



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ—Paul Franz  
North County Line Dancers practice in a Whately driveway.



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Pat Barschenski leads line dancing in her driveway of her Whately home.



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North County Line Dancers practice in a Whately driveway.

## Line dancing in the driveway

With social distancing requirements in effect, North County Line Dancers are practicing at home

By MARY BYRNE  
Staff Writer

**B**racing the heat on a humid summer afternoon, a group of eight women got up from the lawn chairs they'd been resting in and organized themselves on the driveway where they had gathered. Pat Barschenski picked up her phone, pressed play on the music and began calling out instructions.

It wasn't exactly the dance floor the local group of line dancers were accustomed to and the cool of the shade hadn't quite covered the driveway yet, but to them, it hardly made a difference.

"We don't care as long as we get to dance," said dancer Wendy Kingsley.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic closed the Montague Elk's Lodge in March, the North County Line Dancers have had to find new ways to practice together. First, they tried virtual, Barschenski said — but it was far from ideal.

"Some are OK with it, and it is OK as a stop gap," she said on a water break between dances. "But to do it on a regular basis is way too difficult."

For one, said Barschenski, it's difficult for dancers in a virtual setting to sync up properly to the music.

"We had to figure out a way to do in-person again," she said.

When they first started meeting



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ  
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on her driveway in June, Barschenski had boxes mapped out on the driveway to ensure dancers kept a safe distance from one another. Now, they've gotten so accustomed to the set-up, they no longer need the boxes drawn out on the ground.

Plus, she said, there's a degree of respect between one another. They know to sit out a practice if they've been somewhere with lots of people or a high number of COVID cases.

"For me, it definitely has helped maintain a sense of normalcy," said Barschenski, who's been line dancing for more than 25 years.

The group, which now meets on Monday evenings in her driveway, is made up of about a dozen dancers, many of whom have been involved with the group for many years.

One of those women is Isabel Bosley, who travels weekly from Vermont to participate in the group.



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Pat Barschenski leads line dancing in her driveway of her Whately home.

Like Barschenski, she took up line dancing about 25 years ago. She got into it, she said, after being introduced to it by a friend.

"I knew if I started, I wouldn't stop ... and here we are," she said. Bosley has been dancing with the group for almost a decade.

Especially during the pandemic, Bosley said, it's been a great way to get exercise for both the body and the brain.

"If you had a hard day," she said. "You get out on the dance floor and you can forget about the day."

Dancing on the driveway, though a solution to the group's lack of an indoor dance space, has its shortcomings, Barschenski said. Dances have to be modified in such a way to protect the knees and ankles from twisting or getting caught. Practices are also weather-dependent.

But still, it's offered a respite for the dancers in the group.

"You don't feel as closed in," said Kingsley, who has been line dancing for about 11 years.

Even virtually, she said, it was good to see "familiar faces" from week to week.

Debbie Tolpa, of South Deerfield, added that line dancing gives her an opportunity to move — to "cut into the boredom and lack of routine" brought on by the global pandemic.

"We're so lucky we're in an area where we can get out and move," she said.

Though glad to be back dancing, Bosley said it's unfortunate they won't get to share the work they've been practicing this year, as all the events they often perform at have been canceled because of the pandemic.

"Now," she said, "we just have to find a place to dance."

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## David Sund's elegant garden

**D**avid Sund's elegant and productive garden was on the Greenfield Garden Club's tour earlier this summer. On the tour map, he described his garden as having undergone changes and updating over recent years. Last weekend, we visited and talked about the nurture of gardens.

When he was just a lad in 1973, Sund's father took the family to Tennessee to live, but it did not take long to find out Tennessee was not the place for them. Instead, they moved to Greenfield, where grandparents and other family members lived.

Sund still lives in the family house, which was a wreck when they moved. "The four layers of wallpaper was all that held the walls together," he said.

And so began years of rebuilding, and renewing.

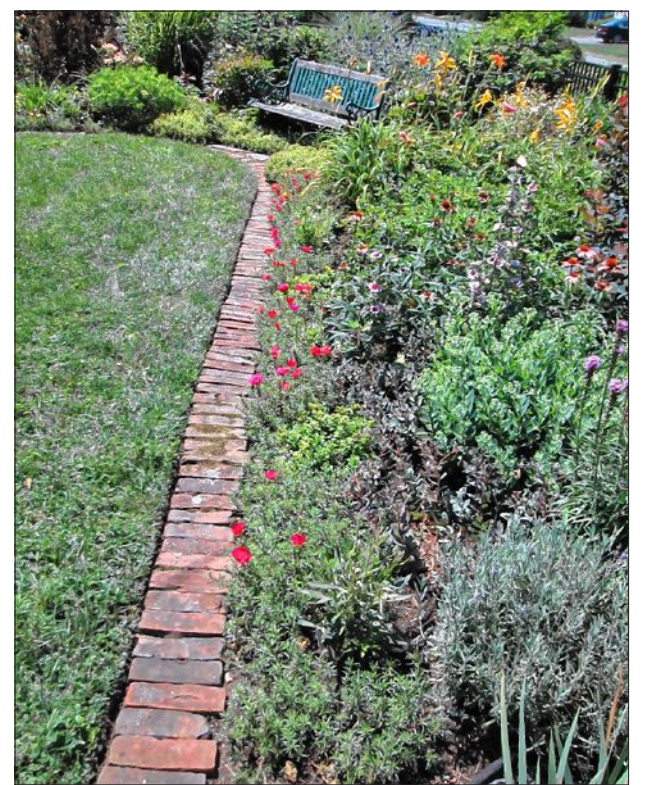
There was also work to do outside. In those days, there were a number of glass houses that ran across several backyards including theirs. In the spring, plants were replanted in outdoor beds and put up for sale. There was a history of gardens and plants on Vernon Street. Sund said his grandmothers had wonderful flower gardens and his father was one of the first who took to organic gardening.

"I grew up gardening," Sund said. "My father used composting to improve the soil and leaves were used as mulch. Once work on the house was completed, I wanted to do more than raise vegetables. I made two rectangular beds for other plants in the back



David Sund.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO/DAVID SUND  
A completed brick edge provides a finished look around Sund's garden.

yard." His interest in design and the many types of plants for a garden began at an early age.

As we talked, Sund said that his current garden implements the idea, 'reduce, reuse, recycle.' This holds true for the plants that have come into his garden from friends

who had multiplied and divided plants, for patio furniture that needed a new home and other treasures. David also regularly shares his plants, but, alas, not this pandemic year.

Before he was a professional gardener, he worked at a small local

private school as both headmaster and kindergarten teacher. Of course, he had a garden to care for as well. He said his day began with work at school, then work in his garden followed by supper, and fin-

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