Oaklore and Other Jay Avis Tales

Elizabeth Craib

There's an old saying that goes if you find a job you truly love, you'll never work a day in your life. Nothing could be truer for Norwich's Jay Avis. He is a mechanical engineer by training (although he'll tell you that he's been “fighting it all along”) and has managed

Continued on page 20

Let's Ride

Katie Cawley

A Great Idea: Community volunteers create Huntley Meadow’s new mountain bike trail

The days are slowly becoming shorter, the nights are becoming cooler, and the long light of late August has arrived. Just as quickly as it began, summer is drawing to a close and the Upper Valley is beginning its annual shift into autumn. Soon the leaves will begin to change, temperatures will drop, apple season will kick off, and the school year will be in full swing.

This passage into fall brings another significant and exciting arrival for the town of Norwich... a community-organized bike

Continued on page 18

Community Action at Its Finest

Norwich Residents Reach Out with Aid

Dave Nelson

We have all seen the bumper sticker and t-shirts carrying the Vermont Strong inscription.

Recently a group of Norwich residents proved that motto is not merely a fancy catch phrase by offering a shining example of how neighbors care for neighbors.

On July 1 of this year, the property owned by Michael and Vickie Seaver on New Boston Road in Norwich was devastated by a sudden downpour that produced more than four inches of heavy rain in a mere few hours. The freakish storm wreaked havoc for the residents along the New

Continued on page 8

Vickie Seaver holds debris ironically emblazoned “Happiness Guaranteed”
SUPPORT THE NEARLY NEW SALE
October 20th-22nd - Tracy Hall, Norwich

Great selection of gently-used clothing for men, women, and children
Over $36,000 raised for local scholarships last year!
Visit www.norwichwomensclub.org for more information.

Fine cuisine

Renowned recreation

Great shopping

Caring staff

Independent living for seniors, with the finest amenities. Call us today to see how we can help you or a loved one.
“The Barret House” in South Strafford, VT

Historic, 5-bedroom, 1 ½ story, extended cape in the heart of the Rockwellian town of South Strafford, VT. “The Barret House” combines modern with antique, features beautiful gardens & foliage, porch, terraces, Dam, and a 2nd floor office over the 2-car garage. With large, open interior spaces, and small, private ones, the home has room for entertaining, relaxing, and solitude. The best of rural Vermont, just 25 minutes from Hanover, Dartmouth College and DHMC.

Offered at $475,000

Crystal Lake, Enfield, NH

Designed and decorated to celebrate waterfront living, this comfortable turnkey property beckons you to gather in the great room, linger on the dock, relax and enjoy the views from the covered porch, or retire to the master suite on the first floor to soak in the sunset. Separate living space over the garage offers office & rental potential. Expansive waterfront and hidden quiet spaces offer a casual retreat and easy living. Whether entertaining, enjoying family or spending quiet time alone, this is the perfect setting. Imagine a place with the power to calm and restore you after a stressful day at work.

Offered at $409,000

Fortune Street, Lebanon, NH

Nice 3-1/2-bedroom house; a short (10 min) drive or walk (2 min) to the Lebanon Green makes for an idea location. The 1st floor 4th bedroom could be used as a study or den to suit your family needs. Total renovation in 2008, incl. all new wiring and plumbing; most windows have been replaced w double pane glass; new garage doors, and appliances. The house features an enclosed front porch and offers plenty of storage in the attic, basement, as well as over the garage.

Offered at $209,900

Birch Lane, Enfield, NH

Local mountain views from every room of this bright and sunny well maintained 3 bedroom contemporary cape located in a wonderful neighborhood for year-round recreational opportunities. Open concept floor plan offers one floor living with a lovely master bedroom. Two additional bedrooms with adjoining bathrooms and family room in a light-filled walk-out lower level for children and overnight guests. Quality and attention to detail are evident: cherry cabinets, granite countertops, hardwood & tile floors. Enjoy a casual cup of coffee at your kitchen island or relax in front of the gas fireplace or in the spectacular sunroom. A mile from Exit 16 on I-89, close to DHMC and Dartmouth College.

Offered at $539,000

Dutton Hill, Norwich, VT

Contemporary design that conforms well to the surrounding landscape, set on a beautiful sun-filled hilltop meadow in Norwich, just 10 minutes from Hanover and Dartmouth College. Three bedroom, 2 ½ bath primary dwelling, with a connected 1-bedroom, 1 bath rental. Master-carpenter finishes, rustic, hand-built characteristics across multiple levels, and features a Rumson fireplace and woodstove hearth. Use “as is” with two living units; convert to single-residence; renovate and/or add on. With a 2- horse stall barn with garage space for 2+ cars it even offers the potential of keeping animals on the premises, and the land may allow some agricultural usage. Good opportunity for graduate students, family, retirement, or second home usage.

Offered at $589,900

North Hill Farm

North Hill Farm perfectly unites all the features of a New England farm with updated amenities in an unbeatable setting a stone’s throw from the Lyme Green. 246 acres of land include everything from private mountain biking and hiking trails to a trout stream and tree farm, all just minutes from the Dartmouth Skiway and the Appalachian Trail! The home features a chef’s kitchen with new appliances, high ceilings, hardwood floors, seven working fireplaces, barns, and updated mechanics, resulting in the ultimate modern farmhouse.

Offered at $2,495,000

Mountain Views on 10+ Acres in Hanover, NH

Long range views of the mountains! NH and VT define this serene setting on a quiet country road. 4 bedroom, 3 ½ bath antique reproduction saltbox on 10+ acres offers formal and informal living spaces overlooking pastures and meandering stone walls. Renovated in 2016, the house offers the grace and charm of an antique with modern functionality throughout. Open country kitchen, family, sun, and living rooms, library, dining room, mudroom and half bath; master suite addition has a full bath and space for an office. The property includes a 25’ x 40’ garage with loft storage and a two-car barn, and connects to miles of hiking and equestrian trails.

Offered at $1,050,000

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I bet many people in Norwich are like this: you just keep going and going, doing good things, but never really stop to assess your progress or good work. It’s okay to be proud of your accomplishments – no matter how impactful or subtle!

After looking through 20 years of Norwich Times issues to prepare the 20th Anniversary center spread (see pages 16-17), I actually do feel proud of the work I’ve been doing (with the help of many, many people along the way) for the past 20-plus years. The greatest compliment I’ve received was from Norwich resident and friend, Rob Gurwitt, who has also read through years of the Norwich Times while testing content for the DailyUV. Rob said to me once that the Norwich Times really does perform a community service. I couldn’t be more proud if that is, in fact, true!

When Wendy McMillan Kenyon and I launched the first issue in September 1997, I remember getting teased and challenged by some saying that our content was too fluffy or the audience wasn’t clearly defined enough. To me, that was music to my ears! I wanted the everyday stuff in these pages. I wanted to reach everyone and no one in particular (as long as they were Norwich residents). I didn’t start a Hanover/Norwich Times for a reason (even though that would have been the smarter financial decision). I believed that Norwich would appreciate its own publication in which to sing its praises – big and small – and that is what we’ve been doing for 20 years.

While the Norwich Times has always been mailed, free of charge, to every address in Norwich and to all of our advertisers, it is not free to produce. The many, many loyal businesses and civic organizations in Norwich and throughout the Upper Valley that have contributed financially to support this community gift should be thanked often and profusely – both verbally and by making a point to do business with them. We truly could not have spent the last 20 years bringing you your own good news without their support.

And, what a fitting segue into the next 20 years: this issue seems to be full of fabulous stories about neighbors helping neighbors improve each other’s lot in life and the ways in which the good people of Norwich contribute to the greater good. Happy 20 years together and thank you!

– Jen MacMillen
Unsung Hero: Arthur Owen

If you’ve lived in Norwich, and especially in the Beaver Meadow area, you probably know Arthur. And if you know Arthur, you probably have had occasion where Arthur came to your rescue in an emergency. Known by some as the ‘gatekeeper of the Meadow’ as his house is situated at the corner of Beaver Meadow and Chapel Hill road, Arthur has been there when cars slid off the road during icy storms, repaired the bell on Beaver Meadow Chapel when it’s been rung too exuberantly by young churchgoers, or plowed out the schoolhouse or chapel when they were needed for an event or service.

The Arthur we are talking about is, of course, Arthur Owen, a longtime member of the Upper Valley community who has had occasion to touch many of our lives with his substantial skills in problem solving and improvising to get us out of jam or ditch, get that well working again, or shore up that foundation. Arthur’s ability to save the day is legendary even to young children who have told their parents to call Arthur when a problem has them stumped because “Arthur can fix and build anything.” Arthur’s innate abilities and the skills he had acquired in his years of working for Dartmouth Buildings and Ground Department made him a go-to resource to resolve much of what comes with living in tough New England. Even if you don’t call Arthur for help in an emergency, he has a way of showing up at just the right time, analyzing the problem, and showing you what needs to be done.

It was with these moments in mind that friends and family of Arthur decided to hold a party to show appreciation for those many instances when he has touched our lives. Close to a hundred people gathered at the Beaver Meadow Schoolhouse in late August for a potluck dinner after a sing-along at the Beaver Meadow Chapel. With the schoolhouse filled to capacity, several people recounted stories of the times Arthur helped them in a moment of need. Some were funny and some ended with hardly a dry eye in the house, but all seemed to end with the mention of “pie.” It appears that the one payment Arthur appreciates for his many services is a good pie.

The last couple of years have brought some changes for Arthur. After his first wife, Shirley, also a legend of the Meadow passed, Arthur married again. He has since moved from Beaver Meadow and is now building a house in Newbury, Vermont, a decision he made so his wife, Carol, could be closer to her job. But he still holds on to his house here in Norwich, and is often seen in the dooryard working on his trucks or plowing through the last year. And now, Arthur has also had to fight against esophageal cancer, a disease that doesn’t yet know Arthur’s resourcefulness in overcoming obstacles. Upon receiving the news of the cancer, the Owens contacted the Beaver Meadow community for prayers and positive thoughts, and those seem to be working well. Arthur’s cancer has not metastasized. It has responded well to chemo and radiation, and the doctors are optimistic that with surgery, scheduled for September, he will be able to beat it.

The party at the schoolhouse was evidence of the support that Arthur has from the community, and assurance that neither distance nor the trials of illness put much of a dent in Arthur’s impact on Norwich, and for that we are grateful.


See “Spotlight On Our Sponsor” on Page 29
Thank you to NPL Volunteers!

During this past fiscal year, our 40+ Norwich Public Library Volunteers contributed their hard work, good humor, and kind fellowship to all our patrons, helping to create the welcoming environment that the library has come to represent and value. Together with staff, volunteers share a passion for books in all their forms and consistently communicate this excitement to current and new patrons as well as visitors throughout the year. Trustees and staff are grateful and deeply appreciate the over 2500+ hours contributed by our terrific and loyal volunteers. Thank you!

Thank you to the Friends

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It’s been another action-packed year at the Norwich Public Library! NPL staff and volunteers were busy with over $4,000 visitors, $1,200 items checked out, and 1000+ people a month using the updated and improved public WiFi. We increased and diversified our outreach with 266 programs that were attended by 3790 people, and 443 events held in our community room. We even added an outdoor seating area, offering new ways for patrons to enjoy the library. That’s a lot of activity for a town of 3,400 residents! Our dynamic and thriving library would not be possible without our loyal and generous donors, patrons and Norwich residents. On behalf of the Trustees and staff, thank you for your support, and we look forward to another active year of serving the Norwich community. Stephanie McCaul, President, Trustees of NPL.

This list has been prepared with care, but if your name has been omitted or listed incorrectly, please let us know so we can correct our records. Thank you!

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NPL loves a parade! Board members, volunteers, friends & staff joined in the fun at the Norwich Fair Parade.

NPL loses a parade! Board members, volunteers, friends & staff joined in the fun at the Norwich Fair Parade.

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John Saroyan enjoys our new seating area. Grateful thanks to the Friends of NPL and the Mascoma Saving Bank Foundation for their support of this project.

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Chainsaw work

Garage debris

Debris cleanup

The cleanup crew

COMMUNITY ACTION AT ITS FINEST – continued from page 1

Boston and Ladeau Roads. For the Seavers, it hit particularly hard, as Vickie explains.

“Our neighbors next to us have a fifteen-foot elevated driveway that runs over a gully. The rain filled a field by the driveway and the water pressure caused the driveway to collapse. All that water rushed onto our property and leveled our two-car garage. Also we had eight trees down and propane tanks were seen floating nearby. There was debris everywhere and the entire neighborhood had to be evacuated. It was devastating!”

Vickie went on to point out that their house did not have a basement and that saved them from further flood damage that would have compounded the situation. Everyone was safe, but not without a price.

“My 90-year-old father is a carpenter and he had many of his tools stored in that garage and they were washed away. Our vehicles were not in the garage and that was a relief,” Vickie said.

As the Seavers looked out at the carnage in their yard, the first thoughts turned to just how would they cope with this disaster? They had no flood insurance and their homeowners policy would not cover the damage. They did not have to stress for very long however. Norwich residents sprang into action to help their neighbors.

“Meghan Wilson, who lives on Ladeau Road, organized a cleanup event for us to help clear out the debris from our flooded garage. The water had run down to Ladeau Road, as well, and the brook behind our house had risen. We have many neighbors in Norwich, and we were the fortunate ones who feel truly honored to have folks that didn’t even know us help us out. It was incredible!”

“All of a sudden we had about 35 people in our front yard,” Michael Seaver stated. “There were people with tractors and a dump truck, and everyone started pitching in to remove all the debris and to cut up the fallen trees. Many of those people we met for the very first time. It was unbelievable!”

The dedicated volunteer laborers quickly cleared the debris working through the day on a Sunday. Once the damaged garage was removed, the group then constructed a brand-new storage shed on the slab where the 24x24’ structure had stood.
It was truly a whole group effort. A lot of people also helped out during the week leading up to the neighborhood clean-up that I helped organize. (Price Campbell was putting up trash bags and collecting debris from the stream throughout the storm, Ashley Lang picked up a ton of debris, and I know there were countless others.)

I wanted to help, but knew that I couldn’t move things in the stream... so I just chose a day at a gathering of Ladeau residents that worked for most. I was communicating with Vicki and Mike about what they would like to have done, and let them know that Sunday from 12 to 3pm was the time where people would be helpful.

Vicki then had a day that she could tell all of her friends and family to come out and help, and Liz put the message out to the town. There was a lot of support from Ladeau, and a lot of support from Vicki’s connections in actually doing the clean-up.

I wasn’t doing heavy lifting, instead I was playing dress-up with the neighborhood kids while others were cleaning up the road. We also helped out Peter and Vicki’s neighbor... and they in return helped us out.

Cheers, Meghan Hewitt

Elisabeth Bilar and Meghan Hewitt pitched in

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Illustration on front: Gouache prototype by Sabra Field for the Upper Valley Haven © 2016
Throughout August and continuing through September, White River Animal Rescue (WRAR) is running a campaign called the #50/50 Campaign. The #50/50 Campaign is based on the idea that a puppy born in the US has a 50% chance of survival, and that many rescues in the local area and beyond have a lot on their plates trying to pull dogs from the south as fast as possible. The goal is collaboration among rescue organizations to save as many dogs’ lives as possible.

Amy Knight, the founder of WRAR, emphasized the need for collaboration among rescue organizations to take that 50% chance of survival and bring the number as close to 100% as possible.

Amy began rescuing dogs unwittingly seventeen years ago when she took in Shiba, a Belgian Malinois puppy who was about to be killed by the farmer who bred it. A teenager who was on the property managed to rescue one of the litter and brought it to Amy. While she intended on keeping this sweet, wriggly thing which showed up, Amy was concerned for the other pups that remained on the property. She called the neighbor, who turned out to be the farmer’s sister-in-law, and the woman collected the rest of the puppies.

Amy also didn’t know she ended up with a pure Belgian Malinois until she took the dog to the groomers. Shiba ended up being quite extraordinary and sadly passed away this previous winter.

When Amy moved to Vermont, she ended up on an email list for rescue volunteers where she was asked if she could help transport three dogs from White River Junction to Burlington. Once people have a line on you, especially from down south, they start calling.

All signs pointed to her need to be involved in animal rescue, so in 2009 Amy decided to start White River Animal Rescue. She also works as a college professor, teaching psychology part time. Her focus is on bringing dogs from dangerous situations in the south up here where they live with foster families with the goal of finding forever homes. Many of the dogs are pulled from overcrowded southern shelters with anywhere from 24 hours to 3 minutes to live, but some come from other places as well.

Amy said, “We don’t only rescue dogs from shelters... Because not all dogs are in the shelters, some dogs are on the side of the road. Some dogs are way out in the country. Some people, they don’t want to bring the dog to the shelter, they dump them wherever, in whatever state. People say, ‘Oh my god! That dog’s not from a shelter?’ And I say ‘no, it’s from the side of the road or a ditch, or in a drainage culvert...’ But it’s still a rescue because they are living on the side of the road.”

Justine Kohr is a WRAR volunteer and self-proclaimed foster failure. She spends her days working as the assistant director of marketing and communications at the Tuck School as well as being a writer and editor. As a volunteer, Justine has utilized her work skills to assist with the marketing of WRAR. “Everyone who volunteers is a little bit involved in everything.”

She has worked with transports, new arrivals, and other aspects of the rescue, as well as training her rescue dog and previous foster, Pepper.

Justine is heavily invested in the #50/50 Campaign as well. In a prior interview she shared, “We know that other rescues and shelters have a lot on their plates and they have a lot of animals that they are bringing into their spaces, and we want to partner with them and help when we can.”

According to Amy, there are currently seven other rescues or shelters participating in the campaign. On the website, the first dogs highlighted are the ones who need the most donations to fight health problems. Then the list continues.

For WRAR they ask that the rescue or shelter send them a video, photo, and description of the dog in need and they will promote it. Half of the donations stay with WRAR, but all of any adoption fees go directly to the original rescue.

The final hope of the #50/50 Campaign is that rescues will continue to collaborate rather than trying to do everything individually. Helping each other, in the end, means helping more dogs.
AS WE JOIN JEN IN CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORWICH TIMES, it seems an appropriate time to look at how much has changed in the wine business during that time.

While people’s tastes in wine certainly vary widely, there have been trends that have come and gone over the past 20 years. When the first issue was published, the country was in the middle of the 1990s Merlot craze. Cabernet Sauvignon had been dethroned as the most popular red grape in California, and people were ordering ‘a glass of Merlot’ as if it was the only red wine available.

In the mid-2000s, Merlot’s dominance had been usurped by Pinot Noir. Largely based on what viewers had ‘learned’ from the comedy movie Sideways, people around the country decided that it was the grape they should be drinking. A decade later we are still recovering from this. At Norwich Wines and Spirits, we have continued to carry not just what is popular, but also the obscure and lesser-known varietals that often offer much better value in great tasting wines.

Another enormous change in that time has been the use of alternative closures for bottles. In 1997, most people were wary of wines with screw-caps, as the ritual of using a corkscrew was such a deeply-ingrained part of the wine experience. Now, after wineries have explored many different synthetic and composite corks, the modern screw-cap has proven itself to be an excellent closure and wines without true corks are getting the respect they deserve.

Join me in raising a glass to toast 20 years of the Norwich Times, and to look forward to what changes lie ahead in the world of wine!
To understand the first heartbeat of Norwich, the real beginning of its history, it’s essential to tramp around the grounds of the first meeting house. For the first Norwich settlers, the building of a meeting house was a major achievement. “More than any other event of the time,” proclaimed the 1905 History of Norwich, Vermont, “with the possible exception of the accomplishment of the national independence, this was an undertaking that enlisted the energies and taxed the resources of our forefathers.” The building where the first town meeting and the earliest church services were held was located near the intersection of today’s Union Village Road and Maple Hill Road, about a mile out of town.

Throughout Vermont, the meeting house was constructed at the proposed ‘center’ of a village where the town business and church services would be conducted. This was a critical decision, and the location of the first meeting house and the Norwich town center was “sharply agitated.” In October 1773, a committee of settlers decided to build the meeting house “a little North of West from Capt. (Peter) Olcott’s dwelling house, on the north side of the highway.” Olcott, who had only lived in town for a year, donated the land for the meeting house lot and the public burial ground. Because there was “considerable dissatisfaction” with the choice of the Olcott land for the meeting house, the area became known as Judgement Hill, a name it kept for many years.

Some of the first Norwich settlers had been members of the Congregational Church in Connecticut and with the help of Reverend Peter Powers, a traveling minister from Newbury, Vermont, a dozen citizens gathered together and established a Norwich congregation in the summer of 1770. The Reverend Lyman Potter was ordained the first minister on August 31, 1775, “…in the open air, upon the spot chosen for the future temple, but then a primitive forest.” But until the meeting house was built, families often hiked three to six miles to attend similar services in Hanover. They also met in homes or in Peter Olcott’s barn or out in the open air if the weather was agreeable.

Construction of the meeting house was a slow process. Building materials along with labor were donated by the townspeople, and the foundation wasn’t laid until July 9, 1778. Finally, in the spring of 1785, after seven years, the meeting house was fully completed. “It was reputed at that time to be the best meeting house in the State.” In June of that year, Norwich was honored when the Vermont Legislature met at the meeting house for 16 days. Among those in attendance were...
attendance was Ira Allen, the first treasurer of the state and the brother of Ethan Allen.

By 1817, Norwich’s population had doubled and the town had grown prosperous. So a larger, second meeting house was built near the old one. On Christmas Eve of 1817, the 40-year-old building, where “pious aspirations of two generations of worshippers had found a voice, and where the fathers of the town had so often formulated their ideas of civil policy in town and state – a building that to Norwich stood for all that Faneuil Hall and the Old South Church together stood to Boston – was sold to Constant Murdock, the highest bidder, for $100.”

In 1817, a third meeting house was built down the hill on the Plain where the village was in reality developing. The church on the Plain had the financial support of eleven Norwich families who raised $2,125 for its construction. Building began on May 5, 1817 and was finished six months later. The new church stood on the green and faced west across Main Street up Elm Street. Captain Partridge’s American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy (later Norwich University) was built east of the church in 1819. The steeple clock was crafted by Stephen Hasham, a well-known clockmaker from Charlestown, NH. Thomas Emerson purchased a bell for the church when it was completed. It was Vermont’s earliest bell and was inscribed ‘Revere and Son, Boston 1817.’ Of the six Revere bells in Vermont, this is the only one that was cast during his lifetime. Revere died in 1818. The bell was guaranteed for only one year, but has continued to ring for 200 years. It cost 45¢ a pound and weighed 647 pounds.

The split between the North Church (at the center) and the South Church (on the Plain) lasted for more than three decades. It was not a peaceful division. Families used to the old meeting house at the center did not want to shift to another church. And families at the Plain felt the town church should be down the hill at the center of the growing village.

Squabbles arose over money, taxes, and which folks could or could not use the North House. In October 1826, tensions erupted when “Deacon Cyrus Partridge (a member of the South Church) complained that Hezekiah Goodrich cheated Samuel Johnson out of part of the value of his farm.” The charge was not supported by the rest of the congregation, so Partridge, who was also upset that the South Church “approved dancing schools,” renounced his membership and joined the North Church. Citizens in both churches were distressed and a council was organized to discuss the issues. It took a few years for

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HISTORY – continued from page 13

temperatures to cool, but in May of 1831, Partridge apologized and “was restored to membership in good standing, in South Church.”

Maintaining the South Church and keeping it comfortable for its congregation was a difficult task in the 19th century. In 1837, they paid $75 for two stoves to heat it. “The stoves were in the vestibule, and the stove pipe ran the length of the church, under the galleries... up through the ceiling into the chimney.” A custodian “rang the bell for all services, deaths and funerals,” and kept up with “sawing the wood, making and tending fires at all times... filling, trimming and lighting lamps, sweeping the vestry... clearing away the snow... tending the doors, see that windows and blinds are kept shut when not necessary for them to be open and winding the town clock.”

In the summer of 1850, an appeal was made by the Ladies Sewing Circle to increase the size of the South Church, and even move it to another location “which would add much to the convenience and comfort of all the worshipers in said house, and the beauty of the village.” In addition, many villagers were annoyed by the late-night shenanigans of the cadets at the neighboring academy who enjoyed ringing the church bell and then racing back to bed before they could be caught. A committee was formed and it was agreed that the church on the Plain should be moved to its present location where it could be enlarged by twenty pews. Remarkably, very little is written about the relocation of the church, which happened in 1852 and must have been a massive undertaking.

By 1853, with a dwindling congregation, the North Church meeting house was sold and razed. It was a bitter departure for many. “I have been to meeting to the Plain,” wrote a young woman in August of 1854. “Oh, it seems so strange to go there... you will never feel at home to go to a meeting on the Plain... and you will mourn that Old House is lost... the place where we have always been accustomed to worship from childhood, and that burying ground where so many dear ones lie, will never be visited now except by the passing traveler.”

With the closing of the North Church sixty members reluctantly moved to the church on the Norwich Plain.

Throughout its history the members of the South Church tackled the social issues of the day. In May of 1827, a committee began to promote temperance. By 1854, a resolution was passed that declared “…no person shall be admitted as a member of the Church who shall not engage to abstain from making, selling or using ardent spirits.”

Sylvester Morris, a long-time deacon at the church, was appalled by the drinking and carousing that occurred at Norwich University, especially after the Fourth of July parade. Morris finally saw that student drinking was halted, but suffered the ire of the cadets who tore up his garden and burned him in effigy in Hanover. Mr. Morris’s wife, Susanna, and their daughters had founded the Norwich Female Abolition Society in 1843. For seven years they supported and sent supplies to people who were helping fugitive slaves.

From the start the meeting house, services were blessed with music. In 1814, Israel Newton, a Revolutionary War veteran, button maker, and a member of...
the church, built what is believed to be “Vermont's first pipe organ in their Congregational Church and meeting house.” This organ did not travel to the South Church. In 1856, a new organ was purchased for the Church on the Plain and placed in its balcony. In 1908, the organ was moved downstairs to the front of the church.

Enter Fred Metcalf. In 1915, Fred, who worked on his family’s Dutton Hill farm, was hired to play the organ at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Norwich. In 1919, he began to play at the Congregational Church as well. “It was an extraordinary scene each Sunday morning. About 10:30 a.m., carrying his ever-present briefcase, coat flying out behind... Fred hurried across the school campus from St. Barnabas to the White Church.” The organ was powered “by bellows pumped by a lever coming out of the case side.” Fred hired “bellow boys” to pump the bellows on Sunday. After an hour of pumping, each boy received a new quarter for his labors. Fred was devoted to music. “He knew how to end things and how to begin in a church service,” wrote a member of the church. Along with his musical responsibilities, which lasted for nearly 60 years, Fred often taught Sunday school, organized a Boys’ Choir and served as a deacon.

By the start of 20th century, church members realized they needed more space for the “various organizations in our Church.” To raise the initial funds for construction, the first Norwich Fair was held on the green in July of 1949. According to a newsletter sent out in June of that year, the fair “...will commence with a dance at the Town [Tracy] Hall on the 15th of July, and on Saturday the Midway on the Campus [Green] will be open to all.” All proceeds from the fair would be placed in a building fund for the church. “We are in hopes of building a parish house,” the newsletter concluded, “to meet the needs of an ever expanding town. Many, many new homes are being built in the village, and the church must serve its people, its youth and its elders, as it has done in the past.”

The fair was a huge success and included a parade with the Grant and Nichols Fife and Drum Corps from Concord, NH; participants on horses and floats; kids on bicycles; and Comrey Cook with his wife Mattie in a 1903 Cadillac. After the parade, everyone gathered on the green to hear Vermont Senator Ralph Flanders – who would later gain fame in 1954 by speaking out against Joseph McCarthy – and watch the ox pulls. The Church raised $1,419.12 for the new Parish House which was built by the Trumbull-Nelson construction company and opened on July 9, 1950.

Beginning high in the woods at the center of Norwich and then shifting to the Plain in 1817, the Congregational Church has been an integral part of the Norwich community for over 200 years. Generations of families worshipped in the first two meeting houses and then at the South Church. Sadly, the first two meeting houses have vanished into history, but the cemetery established at the same time is still there along with a marker commemorating the structures. Happy 200th Birthday to the Congregational Church!

Unless otherwise noted, quoted material came from The Congregational Heritage 1770-1961 in Norwich, Vermont by Louise C. Johnson, and Goddard and Partridge’s History of Norwich.
The Norwich Times is 20 years old this issue! How can that be? It was just yesterday I was carrying my two-year-old daughter, Dewey, around as her dad and I gathered stories and took photos and picked up ad materials. (It’s hard to believe, but 1997 was even before the days of easy and quick electronic file transfer). I never had any big plans to start this publication, but I mentioned the notion of creating a community, good-news-only paper modeled after my other one, the Quechee Times, to my beloved late cousin, Garfield (Field) Miller, and he said “Go for it!”

With his help and encouragement, and the energy and graphic design prowess of Wendy McMillan Kenyon, and a lot of pavement pounding by me, the Norwich Times materialized three months after the thought was verbalized!

To celebrate this milestone, rather than showcase the 80 covers we’ve produced over the past 20 years, I chose a representative selection – one of four from each year – to help us all see how special this community is. As I looked through the Norwich Times archive issues, I realize now that it actually serves as a familiar diary, of sorts, for those of us who’ve been here for a long time, and as a glimpse into the relatively recent past for those who have chosen this special place as their new home.

In addition to the visual story the cover graphics tell, I created a list of randomly selected people and places and businesses who’ve advertised over the years, to reveal the variety, depth, and magnitude of community-building material published about this town. And, by no means, did I list everyone. My main purpose in creating this center spread was to thank you, Norwich, for providing so many stories that make everyday life so very worth living!

Enjoy... and here’s to at least 20 more!

Take care,
Jen MacMillen
Publisher
trail at Huntley Meadow. Huntley Meadow has long served as the scenic location for local sporting events, and now, after three weekends of hard work, it additionally offers a beginner mountain bike trail.

Gered Dunne, the lead volunteer, offered some history on the project as well as some insight into what an undertaking like this can mean for the community. The idea of installing a bike trail was originally floated back in 2007, but without funding the idea lost momentum. The vision was reborn in 2016 and began to come to fruition last September with the installation of a pump track at Huntley Meadow. According to Wikipedia, “A pump track is a type of off-road terrain for cycle sport consisting of a circuit of banked turns and features designed to be ridden completely by riders ‘pumping’ – creating momentum by up and down body movements. They are relatively simple and cheap to construct, and cater to a wide variety of rider skill levels, so are popular in council-owned parks and schools.

Based on the popularity of the pump track, Dunne, with the help of several community members, designed a plan to extend the pump track into more of a beginner mountain bike trail. “The goal there was to kind of have an activity that kids could do when their siblings were in sports and activities and they were down there watching games. Something to do in the background, other than throw rocks into the creek,” Dunne laughed.

Dunne began by going door-to-door in the neighborhood, floating the idea amongst residents to see if it would gain some traction and support “beyond the parenting contingent” of Norwich. The next step was to speak with the town manager at the time, David Ormison, as well as the Norwich Conservation Commission; both approved the building of a ‘closed-circuit, kid-safe trail’ that would also require the removal of a great deal of invasive plant species in the area.

In July, the group of volunteers received a grant for $1600 from the Norwich Women’s Club which set the project in motion, additionally serving as a huge vote of confidence from the community. This grant was followed by the donation of $2000 from the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association which funded the purchase of lumber supplies for the building of bridges and boardwalks which make the trail passable, as well
as hay and grass seed to repair edging on the trail and bumps.

With this funding, the group of volunteers had the means they needed to get started. From the actual designing and building of the trail, to the construction of bridges and boardwalks, to the clearing of invasive species and general ‘cheerleading,’ a group of 15-30 volunteers ranging from children to parents to Norwich’s more seasoned trail aficionados came out to work over the course of three weekends. With the invaluable help of OTB Trail Builders of East Burke, Vermont, this group of community members created a fully functional mountain bike trail at Huntley Meadow.

Special thanks to Norwich community members Kathy Redpath, Nick Krembs, Byron Haynes, Jay Fauci, and especially Graham Webster and Jane LeMasureir for their hard work and dedication in helping to make this project happen. LeMasureir runs the mountain bike program at Marion Cross School in Norwich, which has nearly quadrupled in size since its beginning, proving the high demand for a more permanent and established mountain bike trail in the community.

The trail is accessible from the sidewalk at both entrances in order to keep children from riding through the parking lot, and also has clear visibility for parents that are watching a sporting event while simultaneously keeping an eye on a youngster learning to ride their bike on the track. “The trail immediately creates a safe place for parents to take their little ones to learn how to ride bikes,” says Dunne. He goes on to say, “There’s not a lot of flat accessible trail opportunities for kids who can already ride bikes to learn how to navigate in the woods. And there’s almost no place in Norwich, and very few places in the Upper Valley, where one can learn to make the jump from tricycle or trider bike to a real-live bike without training wheels. Some start on the tennis courts, but the pump track and the kids trail, and surrounding grass fields is really the perfect spot for kids to learn and play free from cars and asphalt.”

But Dunne says the work is not done yet. The next step in the project is to build a central kiosk at Huntley Meadow that can serve as a guide to different trails around Norwich for community members and visitors alike who are looking to explore this beautifully scenic pocket of the world.

It goes to show what can be accomplished when you take the strength, resolve, and dedication of one group of people and pair it with the love and support of a small, closely knit community. What started as a seed of an idea can grow into a full-fledged mountain bike trail in a matter of a relatively few days of work. Dunne closed by saying, “Literally 10 different people who were talking along the trail during our workdays said: ‘Great idea! Love it! Can’t believe we didn’t do it sooner!’”

Willa Dunne to Dad: “I want to do it myself!”

Keith Lewandoski taking notes on body position from ace 5th graders
to couple those skills with his interest in primitive living and passion for helping others. From working as an outdoor educator and leading wilderness expeditions, to volunteering for Hospice and providing compassionate respite care, Jay has never lost sight of finding problems and helping people solve them. “It is a labor of love,” he says.

Jay and his wife, Amanda Burns, came to Norwich in 2012 from the suburbs of Boston. Amanda had found a teaching position at the Lyme School. “She’s an inspiration as far as what someone who is truly a perfect fit for their job looks like,” Jay tells us. “The Lyme School is the reason we moved up here, and she and the school have been the most perfect fit since day one.” In Norwich they’ve found “everything we need – and nothing we don’t need,” Jay explains. With wilderness spaces to explore, Jay and Amanda are keeping up the nature connection they bonded over when they first met as wilderness trip and environmental educators in Wiscasset, Maine with the Chewonki Foundation.

When they moved to Vermont, Jay tapped into his love of the outdoors and primitive living skills with a new business venture. He combined the primitive life skill of foraging – searching and gathering foods found naturally in our environment – with engineering. The foraged food in question? Acorns! Born out of his hobby of making acorn flour for friends and family, Oaklore LLC was founded in 2014. Jay works out of his heated garage space at home with the help of two hired workers who also share his passion for primitive living. Together they harvest and process acorns to produce a high-quality acorn flour which is sold to specialty stores, restaurants, and other niche markets.

Why acorns? Jay explained that acorns are a ‘staple food,’ one that is “high in nutrients, can be gathered in abundance, and stores well for a long period of time.” They are unique in that they are high in fat and starch, but unlike many other baking flours, are gluten free. They are also high in protein and monounsaturated oils that help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. For centuries, cultures around the world have enjoyed the benefits of this staple food. Jay has studied the way Native Americans have used the acorn and he has used his own technical skills to modernize production. “The wild foods I’ve consumed here in New England are varied, but I have a particular interest in the staple foods that sustained our ancestors.”

The process that Jay uses to make his flour has been updated, of course, but he is reluctant to bring the process fully into the modern age. He could, for example, employ the use of ovens to speed up acorn drying time, but he uses his radiant heat floor instead which adds weeks to the process. It is part New England frugality and part historical reverence that has kept him from automating his process. “I am a problem solver. I like doing something unprecedented on a budget.”

Jay calls upon the community quite regularly during harvest time. (The best time to harvest acorns is September through early December, when they fall off

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the trees.) If you’ve spent any time on the local Listserv, you’ll have seen his request. He seeks healthy, well-maintained, pet-and-pesticide-free lawns for acorn collection. One simply needs to contact him and he and his helpers will descend on your lawn to collect your acorns. “It’s a win-win for everyone involved. I get my acorns and the homeowner gets a clean lawn.” Oaklore uses acorns from Northern Red Oak trees, which are the most prevalent in the area.

His passion for primitive life skills comes into play during the harvest. He often challenges himself by asking, “how simply can I live? Is what’s outside enough to live on?” Interest in primitive skills and foraging can be traced back to his childhood in Maine when his parents sent him to summer camp. While there, he discovered wild foods that could be collected in the forest. (His first find was the Indian Cucumber or Medeola virginiana.) Fast-forward to his adult years and this curiosity is stronger than ever.

One would naturally assume that the founder of a unique company like Oaklore would be a specialty food connoisseur. On the contrary, Jay explained, “I’m not a cook. I’m not a foodie. I’m a problem solver!” His natural curiosity, successful networking, and hard work have made Oaklore a success. Help from the Vermont Small Business Administration and S.C.O.R.E. was essential as he was getting started with this first business. He was connected with a mentor, Sally Wilson – former owner of the Norwich Inn – who provided what he considered to be the most valuable piece of advice: “Focus on the flour. Don’t try to add to your product line now with specialty mixes [like muffins and pancake mix.] Do what you do best and the product will do the rest.” The

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advice paid off and now Jay is producing a niche product that is low volume, small scale, and handcrafted.

The business has put him in contact with a variety of people – restaurateurs, fashion designers, celebrities, film makers, brewers, and local news stations, just to name a few. His biggest celebrity client was Francis Ford Coppola who opened an American-Native-themed restaurant last year in Geyserville, California called Werowocomoco. Jay attests that specialty farm-to-table restaurants are his best customers. Another unique client was a brewery in Denver, Colorado that used his acorn flour to produce a specialty brew. While it was only a one-time exchange, it reminds us of the versatility of his product.

Despite the energy and enthusiasm Jay has for Oaklore, his curious mind has him on the lookout for the next adventure. He is currently seeking a buyer for his acorn flour business. “I’d love to find someone who has a passion for the concept and has some physical space they could devote to processing.” Jay said. The perfect buyer would be someone with “a variety of talents – from a love of physical labor for gathering and processing, to a desire to market the product.”

What’s next for this passionate, problem-solving engineer? He explained with a warm smile that he is most happy when he’s making other people happy. It should come as no surprise that his next venture directly involves focusing on people’s problems and helping them overcome them. He is interested in ‘bias reduction.’ He is going to explore the field of sociology as he finds a way to help individuals overcome their personal biases. This may indeed seem like a tough nut to crack (pun intended), but one that is necessary in our ever-changing world. He wants to create bridges between people, help diffuse tough situations, and humanize them. “I want to help people create a new way of looking at things.” He will certainly be calling upon his past experiences to bring success to this new enterprise. He’ll also be calling on you to explore more ideas as well. “I’m a networker and love connecting with people. I’m always looking for people to explore new ideas with.”

If you are ever out and about exploring the wilds of Norwich, be on the lookout for Jay and Amanda. They are an engaging couple with a great love of the outdoors to share. If you stop and chat a while, you’ll be sure to learn a thing or two about our natural environment and perhaps explore other perspectives.

If you are interested in learning more about foraging edible, wild plants, Jay suggests checking out Nature’s Garden by Samuel Thayer. For hands-on education you can also check out the R.O.O.T.S. School in Corinth, Vermont for information on wild food cooking and foraging classes. You are welcome to visit his website www.oaklore-products.com to learn more.
Church Celebrates 200 Years

Members & friends of the Norwich Congregational UCC Church invite all residents of the Upper Valley to our 200th Birthday Party!

Festivities begin at 4pm on September 16th. Activities include old-time crafts and games for kids, an historical scavenger hunt, 19th-century music, tours of the steeple, a talk on period architecture, re-enactments, cider pressing, and a light supper. All are welcome.

At 7pm in the sanctuary, memories of the past 200 years of church life will be shared: remembrances of former pastors and musicians; stories of baptisms, marriages, mission work, and the life of the church. A birthday cake will be shared.

Activities will be in the church’s fellowship hall and church yard, weather permitting. Attendees are encouraged to come in costume.

For further information, please call 802-649-1433 or email them at norwich-congregational@gmail.com.

Worldwide Neighbors

Scott and Lindsay McClure Miller live in the Upper Valley six months a year. They stay in a ‘Yome’ in the woods overlooking a pond, and are beginning to cook some meals over a fire. In the spring and fall, they migrate to California, where they stay in a van with a camper interior that they designed and built complete with a sleeping platform and a kitchen out the back door. In the winter months, the couple explores the world visiting countries near and far: Indonesia, Cambodia, Greece, Sri Lanka, Mexico, and Nicaragua among others.

Wherever Lindsay and Scott go, they bring their mobile documentary storytelling program, World Story Exchange (www.worldstoryexchange.org), partnering with schools and non-profit organizations to give youth the opportunity to create a short multi-media story using photography, video, and audio recording. The students then exchange their stories with one another to learn about the world from the perspective of other kids. By sharing youth-made stories across cultures, Lindsay and Scott believe the world will become a more peaceful place as the next generation develops an appreciation for the vast cultural diversity of our human family.

In their free time Scott enjoys surfing, nature photography, and playing music, and Lindsay enjoys dancing, creating earth shrines, and face painting. They both love to explore our beautiful planet. Scott is an Eagle Scout and has an MA in international affairs, and Lindsay is a certified wilderness first responder and has a BA in psychology. The couple will be offering a World Story Exchange screening in the Upper Valley in October. Stay tuned for a date and time.

Scott and Lindsay McClure Miller’s first picture of Yome life in Vermont

Lindsay teaching Photo 101 in a small village in Lombok, Indonesia

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Tip Tour Your Way Around

Try Something New

It all started at a wedding. As so often happens, a handful of guests found themselves standing around, facing several hours of time to kill before the next officially scheduled wedding event. What to do? Unknown town and region, a chance-met group of people. Who even knew what the options were? Wouldn’t it be great if there were some easily available, informative guide to local scenic spots, interesting features, unique peculiarities?

Tom Yen was at that wedding two years ago. “Several of us were walking by these ritzy houses in Rhode Island, on the waterfront,” he recalls. “Someone said, ‘It’s too bad there’s no way to find a local person who knows their way around, someone who could tell us about all these houses.’ If you Google ‘Rhode Island waterfront rowhouses’ you get lots of responses, but they’re not helpful. (We’ve certainly all had that experience!) They’re mostly about real estate for sale.”

Growth of a Good Idea

Tom headed home to San Diego and his consulting work, not realizing a seed had been planted with his good friend, Dave, another guest at the wedding. Six months later Tom and his wife, Renata, moved east so she could pursue a degree in public health from The Dartmouth Institute. They settled in Lebanon for its easy access to Renata’s classes. Tom and Dave made contact, and they began working on the app they wish they’d had at that wedding. They christened it Tip Tour. The idea for the name, says Tom, “came out of the fact that we decided to include in-app tipping (a gratuity) and ‘tip’ is fun because it also means suggestions. So Tip Tour is a reference to giving a tip for a tour and going on a tour comprised of tips from local experts.” The app aims to provide interesting information about sites near where you are (or where you tell it you’re going). It’s “a mobile platform that focuses on telling stories behind nearby places and things, and providing a way to explore a narrative behind a place via self-guided tours,” says Tom, in his easy-going way. It’s intended for use on a phone; the app doesn’t work on your office computer. (Not that you’d be browsing travel ideas at the office – but, just in case, a web-friendly version is in the works.)

Tom and Renata enjoy outdoor recreation when they have a spare moment. Furry companion Lily joins in as much as possible. They like year-round hiking in the area, and to get out on the Connecticut River on paddleboards or kayaks. They seek white-water kayaking in the Mascoma River when the water is high, and mountain biking is also an interest. Among its outdoor options in the Upper Valley, Tip Tour includes mountain biking tours on trails at Boston Lot Lake.

Interface for an Encyclopedia

Building sufficient content for the app is, of course, a challenge. Tip Tour uses information created by others (with permission, of course). For example, when they’re open the Norwich Historical Society can provide flyers for self-guided walking tours along Main Street. Tip Tour has made the content from the flyers available to the ever-growing number of people who reach for their phone when they need any sort of information. Sarah Rooker, director of the Historical Society, was interested when Tom Yen proposed creating a Norwich Tip Tour. “I’d been trying to get more material online and out to the community,” she said, adding, “It’s easy and cheap to add content online, say more pictures.” Lots of people are used to a printed walking-tour brochure, but online information is available to a much wider audience.

Popular tours often involve breweries, wineries, and specialty markets. The company gives window stickers to business sites on Tip Tour, with the hope of raising awareness of the app. Ideally, passersby will download the app to satisfy the curiosity of the moment, and then use and reuse it.

Tip Tour calls its information providers ‘curators,’ adding gravitas to the process. Tours can cover anything: outdoor sports and exercise, local historical high points (or hidden points), multi-site tours, and single stops. A vineyard ‘tour’ might include many stops along a Napa highway, or rest at a single vineyard but cover many different wines. “Early on we focused on finding existing content,” says Tom, “and we still seek that. But we’re finding people who want to collaborate, they want to create the whole tour. That’s the sweet spot.” You might think it would be like looking for a needle in a haystack to find content-creators, but, says Tom, “Lots of non-profits, like arts organizations, have material they put together in the past, but maintaining and publicizing their site was just overwhelming.”
Video and audio clips, photos, and text are all options for curators to convey their information. “The hope is to have people who are passionate about different things become curators and share that passion and wealth of knowledge with other users,” explains Tom.

**Information, Not Publicity**

Tip Tour wants to avoid becoming a place where businesses publicize themselves. “We are not a platform for reviews,” says Tom. “We are a platform for sharing stories about places and things. Not all stories are placed on the platform; to become a curator, an individual or organization has to demonstrate that they are going to tell interesting stories.” Users of the system, called ‘explorers,’ can rate the stories; stories that accumulate high ratings thus also acquire credibility. And if explorers are particularly delighted with a story or tour, they can leave a monetary tip for the curator. With a pop-up starting figure of 99¢ for this voluntary payment, it’s clear that no one is going to be getting rich fast by curating. The fun of passing on your enthusiasms and knowledge remains the biggest part of the reward.

To see what’s available locally, download Tip Tour Explorer. If you’d like to create a tour for Tip Tour, contact Stories@TipTour.org.

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There are certain signs of summer in Norwich that, to the untrained eye, may not seem like a summer sighting at all. You hear rumblings about it at the dump, “D’ya get yers yet?” Same thing at Dan & Whit’s, “This year I got four instead of three.” You see it in the eyes of your neighbors – weary, sweaty, looking a lot like a through-hiker. You hear it over their fences: Clang!... followed by groans and grunts that, embarrassed, you pretend not to hear.

Summer in Norwich brings visions of soft-serve at Dan and Whit’s, eating dinner on the deck, concerts at the bandstand, and woodpiles in your driveway. You heard that right. Woodpiles. Cords. Sticks sized to sixteen inches, maybe eighteen inches. Kiln dried. Green. Seasoned. That’s summer when you’re a Vermonter. As soon as your first row of Sugar Snax carrots start to poke out of the dirt, you already need to start fretting about winter. No time for rest. Winter’s coming!

Along with the Norwich Historical Society’s Home and Garden Tour, Norwich needs a Woodpile Tour. There are some seriously impressive sights to see offering wildly different stacking styles.

There’s the Type-A stacker, the one who has stacked each row five feet high and seven feet long, with exactly one foot of space in between each row. The Type-A stacker is known to measure the length of each stick to ensure a uniform size. The TAS will photograph her handy work and post it on her social media feed.

There is the All Business / Get ‘Er Done stacker, aka the No Fuss stacker. This is the person who has perfected the stick toss verses the careful stacking of each stick. There are no requirements to the woodpile shape, rather it’s all about getting the wood off the ground to let those February winds blow to dry out the wood.

Then there is the He-(or She!)-Who-Does-Not-Stack stacker. This person receives a pile of wood dumped in their driveway and then proceeds to claim, “Job done!” This person simply picks at the pile when wood is needed to fill the stove box. He is also known to leave piles of clean laundry on his sofa and sifts through it when clean underwear is needed.

There are many stacking styles. All it takes is a drive around town to see the sights. Really! Here are just two to start with.

One should start with the wood pile that is the granddaddy of piles. Said pile is, well of course, the pile that heats Dan & Whit’s. Hang a left onto Turnpike after you pass the dead dog on Main Street (not really dead, rather the dog sleeps in the driveway with ferocity). If you pass the house with the spiders on it – which no longer has spiders, but it’ll always be that house to us – you’ve gone too far. When you come up on the field, it will be completely normal to spend the first few minutes in awe, emitting all sorts...
of oohs and ahs. The field holds roughly 150 cords of wood. It stays there for at least one year before it is ready for burning. Matt Fraser is in charge of the wood for the store and surely needs a title that reflects the enormity of the job. The Grand Poobah of Woodpiles? The Almighty Stacker? Still working on it.

The wood comes from logs dropped off at the site. Matt chops the logs, then splits and stacks the wood himself. Some are sized to sixteen-to-eighteen inches, and some are as long as thirty inches. Matt explains he delivers the wood to the store by truck and then he stacks the wood in banana boxes (“six to eight sticks per box. That’s the way my dad prefers it.”). Matt has two wheelbarrows for this task. One of them he estimates is 40-50 years old. “My dad said we can replace it when it breaks. Of course, we just keep fixing it.” The basement at Dan & Whit’s is truly a must-see destination with stacks of wood wherever there is space. You can even buy a postcard that is a bird’s eye view of the field with the wood piles, back when the original Dan Fraser, Matt’s grandfather, maintained the piles.

Onward with the tour, further afield, past the dump, up the crooked half mile, one will come upon a wood pile that would be best described as MQW (Museum Quality Woodpile). The constructor of this woodpile, Jack Shepherd, could be considered an artist. Jack’s woodpile is stacked in the shape of a fish, fins and all, inspired by a book called Norwegian Wood: Chopping, Stacking, and Drying Wood the Scandinavian Way. Who would read a book about stacking wood? Admittedly, a judgmental thought, but really... who would read about that? Many, it turns out. This book is on several best-seller lists and turns out to be pretty darned entertaining. Jack has been stacking wood for years and it’s always been a great fitness feat he shared with his wife, Kathleen. But after reading the book last summer, which is written with a gentle Norwegian humor, Jack was intrigued to try out what he calls ‘the beehive.’ This cylindrical style of stacking is not only a beautiful way to tart up your driveway, but, as Jack states, “The wood dries very fast, probably because of the draw and convection of the airflow inward and upward.”

After having success with last year’s beehive, this summer Jack went for the Holy Grail and created the fish. Jack enjoys the fun and the challenge of stacking wood in this non-conventional way. It’s a lot of fussy work with chunks of time spent gently hammering in pieces to get that perfect curve. And Jack has been known to mutter a profanity or two when a log gets knocked out of place (talkin’ to you Mr. Woodchuck). The coolest experience is being recognized around town as the fish-woodpile-guy.

Lots of us heat our homes using wood as our primary heat source. It certainly appeals to the New England value of hard work and being thrifty. The expression goes: wood warms you three times – when you cut it, when you split it, and when you burn it. The next time you look at your recently dumped woodpile in your driveway, reframe this ‘chore’ and look at it as an opportunity. Stacking wood is hard work, no doubt. But it can be opportunity for self-expression... or your anal retentiveness. Any opportunity to walk around wearing deer skin gloves, filthy Carharts, and a stinky t-shirt is one no one should pass up. Really. Give it a try. Spend an afternoon stacking wood. You will suddenly acquire a swagger in your walk... maybe even a drawl in your dialect. Welcome to the secret society – you’re a Vermonter.
When a business person is able to establish a business in a community and operate it successfully over a number of years, it is a testament to the abilities of that business owner and to the community where the business is located. When considering this in Norwich, a business such as Dan & Whit’s comes to mind immediately, but several other businesses and professional offices also fit the bill, including the accounting firm of Kayen & Liepmann PC.

Even though Karen Kayen and Suzanna Liepmann joined forces to form the current firm in early 2016, Kayen first opened her office in Norwich 20 years ago. Over the years, Kayen’s firm occupied three different locations in Norwich, settling on the current office space at 295 Main Street in 2004.

Suzanna Liepmann came aboard as a co-owner of the firm after working as an accountant in other Upper Valley firms. At the time, Liepmann says she was “looking for a change” and having known Kayen for many years, the pair decided to partner in Kayen’s Norwich firm. It just so happened that as the two were preparing their partnership, additional office space was available next to Kayen’s office making the physical transition possible.


They also find that “the clients enjoy coming here,” says Kayen. A trip to their office allows the clients time to frequent the other close-by businesses in town.

Though their firm primarily works with clients in the Upper Valley, they have clients throughout Vermont and New Hampshire and beyond. Some clients even live beyond the borders of the US; these are generally ex-pats that now live in other countries. Many of their firm’s clients who live in other parts of the world are former area residents who relocated, yet wish to continue working with the firm, Kayen says.

Clients often stick with a business because of the personal service they receive. “Clients appreciate that we explain things to them,” says Kayen.

As both Karen Kayen and Suzanna Liepmann are veteran certified public accountants, I wondered what makes the work continue to be invigorating and fun for them? “The clients,” both answered simultaneously. With every client and their different needs, the work continues to be challenging and enjoyable.

Andrea’s - A Hair Studio

For the small business owner, there are some definite advantages to doing business in Norwich. There is the beautiful, small-town setting; the community feeling; being a part of a close-knit business environment; the steady traffic flow; and the availability of parking for those visiting the in-town businesses. Andrea Marquay, owner of Andrea’s – A Hair Studio, finds all of these factors important in operating her business. “I love being in Norwich,” says Marquay.

Marquay opened her salon in Norwich in 1998, after spending 14 years working as a stylist at Hilde’s Salon in Hanover. When she began exploring the idea of opening her own salon, one of her clients mentioned an available space in Norwich for opening a salon. “I fell in love with the space,” Marquay says. After close to 20 years, Marquay still loves her business location, mentioning the view overlooking the center of town and the prevalence of parking for her clients as two important factors of her location.

Spending over 30 years in a career is impressive; what keeps Marquay motivated arriving at work each day? “Meeting new clients and getting creative with my clients” are two vital components. Many of those new clients become regulars. “You become friends,” Marquay says of her clients.

That creativity results from the new styles of hair design that regularly come about. Every spring and fall, styles change, and many clients are interested in exploring these new style ideas. To keep up with these new trends, Marquay and the stylists at her salon regularly attend conferences and classes devoted to the industry. These conferences “are like a fashion show,” says Marquay, adding...
that some are very “hands on,” giving stylists a great opportunity to learn about these new trends in styling hair.

Her clients in the Upper Valley are open to many of the style changes. “They want a new look,” she says, adding that people are very health conscious in our area, and that desire to feel good extends to their hairstyle. Younger clients are particularly open to trying new things, she finds. “One trend that remains popular with both men and women is the use of extreme colors in hair.”

Away from the salon, Marquay enjoys spending time participating in various outdoor activities including hiking. “I love the outdoors,” she says.

Andrea’s – A Hair Studio is at 8 Carpenter Street in Norwich and their phone number is 802-649-1774.

~ Frank Orlowski

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR SPONSORS

Amy Koh, Mascoma Savings Bank

Clients of Mascoma Savings Bank’s Norwich office met a new addition to the branch this summer: their new personal banker, Amy Koh. A recent graduate of Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island, Koh began work with MSB in June. Koh says her first few months with the popular area bank have worked out wonderfully. “It’s been awesome…I love the people I work with.”

As a personal banker, Koh works one-on-one with clients, helping establish accounts, answering questions, and solving problems for clients. Having majored in both finance and marketing, Koh says working with a banking institution makes perfect sense for her. Koh, who is from Hartford, VT, says moving back to the Upper Valley after graduating from college was her plan. “I wanted to start work in an area I was familiar with,” she says.

Did her areas of study at Bryant prepare her well for a banking position? “Absolutely. It gave me a good all-around education.” She found her work in finance gave her a great appreciation for working with numbers, while the marketing study enhanced her creativity.

Koh began work at MSB by going through a thorough teller training program at the Hanover branch and the Maple Street branch in WRJ. Being well aware of the work the tellers perform is vital in her job as a personal banker.

Koh enjoyed her work at those two branches, as well as being at her new home at the Norwich office. “Each branch has different customers,” she says, adding that the clients she’s met in Norwich are very down to earth.

The Norwich branch of Mascoma Savings also oversees the bank’s South Strafford branch, giving the Norwich employees added responsibilities. She has received tremendous support from her Mascoma Bank colleagues since starting work with the bank, Koh says. Charles Taylor, manager of the Norwich branch, is very approachable with questions, and the tellers she’s worked with are “really helpful.” The bank’s Human Resource Department has also proven supportive; “They keep in touch with you,” says Koh. No matter when a question comes up, “There is always someone available to ask,” says Koh.

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How long have you lived in Norwich? 38 years
What did/do you want to be when you grew/grow up? An ornithologist!
What do you like most about the Fall season in Norwich? The fact that most bugs that bite are dead.
If you had your own talk show, who would be your first three guests? Michelle Obama, Tina Turner, Peewee Herman
What is your favorite quote? It's a prayer: "Lord save us from our beliefs."
If you could be invisible for a day, where would you be? The Oval Office
Wine, beer, martini or tea? All, but one at a time.
What Disney character would you be and why? Scrooge McDuck; he was wealthy and eccentric.
What is your first thought in the morning? Must find tea!
If you could erase one day in history, which would it be? The day I married my second husband
What song most describes your life right now? Silent Night
What is your biggest fear or phobia? Death!
What is your most energizing dream/vision for your future? The ability for each and every person to reach their fullest potential
What do you love most about living in Vermont? The state itself... weather, etc.
If you could have one super human power, what would it be? Walk on water
If you had to give away 50% of your assets today, where/how would you distribute them? To organizations conserving the land, to libraries preserving historical knowledge, to organizations supporting youth opportunities
What famous or historic person would you take with you on a world tour? Grandma, Norwich Historical Society
What advice would you give to the next generation? Do what you like if you're able
In general, do you follow, break, or create the rules? All of the above!
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