The holidays can get crazy. Lots to do, never enough time. It can all easily degenerate into a Stress Odyssey. The Norwich Times asked around to find out how people manage to keep the JOY in the holidays (and hold the stress at bay).

Artist Kate Emlen lives on Elm Street. “I don’t necessarily go out looking for joy,” she admits, “but it snuck up on me yesterday while I was vacuuming my kids’ rooms and singing along with my headphones on. The kids will both be home, to be joined soon after by my three quirky brothers and families. Doesn’t get any better than that and I get a clean house as a bonus!”

Gail Langeloh, who lives on Kendall Station Road with her husband, John Roback and their two daughters, has a simple answer: “Balsam scented candles. Everywhere!!” She elaborates, “I break them out after Thanksgiving. They remind me of winter and a Christmas tree, but without the effort of getting the tree up (which happens later). I guess they keep me going because the flickering lights are pretty and they smell wonderful. They remind me that holidays are coming.”

Dawn Carey, who lives on Hogback Road and works at The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy & Clinical Practice, learned how to keep her eye on what’s really R

"Water is Life” proclaims the inscription on the side of the fountain on the corner of the Norwich green. Brion McMullan is making a life connected to water, in both his avocation of sailing and his 25 years running the Norwich town water system. Brion retired last summer just in time for some excellent sailing weather. He and his partner, Martha Nelson, have a 36-foot sailboat, the Isabel Cory, named after Martha’s mother, moored in Rockland Harbor, Maine.

The youngest of five, Brion caught the sailing bug when he was about six. His family spent the summers on Lake Alexander in eastern Connecticut and his neighbor taught him to sail. During his work years, even after he owned a boat, his sailing time was limited. Now he’s averaging a least a month on the water, most of it along the coast of Maine—and more “boat time” keeping it ship-shape with Martha.
Norwich Women’s Club News

The October 2015 Nearly New Sale was a tremendous success. Big thanks go to Elaine Waterman, Annette Brown, the fabulous crew of volunteers, consignors, and all of those who shopped the sale. All agreed that the new set up made it much easier to shop. Gross sales for this event of $31,128 help support the Norwich Women’s Club Scholarship Fund.

A milestone was hit this year when three generations from one family worked as volunteers for the Nearly New Sale – Pat Dempsey, grandmother, Carole Dempsey, daughter/mother, and Annie Olsen, granddaughter/daughter.

A large gathering of enthusiastic members and newcomers attended the Annual Fall Welcome Meeting on October 5th, graciously hosted by Jill Butler. New member, Elissa Close, was pleased to be the winner of a raffle ticket for a group outing to the wonderful new Northern Stage. The group continued on to dinner at the ever-gracious Elixir.

The Holiday Party is scheduled on Thursday, December 3rd, 6pm, at the Norwich Historical Society. Members and prospective members are welcome to join a festive evening with old friends and new neighbors. Participants are asked to bring a can of tuna for the Haven. Last year’s donations filled at least one vehicle!

Preparations have already begun for the 5th Annual Spring Gala on Friday, March 11th, under the able leadership of Sue Pitiger and support from lead sponsor Ledyard National Bank. At the Spring Gala, you can enjoy food, wine, auctions, and celebrate the 2016 Citizen of the Year! Tracy Hall is transformed for the occasion and will offer a breath of spring to all who join for the evening. Proceeds from this event go to the Norwich Women’s Club Community Projects Fund. Follow us on Facebook to learn more.

Calendar of Upcoming Events
• Thursday, December 3rd, 6pm
  Annual Holiday Party at Norwich Historical Society
• Monday, January 4th, 10-11am
  Coffee and Conversation at the Norwich Inn
• Monday, February 1st, 10-11am
  Coffee and Conversation at the Norwich Inn
• January 2-January 25th
  Nominations accepted for Citizen of the Year Award
• Monday, March 7th, 10-11am
  Coffee and Conversation at the Norwich Inn
• Friday, March 11th, 6pm,
  Spring Gala at Tracy Hall, Main Street, Norwich

To join the Norwich Women’s Club, visit www.norwichwomensclub.org.

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**AROUND TOWN**

**Christmas Revels Is Coming**

Something's in the air – the sounds of laughter, dancing feet, melodic voices, and hard work. It's Christmas Revels rehearsal season! Each Monday, 11 Norwich children and teens immerse themselves in Scottish culture as they prepare for chorus and acting roles in The Christmas Revels: A Scottish Highlands Celebration of the Winter Solstice at the Hopkins Center, December 17th-20th.

“It’s a great way to learn new songs about different cultures and it’s really fun to meet new people,” says Rosey Thompson – as does her cousin Natalie Junio-Thompson, who will dance onstage as a fairy from old Scottish lore. Hannah Weintraub, Avery Swett, and Campbell Madden are enthusiastic about “singing new songs and meeting a lot of nice people!” For Molly Ryan-O’Flaherty, appearing in Revels has been a highlight of the Christmas season for many years. Eliza Daigle adds, “For me it really demonstrates what the holidays are all about, just being merry and celebrating together as a whole and enjoying yourself.”

Revels North gives children year-round intergenerational connections and bridges to grow into teen and adult roles, through the Revels Kids after-school program (Silk Road traditions this January!), Revels Teens chorus, Christmas Revels, Summer Revels, Mumming workshops and Pub Sings. Lillian Hall summed it up as “a good community where you can meet lots of new people and share good experiences.” Isabelle Pepper feels the sense of respect: “Everyone is nice to each other and everyone tries their best.” As Marion Cross student Theo Cook expressed it, “I like it because you can sing and be yourself without other people judging you at all.” Jasmine Tracy, age 12, added, “It feels like a safe place to be yourself.”

Growing up as a Norwich Reveler, Ania White (also a Marion Cross teacher) has joined the Board of Directors at age 26. “Revels North taught me what it means to care for another person who was at first a stranger, and how, in turn, to share that care with others, setting the example for younger children and welcoming them into the Revels community. The in-between generation, those of us not yet veterans and no longer newcomers, are the bridge that connects the generations of Revels, keeping tradition alive.”

Audiences will see plenty of magic in as the children and teens perform side-by-side with some of New England’s finest musicians: Highland piper Iain MacHarg of the Vermont Institute of Celtic Arts; Celtic fiddler Katie McNally; renowned Gaelic harper Dominique Dodge; accordionist Jeremiah McLane, and a special appearance by Scottish Highland dancer Joshua Haiman. Join the merriment of the shortest days and longest nights! Tickets are on sale at the Hopkins Center – only $8 for children on Family Night, Dec. 17th.

– Lizann Peyton

“**You mean energy has been shining down on us from the sun the whole time and we weren’t capturing it? Why not?”**

– Sebastian Kitchel, age 5, Norwich

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Joy. Such a simple word and a simple concept, yet so few of us are able to keep it within reach most of the time. Maybe it’s a circle-of-life thing where we have it early on and then, hopefully, later on. Or, is it personality-type based? Type A people move too quickly and are too preoccupied with really ‘important’ stuff to keep from tripping over joy. Maybe the more chill types get to experience joy more often. Perhaps it’s just a phase in our human evolution. We seem to be at a crossroads, and joy is on one of the paths leading us out of this phase.

Let’s choose joy.

This issue of the Norwich Times seems to capture the many ways in which we experience joy in our corner of the world. Mary Otto writes about the Montshire Museum of Science, its birthday and new director, and how young and old alike may experience the joy of science within its walls and beyond.

Jane Ackerman reveals how some Norwich residents find joy during the holiday season. Traditions, mindsets, perspective changes, vacuuming, and some balsam-scented candles go a long way towards keeping us joyful during this often-hectic time of year.

Recently retired, Brion McMullan, finds joy in life’s most basic yet essential element: water. As the former head of Norwich’s town water system, and avid sailor, just look at the cover photo and you won’t be able to help feeling his joy!

Now I would like to share a bit of my joy with all of you. Please welcome Justine Fahey as the Norwich Times’ editor. As many of you already know, Justine brings forth a great deal of energy, heart, and soul to this town. With kids in all phases of the school system, and a member of various boards and local non-profits, Justine will bring a great deal of new life to this 18-year-old community journal.

And that brings me great joy! Happy holidays to all!

– Jen MacMillen

I am thrilled to be joining Jen and the rest of the Norwich Times family. This is one of my favorite times of year to live in Vermont, especially Norwich. Norwich really glows with the small-town community feel which I think represents the best elements of the holiday season. And there is really nothing like glistening, snow-covered farmhouses, all lit up for the holidays to get you in the spirit!

In this issue, you will find various examples in which the holidays represent diverse ways to give. I think everyone in our town would agree that the Norwich Public Library is a gift to all of us. I love seeing all the happy faces of the many kids who benefit from the time, warmth, and care of the librarians in the children’s room. The Upper Valley Haven’s Healthy Eating program is a “gift that keeps on giving” – not only providing healthy food for people, but teaching them to cook healthy food for themselves and their families – so the effects ripple down to many people. And talk about spreading the giving spirit to many people, Dan Fraser has revolutionized this concept with his ever-growing 1% for the Haven program. Giving isn’t just for people – Sue Kenney has raised and trained guide dogs for many years, enriching the lives of schoolchildren and others. She knows, as probably many of you do as well, that dogs can also train their owners, which is rewarding for people and their dogs.

We also highlight great instances of the joy of life – Brion McMullan’s life on the water is inspirational in a myriad of ways. Dave Callaway gives us the engaging story of Ransom Slack, a local soldier from the Civil War era. And we honor one of the town’s gems, The Montshire Museum, which provides lifelong opportunities for learning and engagement with the natural world.

So, if there are two main takeaways for this holiday season, I would say they are to find ways to give back to others in your community and beyond, and to live life to the fullest. Happy holidays and best wishes for an adventurous and rewarding new year!

– Justine Fahey
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Farm and Forest Conservation Planning Underway

In August the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) acquired 352 acres at Norwich Farms from Vermont Technical College as the second step in an innovative, non-profit collaboration between the two organizations. The College retains the farmstead with all the buildings and equipment while UVLT will own all the fields and forest. The two have a common vision: a teaching farm for Vermont Tech students that also is accessible to the community for learning and recreation. Each will bring their particular strength to the partnership. UVLT’s expertise is ecological land stewardship and community engagement around appreciation of nature and outdoor recreation; Vermont Tech’s expertise is farm operation and teaching dairy farming to students.

Even prior to the gift of the farm to Vermont Technical College by Andrew and Margaret Sigler in June, the farm has a history of conservation and education. Before the Siglers’ purchase of the farm from the Somerville family, it was known as Brookmead Farm. The Somervilles, in conjunction with a community fundraising effort, conserved 18 acres of open pasture on Turnpike Road with UVLT in 1995. A fire destroyed Brookmead’s old barn early in Mr. Sigler’s ownership and he rebuilt the farm as a state-of-the-art, non-profit, dairy education center in 2002, particularly focusing on herd genetics.

Conserving this highly visible farm is a vision shared by many and is one of the reasons UVLT has assumed ownership responsibility for the land. Working with Vermont Tech's resident farmer to maintain and enhance the agricultural fields will be a primary focus. But the property is also made up of extensive forests which abut Parcel 5 of the Norwich Fire District lands. Vernal pools dot the landscape and provide important habitat for salamanders, frogs, and flora necessary for a healthy ecosystem. Over the next year UVLT is planning a series of workshops and activities where the community and UVLT can learn together what resources the property has to offer and how they might be managed to maintain and enhance the ecological and agricultural values of the property and provide access for recreation and education. The first workshop focusing on forestry issues was held in October and led by county forester Jon Bouton. UVLT invites people to join in its future workshops on ecological and land use topics.

Enthusiasm for the property's recreational possibilities is understandably high and UVLT is presently assessing the existing network of informal trails and logging roads throughout the hillside property. Walkers, runners, cyclists, and skier/snowshoers are excited for the outdoor experiences offered by the property on its main connecting trail to Parcel 5. The Upper Valley Land Trust plans to improve a designated parking area near the farm complex off Turnpike Road. Over the next year, UVLT will be working with the Norwich Trails Committee, foresters and wildlife experts, neighbors, and supporters of the project as the

Anne Janeway

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Located minutes from Dartmouth College and down the road from King Arthur Flour in Norwich, Vermont.
organization formulates its management plan for the property. UVLT hopes to work with volunteers to collect data on forest conditions and the impact of deer on native plants.

In the agricultural realm, UVLT sees additional possibilities for farm activities and education that would involve schools and groups from other non-profits. Sharon Academy students already have a history of hands-on learning about farming and animals at the site.

UVLT is active and visible throughout Norwich, having thirty years of experience and 48 conservation easements in Norwich. The farm at Turnpike Road is a major acquisition for the land trust, as UVLT will own and care for the land with the help of volunteers, its staff, and strong member support. Residents can learn more about the upcoming field trips and progress by visiting uvlt.org or keeping an eye on the listserv for announcements. As of November, $115,000 dollars still remain to be raised to pay for the $300,000 cost of acquiring the land and year-end contributions to the Upper Valley Land Trust are encouraged to close the gap. UVLT wishes to thank the generous families who have already made significant investments to bring about this exciting conservation development in our backyards.
Ransom Slack – A Full Duty Soldier, Farmer and Family Man

David Cellarius

In the spring of 1861, soon after the Civil War began, President Lincoln wired Erastus Fairbanks, governor of Vermont, “Washington is in grave danger,” he began. “What may we expect of Vermont?” Although the original reply was never found, on the back of the telegram Fairbanks had written in pencil, “Vermont will do its full duty.”

During the Civil War, 178 Norwich men, out of a town population of 1,759, joined the army and navy. So the village, according to Goddard and Partridge’s 1905 history of Norwich, sent “…more than one in ten of its entire population, during the four years’ continuance of hostilities.”

The men who came from Norwich were citizen soldiers. Many signed up for a nine-month enlistment and a few paid for a substitute. But the majority, 109 of them, volunteered to serve for three years; Ransom Slack, a teenage farm boy, was one of these volunteers.

Ransom was born near Sharon, Vermont in 1842. His father, Prosper, was a farmer and his mother, Fidelia, had her hands full running a household that included Ransom and his seven siblings. By 1850, the Slacks had moved to Norwich. Ransom attended a district school where he learned to read and write along with his older brother Jefferson and his younger sister Charlotte. Just five months after the war started, Ransom joined the Union Army. Norwich, which did not do in bounties during the war, handed Ransom a $100 bounty for his patriotism. Or perhaps Ransom joined for other reasons. He could have been like a lot of young men who wanted to leave the twelve-hour work-days on the farm for the adventurous life of a soldier, to hear drums and see a battle.

On September 20, 1861, Ransom enlisted. According to his first army record he was nineteen years old, stood 5’8” and had dark hair and eyes. According to his first army record he was nineteen years old, stood 5’8” and had dark hair and eyes. A twelve-hour work-days on the farm for the adventurous life of a soldier, to hear drums and see a battle.

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On August 21st, the Old Brigade, under the command of Phil Sheridan, was attacked by the Rebels south of Charlestown, West Virginia. The Vermont soldiers held their line but the Confederates fired back and men were hit on both sides. The fighting lasted throughout the day. In the center of the Vermont line was an old brick mansion. “Men were soon put into the house, and fired from the windows, doing good execution,” one Vermont soldier recalled. “The enemy could not stand this, and commenced shelling the house with great fury and accuracy… the men were so anxious to fire that as soon as a shell pierced the brick wall, immediately thrust out two or three muskets.” (Full Duty, Coffin, pg. 298)

The fight continued until dark. “By one estimate the Old Brigade used 56,000 rounds. Local legend in Charlestown holds that the Vermont soldiers, lacking horses and mules, used cows to haul ammunition.” Today the battle gets little notice in the history books. Some call it the “Engagement at Charles Town,” others “The Battle of Summit Point.” The results of the battle were “inconclusive.” But it had been a tough fight for Vermonters: 24 men died and 100 were wounded. Among the wounded was Norwich’s Ransom Slack. (Full Duty, Coffin, pg. 298)

Whether Slack was shot on the picket line as the Rebels first advanced, or fought on the main line in the fields near Charlestown we will never know. His military service record said he was evacuated to a hospital in Baltimore and then moved to a hospital in Philadelphia in September before being transferred to Brattleboro where he was mustered out of the army on October 28th 1864, nearly three years to the day since he had enlisted. In a “Special Schedule” from 1890 that listed many of the Norwich men who served in the “war of rebellion,” Slack was the only one listed under the “Disability Incurred” column with the short statement next to his name, “Shot in the right side.”

He probably dreamed of his parents’ farm and the green peaceful hills of Norwich.

For the next three years, the 6th Vermont took part in some of the bloodiest fighting in the Civil War. Ransom and his fellow soldiers in Company B fought at Crampton Cap prior to playing a supporting role at Antietam. In December, the Old Brigade lost two-dozen men at Fredericksburg. They were held in reserve at Gettysburg in the summer of 1863. But shortly after the great battle, the Sixth, with the rest of the Brigade, was sent to New York City to quell the draft riots. The Sixth joined the assault at Spotsylvania on May 10th 1864, where another soldier from Company B wrote, “I am unable to say what was done each day, but I remember that we were under fire most of the time…we were in a fight every day.” By the end of the battle, 15,000 Union soldiers were killed or wounded. One soldier from the 10th Vermont wrote, “Could anything in Hades be worse?” (Battered Stars, Coffin, pg. 225.)

Ransom survived these battles, 18 of them, physically unscathed and along the line was promoted to corporal. By the summer of 1864, with his three-year enlistment about to expire in October, he probably dreamed of his parents’ farm and the green peaceful hills of Norwich.

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Through town records a sketch of Ransom's post war life appears. In 1865, he married 19-year-old Martha Luthera Sawyer. Martha or Luthera, as she appears in the census records, was born in Norwich and raised on a farm with four siblings. She probably met Ransom in school and must have been proud to marry a wounded veteran.

By 1870, Ransom and Luthera owned a farm on Turnpike Road. According to the census of that year the Slack's property was worth $2,600 and his personal savings totaled $1,400. A dollar in 1870 was worth $18 today, so his property was worth $46,000 and his savings equaled $25,200. The Ransom Slacks were doing well. Along with a prosperous farm, their family grew. By 1880, Ransom and Luthera were the parents of five children: Sprague, Ella, Cordelia and eight-month-old twins, George and Mary.

The majority of the folks in the late 19th century Norwich were self-sufficient farmers. Most families had a cow for milk and butter, pigs, sheep, a few horses and a team of oxen to haul a plow. Families grew “hundreds of bushels of hay, corn, and oats to support their livestock...Everyone had potatoes and many families reported... producing apples and maple sugar.” (Norwich, Vermont: A History, Goddard and Partridge, pg. 110) It’s not hard to imagine a grateful Ransom sitting around a winter fire, after gathering a bountiful harvest, and regaling his children with the time he and his friends used a cow to haul ammunition at Watertown or what it was like to hear Rebel bullets fly by at Spotsylvania.

No doubt Ransom, who had spent three years in the field, tramped all over Virginia and Maryland and experienced some of the bloodiest fighting first hand, would have sought out other veterans who knew what he had gone through. He was not alone. Returning soldiers got together and formed the Vermont Grand Army of the Republic, much like today's VFW, in 1868. By 1890, there were more than 110 posts in the state with 5,473 members.

At the turn of the century, Ransom was 58 and Luthera was 54. All of their children, except for Mary, had moved away from home, but they were still running their farm out on Turnpike Road. On August 19, 1911, at the age of 69, Ransom died. The cause of death was listed as “arteriosclerosis.” Luthera, Ransom’s wife of 46 years, sold the farm and bought a home on Main Street where she lived with Mary until 1941, when she died at the age of 94.

There are eleven cemeteries in Norwich. The largest and the last to open in town is the Hillside-Loveland cemetery, located a short walk from Dan and Whit’s, just off Hopson Road. Ransom’s family marker is up the steep center path that runs to the top of the hill. It sits beneath two large pine trees. The five foot high granite tombstone is impressive. Carved into the top sits an eagle above crossed cannons and an American flag. The inscription begins, “Ransom A. Slack, Co. B, 6th VT Vols.” followed by the names of his wife Luthera, and daughter Gracie who died just before Christmas in 1881 at the age of 2. Next to the large family gravestone are smaller markers. Behind the one labeled “father” is a metal rod with a weathered 5-point star that says “Veteran 1861-1865,” probably placed there by members of the GAR. Nearby are the graves William A. Kimball and Daniel Hall, two other men who served in the 6th Vermont with Ransom. In total, 34 Civil War veterans rest in Hillside Cemetery.

Ransom is also honored on the war memorial outside Tracy Hall. His name is listed between Herbert Slack and Henry Slate. It is spelled as “Rансem.” Regardless of the error, there’s no doubt Ransom would have been proud of his service and grateful to be recognized by the people of Norwich. Like the rest of the veterans, when President Lincoln called, he stepped up and did everything that was asked of him, his “full duty.”

Winter Events at NHS
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• Wednesday, February 10, 7-8:30pm
  Book discussion: Robert Graves’ Good-bye to All That
• Sunday, February 21, 1:30-3pm
  Workshop: Preserving Family Recipes
• Sunday, March 6, 1:30-3pm
  Workshop: Preserving Family Treasures
• Wednesday, March 9, 7-8:30pm
  Book discussion: Beryl Markham’s West With the Night
• Wednesday, April 20, 7-8:30pm
  Book discussion: Oliver Sacks’ On the Move
• Wednesday, May 11, 7-8:30pm
  Book discussion: Anthony Shadid’s House of Stone

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Brion and Martha—whose family included ocean-sailing enthusiasts—like to sail from island to island in Maine, stopping to explore as the spirit moves them, or meeting up with other boaters—friends and family—to share meals on each other’s boat or engage in a friendly race. “There are 3,000 islands in Penobscot Bay,” says Brion. Some are inhabited, at least with a seasonal camp, but many are “nothing but rocks and trees.”

Many of the couple’s most memorable sailing adventures occurred with Dr. Joe Grant, who lived on Main Street, but lived for on-the-edge sailing. “We went one leg of the trip when he circumnavigated New England backwards,” recalls Brion. Going through a few locks and taking the mast down a couple of times, it’s possible to sail a circle along the Maine coast, up the St. Lawrence, down Lake Champlain, and down the Hudson River. “There’d be four or five people on the boat, maybe some of his Harvard buddies, a few teenagers, and once someone who had ‘just got out of jail,’” continues Brion. Joe was a good sailor, adds Martha, but “he was primarily a racer, so he’d always push for that little bit more.” Sailing up the St. Lawrence, against current and wind and sometimes tide proved quite difficult, and was made more exciting by lack of good navigational charts. One day they began sailing at 7 a.m. and worked hard till midnight, to find they’d progressed only about 10 miles from their starting point. “The rewards stayed, but the pains fade,” notes Martha. “After you’d sailed one year, he wouldn’t ask you the next—maybe the year after when you no longer remembered how challenging it was.” Still, Dr. Joe was an excellent sailor. On one occasion he sailed for ten days and nights from Maine to make a noon rendezvous in Lake Bras d’Or in Cape Breton; he continued Brion. Joe was a good sailor, adds Martha, but “he was primarily a racer, so he’d always push for that little bit more.” Sailing up the St. Lawrence, against current and wind and sometimes tide proved quite difficult, and was made more exciting by lack of good navigational charts. One day they began sailing at 7 a.m. and worked hard till midnight, to find they’d progressed only about 10 miles from their starting point. “The rewards stayed, but the pains fade,” notes Martha. “After you’d sailed one year, he wouldn’t ask you the next—maybe the year after when you no longer remembered how challenging it was.” Still, Dr. Joe was an excellent sailor. On one occasion he sailed for ten days and nights from Maine to make a noon rendezvous in Lake Bras d’Or in Cape Breton; he arrived at 11:45.

Back home in Norwich, Brion has worked for the Norwich Fire District for 25 years. Nowadays that pretty much means taking care of the Town water system, though the Fire District formerly had more employees than the town. Towns could designate special districts which had the powers of a village, including power to tax, but excepting policing.

The village used to get its water from Charles Brown Brook, from a reservoir upstream from the late-lamented Norwich Pool dam. Eventually, says Brion, “the writing was on the wall” that State regulations would require surface water systems to filtrate or switch to underground water sources, to avoid contamination. There were also problems with the catchment area behind the dam silting up; it had been dredged a couple of times—a process that would be environmentally prohibited now—and the spillway was adjudged not big enough for a 100-year flood. The District looked for a water source, and found a fabulously productive well site of excellent, naturally buffered water in an esker beside the Connecticut River, near Route 5 north of town. The well taps into what’s essentially an underground river; the source could produce a million gallons per day. Norwich uses about 65,000 gallons per day. To provide good water pressure all the time, water is pumped from the well to storage in a closed 500,000-gallon reservoir on Dutton Hill.

Two issues weigh on the person in charge of water: private septic tanks, and water main leaks,” says Brion. Normally, our system has 100 psi pressure in the village, which prevents inflow into the supply pipes if there is a leak, but big breaks (1,000-2,000 gallons per minute) can potentially cause a cross-connection with groundwater. Pressure reducers lower levels for household use.

The other concern that weighed heavily on Brion was galvanic crevice corrosion. In the ’80s some ductile iron pipe was installed to the new well source. Manufactured differently from the old cast iron, ductile iron is stronger but has thinner walls, Brion explains. It can suffer electro-chemical breakdown where groundwater stagnates outside an improperly bedded main. The resulting pinhole leaks could not, of course, heal themselves, but would eventually blow, creating a sinkhole.

The biggest main breaks in the past occurred from hammering, or sudden pressure change, in the system. “It’s kind of like water sloshing in a tub,” Brion says, and can be caused by closing a hydrant too quickly, which can send a wave of pressure through the system. The wave reaches the end of a pipe and bounces back; when it meets the wave from another direction, the multiplied pressure blows the pipe. Oops.

While some of the work on the water system has been humdrum, Brion has very much enjoyed the logical thinking and scientific analysis that detecting and preventing problems has required. For 14 years, Sam Eaton worked with Brion, and he has now taken over as water czar. In earlier days, older residents will be unsurprised to hear, Leonard Cook was a mainstay of the system. Brion says, “I’d be out at some break at 3 a.m. and I’d hear something behind me, and it’d be Leonard. He never charged for his time.”

Four years ago, Brion and Martha had the opportunity to go on a trip to Antarctica in a 150-foot 3-masted sailing bark from Argentina—a sort of working tourist affair for about 45 passengers plus about 15 crew. The weather was various—“sleet, snow, sun, rain, in the course of one watch”—and so were the tasks. Brion noticed in particular the ship’s engineer. “His job was to fix things—the coffeepot, the generators. He was wandering around fixing things.” Not unlike Brion himself. His next big project is finishing a cabin he and Martha are building in Enfield. And yes, it’s definitely close to the lake.
Norwich-based dog trainer, Sue Kenney hasn’t always been a professional dog trainer, but she has always been involved with training dogs. It started with raising Guide Dog puppies for the blind.

Sue raised Guide Dog puppies since her children were young and would bring them into the Marion Cross School in Norwich. The dogs were even incorporated into the curriculum; students would keep journals about each puppy’s weight, nutrition, and behavior. Of course, the benefit went both ways, it was excellent socialization for the puppies as well.

When Sue moved on from the Marion Cross School, she studied under other instructors until she became a dog trainer herself. Although it was a big leap, she decided to start her own business called Goldenbookends Family Dog Training. The Golden Bookends, Pablo and Lady, were her two golden retrievers at the time. Pablo was a pup they raised for the Guide Dog program who didn’t make it, and Lady was a rescue.

Sue did not advertise her business and, although that made her worry, she quickly found that news spread by word-of-mouth. She now teaches classes at SAVES in Lebanon. The realization that you can start a business at any time in your life and be successful has also been one of the biggest bonuses of Goldenbookends, Sue commented. “If you enjoy what you are doing, people know that. They know you are in your element,” she said.

Sue built her training philosophy around establishing a team between the handler and the dog. In the classroom, she teaches the handlers positive reinforcement and attention games to teach the dogs to become “a thinking partner in the process.” Her main goal is for the handler and the dog to develop a strong bond through the use of games, focus exercises, and self-control in order to communicate with each other. Unlike the traditional dog training classes where the idea is to have a dog submit to the human, Sue encourages obedience but with a give and take, an understanding of dogs, how they are wired and how best to work as a team. Using this philosophy, she tries to create an enjoyable experience.

I asked Sue her favorite class to teach: “Puppy First Steps,” she said. “That is when emotions run high, just having someone to talk to is so important. Each phase tests your creativity and patience. This is good for us. It’s about enjoying every minute. [As an instructor] You have to love people as much as you love the dogs. Guiding people through those early moments are some of the most satisfying parts and you have to be available [outside of class] for that too.”

The classes themselves create a wonderful sense of community among the humans too, as well as the dogs of course. “[In a class] no one talks about where they come from. They are all there for a common purpose, to work together as a team.”

She also noted that the community often extends beyond the classroom as the handler/dog teams sometimes get together outside of class, building a supportive camaraderie that can create lasting bonds.

The original Golden Bookends have passed on since Sue started her business, but she has a new arrival in her life. Sully, a twenty month old blind golden retriever came to live with Sue in August of this year. She found the young dog, who has been blind since birth, through Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue based out of Hudson, MA. It’s been a new challenge, she said, but Sully has been a very willing participant, happy to live out in rural Vermont where he can hike whenever his handler wants.
important about the holidays the hard way.

“There is nothing like breaking your wrist four days before Christmas to help strip things down,” she says. On December 21st of last year, Dawn slipped on some ice and broke her wrist. She had been on her way to a party and was all dolled-up. Always the intrepid optimist, she posted a photo of herself from the ER and labeled it “ER Best Dressed Award.” Despite the bandages and IV sticking out of her arm, she looked great. Still, it was terrible timing. “I remember sobbing on the way back from the ER, realizing that I hadn’t wrapped ANY presents, made any of our favorite foods, or done the laundry in the past week. Christmas was ruined. “Then it slowly dawned on me that all the things that I LOVE about the holiday were still there: the snuggly-ness, all my kids in the house again, the small rituals of love. The kids, three out of four of them well into their twenties, still donned their matching jammies. We still read the letter from Santa and reveled in each others’ company. Christmas is the epitome of coziness for me.”

Jennifer Roby’s approach to the craziness that can overtake the season is a pragmatic one. “I usually keep a pretty detailed list of what I need to get done. (Of course that’s an everyday issue!) I keep my calendar open specifically around the holidays and devote whatever time I can to family. My favorite place to be is at my parents’ house, with my extended family, just sitting in front of the fire, chatting, laughing and reminisicing.”

Family is the focus of the season for Bill Aldrich too. Bill, who has lived in Norwich his whole life and is surely a fixture in town, says he “does nothing really out of the ordinary” during the holidays. “We just enjoy family, which is close by.” Over the years, Bill’s extended family, some eight or nine generations of it, has been rooted here at least since the early 1800’s.

“The MOST important thing,” Bill explains, “is when the grandchildren all read a page out of the Story of Christmas all the way to the end. They start as soon as they are old enough to sound out the words.”

Growing up with extended family all around town, generations of Aldriches – including Fullingtons, Grays, Wallaces and Wests, Bill and his many cousins and other relatives gathered at his grandparents’ house, known to this day as the Aldrich House at 16 Beaver Meadow Road.

“I guess I’ve learned over the years to go with the flow. In my working days, I worked a few Christmases. Since I’ve retired, my wife and children make it go easily. We all get together here on Christmas Eve and exchange gifts with the grandchildren. We give our kids and spouses a card with the easy-to-give gift: cash. Then they can get what they need. We have a lunch or dinner, according to the time of day, and then we chat while we slide into our usual comfort of enjoying the day. Then on Christmas morning we’ll go to our kids’ homes and watch the grandkids open their gifts. We’ll have lunch at one place or another, and then return home to watch football. Or not!”

Once the kids have grown up and Santa is no longer coming down the chimney, many people find a solution to holiday financial-overextension and exhaustion by shifting the focus from gift-giving to family activities. “We finally did away with gifts and made a game of it,” offers Martha Sass who works at Zuzu’s. Martha’s children are now college-age. “Last year we each spent Christmas morning writing an original poem. The poems went into a jar and we read them aloud at dinner. Everyone had to guess who wrote which poem. It was really fun.”
“We also make up variations to the old Yankee Swap,” she continues. “Last year we did a sort of Yankee Swap/Bingo thing. We had a grab bag of small items, all wrapped-up. Everyone pulled a gift out of the bag. Then we read The Night Before Christmas [a.k.a. Clement Clarke Moore’s poem A Visit from St. Nicholas] aloud. Every time the word ‘the’ was read, you passed the gift in front of you to the person on your right. When the story ended, whichever gift you had in front of you was yours! It was fun.”

Any effort made at the holiday season can be appreciated. Eileen McHugh, owner of Zuzu’s, recalls a wayward Christmas gift that managed to hit the mark anyway. “One year my sister, who I think was in high school or college at the time, tried to make a Christmas stocking for our mother. She embroidered her name on it and everything. But she didn’t finish it in time. My mother still uses that half-made stocking, every year.”

Creating something helps bring color and joy to the holidays. For several years running, the Norwich Historical Society held a yearly ornament decorating party for all comers, young or old. Free and open to anyone, the event featured tables spread with all the materials needed for creating something sparkly. Cookies and beverages were provided. Strangers (with or without crafting experience) gathered to chat over glitter and glue, and find the Zen of working with their hands to create something beautiful. People who hadn’t known each other before had a chance to chat without feeling self-conscious or forced, using ornament-making as a good excuse just to play.

Devotees of the 1990’s TV show Seinfeld will remember Frank Costanza (Jerry’s pal George’s contrarian dad, played by Jerry Stiller) explaining his own, made-up holiday called “Festivus.” Created in real life in the 1960’s by the father of one of the show’s writers in response to family holiday tension, “Festivus” found its way into a script and made its way into popular culture as an alternative to the commercialism of Christmas and the relentless pressure to be inclusive. In the 166th Seinfeld episode
called “The Strike,” Festivus is celebrated by the fictional Costanza family “anytime from December to May.” It includes such annual rituals as “The Airing of Grievances” and “Feats of Strength.” Instead of a Christmas tree, the Costanzas erect a naked aluminum pole. Frank Costanza’s fervor for Festivus with its motto “Festivus for the rest of us!” is well worth watching online and remains a gentle reminder not to get too crazy.


Kate Emlen and her “3 quirky brothers” circa early 1960s

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**Keeping the Jingle in Your Step** – continued from page 13

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**EST. 1986**
E ach month, more than 1,000 households benefit from the Food Shelf at the Upper Valley Haven, an on-site source of groceries offered at no cost. Six years ago, the Healthy Eating Program began, which has taken the issue of food accessibility in the Upper Valley and turned it up a notch, adding in the importance of nutrition and a little cooking wisdom.

Jennifer Fontaine, director of Community Services and Operations at the Haven, said in the past, healthier items, especially produce, were left on the shelves, prompting staff to consider how they might get guests to consider healthier choices. People in need can take a week's worth of groceries each month from the Food Shelf and have unlimited access to breads and produce.

“We emphasize good nutrition, not just any food to keep from feeling hungry, so have worked to acquire fresh produce, dairy, and protein,” Fontaine said. She said the Haven purchases food from a variety of sources including the Vermont Foodbank and local retailers to stock the Food Shelf, but “about 87 percent of the food that is distributed is actually donated or rescued food.”

While the Haven promotes nutrition via its Food Shelf, many visitors do not have experience in cooking some of the healthier options offered. “Many of our visitors live in more rural settings where shopping options are limited,” Fontaine explained. “A lack of variety and higher prices govern their diets. Studies have shown that it costs more to eat healthfully, and that is a luxury some of our visitors do not have on their limited incomes.” Fontaine referenced a 2013 Harvard School of Public Health study on the costs of eating healthy (i.e., diets rich in vegetables, fruits, fish, and nuts) versus eating unhealthy (processed foods, meats, and refined grains). The study concluded that a healthy diet is $1.50 more per day, which, when spread over 30 days and for multiple family members, adds up quickly. (More information on the study can be found here www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/healthy-vs-unhealthy-diet-costs-1-50-more.)

The Healthy Eating Program helps community members in need to obtain healthy food and learn how to prepare simple meals with it. Volunteers at the Haven help make this happen through cooking and offering samples every day. “Volunteers come in to the Food Shelf in the morning and choose items that we have an abundance of to create their sample of the day,” Fontaine explained. “Some make up their own recipes, and some search cookbooks or online for recipes.”

Monday through Friday around 10:30 am, volunteer chefs start working on their healthy dish, ready to serve food to Haven visitors between 11:30 am and 12:00 pm. If people like what they try, they can take home a pre-made bag of the necessary ingredients and recipe so they can make it at home. While most of the volunteers do not have professional cooking backgrounds, Fontaine said “a common thread is their love of healthy cooking.”

The preparation of meals is an important element in the Healthy Eating Program. Rather than just offering fresh, seasonal vegetables in the Food Shelf, cooking these foods in front of and for guests of the Haven shows them how to easily incorporate healthy and fresh foods to their diets. “Walking through the doors you are met with tantalizing aromas -- onions or garlic cooking, a good base for a lot of recipes -- or sweet spices or savory herbs,” Fontaine said. “Being able to watch food being prepared is a great lure for people. Smelling, seeing, and tasting are a great way to engage people in talking about food and getting them to consider working with and eating featured ingredient.”

Guests have responded positively, according to Fontaine. “People are taking produce that they might not have taken before, things like kohlrabi and patty pan squash, and commenting to us how it’s improved the diversity in their diet,” she said.

“Anyone in need in the community is welcome to shop our Food Shelf,” Fontaine said. “We require minimal demographic information and a few statistical points from visitors, but we do not require people to show proof of need. Our philosophy is to serve people without creating more barriers,” she added. “Anyone is welcome to sample from the Healthy Eating program. On any given day you will see other volunteers, other service providers visiting, and even staff supporting the efforts of the program to encourage our visitors to participate.”
MONTSHIRE MUSEUM TURNS 40! – continued from page 1

where a primary goal is to support and enhance the education of young women in the sciences.

Naturally, my grandchildren’s love of the Montshire ignited mine, and I became active as a volunteer on the Montshire Fund Committee and in various educational pursuits over the years. These connections have led to what I now see as my “grown-up,” ongoing engagement with this wonderful educational, scientific, and outside-the-box-fun resource, right here in town.

I was delighted to have the opportunity one afternoon this past fall to sit down with the Montshire’s new Executive Director, Marcos Stafne, who began work here in April. I wanted to know more about what he believed that he brought to his new job, what stood out about the Museum for him in his early months here, and what his thinking is as he contemplates his role in leading an institution turning 40 on January 10, 2016.

Marcos Stafne’s life history and job experience are very clearly museum based. He grew up in Orlando, Florida, where he spent a lot of kid time as a visitor to the Orlando Science Center and where he worked during college, as a program presenter as well as an actor performing shows about science, both of which, he says, “provided me with a great background for understanding the different ways that one can communicate science. I enjoy taking difficult concepts and making them accessible to folks at various levels.” Marcos brings expertise from his work at the Orlando Science Center, the New York Hall of Science, the Rubin Museum of Art, and most recently, the Brooklyn Children’s Museum.

How did he get to Vermont? By car, he states, driving up for the first time from New York during a snowstorm! Encouraged by various colleagues to put his hat in the ring for the Montshire job when David Goudy’s retirement was imminent, Marcos arrived for an initial interview at the peak of last year’s intense winter. “When I drove toward the Museum from Hanover,” Marcos says, “I was awestruck by its majestic position along the frozen Connecticut River. The building isn’t ostentatious, but the aesthetics project it as a place of importance,” an observation that Marcos elaborated on as our conversation continued:

“When I entered the building for the first time, I noticed how engaged all the visitors were. The exhibits allow you to bring your imagination to the table. In essence, a visitor plus the exhibit equals the experience. The Museum needs people to activate it; that each visitor experiences the joy of engagement rings true to my own personal connection with science.”

As the new Executive Director, Marcos Stafne succeeds David Goudy, who held the job for 34 years. I was interested in how Marcos contextualizes for himself the connection between the past and the future, in thinking about his role here: “There’s a reason, according to folk wisdom, that cars have windshields that are bigger than their rear view mirrors.” Going on to explain, Marcos affirms that the Museum was “built on a strong foundation, and my role is to take advantage of what is already working incredibly well, sharpen our focus, and keep the Museum relevant to the community.” Glancing backwards to identify strengths and depths that are synonymous with our identity, he suggests, we use that retrospective view to help sort through the choices ahead and make rock solid decisions.

David Goudy had “real vision,” Marcos commented. With dedicated and highly competent staff members and volunteers, he led the Museum to develop the hands-on opportunities that characterize visitors’ experiences here. He forged strong connections with local institutions like Dartmouth and with more distant pinnacles of the scientific world such as the Association of Science and Technology Centers, the National Institutes of Science, and the Noyce Foundation, whose aim it is to help develop leaders in the areas of math and science. Under David Goudy’s guidance the Museum also established multiple programs designed to deliver good science education to local school children and professional development opportunities to teachers.

Director of Education Greg DeFrancis created the School Partnership Initiative, further strengthening the Museum’s dedication to meaningful science education. Since its inception, the Museum has welcomed thousands of school children annually, through carefully planned school programs orchestrated by its highly skilled educators.

But that’s not all. It was under David Goudy’s leadership that the Museum expanded its footprint; built walking trails; began programming for adults; created the outdoor Science Park, recently renamed in his honor; and dedicated the Hughes Pavilion.

That’s a lot to work with, and Marcos looks forward to a future that will include expanding ties with Dartmouth and the community, exploring opportunities to utilize the Museum’s 110-acre campus, and increasing the educational programming. He also sees additional priorities on the horizon. Already, under the leadership of Jennifer Rickards, Director of Development and Visitor Services, the Montshire offers a “Warm Welcome” program, which provides greater access to the Museum for economically disadvantaged children and families.

Emphasizing a broad sense of inclusiveness will be a definite intention as the Museum looks ahead. “My short term focus has been to get to know the Montshire; listen to what folks have to say about the Upper Valley, Vermont, New Hampshire, New England, and interpret people’s perceptions to ensure

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that the Montshire is meeting the community’s needs,” says Marcos. On his list of possibilities down the road, he names improving access and opportunities for those with special needs, diversifying adult programming, providing connections for senior citizens, and exploring engaging programs for teens that can strengthen their ties to science in a supportive environment. Marcos envisions a museum that is both a community hub as well as an exciting destination for visitors from far and wide. Expanding partnerships and collaborations is on his radar as an essential pursuit in the years ahead. Community engagement in all aspects of science will be crucial.

As the Montshire Museum of Science celebrates its 40th anniversary, the leadership plans a year full of superb exhibitions, programs, and events beginning January 10 with a community Open House. The thematic mantra will be to cultivate the Joy of Science.

Human Plus: Real Lives + Real Engineering (January 30 – May 8, 2016) is a 2000 square foot interactive exhibit that offers visitors a chance to explore and create a range of low-tech and high-tech tools that extend human abilities.

Prototype Showcase: Making Music: The Science and Art of Instrument Design (May 16 – June 6, 2016) will allow visitors to share their input as the Montshire creates a new exhibition focused on the art and design of musical instruments.

The Tinkering Loft (June 25 – August 28, 2016) will be the Museum’s marquee exhibition for summer 2016. Based on the Montshire’s work piloting activities in the Tinkering Lab over the past 18 months, The Tinkering Loft will provide an extended environment to engage all visitors in tinkering, designing, and building.

And dinosaurs will be back next fall when the Montshire hosts Dinosaur Revolution. (September24, 2016 – January 1, 2016)

Please join me in wishing Norwich’s Montshire Museum of Science a very happy birthday, and also in welcoming Marcos Stafne as the new Executive Director of this very impressive institution. As the Museum builds on its past and looks toward its future, may the goal of experiencing the joy of science lead to an even more vibrant and inspirational 40 years ahead, on all fronts! ■

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AROUND TOWN

Give the Gift of Reading with Book Angels

The Norwich Bookstore’s Book Angels program makes sure area children in need receive a book as a gift during the holiday season. Dedicated volunteers work with local non-profit agencies to develop a wishlist of books for young readers of all ages. Each child is represented as an angel on a large wreath in the bookstore. Customers can choose an angel and find a book that matches his or her request, select a book that is special to you and we’ll find an angel for it, or donate a specific amount toward the program.

The Book Angels program runs mid-November through mid-December until every child has received a gift-wrapped book. The bookstore will donate at least one book for every 10 purchased. We regularly work with The Family Place, Vermont Child and Family Services, The Haven, and the Children’s Literacy Foundation. For more information, go to www.norwichbookstore.com. We thank you all for supporting this generous local tradition!

54th Annual Christmas Nativity Pageant

The 54th Annual Nativity Christmas Pageant will take place on Thursday, December 17, beginning at 7pm in front of Norwich Town Hall (Tracy Hall) on Main Street. Everyone is invited to this traditional walking, carol-singing pilgrimage re-enacting Mary and Joseph’s journey to the manger, according to the Nativity story. From Tracy Hall, Joseph leads a donkey carrying Mary to the Norwich Inn. The Innkeeper tells them there is no room at the Inn and sends them to a nearby stable. The journey continues to the stable where the nativity scene is complete with sheep and oxen. It concludes with the arrival of the three Wise Men bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The Norwich high school seniors play the roles of Mary, Joseph, the Angels, the Shepherds and the Wise Men.

Gifts of non-perishable food or clothing for the Haven are welcome and can be presented at the manger or left in a collection box in Tracy Hall.

Please wear appropriate outdoor clothing and bring flashlight or headlamp. Songbooks are distributed. Following the Pageant, everyone is invited to continue the merriment at the Norwich Inn for hot cocoa, cookies and more caroling with piano accompaniment. It’s co-sponsored by The Norwich Inn and Norwich Recreational Council.

Please consider making a donation to the pageant to ensure that this unique tradition continues. Checks may be made to “Norwich Christmas Pageant Fund” and sent/dropped at Dan & Whit’s. In addition, Dan & Whit’s will be selling beautiful holiday greeting cards with scenes of the Pageant painted by local artists. All proceeds raised go to the Pageant Fund, which is used to pay for various production expenses including replacement of old costumes, printing costs for flyers and songbooks, speaker rental fees and transportation costs for animals and props.

The Family Place

Celebrating 30 years of providing family-centered support to Upper Valley parents and children – from 1985-2015 – The Family Place is also celebrating five months with a new Executive Director, Nancy Bloomfield.
Meet Your Neighbor

Gina des Cognets
Hazen Street, Norwich

Where in Norwich do you spend the most time?
Running... on roads, trails, in town, out of town... and with friends over delicious dinners at our houses. I wouldn’t change a thing!

Who shovels your driveway/walkways?
Arch! Lucky me!

Who was your favorite grammar school teacher and why?
Mrs. Woodruff, third grade. She inspired us to think about life beyond our town – I vividly remember studying everything about China and loving it.

If you were to write a book, what type would it be?
A blog with a little of everything: favorite recipes, travel destinations, fun experiences, products and things I love and find useful and/or inspiring.

What is your favorite girl’s name? Boy’s name?
Girl: Elizabeth, boy: Henry

Which Disney or cartoon character best describes you?
Velma, Scooby Doo

To which local business are you most loyal and why?
ZuZu’s – I love the spunk of the women who run the store; Dan and Whit’s – how can you not! Velma, Scooby Doo

What is your favorite quote?
“It’s a great life, if you don’t weaken.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

If you were to write a book, what type would it be?
A blog with a little of everything: favorite recipes, travel destinations, fun experiences, products and things I love and find useful and/or inspiring.

Describe Norwich in a word or short phrase.
Bucolic

Who is your favorite actor or actress of all time?
I have 2: Gilbert and Gunnar

If you were to write a book, what type would it be?
Children’s book

Describe Norwich in a word or short phrase.
Bucolic

What is your favorite boy’s name?
I have 2: Gilbert and Gunnar

Describe Norwich in a word or short phrase.
Bucolic

Who is your favorite grammar school teacher and why?
Miss Forbes, 2nd grade. I was in a boarding school, two hours flight away from my home and family. She paid extra attention to a little girl who was very homesick, awkward, and lonely; she had faith in me and made me feel important and valued.

If you were to write a book, what type would it be?
Children’s book

What is your favorite boy’s name?
I have 2: Gilbert and Gunnar

Describe Norwich in a word or short phrase.
Bucolic

Who was your favorite grammar school teacher and why?
Mrs. Woodruff, third grade. She inspired us to think about life beyond our town – I vividly remember studying everything about China and loving it.

If you were to write a book, what type would it be?
A blog with a little of everything: favorite recipes, travel destinations, fun experiences, products and things I love and find useful and/or inspiring.

What is your favorite quote?
“It’s a great life, if you don’t weaken.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

If you could go anywhere in the world on vacation, where would it be?
The beach. And it doesn’t matter which one! My favorites have been Penang, Malaysia, and Hue/Hin, Thailand, and even – North Hampton, NH!

Which local organization do you believe has the most positive impact on the Norwich community?
I’m a fan of the hard-working local organic farms and CSAs, like Nora Lake’s Sweetland Farm CSA. They bring a sense of community and commitment to the environment.

Nordic or downhill skiing or snowboarding or winter mountain biking?
Telemark skiing at Mad River Glen. Completely and utterly hooked after years of downhill.

Which local arts organization is your favorite?
The HOP. I love the live music on the Dartmouth green in the summer time.

What is your favorite regular feature in the Norwich Times and why?
This one! I love learning about my neighbors.

John Pepper
Elm Street, Norwich

Where in Norwich do you spend the most time?
Mostly at home... and preferably outside. I work in Boston a few days per week so I’m not a hermit. We are fortunate to have purchased Betty Booth’s old property and have trails and Blood Brook and all kinds of animals and nature to enjoy.

Who shovels your driveway/walkways?
Graham Webster and friends do the driveway. But, I bought a used ATV last year so maybe I’ll get a strap-on plow and do it myself this year.

If you were to write a book, what type would it be?
A business comedy about the stories you can’t make up while trying to build a burrito business. I’ve been trying to write it since 2011.

Describe Norwich in a word or short phrase.
Peaceful. Just quiet enough to hear yourself think, but not totally removed from the outside world.

Do you see the forest or the trees?
I see burritos.

To which local business are you most loyal and why?
I love Morano Gelato... Morgan’s commitment to delicious authentic gelato, and Pam and Jen’s commitment to such a personal customer experience, and the energy they put into the community.

You can have super powers for a day. Which ones do you choose and what good will you do with them?
I’d have the ability to see peoples’ biggest dreams (without them knowing it) and then give them just enough encouragement to actually take real steps towards realizing them.

Who is your favorite contemporary sports hero?
Tom Brady. He is talented, humble, and has seemingly overcome the majority of the US population being against him a few short months ago. He has never lashed out in bitterness.

Which local arts organization is your favorite?
The Montshire... the go-to for all 3 of our kids since 2003.

In which stage of life would you prefer to spend the most time and why?
Child-rearing years. This is so much fun. Our kids are 11, 9, and 2. Something different every day... every hour.

Which is your favorite regular feature in the Norwich Times and why?
Wait, I thought this was for the list serve.
Whether you are dreaming of a new home, a renovation or addition to your existing home, or expanding your office space, making your dream a reality is only a phone call away!

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Holiday 2015
The Norwich Times

Please join us today! For more information, contact Douglas Lufkin at: info@LufkinGraphics.com
The Norwich Business Council (NBC) helped Norwich celebrate Halloween this year by donating 200 pumpkins for the 5th & 6th graders at Marion Cross Elementary School to carve after school on Friday, October 30th.

The pumpkins were delivered to Cheryl Herrmann’s Re/Max Realtor’s office and Kevin DeRosa and staff from the Ledyard National Bank opened and scooped out about 30 pumpkins. In the afternoon, Cheryl Lindberg (Mascoma Savings Bank), PJ Stanwood (Open Journey Coaching), Doug Lufkin (Lufkin Graphic Designs) and some parents came to help with the pumpkins. Once school was out, the children came, selected pumpkins, and carved scary faces with tools donated by Dan Fraser (Dan & Whit’s). After the pumpkins were carved, the children took them to decorate the local businesses on Main Street. On Halloween, battery-operated tea lights (from Dan & Whit’s) were put in the pumpkins to add to the festivities.

Bill Hammond, the principal at Marion Cross, took the scooped-out pumpkin goop to the school’s compost site. On Monday, Cheryl Lindberg, Cheryl Herrmann, Doug Lufkin and Carrie Vreeland (Vreeland Clinic) came to remove the pumpkins – and delivered them to Hogwash Farm. The piglets squealed with delight and the older pigs grunted their pleasure as they tucked into their feast.

Happy kids, a festive town, and pleased pigs – the Great Pumpkin would have been proud!

Check Out the Turkey Trot

The 7th Annual Norwich Turkey Trot took place on Thanksgiving morning, November 26. People met at the gazebo on the Norwich Green for a 4.4-mile run or 2-mile walk around Norwich. See photos online at www.facebook.com/NorwichVT-TurkeyTrot.

Please Join Us Today! For more information, contact Douglas Lufkin at: info@lufkinGraphics.com

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Happy kids, a festive town, and pleased pigs – the Great Pumpkin would have been proud!
School Days is a new feature of the Norwich Times, highlighting innovative, fun and community-based goings on at Marion Cross. We had the opportunity to sit down with Bill Hammond, Principal of MCS, to discuss the latest and greatest.

Tout le Monde

Little voices singing in French can be heard throughout Norwich, thanks to an expansion of the French program, which now includes kindergartners through sixth graders. The reasons behind this move are both scientific and philosophical. “We know that younger people’s brains are wired more naturally for acquiring language, and learning a language has a positive impact on learning other subjects like math,” says Mr. Bill. “Learning a language early also promotes a global perspective that we wish our kids to adopt.”

The Play’s the Thing

In October, the entire sixth grade class put on a production of the musical, You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown for the rest of the school. Students chose their own roles or an offstage duty. “I wanted to feature the sixth graders this year, to let them know the kind of leadership and impact they can have on a community,” explains Mr. Bill, who plans to do something different with each sixth grade class depending on the character of the class. “This year’s group is theatrical so a play made sense.”

Connecting to the Natural World Through Play

“We know physical activity is really important for students’ learning, but we don’t always design things that way,” says Mr. Bill. Forest Fridays, now in its second year, is a program that allows kindergartners to spend most of every Friday all year long outside in the Milton Frye Nature Preserve. The children have French class, stories, lunch and snack outside. Every student also has a special spot to sit quietly each week and observe, which, says kindergarten teacher Jennifer Newberry, inspires a sense of wonder, and of course, many questions. The curriculum “is led by the students and determined by the natural rhythms of the seasons.”

Choices, Choices

“Part of good learning is giving options,” says Mr. Bill. With this in mind, new this year for the fifth and sixth graders are weekly elective classes. Some of the 5-week sessions available include: technical theater; outdoor running; Chinese; yoga; chess club; improv; locavore cooking; tree identification; TV production; and earth stewardship.

The KOOP

All Norwich residents would probably concur that empathy, cooperation, problem solving and leadership skills are among the most essential of life lessons, and there is no better time to start learning these than kindergarten. To this end, this year the school has added the Kindergarten KOOP (Kindergarten Open-Ended Outdoor Play), an enclosed outdoor classroom featuring a mud kitchen, a puppet theater and a stage. The creative nature of open-ended play enhances imagination and builds intelligence. “There are no expectations, no specific problems to solve, and no pressure to produce a finished product,” says kindergarten teacher Jennifer Newberry. Make-believe play, she explains, also helps strengthen children’s understanding of the world around them and the consequences to their actions.

The Real Deal

You may have heard that there is now a covered wagon in the nature area behind MCS. This antique wagon, surmised Mr. Bill when his wife discovered it decaying in the yard of an antique store, will provide the perfect backdrop for the third graders traveling through the nature preserve to experience what life was like for pioneers on the Oregon Trail. With support from the Milton Frye Fund, the prairie schooner has been moved to the meadow by the entrance to the nature area, and is being restored with help from Youth-in-Action.
They float and flutter over summer fields, sun-splashed woodland openings, and flower gardens. They merit angelic roles in poetry, art, and our own imaginations. With names like Great Spangled Fritillary, Painted Lady, and Emperor Hackberry, they are among Earth’s most captivating animals.

Now, butterflies have a new and monumental role to play in our understanding of the planet. With an exciting citizen science project called e-Butterfly, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) intends to elevate these lofty insects to a higher calling at the intersection of recreation, science, and conservation. During 2016, VCE will take charge of e-Butterfly, the continent’s most ambitious online butterfly reporting and tracking project. Launched on a shoestring budget in 2014, e-Butterfly gathers butterfly sightings from citizens and scientists into a central computer database. In data there is power. e-Butterfly can become a potent resource for everything from recreational butterfly watching to research on climate change.

Before butterflies, birds united citizens and scientists in conservation. Birders, known for keeping meticulous lists and notes, have for more than a century provided essential population data to ornithologists and conservationists, most of it now gathered in supercomputers and available online at Cornell University’s hugely successful eBird.org. In Windsor County alone, Norwich-based birders submitted well over 1,600 individual checklists to eBird in 2014! Butterflies are next in line. e-Butterfly has fast become the essential platform for butterfly enthusiasts across North America. At e-Butterfly.org, butterfly watchers and scientists enter and manage their sightings and photos. After only 18 months in operation, the e-Butterfly database has amassed more than 500,000 records and 3,500 users.

Already we are learning about the intricacies of butterfly migration, including the recent discovery of unusual spring flight of over 300 million Red Admirals across eastern North America! E-Butterfly is documenting the steady northward expansion of Giant Swallowtails into Vermont and elsewhere – possibly in relation to a warming climate. The recent, sobering decline of Monarchs has been well-tracked by e-Butterfly. These and other discoveries provide VCE and other conservation groups with essential information.

And, using e-Butterfly is fun! This easy-to-use online tool enables anyone to “butterfly with a purpose”. Not only can we learn about and celebrate the beauty and diversity of these vital pollinators, but we can contribute to conservation at the same time. Windsor County harbors at least 75 of Vermont’s 103 known butterfly species, but we have much yet to learn. Check out VCE’s Vermont Butterfly Survey website at www.val.vtecstudies.org/projects/vermont-butterfly-survey, grab a net and field guide, and get ready to use e-Butterfly next spring! – Chris Rimmer
CB Redpath: Heather Mason

Upper Valley native Heather Mason started out at Coldwell Banker, Redpath, & Co. as a temp, but ideally the office was looking for a full-time receptionist. Heather proved the right fit and was hired. That was 9 years ago. Now, she is a woman who wears a few different hats at work.

She’s the receptionist, likely to be the one greeting you when you enter the CBRedpath office or answering your phone call. But that’s not all Heather is doing, she’s also the Listing Coordinator for the office.

As the Listing Coordinator, Heather spends her time compiling all the relevant information and photos regarding new listings, or changes to current ones. Agents hand over the care of this important aspect of real estate to her, freeing up time for them to serve clients. All that work she does then gets put up on the MLS. Heather has also been given the title of “office fixer,” she makes everything run smoothly, from getting the copier to work to meeting the needs of the clients.

I asked Heather what her favorite part of the job is and she surprised me. It’s the people in the office that really keep her going, and the amount of effort they all put in to giving back. The CBRedpath office participates in Toys for Tots, Angel Tree, The Prouty, and individual colleagues support more charities through other activities as well. There are so many different personalities, Heather said, “Everybody goes in so many different directions, these are unifying things, everyone pitches in to help out.”

Even, she noted, some of the vendors the real estate office regularly uses, such as movers or painters that they arrange as services for home buyers if necessary. Vendors will come in and take a name off the Angel Tree too, helping to keep the “giving back” energy flowing in the office and beyond.

– Molly O’Hara

Stonecliff Animal Clinic: Dr. Billy Dundon

As of November, Dr. Billy Dundon had only been working at Stonecliff Animal Clinic in Lebanon, New Hampshire, for two months, but he was already “having a blast,” he said. Though you won’t detect an Irish brogue when he talks, Dundon is originally from Ireland’s County Clare. He moved to the United States around the age of six and returned to Ireland to attend the School of Veterinary Medicine at University College in Dublin.

“I think about animal caretakers who work in emergency hospitals like myself,” Dundon said. “That was 9 years ago. Now, she is a woman who wears a few different hats at work.

The Mascoma Savings Bank takes a great deal of pride in the fact that they not only offer superior banking services to the surrounding communities in the Upper Valley, but are an intricate part of each community as well. Since 1988, Mascoma Savings Bank Foundation has contributed over $3.4 million to local nonprofits. Case in point: The Family Place Parent Child Care Center on Route #5 in Norwich, VT. This nonprofit organization just celebrated its 30th anniversary this past October offering a myriad of services including Parent and Education Support, Child Care Support Services, Nursing Services, Home Visits, a Child Advocacy Center and Special Investigation Unit, Play Groups and an Information, Referral and a Lending Library.

Hanover, N.H. resident, Angela Stafford, serves as The Associate Director of Operations and heads up Donor Services for Family Place and she was adamant about the importance of corporate sponsorship.

“Mascoma Savings Bank has been one of our high-end corporate sponsors for a very long time,” Angela explained. “Their involvement just puts my heart at ease. With state and federal funding being cut every year and operation expenses increasing, corporate sponsors are absolutely essential. We can always count on Mascoma Saving Bank and their support.”

The Family Place’s largest fund raising event is coming up December 5th at Tracy Hall in Norwich when the 13th Annual Gingerbread Festival takes place, featuring a gingerbread house making competition, a gingerbread cafe, silent auction along with storytelling and children’s activities. That activity has become a holiday tradition in the Upper Valley region.

“Last year we raised $56,000 during our Gingerbread Festival so it has become a huge event. 100% of the money raised was donated to the Family Center. It is a very festive and fun time just before the holidays.”

The Family Place Mission Statement speaks volumes for the organization: The Family Place delivers comprehensive programs designed to strengthen positive relationships, teach essential skills, and promote enduring healthy growth for families with young children in the Upper Valley and surrounding areas.

Mascoma Savings Bank

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– Dave Nelson

Wishing you the very best this holiday season...
19 Days of Norwich

The 19 Days of Norwich, 1% for the Haven is in its third year. We are thrilled to have other towns following our lead, with a strong presence in Lyme, Hanover as well as a sprinkling in other towns as well. All these efforts will work together towards matching funds from the very generous Byrne Foundation. This year the Byrne Foundation is offering an $80,000.00 match. The best way to show our appreciation is to be sure we reach that goal. We need everyone's help to do so. Please shop locally with businesses with yellow 19-Day signs posted. Activities this year include the pancake breakfast, the grilled cheese lunch, the character breakfast, the petting zoo, a farm tour, a concert by Cameo Baroque, and the local product/food fair. We will have raffles, an online auction and a family fun game called 52 pick-up, and don't forget the 8 world wonders of Norwich for food donations. For details, contact dan@danandwhits.com or visit www.19daysofnorwich.com.

Holiday Basket Helpers

On November 11, Dan Fraser once again worked his magic for the Hartford-Norwich Holiday Basket Helpers, hosting a wine tasting to benefit the program. All had fun and received great deals on delicious wine, all to benefit a great local organization. The Holiday Basket Helpers are a local non-profit who embrace the challenge of making sure that children in need in our community experience the joy of the holiday season by connecting their needs with sponsors who purchase requested Christmas gifts for them. The organization also helps senior citizens with gift baskets of non-perishable foods and handmade cards and ornaments by local scouts. Last year they helped over 400 children and almost 200 seniors. They could do none of this without the overwhelming and generous support of our community. Please consider helping us help others this year, and bring the joy of the season to those who might otherwise be forgotten.

The Hartford-Norwich Holiday Basket Helpers needs your help. For over 30 years, this local non-profit organization has been providing gifts of warm clothing and cherished toys to children in need in our Upper Valley. Please bring the joy of the season to a local child in need. Go to www.holiday-basketsvt.org to sign up to sponsor a child or simply donate today.
It's a good problem to have – especially in these days of i-machines and e-everything: mid-afternoons on weekdays, the Norwich Public Library is flooded with kids. They come in to do homework for a few hours before their parents get out of work. There are a lot of 3rd, 4th and 5th graders – old enough to do their own thing, but not old enough to be at home alone for hours and hours. They play board games, use the library's computers, collaborate on school projects, or just settle in to read a good book.

“We're not at all interested in expanding the library, but some days we do wonder where we are going to put them all,” says Lucinda Walker, Norwich’s beloved, miracle-worker of a librarian.

They have a regular routine, the kids say. The school day at Marion Cross ends, they stuff their homework into folders and folders into backpacks, find their posse and set out for Dan & Whit’s for after-school snacks. Snacks procured, they move en masse up the street to the library where they dump their packs on the front lawn or the steps by the sculpture, and make fast work of the libations.

“No food in the library,” explains a lanky 4th grader with the legs of a colt. “It’s okay, except when it’s raining or it’s really cold,” she shrugs without complaint. It’s just part of the drill. At her side, her friend
Sonja jams the remains of a chocolate-covered, cream-filled doughnut into her mouth. Snacks dispatched, the kids jam the doorway, piling inside.

“Kids just migrate here. It’s not an organized after-school program,” explains Lucinda. “But we do end up supervising. Sometimes they can get pretty loud…”

The younger set gets into the act, too. Story Hour on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 calls to anywhere from 10 to 25 toddlers and Moms who gather in a circle for 30 minutes of singing and clapping, and a story read by NPL’s children’s librarian, Beth Reynolds. Beth holds the picture book of the day open towards her audience and walks the story around inside the circle, involving each tiny member of her audience directly in the narrative.

After Story Hour, toddlers rummage through plastic bins of toys, learning to “share,” while their Moms, a bit more relaxed about sharing, hang out on the floor chatting.

“The best part about all of this is,” offers Beth, “is that kids will grow up being comfortable in libraries and knowing that they are always welcome.”
Holiday Merriment is Locally Inspired at the Co-op Food Stores.

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