilding. Recently, a sophisticated online scam under the name "Paw Haven" exploited Sweetpea's public information, deceiving animal lovers nationwide.

The incident involved internet scammers misappropriating Sweetpea's Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Paxton address, and pairing them with photos stolen from other legitimate animal rescues and businesses. Fraudulent advertisements on Facebook and Instagram solicited donations for fictitious animals, preying on people's compassion. This identity theft crime tricked donors into sending money. The scam was uncovered when a vigilant supporter recognized Sweetpea's address in the ads and alerted the organization. No Sweetpea or supporters' data was accessed; "Paw Haven" used public information from Sweetpea and other organizations to create the impression of a different animal rescue.

Sweetpea promptly reported the fraud to the Paxton Police Department, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Nonprofit Organizations/Public

Charities Division, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, Facebook/Meta, PayPal, Paw Haven's web hosting service, and its payment processor. "It's heartbreaking to see scammers taking advantage of people's desire to help animals they believe are in need," said Sweetpea President Deb Young. "Fraud like this takes donations and support away from legitimate non-profits and weakens the trust people place in them."

The Paxton community helped amplify warnings. "I'd like to thank the Town of Paxton and the Paxton Police Department for alerting their social media followers and the community to the fraudulent sites," Young added. Sweetpea also posted an alert on their Facebook page, with over 15,000 followers, urging supporters to donate only through their official website, [sweetpeafora.org](https://www.sweetpeafora.org).

The Paw Haven scam underscores the rising threat of animal rescue fraud on social media. To avoid scams, verify an organization's 501(c)(3) status and EIN on the IRS website at <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/>. The Massachusetts Attorney General's Office also maintains a public charities database at <https://masscharities.my.site.com/FilingSearch/s/>. Be cautious of posts with graphic images, vague details, or requests for payments like gift cards. Always donate through verified websites.

Despite this disruption, Sweetpea remains committed to returning to fundraising to rebuild and reopen the animal shelter. You can learn more about Sweetpea Friends of Rutland Animals at <https://www.sweetpeafora.org>.



**STERLING GREENERY**  
.COM  
Garden center - Pond store - Stone yard



44 Redemption Rock Trail, Sterling  
978-422-0071



242 Pleasant St. Paxton  
508-304-7887

## Sterlinggreenery.com

# Your Garden Delivered



## Local quality, online convenience!





# Top Questions To Ask When Hiring A Real Estate Agent

By Karen Packard

Of course, I believe I am the best real estate agent in the area and working with me will get you the most money possible for your house sale. But, for those of you that likes to interview more than one person I want to make sure you are educated on what to ask. And since I only take on a certain number of clients each year, I may be unable to work with you in the timeframe you are looking for. So, I wanted to write this article on what you should look for when hiring an agent.

I cannot stress enough how important it is to hire a qualified agent when buying or selling a home. This is your most important financial transaction of your life (or at least right now). A qualified agent will make ALL the difference in getting the best price and the smoothest transaction possible. According to HomeLight's data, the top 5% of real estate agents across the U.S. sell homes for as much as 10% more than the average real estate agent. And Real Estate falls into the 80/20 rule like many industries. 80% of homes are sold by 20% of the agents. Many agents sell very few if any houses each year. This is an industry where experience matters. Every house is different and the only way your agent can help you effectively is with the experience needed to know everything there is to know about houses. There are over 1.5 million Realtors in the U.S. with Massachusetts latest list sent to me by the Division of Occupational Licenses as just under 70,000 Brokers and Salespersons licensed in our state. This can make it impossible and overwhelming to choose the right agent. picking the right agent can feel, well, overwhelming. Many people just choose a friend or someone they were referred to without knowing what to look for.

Here are some helpful tips on what to look for when choosing the right agent for you.

1. What are your credentials? Is your agent full time or part time? How long have they been selling real estate? Make sure you are hiring a full-time agent who is available for phone calls and showings 7 days a week. You do not want to limit the availability of the buyer or buyer's agent getting into the house or getting questions answered in a timely manner. You want to make sure they will have the schedule and time needed to focus on finding you the best buyer for your home. Look them up online. Check out their website, their Facebook and other social media pages. See how professional they appear online and if they market themselves well. If an agent cannot market themselves, how will they market your house? Check their Zillow and Realtor.com reviews to see what clients say about working with them.
2. How many sales did you close last year? According to the National Association of Realtors the median number of houses sold for agents last year was 10 homes. Many agents do this job as a second income or part time. Choosing a full-time agent that sells over 20 houses a year is important. Every transaction is different and a more experienced agent will have tackled more problems and know how to avoid them. Do you know anyone who has worked with them in the past? Were they happy with the agent's performance? Was that agent easy to reach when you call?
3. Are you an expert in this area? A local expert is important. Knowing the secret spots in town, knowing the access to internet, local amenities, where to shop, benefits of living in your community are all important things. I can't tell you how many times I have sold a house because I was also able to show the benefits of living in our community. A local agent is key to knowing not only how to market the house but also sell the benefits of the town and community. They also usually have local resources you might need if a problem arises at the home inspection.
4. The listing price. Ask the agent you are meeting with how they came up with their suggest listing price and why they think that is the perfect number. Don't just go with the agent who proposes the highest number. They might be trying to give you a higher number to get the listing and then ask for a price reduction later. This could actually hurt you more that you think. Pricing the house correctly from the start will get you the most money. It is ok to challenge the agent you are interviewing. Make them prove to you why their list price is the best one for your home, neighborhood, upgrades and the timing you are choosing to list.
5. Who will you be working with? Does the agent have a team? Do they pass you off to a transaction coordinator to handle the paperwork?

Sold Single Family Homes Sold in Paxton in April 2025	
451 West St.	Sale Price \$620,000
929 Pleasant St.	Sale Price \$765,000

Are you going to be working directly with the agent you are meeting with or will they disappear after you sign the contact and you will be working with someone you haven't met before? Will you be the agent representing my house at the open house? Many companies use new agents to work at open houses. Check to see if your agent will be there to answer questions! This is where full time agents are important again, you want your agent... the one who knows the most about your property representing the house and answering the calls. If they are part time, is there going to be anyone answering the phone or will buyers need to wait until you finish your day job to call them back. They might lose interest if they wait too long.

6. What does it cost to sell my home? There are expenses to selling your home. Your agent should be able to review these expenses with you prior to listing so you know how much money you will walk away with after you receive an offer.
7. What is your marketing and sale plan? Are they going to use a professional photographer or take photos with their phone? Do they do internet marketing? Will they do internet paid ads or just posting on their own social media? Do they do any newspaper ads or direct marketing? If so, where and how many? Make sure the agent has a marketing plan and isn't just listing it in the MLS and waiting for phone calls. Also, make sure they are targeting the right demographic for your home. Targeting the right people with the marketing is extremely important. It is a waste of time and money to advertise to the wrong demographic of potential buyers.
8. What should I do to get my house ready? Agents know what buyers are looking for. I work with buyers every day and hear what they want to see. Your agent should be able to give you tips to making your house appeal to the buyers that are looking in the area. There might be little things you could do prior to listing that will help sell your property.
9. How do you communicate? Are they going to call, text or email you? What times of day are they available (especially important if they have another job)?
10. How long will it take to sell my property? Find an agent who has a clear strategy for listing in a specific time period, a marketing plan, showing schedule and a clear plan for how long they expect before your house is under agreement and then sold. You need to review the plan with your agent and make sure the timing works for you.

I have found many homeowners don't know what to ask so they just go along with whatever the Real Estate Agent says. Knowing what to ask could help you make the best decision on which agent is best for you. Interviewing more than one agent can be extremely helpful. Every agent has different strengths, find the one you think will do the best job and sell your house for the most money possible. Watch out for agents that can't answer the questions confidently. A good again will know the answers to your questions without hesitation. They will be transparent and realistic, offering professional advice on the best way to achieve your goals. If it doesn't feel right, it probably will not get better. Trust your gut! Don't choose the agent you want to be friend with, choose the agent that you think can get the job done. Too many people tell me they chose her/him because they were "nice" and then were disappointed they could not deliver on what they promised.

I could obviously go on and on with more tips but I am running out of room in this issue. Feel free to email me with any questions at [kpackardrealtor@gmail.com](mailto:kpackardrealtor@gmail.com). Even if you do not hire me, I am always trying to make sure people have the best real estate experience possible.

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

## May Seminar

This month's seminar is **Getting Ready To Sell**. It will be held at my office, 35 Redemption Rock Trail in Sterling on May 27th from 6-7pm. Please call/text me at 978-407-2568 to sign up or email [kpackardrealtor@gmail.com](mailto:kpackardrealtor@gmail.com). You can also sign up on my website [www.karenpackard.com/seminars-and-events](http://www.karenpackard.com/seminars-and-events)





# Garden Guru: Start Your Vegetable Gardens

By Mark Packard



It's crazy to think we had 6 inches of snow just a few weeks ago, but it looks like the weather is finally nice enough to start your vegetable gardens and annual planting! You can start moving your tropical plants back outdoors too! Just keep an eye on the night time temperatures to be safe. If the temperatures get below 40 degrees, cover your tender plants with a blanket or sheet. Plastic will not work for frost protection because it is too thin and will transfer the cold to any plant that touches it.

Spring planting has begun! Now is a great time to get new trees, shrubs and perennials in the ground. If you haven't mulched yet, do it soon before weeds start to grow. Mulch is a great weed suppresser and keeps the moisture around your plants. It also breaks down and replaces nutrients in your soil. Another great weed preventer is a granular called PREEN. It is a germination preventer which means it won't hurt existing plants, it will just prevent weed seed from germinating. Just sprinkle the preen in your flower beds before mulching to cut down on weeding up to 90%! Also, when adding new mulch to your flower beds make sure not to build the mulch up around the trees and shrubs because it will make the bark rot and could kill your plants. If needed, remove some of the mulch first before installing new mulch.

Water gardens are getting more and more popular and this year, we have a lot of new customers building ponds. If you are interested in learning about ponds, join us on our pond tour in June! You will be able to see the areas nicest ponds and gardens and learn all about how they work and how they are installed. Check our website for details. [www.sterlinggreenery.com](http://www.sterlinggreenery.com)

Gardening questions? Email [mark@sterlinggreenery.com](mailto:mark@sterlinggreenery.com)



**Trucking  
& Disposal LLC**

**\$25 OFF YOUR  
FIRST DUMPSTER  
RENTAL!!!**



**CALL TODAY @ 978-514-5330  
OR ORDER ONLINE AT  
[WWW.STFTRUCKINGDISPOSAL.COM](http://WWW.STFTRUCKINGDISPOSAL.COM)**





# FINANCIAL FOCUS®

## Be alert for caregiver financial abuse

Do you have a parent or other elderly relative who may soon need a caregiver? If so, be diligent when selecting the right person for the job — because choosing the wrong one could lead to big financial problems.

You might find a close family member or friend to serve as caregiver — someone who is honest and trustworthy, with good judgment and strong money management skills. However, in many cases, people hiring caregivers just don't know how they'll perform until the caregivers have begun work. A dishonest caregiver could steal valuables or cash from the person they have been paid to assist or incept their mail to obtain credit card numbers and other sensitive information to commit identity theft.

So, if you enlist a caregiver and begin having doubts about them, you'll need to watch out for these warning signs of possible financial abuse:

- Efforts to prevent the individual receiving care from speaking to family members
- Inquiries into the location of estate-planning documents, such as a will
- Interest in brokerage and retirement accounts, possibly with the intent to change transfer-on-death designations
- Withholding financial or medical information from the family
- Missing jewelry or property
- Requests to be a joint holder on bank or brokerage accounts, sometimes followed by large cash withdrawals paid to the caregiver
- Request for legal authority, such as a financial power of attorney naming only the caregiver

This last item — the request for financial power of attorney, or POA — is particularly concerning because of the scope of duties covered by this type of authority. That's why it's so important that all family members understand what a financial POA can and cannot do.

A general financial POA provides the agent with the authority to act on behalf of an individual's finances, while a limited financial POA gives the agent the authority only for certain actions, such as paying bills, making withdrawals and opening or closing bank accounts. A general financial POA and a limited financial POA both can be durable, which means they take effect once executed, or springing, which is contingent on a specific event, such as a physical illness, mental incapacity or even a hospitalization.

Unfortunately, some POA agents have abused their responsibility by stealing money, making unauthorized transactions and even attempting to change the beneficiary designations on retirement accounts or insurance policies owned by the people for whom they provide care. These beneficiary designations can even supersede the instructions left in a will or living trust — and they can't be changed by a financial POA.

If you suspect financial abuse by a caregiver, you can consider contacting your loved one's financial advisor or attorney, if you know who it is. While they can't share information with you, they can check for red flags and contact your loved one directly. You also can get help from your state government. The National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) provides a listing of offices in each state at [napsa-now.org/help-in-your-area](http://napsa-now.org/help-in-your-area).

Finding a caregiver for a parent or other elderly relative can be emotionally difficult — but it doesn't have to be financially draining. Get to know the caregiver if you can and watch for any red flags, so you can take comfort in knowing that your loved one's finances are in good hands.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.*

*Edward Jones, its employees and financial advisors cannot provide tax or legal advice. You should consult your attorney or qualified tax advisor regarding your situation.*

John J. Olivieri Jr.  
Steven Olivieri  
Owners  
MPL 10307



**TOP TIER**  
MECHANICAL

Plumbing • Heating • Air Conditioning  
Radiant Heat • Snow Melt  
Commercial and Residential

Office: 978-563-1696  
[jolivieri@top-tier-mechanical.com](mailto:jolivieri@top-tier-mechanical.com)  
[solivieri@top-tier-mechanical.com](mailto:solivieri@top-tier-mechanical.com)

[www.top-tier-mechanical.com](http://www.top-tier-mechanical.com)

**J.F. GRAY**

LANDSCAPE CONSTRUCTION & PAVING

*"From Pavers to Paving,  
We've got you covered"*

**John Gray Jr. 508-958-1312**

- Excavation
- Drainage
- Grading
- Loam Spreading
- New Lawns
- Walkways
- Patios
- Retaining Walls
- Asphalt Paving



# Caring for the Mind, Body and Soul: New Business in Sterling Aims to Create an Environment of Healing

By Samantha Vanderwalker

Jamie Joyce of Bolton recently reopened the doors to her business, Mending Wings Massage and Reiki, with the goal of creating a space where clients can find a healing environment for their physical and mental needs through massage, reiki and more.

“Holistic healing is so important,” Joyce said. “I want to accommodate anyone that’s looking for healing and provide service customization for whatever they need.”

Joyce, whose grandmother was diagnosed with cancer, stated her desire to help people feel better stemmed from seeing the pain and discomfort her grandma endured near the end of her life. Her dislike of blood though turned Joyce towards pursuing massage therapy school.

As a mom of two, Joyce stated that massage took a backseat once she had her son. About five months after the birth of her daughter, Joyce said she felt the desire to re-enter the field and get back to helping people heal.

“I saw how massage therapy helped with pain relief as well as stress relief in general,” Joyce stated. “With reiki, you work with the energy through the chakras and find blocks in the energetic system. When there’s a block, it can cause pain. Removing those blocks can help remove pain mentally and in the body as well.”

Reiki, which means “spiritually

guided life force energy,” stems from the Japanese tradition of stress reduction and relaxation through which a client undergoes a laying on of hands to heighten their life force energy, according to The International Center for Reiki Training.

“I was pretty skeptical about reiki when I first got started, and so was my husband,” Joyce recalled. “But as I got into my practice and did work on my husband, he made the comment ‘I’m not quite sure what you did but that feels a lot better.’ I think people should give it a try and if they’re willing to give it a shot, they’ll be able to really experience the benefits.”

As she looked for where to get started again, Joyce’s friend encouraged her to try working for herself. According to Joyce, being her own boss gives her the freedom to truly individualize the care for her clients each and every session, as opposed to having to adhere to set treatments you may experience at other spas.

Joyce, who says she’s “Massachusetts people,” is happy to be back in the Sterling community after a brief stint in Stow.

“Sterling is just an awesome community,” she said. “And I really have some of the best clients ever. Most of them have been with me since I first opened two years ago, and I love seeing people being able to fully participate in life again and



Mending Wings is a place to find healing.

Photo Contributed

be free from pain. It means so much.”

Mending Wings Massage and Reiki, located at 50 Leominster Rd. #12 in Sterling, Massachusetts, is open on Saturdays. Appointments can be booked

at <https://mendingwings.noterro.com>.

Joyce states that she is a trauma informed provider and her business is a safe place for those who have experienced trauma.

Cruise Planners Worcester County Presents



An Evening With

VIKING

Exploring the World in Comfort®

Come and learn what traveling with Viking is all about!

EVENT NIGHT OFFERS

\$25 Deposits\*

Free/Reduced Airfare\*

Onboard Credits

Tuesday, June 3rd

5:45 PM CHECK-IN

6:30 PM PRESENTATION/Q&A

THE MANOR

42 W Boylston St, West Boylston, MA 0158

This event is for new Viking guests. All promotions/specials will be extended to past Viking guests!





CRUISE PLANNERS

COMPLETE PERSONALIZED VACATIONS OF WORCESTER

Due to demand, attendance is limited. No Walk-Ins – RSVP Required.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY! \*On select departures



Tom Hansen & Ted Goulet

tgoulet@cruiseplanners.com

TNTGuysTravel.com • 774-261-8160

8

PaxtonCommunityNews.com • May 2025





# Tax Talks

## with Jennifer Lovett, IRS Enrolled Agent (EA)

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

Tax Season 2025 is complete! What I love about taxes is that there are so many ways to file. Some of you filed as DIYer's, on the IRS free file site, turbo tax, private CPA, Liberty Tax, H&R Block or maybe you ignored them altogether. One thing that happened this year is that some filers used AI and thought, "Wow, that software seems smarter than my cousin Larry!" Well, you may or may not be wrong. AI – Artificial Intelligence – was a buzzword this tax season and this preparer tried it first-hand to see if it lived up to the hype.

My verdict, good for some, not for most. While AI may rarely fat finger a number, even on very simple returns AI is not perfect. Yes, AI will not sigh dramatically every time you ask a question and never takes a day off, I advise using it wisely and as a double check, not your primary filing method. If your return is more like a novella, use AI as an assistant, pair it with a live, breathing professional, sighs and all. So, before you let a robot handle your Schedule C, let's take a look under the hood and ask the million-dollar (or at least several-thousand-dollar) question: How good, and safe, is tax AI, really? Are these "free" models upselling your information? You wouldn't provide your Social Security Number, income, children's names and other information to anyone, would you? If the product is free to use, you just may be the product.

AI uses machine learning, meaning that it is a software that learns as it goes. It is simply digesting your documents. It may suggest deductions like a turbo-charged accountant with zero coffee breaks, but AI cannot know your life, goals, side hustle, or messy life circumstances. It is a series of algorithms not actual creative, human knowledge. The cold hard fact is that AI cannot work in the gray, but lives in the black and white. In fact, it can create downright risk. It could create deductions that are not substantiated, misinterpret gig work, fail to recognize tax breaks. Some AI tools are aggressive enough to err on the side of claiming too much, potentially creating an audit risk without

even warning you. AI is like a vending machine, quick and easy, but can it ask questions like "Have you considered setting up an S Corp? Let's defer that income to next year". AI might simply file taxes, but can it actually help you plan them? (Spoiler, it cannot)

Final thoughts: AI can handle simple math problems, but it cannot be your real-life strategy liaison. AI is up and coming, it helps point you in the right direction, it just isn't there yet, maybe someday. There will always be a place for experts, AI will never be able to match a good tax expert's brain and forethought. Messy multi-state returns, businesses, multi-year filings, complicated investments, nuances for unusual deductions and even the obvious, as of today there is no replacement for a trusted partner when it comes to your financial health and future. An AI bot will never pick up the phone and call you back when needed, work through issues and questions, especially for forward planning, IRS letters, or represent you in an audit. Your real-life accountant can help you through and go to bat for you, a bot only knows you as "User AB123".



# Mass Landscape Supplies & Equipment Rentals Inc.

110 Pratts Junction Road, Sterling, MA



Equipment Rentals



- Lawn Fertilizer
- Grass Seed
- Landscaping Tools
- Bark Mulch, Loam & Stone
- Lawn Care Supplies
- Landscaping Supplies
- Lawn Care Equipment Rentals
- Landscaping Equipment Rentals
- Construction Equipment Rentals
- Lawn & Garden Equipment Rentals

110 Pratts Junction Road | Sterling, MA 01564

978-563-1532 | [www.MassLandscapeSupplies.com](http://www.MassLandscapeSupplies.com)



# Richards Memorial Library Programs

## May 2025 Events

The Paxton Library is located at 44 Eichards Avenue, Paxton, MA 01612  
For more information about their events please call 508-754-0793 • Website: <https://rmlpaxton.org/>

May Adult Book Display: Berry Good Books - Celebrating Strawberry Month

Events

Spring Scavenger Hunt - Tuesday, May 6 through Saturday, May 31

Spring bunnies are hiding all around the J/Y room. Find all 8 bunnies dressed as book characters and earn a small prize!

Scrunch-Paint a Silk Scarf with Kulina Art: Thursday May 22, 2025 6:30-7:30pm

Beginners workshop on creating stunning “tie-dye style” silk scarves.  
Garine of Kulina Arts will guide you through the magical world of colors and how to expertly blend them using our permanent, high chroma, highly transparent liquid fabric paint.  
Garine provides step-by-step instructions for a creative process that will leave you with a wearable masterpiece.  
Back to Basics: Vintage Crafting is a series of three events featuring back to basics artisan crafts, and is a nod to the joys of handcrafting wearable art. <https://Tinyurl.com/RMLSilk>  
Sponsored by Barre Savings Charitable Foundation

Edible Garden Club for Ages 7-12

The Edible Garden Club will meet as needed in May 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](https://bit.ly/RMLEdibleGardenClub)  
Thank you to the Paxton Garden Club for funding the library’s Edible Garden!

Graphic Novel Book Club

Ages 8-12  
Each month, receive a featured graphic novel, along with a small treat.  
Read and enjoy.  
Optional: Join other graphic novel fans monthly for discussion and fun activities related to the book. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 4. We will be discussing *Speak Up!* by Rebecca Burgess.  
Register now [RMLPaxton.org/tweens](https://RMLPaxton.org/tweens)



LISTINGS CONTINUED PAGE 11

RMLPaxton

# LEVEL UP AT YOUR LIBRARY

## Summer Reading 2025

for children, tweens & teens

**The Games Begin June 17!**



Earn reading prizes!



Attend fun programs!



44 Richards Ave. Paxton, MA (508) 754-0793 [www.rmlpaxton.org](http://www.rmlpaxton.org)

Saturday 5/24 - Library is closed. The library is closed Saturday when Monday is a holiday.

## Electrical Work

William Jackson 978-400-6580  
Electrician Rutland MA




Fully licensed and insured electrician serving residential and commercial customers in the Central MA area.  
LIC#59759-B

Residential - Commercial  
New Construction – Old Work  
Additions – Remodels  
Knob and Tube Rewires

 **Veteran Owned**

 Like us on: [@wj.electrician](https://www.facebook.com/wj.electrician) [wj.electrician@gmail.com](mailto:wj.electrician@gmail.com)






# MILES

## FUNERAL HOMES

Pre-Planning ~ Burial ~ Cremation Services  
*Honoring Lives & Celebrating Memories*

We are committed to providing the highest standards of funeral service with a comfortable and supportive environment to each family we serve.

1158 Main St., Holden, 508-829-4434 • 100 Worcester Rd., Sterling, 978-422-0100  
Richard Mansfield & Ricky Mansfield, Funeral Directors  
[www.milesfuneralhome.com](http://www.milesfuneralhome.com)



Residential / Commercial 508-826-2785

# Sterling

## power wash

Power - Pressure - Soft washing

**10% off with this Ad!**



After Before

Houses • Mobile Homes  
Roof Stains • Decks • Patios  
Pool Areas • Gutter Cleaning •  
Rust Removal • Store Fronts •  
Hot Water Sanitizing Garage  
Floors and More



LIBRARY NEWS

LIBRARY EVENTS from page 10

Friends of Richards Memorial Library Board meeting - Tuesday 5/27, 7-8pm

Weekly Events

LEGO Challenge on Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30pm

(No LEGO Tuesday, May 20 and May 27)

Take the weekly challenge or build from your imagination. Completed challenges will be displayed at the library. All materials provided. Ages 5+ due to small parts.

Outdoor Story and Playtime, Wednesdays, 10:30-11:15am

May 21 - Special 10am start with Community Connections (Wachusettcfce.com)

No Storytime Wednesday, May 28

Join us for outdoor play and learning in the beautiful library yard or fun indoors in inclement weather. We sing songs, go on scavenger hunts, read stories, create, and play.

Looking Ahead

Saturday, June 14 - Balloon Animals @ Paxton Days - sponsored by Friend of RML

Tuesday, June 17 - Summer Reading Program Begins!

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!

Stay tuned for more details as the start date approaches.

“Go Local or Go Home” - Summer Reading Program for Adults



**Holmquist & Sons**  
General Contractors LLC  
Licensed and Insured

**Randy Holmquist**  
978-833-2884 | rholm1964@gmail.com  
www.HolmquistConstruction.com  
Sterling, MA 01564



# GRAND OPENING

& Networking Event!

New England’s Interior Designer-Curated Shoppable Workroom  
Your One-Stop, Retail-Style Interior Design Solution for Any Project

**You’re invited!**  
Bring a friend and join us for a celebratory afternoon at our new Showroom + Workroom! This is your chance to connect, shop, and be inspired by all things interior design.

- New, Interactive Workroom
- Meet Our Trade Pros
- FREE Raffles + Giveaways
- Wine, Beer, & Mocktails
- Special Promotions
- Live Music & more!

**May 22nd**  
3PM - 7PM  
153 CLINTON RD STERLING, MA

(RAIN DATE: 5/23)

Scan to RSVP!





WWW.STERLINGANDMAPLE.COM

# PLANT NERDS



**Mobile Design Service**

QUALITY PLANT MATERIAL SOURCED FROM:



**\*3 YEAR GUARANTEE ON ALL TREES & SHRUBS**



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

**STEP 1**  
Book your \$99 appointment by going to [www.plantnerds.design](http://www.plantnerds.design).  
  
Then, send pictures of your yard, your contact information, and any preferences you may have to [plantnerdsdesign@gmail.com](mailto:plantnerdsdesign@gmail.com).  
  
A member of our design team will reach out to you prior to the appointment to better understand your needs and to make sure the right plants are selected to thrive in their new home!

**STEP 2**  
Our designers will pick a selection of flowers, shrubs, and trees from our garden center that will compliment your yard and suit your individual needs.  
  
Once they arrive at your house, all of the plants will be laid out in the exact spots that they will be planted.

**STEP 3**  
Once the design is complete and you're happy with the selections, the plants stay right where they are. You can request that our install crew return and plant them for you at an additional cost, or you can choose to install the plants yourself. And that's it!





# Handy Heroes

- No job too small!
- Owner on every job
- Local Small Business

**978-333-2234**

**Handyman Services**

PaxtonCommunityNews.com • May 2025

11



# Great News About Wachusett Girls Flag Football!



*by Nicole Daly, Guest Contributed*  
The Wachusett Regional High School girls flag football team hosted their first ever home game on Wednesday, April 30th at Hal Lane Field. Growing from one team of 9 girls in 2024 to 30 girls and two teams this year, the Mountaineers welcomed Springfield International Charter School and South Lancaster Academy in their historic debut on home turf. Lead by co-captains Jordan D'Amelio and Jillian Sanders of Sterling and Brenna Patenaude of Rutland, Wachusett improved its season record to 5-1, defeating the Springfield Panthers 40-6 and the South Lancaster Crusaders 32-6. The Mountaineers will host their final home games of the season on May 13th, starting at 6:45pm. Invite members of the Wachusett community to come cheer them on!

**Ask About our 0% financing!**

**\$500.00**  
Spring Discount for a Full Roof Replacement  
Offer Expires May 31, 2025

**Tip Top Roofing**  
245 W Boylston Street  
West Boylston, MA 01583

**Free Roof Estimates**

Contact Tip Top Roofing today for a quote on our affordable roofing rates, delivered by industry professionals with a wealth of experience among all our foremen and contractors.

**CALL US AT (508) 835-4777 • WWW.TIPTOPROOFS.COM**

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.”  
— C. S. Lewis