



Town of Westford Massachusetts

Town Manager's Newsletter

December 2015



Jodi Ross,
Town
Manager

jross@westfordma.gov
www.westfordma.gov/tm
978-692-5500

Subscribe to Town News



Receive Important Town
Notices and Information
[www.westfordma.gov/
subscriber](http://www.westfordma.gov/subscriber)

Wings - Silent Film with
Organ Accompaniment
Thursday, December 17
7:00 PM
Page 11

Town Hall Holiday Hours

Thursday December 24
8:00 AM - Noon
December 25 - Closed

Wednesday December 31
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
January 1 - Closed



Watch
Meetings Online
westford 
community access television
www.westfordcat.org

Dear Westford residents,

On November 8th over 40 people gathered in the woods at East Boston Camps to acknowledge long-time caretaker George Fletcher by naming a trail in his honor. George was the caretaker at the camps for over 40 years and is well loved by previous campers, counselors, town residents, town staff and officials. The George S. Fletcher trail connects the Waki and Nashoba trails and is located near the Stony Brook Middle School. The Friends of East Boston Camps organized the event and provided refreshments.



At their December 8th meeting, the Selectmen voted their intention not to exercise their right of first refusal of the [Drew Garden's property](#), which is under a purchase and sales agreement with a local developer. This developer plans to build a high-end restaurant, with a function hall in a barn-like structure, on a third of the property, with the other two thirds remaining in agricultural state. This proposal, with an agreement to protect the town's interests, will be discussed again at the Selectmen's December 22nd meeting.

Also at the December 8th meeting, the board heard presentations by the Town Center Traffic Committee and the Town Farm Task Force. The Town Center Traffic Committee is making [recommendations](#) to add another stop sign to the Main Street/Boston Road intersection, add a cross walk from the Hildreth Street side to the common, make improvements to the Lincoln Street right hand turn, and consider adding a police officer at peak periods. The Town Farm Task Force is [recommending](#) the Parks and Recreation departments be relocated out of the Town Farm building, and the building be sold to a private party, with an historic preservation restriction in the deed. The board also voted to raise the minimum wage to \$10 per hour effective January 1, 2016, which is in line with the state legislature.

(Continued on next page)

The town received favorable bids for the floor and smoke stack stabilization at 12 North Main Street. The town is using CPA funds which were awarded at our spring town meeting to stabilize the structure in preparation for the winter ahead.

The new Center Fire Station's construction bid numbers should be available at the Selectmen's December 22nd meeting. This building is approximately 25,000 sq ft and will be located on Boston Road across from the Drew Gardens location. More information about this project may be viewed at this link: [Fire Station Project](#).

There is an interesting article about Community Preservation Act funds in our newsletter. Our State-matching CPA funds are basically level with last year – we will receive \$513,583 from the state, while last year we received \$514,377. These funds allow us to fund various projects approved by the committee and then town meeting.

Our Recycling Commission provided us with a FY2015 Full Report. The data shows an overall decrease of 87.4 tons of recycling, with an overall decrease of 543.3 tons of trash. Our tipping fees saw savings of \$36,946.44. Overall in FY2015, a very positive trend in trash reductions, yet slightly negative trend in recycling due to less recycling activity last year. Here is a link to the report: [Recycling/Trash 2015 Report](#).

The Westford Scholarship and Grant Committee (SAG) has announced the first round of SAG Educator Grants is now open, with applications due on January 30, 2016. Also, the SAG Committee has worked with our Tax Collector/Treasurer to implement an online donation form for interested residents to donate to the Scholarship and Arts and Technology funds. For more information about the grant program and details about donating, please visit: www.westfordma.gov/sag.

We received the results of our energy aggregation bid to procure a competitive electricity supply rate for our the entire community on November 10th, with a low bid of \$.0949/kWh for a term of 24 months, beginning January 2016. The town's energy consultant, Good Energy, is sending a public information letter with opt-out cards to Westford residents this week. This Customer Notification Letter will be sent to all customers who are on the Basic Service with National Grid. This notification will include a chart comparing National Grid rates with the Competitive Supplier rate. During the opt-out period, if a resident or business owner does not send in the opt-out post card that is enclosed with the Customer Notification Letter, they will be automatically enrolled in the aggregation. If any customer has already signed up to receive electricity from a competitive supplier, they will not be sent a Customer Notification Letter. Customers with a competitive supplier can join the aggregation after their contract with the alternate suppliers has expired, by Notifying either Good Energy or the town manager's office. If residents/business owners do not opt out, and choose to later, we have been informed they may opt out at any time. Those who do not opt out will still receive a bill from National Grid with ConEd Solutions listed as the supplier. Please note, a competitor's card is being received at the same time, but it is not the town's new competitive supplier.

The Board of Selectmen, Assistant Town Manager John Mangiaratti and I cooked breakfast for our seniors at their annual holiday breakfast. It is always so much fun for us to "serve" our seniors during this event. The menu included scrambled eggs, sausages, French toast, home fries, fruit salad and other assorted goodies.

(Continued on next page)

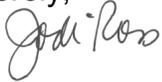
Please join me in congratulating Matt Hanson, formerly my Project/Procurement Specialist on his new position as Assistant Town Administrator in Tyngsboro. Matt worked in my office for about a year and a half, and helped us to improve our operations. He was instrumental in many projects coming to fruition during his tenure. He will be missed.

There are several openings on other local boards and committees, including the Affordable Housing Committee, Communications Advisory Committee, Cultural Council, Historical Commission, and others, and I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees. If you have interest, please complete a Citizen's Activity form at this link: [Citizen Activity Form](#) or stop by and fill out a form in the Town Manager's office.

Would you like more detailed information on Board of Selectmen meetings? Click the following links to access: [Board of Selectmen Documents](#) & [Board of Selectmen Meeting Videos](#).

I hope you are enjoying these warm December temperatures as much as I am. Happy Holidays to you all!

Sincerely,



Jodi Ross
Town Manager



Highway building and salt storage shed recently converted to efficient LED lighting, made possible through an energy savings grant.

Council On Aging



GINGERBREAD COOKIE DECORATING

Tuesday, Dec. 22, at 10:30 a.m.

Join us while we decorate gingerbread cookies and sip hot chocolate.

NEW YEAR'S EVE DAY LUNCH

Thursday, Dec. 31 at 11:30 a.m.

Come celebrate, enjoy a warm ham dinner with delicious sides ~ catered by Donna Dutton. Plus there will be a cheesecake desert topped off with pineapple.

Sponsored in part by the Cummings Foundation and Friends of the Cameron.

We'll toast in 2016 with our very own 'Upbeats Band.'

Cost: \$4 per person. Please RSVP to 978-692-5523 by December 28.

NEW YEAR'S EVE DAY TRIP

Thursday, Dec. 31. Departure time TBD.

Best of Times presents a cabaret show at the Hilton Double Tree in Leominster, MA, featuring Jan Peters and a music selection of popular Broadway and standard tunes, as well as material from promising new song writers.

There will also be dancing to the Tom LaMark Orchestra.

Meal choice of baked scrod or prime rib/roast sirloin/sirloin steak.

All-inclusive cost (including gratuity) is \$92 p/p.

BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT

Tuesday, January 19.

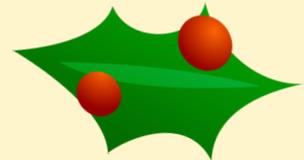
Seniors Eight-Ball Double Elimination Tournament. First place gets trophy and name on the wall for a year. Entry fee: \$3, due at event. Coffee & snacks served. First break at 9:30 a.m. Call Peter Mudgett at 978-692-8383.

MEALS ON WHEELS

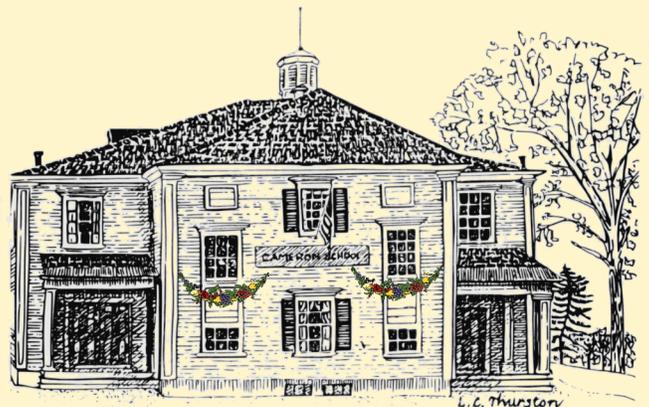
Monday through Friday.

Along with traditional meals, five special diets are now available to clients, with a doctor's authorization.

Meal deliveries are to your door, Mondays - Fridays, around noon. Call 1-800-892-0890 to register.



To view the complete Council On Aging Newsletter please visit our website: www.westfordma.gov/coa and click on [Newsletters](#).



Westford Senior Center

J.V. Fletcher Library

“Widening Westford’s World”

Whether you step inside the Library or open the Library’s online catalog, you’ve passed through a portal where you can pursue a world of possibilities.

From our online [homepage page](#) - after you click on “[Catalog](#)” and then again on, “[Online Catalog](#)” - what you see before you is not only the option to search for the title in any of the 36 Libraries in the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC) but you are also just one click away from:

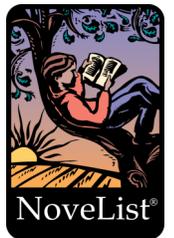
[The Commonwealth Catalog](#) extends your search beyond our Online Catalog; when you click on the Commonwealth Catalog link (in the horizontal menu) you are able to search through millions of books, DVD’s and music from participating libraries all across Massachusetts. Once you fill out your request, the next step is to simply pick it up from the Fletcher Library once it has been delivered to us and we’ve notified you.



[Massachusetts Libraries](#) Thanks to funding from the Mass Board of Library Commissioners and The Massachusetts Library System, this tool enables you to research a topic via millions [there’s that word again] of online articles from established sources such as *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, *Rolling Stone* and the *Boston Globe*. It’s a graphical site that has interesting topic boxes - in addition to the typical SEARCH Engine box - like an orange box that reads: “Searching for a Job.” One click opens up three possible links: *Support at the Library*, *Careers and Job Hunting Resources* and *Coping with Being Unemployed*.



[Novelist](#) provides Reader’s Advisory from every possible angle, like: “I’m in the mood for books that are..... “character driven and conversational,” or “courageous and dramatic,” or “thought- provoking and compelling,” or “upbeat and engaging.” And that approach is just one of dare I say it, “millions” of options. Perhaps not, but Novelist is creative and thorough in their quest to help our patrons find, their best, next, book to read.



[Overdrive](#) Download eBooks and eAudiobooks to your smart devices for free; our Non, Fiction, Chinese Foreign Language and Children’s collections are thousands strong and growing each month.



[Safari Books Online](#) Access the FULL text of over 5,000 technology books on a plethora of subjects including: desktop and web applications; digital media; engineering; information technology and software development; math and science; personal and professional development and so much more.



Research, learn and discover.

WWW.WESTFORDLIBRARY.ORG

WWW.WESTFORDMA.GOV

Health Department

Celebrate with Care Over the Holidays

With the holiday parties in progress, we need to think about celebrating with care. Please remember when you say to yourself, "I think I maybe tipsy", you probably are way over the legal limit to drive. Being caught driving drunk can cost you a lot of money, and that is if you do not cause bodily injury or damage to property. It is estimated that a drunk driving conviction could cost \$10,000, or more.

If you are having a party, here is a great tasting non-alcoholic drink you could serve.

PG-13 Singapore Sling

Ingredients

Servings: Makes 4

- 1/2 cup mango juice
- 1/2 cup pineapple juice
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 8–12 oz. tonic water
- 4 mint sprigs
- 3/4 cup pomegranate juice

Preparation

Combine juices in a pitcher filled with ice and stir until cold. Divide among 4 Collins glasses filled with crushed ice and add 2–3 oz. tonic water to each. Garnish with mint sprigs.



Health Department (continued)

Vent System Maintenance

For the purpose of this story, we shall call him "Tom". Tom has a newer boiler and newer heating system in a recently built home. He gets it serviced from a reputable company in Central Massachusetts, and Tom has parts changed when needed. Recently Tom was coming home and he detected an odor in his house. He called his heating contractor and they inspected the entire venting system. What you are seeing in this picture is a piece of vent pipe that collapsed and began to cause fumes to back up into the house. The odor was not terrible, but if Steve chose to ignore it, he and his family could have easily been overcome by Carbon Monoxide gas. Steve was fortunate to have other issues that caused the odor, but if he had decided to ignore it, the outcome could have been fatal.



Corroded Flue pipe, photo taken November 2015

The purpose of this story to remind every landlord and homeowner, to NOT just service your boiler or furnace, but to make sure your service provider is checking each and every part of the venting system! An inspection of the total system and proper maintenance could save your life! Additionally, this is a great time to make sure your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are working. CO can cause harmful health effects by reducing oxygen delivery to the body's organs (like the heart and brain) and tissues. At extremely high levels, CO can cause death.

Exposure to CO can reduce the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood. People with several types of heart disease already have a reduced capacity for pumping oxygenated blood to the heart, which can cause them to experience myocardial ischemia (reduced oxygen to the heart), often accompanied by chest pain (angina), when exercising or under increased stress. For these people, short-term CO exposure further affects their body's already compromised ability to respond to the increased oxygen demands of exercise or exertion.

Highway Department

Westford's Snow Removal Strategy

When the Snow Begins

When a snowstorm begins, the Department responds by treating all roads with deicing chemicals. Treating the road surfaces serves two purposes — preventing snow and ice from bonding to the surface and to keep traffic flowing. Treating the roads takes approximately 2 1/2 – 3 hours. Please remember that our crews must travel on snow covered, slippery untreated roads to get here at any hour of the day or night. Please be patient as the crews will be out as soon as possible to begin snow removal operations.



During the Storm

Plowing operations begin when there is an accumulation of **2 to 4 inches of snow** on road surfaces. Depending upon the severity of the storm, town forces are assisted by hired contractors to expedite the process of snow removal. Each vehicle is assigned to a predetermined route and will remain there until the storm subsides unless an emergency occurs that requires reassignment of equipment from one location to another. The main objective is to keep all roads passable during the storm. Unfortunately, it is not possible to keep the roads free of snow without filling in many driveways; therefore, when you clean the end of your driveway, deposit the excess snow to the downstream side of your driveway. This will minimize the redeposit of snow into the cleared opening when the plow makes its next pass.

Please comply with the WINTER PARKING BAN (now in effect)

No on-street parking longer than one-hour between 1AM and 8AM from November 1st to March 31st. Vehicles that are illegally parked will be ticketed and may be towed at the owner's expense if they interfere with snow removal operations. Throwing, dumping or leaving snow in the roadway is forbidden and can result in a \$50.00 fine.

Following the Storm

After plowing is completed, roads are given a final treatment of deicing chemical. In the days following a storm, scraping and treating of roads continues depending upon weather forecasts. If colder weather is forecasted streets must be scraped of snow and slush to prevent icing of the surface when the temperature drops and also to widen the road edge so that drainage structures are exposed if the temperatures rise and melting occurs. As time allows, snow is removed from intersections where sight distance is a concern.

Keeping the Town Right-of-Way Clear for Snow Removal

The town generally owns the land from the edge of roadway up to 15 feet back depending on the particular road. Snow is pushed back into this area after large snow fall events to make room for future snow fall.

For more information: www.westfordma.gov/highway

Home HEATING SAFETY

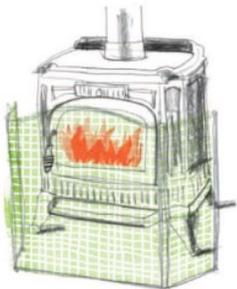
Space heaters and wood or coal stoves can give you extra warmth during the cold winter months if you **use them safely!**

BUT if the heaters are in the wrong place, they can cause serious fires, injuries and deaths.

One hundred and twenty five (125) space heater fires were reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal between 2005 and 2014. **While these fires are not frequent, they are deadly.** One of every 16 space heater fires causes a fatality. These fires caused 23 civilian injuries, 27 fire service injuries, and an estimated dollar loss of \$7 million. The average dollar loss for a space heater fire is \$55,982. Twenty-five percent (25%) of these fires were caused when combustible materials such as bedding, magazines, newspapers, clothing or furniture were too close to the heater, and another 3% were caused when rugs, carpets or mats were under or too close to the heater.

Follow these safety practices with your space heaters and wood or coal stoves:

- The heater or stove should be stable, so that it doesn't tip over.
- It should be at least **3 feet** from things that can catch fire, like curtains, small rugs, papers, and furniture.
- If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is a heavy-duty cord. Heavy-duty extension cords are thicker and have three prongs.
- Turn off space heaters while you are out of the room or sleeping.
- Have the inside of your chimney cleaned before winter arrives.
- Put a screen or other barrier around the heater or wood or coal stove.



Remember:

- Keep your children away from the heater or stove.
- Don't use kerosene heaters inside your house. It's illegal in Massachusetts.
- Don't use your gas oven for heat. Don't use grilling charcoal for heat. Their fumes can poison you and your family, especially while you sleep.
- Make sure you install a carbon monoxide detector in your home to warn you about poisonous fumes.
- There are fuel assistance programs in Massachusetts to help families pay their heating bills. Call your city/town hall to find out about these programs.

Community Preservation Committee News

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows any city or town in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to adopt a property tax surcharge with revenues from this surcharge (and state matching funds) devoted to the following four areas: (1) **Open Space**, (2) **Historic Preservation**, (3) **Community Housing**, and (4) **Land for Recreational Use**.

How do I calculate my CPA Surcharge?

The CPA surtax is calculated by starting with the value of your real estate. Residential real estate receives a \$100,000 value exemption. The resulting value is multiplied by the current tax rate and multiplied by 3%.

Real Estate Value	Residential Exemption	CPA Taxable Value	CPA Taxable Value x Tax Rate (16.24/1000)	CPA Tax at 3%
\$500,000	(\$100,000)	\$400,000	\$6,496.00	\$194.88

What's new with the Westford Community Preservation Committee?

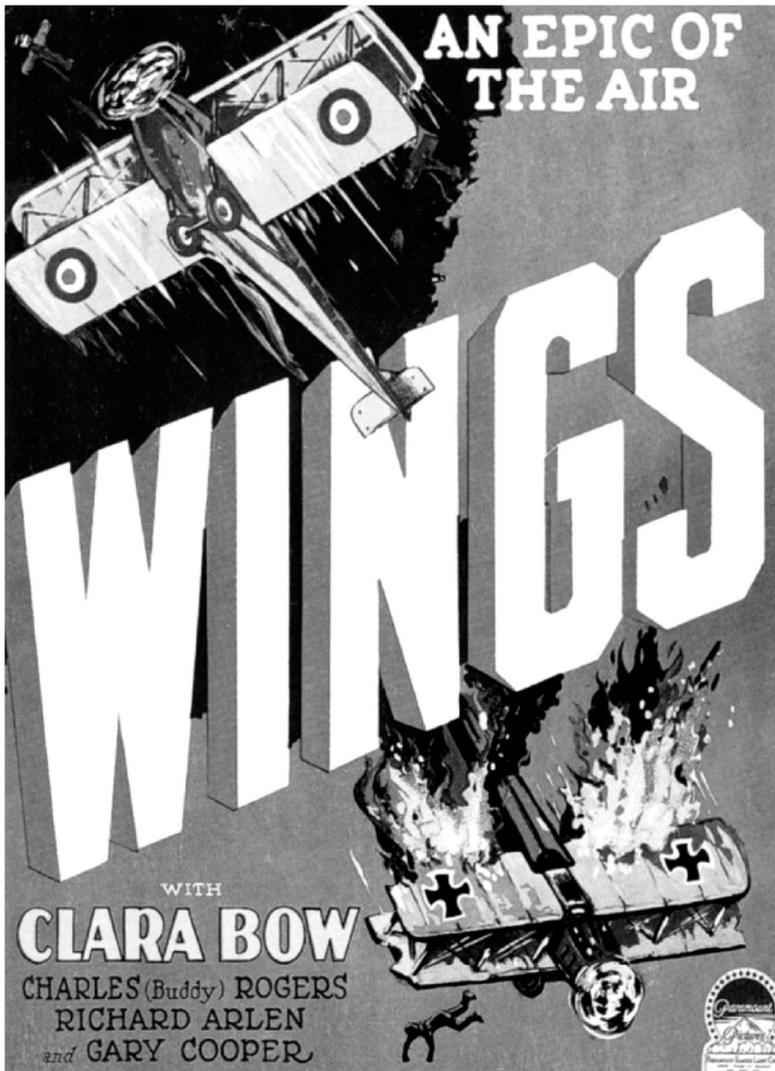
The Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) just released the Community Preservation Trust Fund distribution for each CPA municipality throughout the state. The revenue from this year's trust fund distribution comes from two sources: the recording fees collected over the past 12 months at the state's Registries of Deeds plus a transfer of \$10 million from the state's FY2015 budget surplus. In total, more than \$36 million will be distributed to the 156 communities eligible for a distribution.

All CPA communities will receive a 29.7% match on round one of the trust fund distribution this year. Communities that adopted CPA with a full 3% local property tax surcharge will receive a higher percentage. **The Westford Community Preservation Committee is happy to announce the receipt of \$513,583 in state matching funds this year.**

You can find out more about how this distribution was calculated as well as how this distribution compares to prior years by going to www.communitypreservation.org

CPA applications for the April 2016 Annual Town Meeting are just getting underway. A Needs Assessment meeting will take place on December 1, 2015 at the Cameron Senior Center. Final applications are due January 8, 2016. Applications and directions can be found on the Town of Westford's Community Preservation Committee website. The Community Preservation committee looks forward to hearing your ideas!

JOIN WESTFORD ACADEMY and the WESTFORD EDUCATION FOUNDATION as we present



Wings is an Academy Award winning silent film from 1927 about World War I. In this special presentation, the movie will feature live organ accompaniment by nationally recognized conductor, organist, and music educator Peter Edwin Krasinski. Made possible in part by a grant from the Westford Education Foundation, this evening event is a prelude to a similar presentation being made to all 9th and 11th grade Westford Academy students studying WWI on Friday, December 18th.

Seating for the Thursday, December 17th performance is available for members of the community for a suggested donation towards WEF that provides grants to educators of Westford Public Schools and Nashoba Valley Technical High School. Community tickets can be obtained by contacting Mr. Scully in the WA History Department or WEF at 978-418-9179 and are first come first served. Community tickets will also be available at the door for a \$5 per person suggested donation.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015
7:00 P.M.

WESTFORD ACADEMY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
\$5 PER PERSON DONATION SUGGESTED





DONATING TO SAG FUNDS OPENS NEW LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO WESTFORD'S STUDENTS

HELP OUR TEACHERS INTRODUCE INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS



HELP OUR MOST CIVIC-MINDED STUDENTS FINANCE COLLEGE

ABOUT THE SAG FUNDS

The Town of Westford **Scholarship and Grant (SAG) Funds** are supported by voluntary contributions from residents and managed by the Town's **SAG Committee**:

- **ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY FUND** – Provides grants to Westford educators for innovative initiatives that enrich and advance student programs.
- **SCHOLARSHIP FUND** – Provides financial awards to Westford residents for educational opportunities and job training.

HOW TO DONATE

1. Visit <https://epay.cityhallsystems.com>.
2. Select municipality, Westford, MA.
3. Click button, "Click here to VIEW or PAY your bills."
4. Select Bill Type, Donation.
5. Select the Fund to which you wish to contribute.
6. Complete the online form and checkout process.

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
WESTFORD'S TEACHERS AND STUDENTS!**

CONTACT THE SAG COMMITTEE

sag@westfordma.gov

Jon Myerov, Chair

John Mangiaratti, Assistant
Town Manager

www.westfordma.gov/sag

Recycling Commission

HOLIDAY RECYCLING REMINDERS

Holiday season activities generate a large amount of recyclable material. Massachusetts state environmental regulations ban recyclables from trash. As a reminder, the Westford Recycling Commission asks residents to recycle all they can. **Recycling saves Westford money by diverting trash from the incinerator which costs \$68 per ton.**

Recycle your cardboard gift boxes, garment boxes, toy and game packing cardboard, clean food boxes, beverage cartons, and shipping boxes. All cardboard must be flattened and no larger than 3 feet by 3 feet in size.

Recycle your gift wrap paper (not foils), tissue paper, and paper tags, bags, cards, decorations, and envelopes. Recycle your newspapers, ads, and catalogs.

Recycle your clean, clear, and colored bottles, jars, aluminum and steel cans, aluminum foil, and plastic containers marked #1- #7.

Styrofoam is not acceptable at curbside. Save all your clean Styrofoam for Westford's collection on April 16, 2016, at the Highway Garage.

On your recycling day, put recyclables in bins, boxes, or totes at the curb by 7 a.m. and separate them from your trash containers. All recyclables can be mixed together.

"Recyclables" stickers to affix to receptacles are available at the Town Clerk's office.

Bulk item stickers are \$5, reduced from \$10, as of February 1, 2015. Refer to Bulk Items & Policy button at www.westfordma.gov/recycling as well as for all current information.

Note: If your normal trash and recycling pick up day is Friday (Christmas Day and New Year's Day), your pick up day will be Saturday.

**WESTFORD THANKS YOU
FOR RECYCLING, REDUCING,
REUSING, AND REPURPOSING.**

