On a cold, snowy late November night, a small crowd gathered in the Congregational Church on the Norwich Green. Representing four Upper Valley congregations, they had come to attend an interfaith Thanksgiving service to express their "thanks for the blessings we share." Bidding them welcome, Pastor Mary Brownlow remarked that the universal theme of gratitude "calls for deep thoughts and sentiments, and draws us out of our narrow concerns into a larger, spiritual realm." Setting the theme for the service, she said, "We're mindful of family, family, family..."

"Twas the night before Thanksgiving..."

UVIP: A Shared Humanity

Interfaith Group Seeks Justice, Dignity

The Upper Valley's numerous faith-based congregations perform many great services for their members and their communities. They also come together to support instances of injustice and concern they see happening beyond the borders of their separate communities. One organization that helps form bonds between various congregations to attend to problems occurring in the Upper Valley and beyond is the United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP).

Local Inspiration

Stories of Good
Norwich Women’s Club News

Winter Calendar 2018-19
- Thursday, December 6th, 5-7pm, Holiday Gathering, Norwich Historical Society
- Thursday, January 3rd, Citizen of the Year nominations open
- Monday, January 7th, 10-11am, Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn
- Tuesday, January 24th, Citizen of the Year nominations close
- Monday, February 4th, 10-11am, Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn
- Monday, February 11, 11am-1pm, Book and Author Luncheon, Norwich Inn
- Monday, March 4th, 10-11am, Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn
- Saturday, March 16th, 6-9:30pm, Spring Gala
- Monday, April 1st, 10-11am, Coffee and Conversation, Norwich Inn

For more information on these events, find us on Facebook or www.norwichwomensclub.org.
All welcome!

Helping to build a strong community

260+ members from over 14 towns in the Upper Valley
8 Coffee & Conversations held at Norwich Inn each year
3 social events in fall, winter, and spring
4 cultural programs offered annually
3 free Summer Concerts on the Norwich Green
150+ flowers maintained in Norwich Town Center
200+ volunteers recruited to work each Nearly New Sale
www.norwichwomensclub.org keeps members informed

$34,000+ in annual scholarships awarded.
200+ people attend our Annual Spring Gala where 200+ items are auctioned to support community projects
$33,000+ Community Project Grants awarded to an array of non-profit organizations serving Norwich
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Courtney Dobyns

Community members who attended the Root District Schoolhouse Gathering on October 22, 2018, recalled fond memories of potluck suppers, movie nights, birthday parties, and dance classes spanning 50 years at the one-room schoolhouse on Union Village Road at Goodrich Four Corners.

This lively event was held at the Norwich Historical Society to envision the future of the building. The Root District Game Club Board elicited ideas and posted sticky notes on bright pink schoolhouse posters. Suggestions ranged from using the building as a venue for yoga and art classes to poetry readings and a winter tracking event.

The participants voiced a desire for the building to remain largely the same with its classic lines and its four large windows. The interior should still feel and look like a schoolroom with its blackboards, stage, warm woodwork, and refinished floors. This truly is an authentic and well-built example of a one-room schoolhouse, a rarity today.

Before it was declared unfit for public use in 2011 due to a crumbling foundation, the schoolhouse was used as a hunting club in the 1950s, a riding club, and then a community center into 2000. Many folks contributed, heading up the various committees and volunteer efforts to keep the building and its activities strong and viable.

Neighbors living near Goodrich Four Corners (recently nominated as a Historic District) made a concerted effort to raise money to replace the foundation and mitigate hillside drainage issues. Fundraising and planning has taken over six years and the goal is in sight: the old foundation will be replaced in summer 2019. If all goes well, the next gathering will be at the schoolhouse to celebrate!
One rule of thumb I follow very strictly is the ‘no politics’ and no bad/sensationalist news allowed on the pages of the Norwich Times. When I began compiling this issue’s story list, I had a strong need to include examples of people engaged in work devoted to the greater good, my own work included. I wanted this holiday issue to feature stories that help peel back the layers that usually keep us divided or in the dark about issues, and to shine a light on that shared place where all humans connect.

When I saw a posting on listserv about an interfaith Thanksgiving service, I knew this would be one such example. Mainstream media tells us nightly about religious wars happening all over the world. I wanted the Norwich Times to remind us that beliefs may be doggedly different in a variety of domains, but our shared humanity is where we need to spend our time and energy. Read Lars Blackmore’s story about members of four Upper Valley congregations who engaged in the universal act of giving thanks on Thanksgiving eve and you will see what I mean. I read somewhere that it’s not possible to be angry or resentful at the same time one is expressing gratitude. World peace, anyone?

The other cover story, the United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP), seems to fly in the face of my ‘no politics’ rule. However, this is exactly the point. Who is to say if what they are working toward is ‘the answer?’ The theme that strikes a chord for me is that the people who participate in the UVIP’s initiatives are from different faiths and beliefs yet find the common ground where humans connect to help other humans here and around the world. I’m not here to change anyone’s beliefs; I just love that people from a variety of beliefs and backgrounds can come together and work toward the greater good.

Enjoy this holiday season and ‘let there be peace on Earth.’ Happy New Year!

~ Jen
Get Involved in Conservation through Citizen Science

Lynwood Andrews and Mary Sellman

We currently hear a lot about the term ‘citizen science.’ It pops up in discussions ranging from the study of local flora and fauna populations to water quality to climate change. So what exactly is citizen science? According to the Oxford Dictionary, it is “scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the guidance of professional scientists and scientific institutions.”

All it requires is curiosity about an aspect of the natural world and the interest to learn. Below is a representative sample of citizen science projects focused on conservation:

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies [www.vtecostudies.org/volunteer]. Here is a partial list of their programs focused on those suitable for beginners.

- iNaturalist: Explore and take pictures of the plants and animals in Norwich, or elsewhere in Vermont, and post them to iNaturalist to increase knowledge of Vermont’s biodiversity. If you are not sure of the exact species you have, iNaturalist will give suggestions, or others on the website will help.
- Vermont eBird: Help document bird species.
- Vernal Pool Mapping and Monitoring: Help map vernal pools and/or monitor a vernal pool.
- Phoenix project: Help enter historic data on birds into a digital archive.

The Vermont Agency for Natural Resources has numerous programs ranging from water quality and aquatic invasive species monitoring, to recycling, to tree monitoring. [www.anr.vermont.gov/you-environment/citizen-scientists-volunteer]. Examples include these two water quality programs.

- Vermont Lay Monitoring Program: Monitor water quality of lakes and ponds. If permission and access from owners could be obtained, they would like to include Norwich water bodies in the program. [www.dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/monitor/lay-monitoring]. Contact Mark Mitchell at mark.mitchell@vermont.gov.
- Vermont Invasive Patrollers (VIP): Early detection of aquatic invasive plants and animals. This program would also like to include Norwich lakes and ponds if permission and access from owners can be obtained. The early detection program for Hydrilla on the Connecticut River will be seeking volunteers. [www.dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/aquatic-invasives/monitoring/vips]. Contact Kim Jensen at Kimberley.Jensen@vermont.gov.

The Vermont Parks and Recreation in conjunction with Vermont Urban and Community Forestry have many tree, invasive plant, and community forest management programs including:

- Stewardship of the Urban Landscape (SOUL) Tree program offers classes in the spring for individuals interested in improving tree ID, tree pest ID, and tree management skills.
- Forest Pest First Detectors – Learn about three forest pests: Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Longhorn Beetle, and Hemlock Wooly Adelgid, and assist in monitoring the local trees and educating the community about them. [vtcommunityforestry.org/programs/citizen_engagement/firstdetectors].
- Backyard Woods Program – If you own 5-25 acres of land and would like to create your own stewardship action plan, this is an online self-navigated course for homeowners offered in the fall. [vtcommunityforestry.org/program/education/backyard-woods-program].
- Healthy forest mapping Windsor County, VT – This is a project on iNaturalist aimed at mapping the presence of invasive plants for the benefit of private landowners as well as managers of public lands.
New Memorial Honoring Veterans Dedicated in Norwich

Monuments honoring veterans dot the landscape throughout towns in New England and the nation. From the likenesses of Civil War soldiers standing guard over the town square, to the solemn and emotionally inspiring Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, honoring those who served the nation in the armed forces is a national tradition.

Norwich is no different. For many years, two stone monuments dedicated to veterans stood in town in front of Tracy Hall. One honors those from Norwich who served from the time of the Revolution through the war in Korea. The second honors the Vietnam-era vets. A few years back, the members of American Legion Lyman F. Pell, Post 8 in Norwich decided it was time to recognize Norwich veterans who served in the post-1975 era, 1975, of course, is the year the war in Vietnam ended.

According to current Post Commander Lyle Favreau, former Post Commander Jim Harlow originally came up with the idea for this new monument. In January 2015, Favreau says a committee of five post members formed to plan the new memorial.

Favreau — who has served as post commander for the past three and a half years — says much of the committee’s early work was spent finding the names of residents who served, and determining who would be included on the memorial. The goal was to recognize active and reserve armed forces veterans, including those from the National Guard. Those whose names are on the monument must have received an honorable discharge to be included.

As of early 2018, the post received one bid for the project, with the cost of completion a concern. With a goal of completing the memorial in 2018, Favreau says he and the committee (which includes members Jim McGuire, Gary De Gasta, and Demosthenes Sofronas) began to draw up plans for going forward with the site work, and determining the best placement for the new monument. Favreau contacted Thad Goodwin, the town tree warden and a local contractor. After discussing placement of the stone monument, Goodwin inquired about who would be doing the actual site work. Favreau says Goodwin, an excavator, generously volunteered his time and labor on the project, and added he would inquire of local mason Ernie Parker about doing the cement work on the project. Parker then volunteered his time, as did Strafford resident Tom Root, who handled the electrical work on the project.

As tree warden, Thad Goodwin met with Favreau originally to discuss placement of the monument near an existing tree at the site. Goodwin says when he asked Favreau about the project, “He told me they were over-budget, and weren’t sure how they would complete it.”

Goodwin thought about the project’s importance, and decided to help, offering his excavating services. Goodwin did all the site prep work, including installing the new flagpole, and removing the old tree that was impinging on the site. He also recruited Ernie Parker and Tom Root, both of whom were happy to volunteer their labor, he says.

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“Ernie Parker was huge,” says Goodwin, not only in doing the cement work at the site, but also offering many ideas about completing the project.

What was the reason Goodwin decided to offer his services, and recruit the other contractors? “I did it for the vets,” he says.

Not only did the local professionals aid the project immensely, Favreau says the town of Norwich was instrumental in helping this come to fruition. “I can’t say enough about the town,” says Favreau. “They were very supportive of the project.”

The project included more than the installation of this new monument. “We also cleaned and refurbished the old monuments,” says Favreau. As a result of the savings from the labor donated by Goodwin, Parker, and Root, they were able to hire a professional to clean the two existing bronze nameplates on the stone monuments, prepping them for the dedication. Additionally, the existing flagpole was removed, and a new pole installed.

The Rock of Ages quarry in Barre created the new stone monument, honoring the post-Vietnam vets. They delivered the monument to the site, and set it in place. Unlike the other two monuments, the names on this new one are etched into the stone. There are 74 names of Norwich veterans immortalized on the monument, with room to add more in the future.

The entire cost of the project, including the monument, flagpole, and the cleaning of the other two monuments, came to $16,000. The cost of the project was covered by individual donations and grants the Legion Post received.

The new monument was dedicated at a ceremony on November 12. American Legion dignitaries, town officials, and residents attended. “I was told there were about 200 people there,” Favreau says.

Now that the memorial is complete, what are their thoughts about it? “I’m very proud of it,” says Favreau. “It’s very professional.”

“And it looks really sharp,” adds Goodwin.

Frank Orłowski
A Real Life Super Hero:
Meet Officer Jennifer Frank

Just what is a Super Hero? The Urban Dictionary defines that term in the following manner: “A being with extraordinary physical or mental powers, far beyond the range of normal human ability, who uses those powers to protect the innocent and for the general good.”

While she is attired in a crisp, immaculate uniform of a Norwich Police Officer, Sergeant Jen Frank may not add a flowing cape around her neck, but her mission to serve the residents of Norwich elevates her status reserved for Super Heroes. When Jen applied for an open position with the Norwich Police Department, she came complete with an impressive résumé of accomplishments in her chosen profession and her personal life.

For starters, Jen was named The New England Regional Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for 2018. That region includes being tabbed as the Top Law Enforcement Officer in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania. In addition, she was honored in 2017 as the Vermont Police Officer of the Year. Those awards carried a very special meaning.

“I was told that I was the very first woman in law enforcement to receive those awards and that makes it very special to me. I was very honored,” Jen stated.

Jen’s résumé also includes the following: Former detective/school resource officer in nearby Windsor for a three-year stint. She had also served as a special investigator for the Plymouth Police Department. Before her entry into law enforcement, Jen began her career as a high school social studies teacher.

“Having taught school helped me develop a passion for working with young people and that was a factor in my becoming a school resource officer. While doing that, I also used a social media resource to further develop positive interaction with the community and young people. That is very important.”

Jen has developed a Facebook page – with over 700 followers – that highlights her compassion, caring, and ability to emphasize the positive aspects of police work. She updates her daily contact with the community with photos and reports which range from youth activities to reporting road conditions.

“I don’t think most people realize that 90% of our police work involves dealing with the personal interest and contact with all members of our community. That is a critical aspect of what we do. Always accent the positive!”

Jen has been on the Norwich Police force for about seven months and she has quickly adapted to her new environment. Asked how the new location has impacted her brought a wide smile.

“Yes, I have only been here about seven months and I can’t believe the reception by this community. I have been welcomed with open arms here and it already feels like home! The transition from Windsor has been an easy one and I am very fortunate to have Chief Doug Robinson at the helm. Everything has come together for me. There is an old saying that states ‘if you love your job, you never have to work a day in your life.’ I believe that!”

Jen also is a well-conditioned athlete and is dedicated to staying in top physical shape. “I am into anything physical,” she explained. “I love running, hiking, and working out. I am also a member of an ice hockey team and love to skate. I believe your physical condition is a key element in law enforcement.”

Norwich residents should take time to meet Jen while she is out and about. They may discover that the police motto of Serve and Protect may have to add the word ‘inspire’ as well.
Who is the most ‘famous’ person you know or know of in Norwich?
Wendy Thompson, aka “Ms T.” Children and adults appear at her door every October 31 and recite poetry.

What fictional place would you like to visit?
Hogwarts

Which “real” place would you like to visit?
Bitlis and Malatya, Turkey, birthplace of my paternal and maternal grandparents.

What skill would you like to master?
Playing the fiddle

What would be your first question after waking up from a 100-year sleep?
What’s for breakfast?

What is your ideal way to spend a weekend in Norwich?
At home, in the woods behind our house, napping, playing music, eating.

What is the best way to start the day?
An early-morning Norwich run

To which organization or person/group do you donate your time or other resources regularly?
Norwich Nursery School, Marion Cross, Valley Terrace, The Haven

What weird food combinations do you enjoy?
I’m coming up short on this one. I like just about anything for lunch or dinner with bulgur rice, but that’s not considered weird anymore.

What’s the last book you read? Did you like it, love it, or were you just happy to be done with it?
Becoming by Michelle Obama... loved it!

What was cool when you were younger, but not now?
Los Angeles

What is your favorite movie from childhood?
Return of the Jedi

What is your motto in life?
Carpe diem.

Does your life have a ‘theme song,’ if so, what is it?
Chariots of Fire theme by Vangelis

If someone gave you $1,000 right now, what would you spend it on?
Running shoes and running apparel

If you could save or protect one animal, plant, or part of our earth, which would it be?
Eastern Kentucky

If you could only eat at one local restaurant for the rest of your life, which one would it be?
Lou’s

What did you want to be when you grew up?
An actor

If you could be invisible for one day, where would you be?
The White House

If you could have one super-human power, what would it be?
Time travel

If you could have dinner with any famous person (alive or dead) who would it be?
Ellen DeGeneres

In general, do you follow or break the rules?
Follow. Always!

What’s your most energizing dream/visions of your future?
All-town snow-angel making on the Norwich Green after the next big snowfall
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oh, man, should I focus on the year behind or the year ahead? When it comes to the good-news-express that is this publication, it is a big choice. Maybe it is easiest to go for a little half-and-half.

In January 2018, Norwich took a star turn on the national stage with the publication of Norwich: One Tiny Vermont Town’s Secret to Happiness and Excellence. It’s safe to say that there is a certain amount of exhilaration that we feel when we read someone’s name we know in print, or when we run into someone who features prominently in the book. Of course, as the father of a kindergartner and a second grader, I am a little anxious about which Olympic event my children will dominate. Since it is a guarantee that Norwich kids are far superior to Lake Wobegon kids (who are merely “above average”) because they all end up in the Olympics, I just don’t know if I should dream for a fencer or a luger. One of each would be best, so every two years I could go to the Games. Seriously, though, it was nice to see our town celebrated in print, was it not?

In the warmer months, we saw a manifestation of community in its purest and most marvelous form. When a champion of all things education, athletics, kindness, and youth unexpectedly passed, we celebrated him at Huntley Meadow. Across generations, we joined together in our grief, yes, but, more importantly, in our belief in the bonds that the 05055 create. People returned to their hometown from hundreds of miles away. They walked from their houses in Norwich. They drove from surrounding towns and from near the Sharon, Thetford, and Hartford lines to pay tribute to their teacher, their coach, their mentor, and their role model. More than that, though, they joined together to acknowledge a family and a way of life that lets goodness blossom. No matter what our bank account balance says, we were all a little richer that day.

Near the end of the year, we voted. It was without drama, without apparent conflict, and, frankly, it was a refreshing taste of civility in comparison to the national discussion.

Now, as 2018 creeps to a close, there are signs of fissure in our little zone of contentment. Might the treatment of returnable bottles and cans at the Transfer Station be the issue that splits us into irreversible factions? Perhaps, but... I think we can weather the storm.

Sneaking a peek ahead, what might we feel, experience, debate, and fete in 2019? Far be it from me to pretend to portend. Nevertheless, I would bet my kids’ previously-owned-they-fit-last-season ski boots – they may have outgrown them, but what child doesn’t deal with compacted toes at least once in their youth? – that the town directly west of Hanover will raise the bar of civility to new heights. In all likelihood, we will build on our traditions (fair, farmers market, Nearly New Sale, Halloween, Memorial Day parade and barbecue). I am confident we will find new avenues to express our civic pride. As sure as the sun rises and sets, we will light the Listserv ablaze with topics as simple as snow plowing and as important as the very survival of our beloved town.

Whatever surprises 2019 has in store for us, I imagine that each and every one of us will find ourselves saying “it’s a pretty special place to live” at least once. It might be at a Grange breakfast or in the Dan & Whit’s parking lot. It could be at a Cross School theater production or a Tracy Hall contra dance. Regardless, my hope is that we have the wisdom to cherish and respect those moments. After all, it is those little slices of time that make our collective community lives so strong.
Christmas Mystery retells Nativity Story

On Sunday, December 16, the Christmas Mystery will be performed at Rollins Chapel in Hanover. For over 100 years, this retelling of the Nativity story has taken place in Hanover, making it one of the longest-running pageants in the country. It was first performed in 1917 at the Church of Christ at Dartmouth College; when fire destroyed the church in 1931, the Mystery moved to Rollins Chapel.

The Hanover Christmas Mystery has become a time-honored celebration of the Nativity story with Hanover High School senior girls playing the roles of angels and senior boys as shepherds, and local men lending their voices as elder shepherds, the wise men, and Joseph. The identity of Mary is a mystery until the performance. She is a member of the previous year's graduating class, and is chosen by a secret vote of her angel group.

A highlight of the pageant is the performance of We Three Kings, when the kings arrive with an adorable page in tow and present their gifts. The spirit of giving continues through the next song, O Come All Ye Faithful, when audience members are invited to come forward to lay gifts at the manger. Gifts should be wrapped and marked with the age and gender of the intended recipient. In the past, the gifts have been donated to Listen Center and the Upper Valley Haven. The Christmas Mystery performance itself is supported by voluntary donations that may be made upon leaving the chapel.

Although the Mystery is a telling of the Nativity through song, it has become a cherished tradition in the community among members of all or no religious persuasions. Join your neighbors in a spirit of peace and giving.

Sunday December 16, 2018 at 4pm and 5pm. (late arrivals will not be seated)
Rollins Chapel, Hanover • All Welcome! Free and open to the public.
More information on Facebook: 2018 Christmas Mystery Hanover, NH.

A Listserv Post from Dan Fraser

Greetings! We all know that Norwich is pretty unique, and one of those things that makes it special is The Norwich Christmas Pageant. For well over 50 years, this tradition has been an annual event. This year, the Pageant will be held on Thursday, December 20th starting at 7pm, so save the date!

The pageant costs about $1,200 to run (covering the costs to rent sound equipment, hay and animals, and to print songbooks, etc.).

I hope you will join us in supporting the pageant in the following ways:
1. Attend the Wednesday November 7th wine tasting ($5 per ticket and $2 per bottle sold at the event supports the cause). Update: this event raised $202.
2. Pizza Wednesdays in November (we donate $1 from every pizza sold).
3. Round Up: Donate your spare change at the register to support the pageant.
4. Norwich Antes Up deck of cards: $10 gives you a one-of-a-kind perfect gift and will support the pageant (and four other local non-profits).
5. Purchase a Pageant Puzzle.
7. Drop off a donation check made to The Norwich Pageant.

Thanks to the Norwich Women’s Club for underwriting the cost of establishing The Norwich Pageant as a non-profit.

Attention: Norwich Residents/Hanover High Seniors: If you have not been contacted to be in the pageant, then please let me know. All Norwich High School Seniors are welcome and encouraged to participate (regardless of religious affiliation, home school status, etc.). We have a Norwich donkey, Norwich sheep and oxen, and even a Norwich baby Jesus. However, we still need angels, shepards, wisemen, etc.

Through all of these small efforts, we will be able to cover the cost of pageant thanks to your support.

Thanks for keeping it local.

~ Dan Fraser, Dan & Whit’s

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I know how to find the answer to this question. Take a few minutes out of your day and sit down with longtime publisher, Jen MacMillen, and have a chat. She may have to clear out a space for you to sit in her busy office, and you may have to wait for her to finish her daily multi-tasking duties, but you will come away convinced that there is good news out there. Trust me on this! If there is local news out there with a positive slant that emphasizes the good in people and communities, Jen will find it and bring it right to your doorstep – at no cost!

This talented and dedicated lady began her good-news-only publishing businesses when she started an employee newsletter for Gannett Outdoor billboard advertising company back in 1988. Today, the former Norwich resident publishes the Norwich Times, the Quechee Times, the Lebanon Times, and the ironically named Northeast Journal of St. Petersburg, Florida. The New England papers are published quarterly and are mailed directly to every resident in the communities they serve at no cost whatsoever to the readers. Local businesses, civic and non-profit organizations fund the publications through paid advertising space and content sponsorships.

As a longtime journalist/photographer, I was attracted to her work like a moth to a bright light. I quickly offered my editorial services, which she happily accepted. That was in 2013, right after the first issue of the Lebanon Times published. From then on, I have joined the crusade to emphasize the good-news-only concept. For me, being engaged with people in the community and reporting on the good things that happen here is the most rewarding contribution of my career.

Although it's been an idea percolating for about 12 years, Jen is now ready to expand her mission and extend the concept to other communities across the country... to literally spread good news! As her dream comes true, everyone can share her passion and love of all things positive. Don't take my word for it. Let me allow Jen to explain the details herself. (After all, she is the publisher!)

**DN:** What prompted the change of your business from Village Green Publishing to Greater Good Media? Have you revised your mission statement?

**JM:** I actually love the name Village Green Publishing. It evokes a wonderful image of a central community gathering place where citizens can engage in typical community building activities. New Englanders are familiar with this image and the positive feelings associated with it. However, I'm ready to expand and need a name and image that is more universal and captures what my true mission is. Now that my daughters are essentially on their own (one in college and one recently graduated from college), I am ready to put into motion the idea I’ve had to help others spread good news in their own communities. One day while driving, the name Greater Good Media popped into my mind. That was it! I knew it was exactly the right fit for my bigger vision in that it perfectly describes what my mission is and is broad enough to include all forms of media. Don’t get me wrong, I love print and believe strongly that everyone still values a beautifully crafted, tangible piece. It’s like getting a present in the mail vs. an online gift card! As a business owner, I know I must keep pace with the times and see the tremendous value of other, more immediate, forms of media as an opportunity to spread farther and faster the good news themes that abound in my printed community journals.
DN: Going forward, what would be a ‘blue-sky scenario’ for your publications?
JM: I keep going back and forth between wanting to launch papers myself in communities I believe will receive them best, to serving as a consultant of sorts to others who want to ‘be the bearer of good news’ in their community. I love both ideas for different reasons. I like the idea of Greater Good Media acting as a central headquarters from which the model I’ve created can be used efficiently elsewhere. At the same time, I believe wholeheartedly that the way we will be able to make real, lasting, positive change around the world (that must happen in short order for a variety of obvious reasons), is to start at the community level. With that said, helping others establish their own good-news-only media, as they see fit, appeals to my core beliefs. Either way, I am excited to play a small role in creating a ripple effect of positive change farther afield.

DN: As you look back on the early days of getting these publications to become a reality, what kind of feedback have you received from the communities involved?
JM: The fact that my papers are still alive and kicking tells me that readers and businesses see the value in reading about the positive, everyday stuff that traditional ‘news’ outlets don’t always focus on. If all we read about is what’s bad in our community, it’s hard to shake that feeling. If, on the other hand, we get a shot of good news or receive public recognition for doing good deeds, we are more likely to take pride and ownership in our community and want to participate. New Englanders aren’t known for being effusive, but I’ve never received anything but positive feedback. My greatest reward happened when an elder woman from Lebanon called to thank me personally for publishing the Lebanon Times. She said she was mostly homebound and that this paper helped her feel connected to the community. My job is done! That one phone call made all of the incredibly hard work it takes to produce these papers absolutely worth it!

DN: As you face the future and look to expand your coverage areas, what do you anticipate will be your biggest challenge?
JM: Myself! As is the case with many small business owners, I get so caught up in the day-to-day details of producing the papers, while making sure the mission remains the guiding force, I don’t find the time to work on my dream. Because I am not trying to be a ‘newspaper,’ I can easily fit into any community without stepping on anyone’s toes. I’m all about collaboration and the principle that there is room for everyone. So, if I can get out of my own way, I’ll make it work and have a blast!

DN: Is there, indeed, ‘good’ news out there in these stressful times?
JM: Thankfully, yes! I have strong opinions about how humans are behaving in today’s world. However, if we really zoom in on our common denominator – that place that lives in all humans – we all want the same things: love, acceptance, and our basic survival needs met. When we operate with that as a guiding principle and incorporate an ‘abundance’ mentality into our everyday actions, then it’s easy to see the good in everything and everyone!
In late November of 1898, Norwich celebrated the opening of the Village School, now known as the Marion Cross School. According to The Hanover Gazette, “The new building for which the people of Norwich have been waiting patiently for over a year has been completed... and it is with a feeling of pride that the citizens came in large numbers to inspect the handsome and commodious new structure.”

The new school was a two-story red brick building with two classrooms on the ground floor “seating almost forty pupils each” and two rooms on the second floor “with a rolling door between them, so that the two large rooms can instantly be converted into one large hall for entertainments with a seating capacity of nearly 300.” Each room had eight large windows “providing an abundance of light, which was somewhat lacking in the old building.” The cost of the school was $5,134.06.

Before the building of the Village School, one-room schoolhouses were spread throughout the town’s precincts. In 1781, Norwich built its first school and soon after divided the town into distinct, independent districts. The district schools received some financial support from the town, but parents supplied books and materials for their children, and the teachers often boarded with families. By 1836, there were 20 school districts with 774 students. But gradually the population declined and by 1880 there were only 15 schools for 220 students. Children who lived in the village center received an education across the street from the Congregational Church in the North Barracks – one of the few remaining structures of Norwich University – which had moved to Northfield in 1866. It was a snug fit. Students from primary to high-school level were taught in two rooms on the first floor. There was a long stove in each room and the students kept the fire going with wood “the size and length of railroad ties.” Not surprisingly, the North Barracks burned to the ground in 1897. Within a year, the new brick school was built.

By the late 1890s, it was obvious that operating single-room schools at every corner of Norwich had become impractical and costly. “An improvement might be made unifying more schools under one roof,” suggested one superintendent of schools in a town report. Fewer teachers and schoolhouses would save everyone money, and classes could be separated by grade levels. For these reasons, the superintendent concluded, “I approve of the centralizing of the schools as much as possible, that is, unifying as many schools in one as can be made practicable.”

Vermont agreed and a state law passed in 1892 abolished the district school system. From then on, Norwich was in charge of all of the community’s schools. When the Village School opened in 1898, it offered classes for any Norwich student. While several of the one-room schoolhouses closed and took advantage of the town’s offer, many remained in operation. The Village School gradually prospered. In 1917, the Norwich Women’s Club paid for a music teacher. An annual spelling bee was held each May, and student work was on display in the church vestry at the end of each year. In 1932, the first standardized tests were given to the 8th grade and Norwich students came out above the country’s average. There were also structural upgrades: indoor plumbing was installed in 1925 and a central heating system replaced wood stoves in 1942.

However, the most important improvement came with the arrival of Marion Cross in 1929. A graduate of Johnson State Teachers’ College, she began her career in a one-room school in Cambridge, Vermont, where her mother had once taught.
taught. When Mrs. Cross first arrived at the Village School, there were four classrooms and each teacher taught two grades. For her first five years, Mrs. Cross taught 7th and 8th graders in the upstairs rooms of the brick school. In 1934, she was appointed the principal/teacher of the school, a post she held until 1973.

Mrs. Cross ran a tight, well-ordered school. “She was strict,” said Bill Aldrich, a 1952 graduate, “but, being the principal, I guess she had to be.” Donald Ballam, a student of Mrs. Cross in the 1930s recalled, “You did sort of toe the mark. Even boys who may have been larger than Mrs. Cross gave her no trouble.”

Each morning, the upper four grades had joint assemblies conducted from the hallway, the children seated in their respective rooms. The flag salute, the Lord’s Prayer, and a Bible reading usually from Psalms, made up the assembly. Attendance was taken and instruction began for the day.

A highlight each June was the eighth-grade graduation. The 1939 graduation was typical of many and included four students from the Beaver Meadow school, four students from Pompanoosuc, four from the Root District, three from the New Boston School, and a dozen from the Village School. “With all the eighth graders from the different schools gathered for the ceremony,” said Mrs. Cross, “it was truly an important occasion for the entire town.” Students practiced for several days before the graduation. During the 1939 ceremony, Wesley Cook read the class will, Edna Smith read her essay My Trip to Montpelier, the chorus sang Au Claire de la Lune and Rev. Hazen closed with the benediction. The class motto that year was ‘Find a Way or Make One’ written by Violet Preston.

In 1945, Norwich faced several educational dilemmas. All but four of the one-room schoolhouses had closed; only the Root District, Beaver Meadow, Turnpike, and Pompanoosuc schools remained and very few students attended them. At the same time, enrollment at the Village School had swelled to 104 by 1944 and was bursting at the seams. By 1948, there were 171 students, but only the five lower grades met in the Village School. The 6th graders, all 28 of them, had a classroom on the Tracy Hall stage, separated from the main auditorium by a curtain where music and gym classes were held. The 7th grade was taught in a small room on the top floor. Mrs. Cross had an 8th grade class in what is now the Listers’ Office, a tiny room up two flights of stairs. It was so small that after the children’s desks were moved into the room there was only space for a teacher’s desk. She had to store her coat and her crutches for a sprained ankle in the hallway. Added to the tight quarters, the Norwich Women’s Club began serving a 15-cent hot lunch to all children in the basement of Tracy Hall in 1945. The school and Tracy Hall were overflowing with young scholars. Something had to give.

In October of 1949, voters approved a bond issue to enlarge the school and it was decided to construct a four-room addition. The expansion continued until 1951 when the last one-room schoolhouse in Pompanoosuc shut its door. After that closing, all Norwich students – more than 200 – attended the Village School. Once again, more space was needed. In 1960, voters elected to build a six-room addition to the Village School at a cost of $122,586.

In 1962, Norwich joined with Hanover to form the Dresden Interstate School District. John F. Kennedy signed the Interstate Compact into law in November of 1963. This was the last piece of legislation he signed before his assassination. From then on, Norwich students from 7th to 12th grade would travel across the Connecticut River for their secondary education.

The last 8th grade at the Village School held its graduation ceremony at Tracy Hall in June of 1964. “In an unscheduled speech of thanks, Ellis Harlow, speaking for the class of 1934 presented a gift certificate to Mrs. Cross. The class of 1934 was the first to graduate after Mrs. Cross became principal.”

Mrs. Cross retired in 1973 after 44 years at the Village School. In an interview soon after she left, she pointed out that “Norwich has always been a highly cultured area, with this very much due to the influence of Dartmouth College... Its school will continue to be progressive and its citizens will always be actively supportive.” In closing, she reflected on the career she had chosen. “I can’t tell you what it is, but something about working with children – the most important part of a community – makes you feel very much a part of that community. It’s the most rewarding experience anyone could hope to have.”

At a town meeting in March of 1973, Norwich voted to make the school her namesake, the Marion Cross School. According to Mrs. Cross, this was the pinnacle of her 49 years devoted to teaching. The following September, Milt Frye became the new principal and guided the Marion Cross School for the next 23 years. But this of course is another story.
UVIP: A SHARED HUMANITY – continued from page 1

One longtime volunteer member of the UVIP, Rosemary Affeldt, sums up her reasons for involvement in the organization this way: “How many of us have sat in front of our television screens, aghast at what we see nightly, feeling appalled, distant, helpless to respond, be it to local issues of concern such as high fuel costs, low wages, or undocumented immigrants being stopped at roadblocks... These are only a few of the social, moral, and economic justice issues which UVIP is currently tackling.”

The work of the UVIP focuses on three main areas of concern, says Rod Wendt, executive director for the organization. Those areas are immigration justice, economic justice, and aging with dignity for seniors. These, of course, are complicated matters with numerous issues involved in each area. As such, Wendt points out that the UVIP works with other organizations in Vermont and New Hampshire in taking on these issues. In Vermont, the UVIP teams up with the organization Vermont Interfaith Action in working to address and solve these issues.

Fifteen different area congregations support the work of the UVIP, including St. Barnabas Episcopal Church of Norwich, the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley in Norwich, and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in White River Junction. Members of each congregation interested in the work of the UVIP meet to work on projects and ideas proposed, and each congregation puts forth a member to serve on the organization’s executive council.

Though current concern regarding undocumented immigrants runs high in some parts of the country, is it an issue in the Upper Valley? Rod Wendt explains that it is. He finds that DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) students at schools such as Dartmouth have many concerns about their status in the current atmosphere regarding immigration. He adds that area migrant workers also have worries regarding their status. As the US Border Patrol has jurisdiction within 100 miles of an international border, the checkpoints set up along major highways including I-91, I-89, and I-93 are also of great concern to the immigrant community here.

In the area of economic justice, raising the minimum wage is a current advocacy issue for the UVIP, particularly in New Hampshire. In 2018, Vermont’s minimum wage is $10.50 per hour, and beginning in 2019, it will increase at the rate of inflation. New Hampshire’s minimum wage is set at the federal level, $7.25 per hour. The UVIP is involved with the Raise Up New Hampshire campaign, an initiative of the NH Alliance for a Moral Economy. This initiative is not only designed to increase wages, but also to secure paid sick days for workers, oppose right-to-work legislation, and to protect the rights of temporary workers.

In the areas of immigration and economic justice, getting those affected involved in the work and process is critical, says Wendt. “It is the foundation of our work.” Still, for numerous reasons, many affected folks are hesitant to participate. “It’s hard work getting them involved.”

In an effort to reach more of these folks, the UVIP is partnering with local service organizations – including LISTEN, The Haven, and the Good Neighbor Health Clinic – to reach their clients and give them a voice in these efforts. Wendt says they are “in the very early stages” of this effort, and he is hopeful for positive results in this partnership in the near future.

Rosemary Affeldt agrees that working with those most affected by these issues is important for her work in the UVIP. “As a member of UVIP... I can engage in a grassroots collective effort to empower community members to find their voices, self advocate for change, and make a difference for themselves and their communities.”

The third aim of the UVIP is their effort called Aging with Dignity. As many members of the congregations that make up the UVIP face this dilemma, educating seniors on subjects such as remaining in their home, staying active in their community, and planning for medical needs is a natural direction for his organization. With their focus on education, the UVIP trains facilitators to work with area seniors, and offers a course entitled Useful Tools for Aging with Dignity. 2018 was the second year for the course, and it will remain a staple of the work of the UVIP.

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For some, winter brings about an increase in physical activity. Skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, and ice-skating are popular forms of winter activity, and adherents of these sports await the winter season with gusto. Not everyone enjoys winter activities, however. Some avoid the outdoors during the season, and unless they take part in indoor activities, exercise takes a backseat.

In order to motivate young people to stay active during the winter months, the Norwich-based Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA) offers a program called the Passport to Winter Fun. Kaitie Eddington, program manager at the UVTA, heads up the youth-oriented effort.

“It’s a self-motivating program,” says Eddington. The children choose the winter activities they wish to take part in, and record the time spent in that endeavor. The only rule is that the chosen activity has to get them moving. “It must be a physical activity.”

The children record each time – during the winter – that they spend at least 60 minutes participating in a physical activity. The ultimate goal is to record 30 days when they’ve devoted one hour to these activities. Prizes are awarded to those who reach the threshold.

The actual program runs from January through March, and students of elementary-school age can participate. This year, 29 schools have students participating in the Passport program, including students at the Marion Cross School, and the Ray Elementary School in Hanover. About 2,800 students signed up for the program this year, with the Passport program now in its 14th year.

Students enrolled in area schools are not the only ones who take part in the Passport program. “We reach out to homeschoolers, too,” says Eddington.

The main activities students in the program undertake are the popular ones in our area: skiing, skating, and sledding. The program encourages all manner of activities, however, so the kids can devise many ways to record their efforts. Eddington adds that she is also happy to provide ideas for activities.

Though the program focuses on kids taking part, often reaching the goal becomes a family affair, where everyone joins the child in their efforts.

Many area businesses and organizations assist the Winter Passport program by offering prizes and incentives for the participants, and by holding winter events where Passport participants and their families can participate in qualifying activities. A great example of one such event is UVTA’s Skate-a-thon held each winter on Lake Morey, with the support of the Lake Morey Resort, among others.
**Book Angels at the Norwich Bookstore**

There is still time – until mid-December – to help the Norwich Bookstore’s Book Angels deliver books to children and young adults in our community!

This year we are working with the Family Place, Vermont Child and Family Services, The Haven, and the Children’s Literacy Foundation to identify young people to receive the gift of a special book.

Paper angels hang on a large wreath in the bookstore stairway with hints or requests such as “2-year-old likes trucks” or “teen reads fantasy.” You can participate in several ways:

- Choose an angel and find a book that matches.
- Select a book that is special to you and we’ll find an angel for it.
- Donate a specific amount and we will pick out books and appropriate angels.

The Norwich Bookstore will donate at least one book for every ten purchased and we guarantee that no Book Angel will leave empty handed.

We thank you all for supporting this generous local tradition!

- Liza Bernard, Norwich Bookstore

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**Norwich Nursery School: Rooted in Community**

This past fall Norwich Nursery School held their annual fundraiser called Rooted in Community. Current students and their families reached out to local business leaders, family, and friends in the community for donations to support their scholarship and enrichment fund. Historically this fund has provided tuition scholarships for 1-2 students a year who would otherwise not be able to attend our school. Together, our community was able to raise enough money to provide scholarships for two future Vermont nursery-school-aged students.

The highlight of the fundraiser for the current students is gathering together in Norwich to participate in a beautification project. This year students gathered at the new Norwich Police and Fire Station to plant daffodil bulbs along the entrance to the station, and around the parking lot to enjoy in the spring. It is the hope that this teaches our little ones the importance of making contributions of their time and effort to improve our community. The students also look forward to a future field trip to check in on their flowers in the spring.

Norwich Nursery School would like to thank Ledyard Bank, Foggs Hardware, Mascoma Bank, Four Seasons Sothebys, Children’s Art Studio, Dan and Whit’s, Solaflect, Haynes and Garthwaite Architecture, Otto & Associates, Veremedy, and Partridge House for their generous donations that support our future students.

- Christina Aquila
Co-op's Auto Service Center Expanding to Norwich
Growth of business to bring doubling of capacity

Responding to customer demand and a turn-key opportunity, the Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society's management and board of directors will soon open a second auto repair facility at the site of Prime Subaru (former location of The Car Store) on Route 5.

Following more than 30 years servicing automobiles at its South Park Street, Hanover location, the Co-op's Norwich repair facility will result in a doubling of capacity to serve Co-op members and customers. Co-op's Norwich repair facility will result in a doubling of capacity to serve Co-op members and customers. The large bays and equipment currently at the site will allow for new services, such as servicing of trucks, fleets, a weather-protected lane so customers can pull inside when dropping off their vehicle, and shorter wait times for appointments.

Hanover Co-op general manager Ed Fox said, "Our auto repair business has been growing rapidly at our Hanover location. This Route 5 location is an ideal opportunity for our member-owners to find service at their business. Expanded capacity and services such as Vermont inspections have been a long-time coming."

The Co-op's Auto Service Center in Norwich will have five times the lot space as its Hanover location. The expansion may mean as many as seven new employees. The first service appointments are expected for early December, with full staffing and operations anticipated by next spring.
I was hesitant about joining Pony Club at first because I wasn’t sure about how the levels worked, but I decided to stick with it. Now, almost 4 years later, I have nothing but good things to say about it. It has been the most exciting, the most stressful, and the hardest thing I have ever worked towards. I wouldn’t have it any other way. I have become closer to my friends than I thought I ever would have and made many new ones along the way. Pony club has taught me that sometimes I just need to go out of my comfort zone in order to do what I want to accomplish.

Kristen Gilliland of 8T Acres Pony Club said.

At one time, Pony Club was the way to learn to ride, mainly if one was interested in eventing as a sport. It was the start for many children as they went along with their horsey adventures. But, as lesson barns have become a bigger deal for youth, and parents are less likely to have a big enough plot of land to have a pony housed out back, Pony Clubs are becoming less common, at least in this area. In recent years, Pony Club has broadened to include a wide variety of disciplines including Western sports, gaming, and more.

Pony Club is an international youth organization focused on both riding and education regarding horse care. The United States Pony Clubs, Inc. started in 1954 to teach riding and the proper care of horses. It is based on The British Pony Club, which was created in 1929 as a junior branch of the Institute of the Horse. Since then, Pony Club has expanded to many countries around the world, with the primary goal being to promote sportsmanship, stewardship, and leadership through horsemanship. As they become better riders and horse people, students move up through levels or “ratings” from D-3 through A level.

Finding a Club branch can be hard. In Vermont, there are only three Pony Club branches, and none in the Upper Valley. The branches are in Charlotte, Rutland, and Essex Junction, VT, all a good distance from the Norwich area. However, in recent years 8T Acres Equestrian Center opened in Hanover, NH and is a Pony Club Center. The only difference between a center and a branch is that Pony Club members don’t need to have access to their own horse, they can ride lesson horses from the barn. 8T Acres is the only Pony Club Center in New Hampshire or Vermont.

Ashley Glynn opened 8T Acres Equestrian Center in Hanover in 2014. Ashley has been riding horses since the age of five and a Pony Club member for nearly as long. In college, Ashley studied pre-veterinary courses before transferring and obtaining her B.A. in Equine Business. She has spent time coaching Colby Sawyer College’s IHSA team as well as training young horses and teaching lessons at Horton’s Farm in Grantham. She also has her A Rating (highest rating you can have) in Pony Club in the tracks of dressage, jumping, and eventing. Currently, Ashley is the only person in the United States to have three A ratings.

One of the most essential parts of Pony Club, Ashley noted, is the emphasis on education regarding horse care and horsemanship. Often students who just take lessons won’t receive the same knowledge about feeding regimens, home vet care, farriers, groundwork and more; however, these are incredibly important things for students to learn if they have or have the goal of owning their own horse.

The other aspect Ashley appreciates is the emphasis on teamwork. At Pony Club rallies (competitions), the riders ride as a team rather than as individuals. Students learn to support and help each other. Pony Club also teaches members to instruct, allowing students to practice and to respect the individual process and progress of each other.
8T Acres Pony Club member Kirsten Gilliland of Grafton agrees, “Pony Club promotes maturity and teaches you and others to prepare for and to be prepared for different scenarios. You learn about farrier work and the different components of nutrition. I not only gained confidence in myself but I have learned how to learn from my mistakes and teach the younger members in my Pony club.”

Kirsten, a 16-year-old member of 8T Acres Pony Club, has been dedicated to the Club for the last four years. “I am extremely lucky to have gotten into a very non-competitive Pony Club that is very welcoming to new members and where everyone is eager to learn and teach the new members. Our pony club ranges from ages 5 to 17, which allows older members to have a positive effect on younger members.”

“One of my biggest motivators has been Ashley Glynn who has been a part of pony club since she was a kid.”

It’s a family affair for Kirsten, as both her younger sister, Lauren, and her grandmother are Pony Club members as well. Her grandmother, Joyce Truman, keeps both girls’ horses on her property and manages much of their daily care. When Kirsten joined Pony Club, Joyce learned about a program for those who are over 25 years old (the cutoff age for Pony Club) called Horsemasters.

The Horsemasters program follows the same curriculum and tests for the various levels as Pony Club and you are rated in the same manner. Joyce even decided that she would like to learn more about horse care and would like to get back on a horse after a two-year hiatus this year, but has been in the Horsemaster’s program for three years. “I wanted to know what I am looking at besides feeding them, farrier, vet, and how to take care of them better… There’s a lot to know about!?”

Horsemasters is a fantastic opportunity that is particularly suited to those adults who want to get back into riding. However, even adults who have never ridden or worked with horses will benefit tremendously from Horsemasters.

There are a lot of choices for riding education in the Upper Valley, but not many programs that are focused equally on riding and on horse care. The Pony Club’s emphasis on both has it winning by a nose!

Thank You from Mabel
Editor’s Note: When I first saw this post on the Norwich listserv, I immediately made plans to publish it in this issue. In one small piece, the themes of gratitude, community, service to others, joy in simplicity (and, of course, the healing power of pets) are all here.

Good morning!

A couple months ago, in the midst of finding my 74-year-old, shut-in, hurt and disabled neighbor, Mabel, in distress and in need of just about everything under the sun... I posted: “ISO a monitor for a DVD player.”

The response was overwhelming! Some incredible folks even delivered right to my farmers market site! It took a while, filtering out the functioning and non-usable ones, and obtaining just the right cables... though success was finally had, and...

On behalf of Mabel and her improving condition, I wish to say: THANK YOU to all that offered mechanical, logistical and emotional support.

It brings me to tears how grateful I am, and how fortunate WE all are to have one another. How do any of us get well and move forward? By standing on the shoulders of others! After a very long wait, Mabel goes in for her knee surgery on December 7th. Yippee! She has been a precious gift to me and all she touches.

Thank you, beautiful community.

Top: Mabel and Diana. Above: Mabel and Cameron, one of the people living in the ‘community.’ He is a constant helper to Mabel. He walks 22 times around the common each morning, and stops by her door to make her coffee before she gets up each morning, then continues on his walk. The cat is Bamboo, a rescue kitty Diana brought from Costa Rica (who has gone through his own wars!). Mabel is trying to adopt Bamboo if the landlord will allow.

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One of the wine purchases that continues to challenge even the most experienced wine lover is the elusive bottle of sparkling wine. Decades ago, most people sought out a bottle of a well-known, name-brand Champagne. In recent years, many have settled for a simple bottle of Prosecco, which can be very pleasant, but is certainly not ‘the same thing for much less money.’ For a special experience this year, try a ‘grower-bottled’ Champagne from a small producer, which allows you to support a true farmer rather than an international conglomerate, and promises to be great quality and delicious! There are many we can recommend, starting below $40.

If you need to supply celebratory bubbles for a larger group, or simply prefer to keep the budget more reasonable, there are many less-expensive options that are still bottle-fermented like real Champagne. Spanish Cava is a great example, and great ones can be found at much the same price as mass-produced Prosecco, $10-$20. For a festive and tasty experience, a bright Cava Rose can combine the best qualities of tiny bubbles, gorgeous color, and lively fruit.

Lest you think I categorically dismiss Prosecco, I can assure you that’s not the case. The softness and lower acidity make it a perfect choice for bubbly cocktails, and there are many such drinks that look beautiful in a flute-shaped glass and can be offered as a lovely welcome to arriving guests as you hang up their coats. In fact, one of my favorite bits of hospitality is to hand my friends a sip of something bubbly as soon as they get their boots off. Of course, after making it up our driveway, my guests will be handed grower-bottled Champagne!
Make the season special! Bundle up and join this magical, dazzling, family-oriented holiday weekend hosted by the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce and downtown businesses. Gather your neighbors, family, and friends and Celebrate the Season together.

The fun started with the Snowflake Scavenger Hunt between November 23 to December 8 at 1pm. Visit participating Hanover and Norwich businesses to find the snowflake and unscramble the secret message. Enter your completed form into the collection boxes located at Hanover True Value or the Nugget Arcade building or online to win a giant stocking’s worth of prizes from local businesses valued at $800. Visit hanoverchamber.org/hunt for rules, list of businesses, and more information.

Festivities begin in Norwich on Thursday, December 6 with Open Houses in Norwich Square businesses including the Norwich Bookstore, Blue Sparrow Kitchen, Northern Nights Yarn Shop, Norwich Wines & Spirits, and Zia’s. Great holiday discounts and complimentary tastes of the season.

Santa Claus is coming to town at the Norwich Inn on Friday, December 7 from 3:30-5pm. Children can let Santa know their holiday wishes.

Make your holidays hassle-free with free parking every weekend all day in Hanover throughout December.

On Friday, December 7 from 4-8pm, downtown Hanover comes alive to Celebrate the Season! Family activities take place all throughout downtown businesses with horse-drawn wagon rides, holiday crafts, complimentary tastings, and great holiday shopping and discounts.

See Santa and friends at Mascoma Bank, 80 S. Main Street, roast marshmallows at Ramuntos, decorate a gingerbread cookie at Lou’s Restaurant, and preserve your family memories at a photo booth at Four Season’s Sotheby’s Real Estate on S. Main Street. Make your own Snitch ornament at Gringott’s (aka Ledyard Bank). And hear harmonious sounds of the season by the North Country Chordsmen and Banish Misfortune Cello Ensemble. There is something happening all along S. Main!

Come back downtown on Saturday, December 8 to meet Santa for breakfast at David’s House from 9am-1pm with carols sung by the Lebanon High School Choir. Check out the Annual Hanover Garden Club Holiday Sale 9am-noon at the RWB Community Center.

New this year: pick up your holiday cookies with a Cookie Stroll from 2-4pm. Pick up your cookie box in front of the Nugget Arcade building for a suggested donation of $5 (proceeds to benefit local charities) and visit participating businesses to collect your cookies. Life is short – eat a cookie!

Finish off your day by trying a new dining destination at discounted prices – the Hanover Area Restaurant Week begins Saturday, December 8 through December 15! Prix fixe menus for lunch and dinner all week at restaurants you have been dying to try. Full schedules can be viewed at hanoverchamber.org/celebrate. Many thanks to sponsors Hanover Improvement Society, Hanover True Value, Dr. Sam’s Eye Care, Four Seasons Sotheby’s International Realty, Bar Harbor Bank & Trust, and King Arthur Flour.

Hanover… So Much, So Close, So Celebrate the Season with Us!

~ Tracy Hutchins

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“We are so happy Mom is thriving again.”

“As Mom aged, we thought it best if she stayed in her house, but, we were wrong. Even with hours of expensive home care, Mom wasn’t thriving. She needed more. She especially needed more socialization—not isolation. And more affordable and reliable access to care when she needed it. So she made the move to Valley Terrace. She truly loves her elegant new home! Life is more complete in a community with lots of friends and activities, chef-prepared meals, daily care, medication management, and even transportation to appointments and outings. I visit her often, so I know Mom is happier and more relaxed now... and I am too. We only wish she’d moved sooner.”

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friends, and strangers who surround us with neighborly love. May the companionship we share satisfy each hunger for community."

When Rabbi Mark Malamut of the Upper Valley Jewish Community next sounded the shofar, it was intended both as a literal call to worship, but also, as he later explained, “To wake us up to those things we want to be grateful for and that we want to work on in our lives.”

Pastor Brownlow noted Thanksgiving’s roots as a national holiday which does not belong to any one religion. Indeed, it is appreciated by many as a refreshingly secular holiday, free from the religious connections of Easter and Christmas. Based on ancient rituals of giving thanks, it evolved from the apocryphal Pilgrim feast with the Wampanoag and Governor Bradford’s proclamation of “a day of thanks-giving toward God” into a New England harvest tradition. George Washington proclaimed the first nationwide thanksgiving celebration as “a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God.”

But the official federal holiday came almost a hundred years later, after decade-long lobbying by writer and editor Sarah Josepha Hale for a patriotic celebration of autumn.

In 1863, a war-weary Abraham Lincoln concurred, proclaiming Thanksgiving Day to rally and unify a bruised nation around a common theme: a national rite of reconciliation and patriotic concord. Marveling at the progress made by the country in spite of the ongoing Civil War, he declared, “No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God [...] It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens [...] to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.” Those heavy religious undertones for a supposedly secular holiday raised the hackles of freethinkers and proponents of church-state separation over the years.

A recent Pew study of “Where Americans Find Meaning” found that spirituality and faith came fourth after family, career, and money. But those belonging to a faith will likely agree with Pastor Brownlow’s observation that “all faiths have an element of thanksgiving in them, a universal feeling of empathy and compassion, particularly toward your community, great and small.”

“What if, today, we were grateful for everything?” - Charlie Brown

The Thanksgiving holiday may once have been intended as a gaudy celebration of patriotism and material abundance with a religious veneer, but times have changed. “In a new Gilded Age of massive income inequality,” wrote humanities professor Leigh Eric Schmidt a few years ago, “Thanksgiving has emerged anew as a time to amplify core progressive themes – to focus on the 99 percent over the 1 percent.”

Echoing this sentiment, Pastor Brownlow characterized the interfaith service as “a grounding exercise, a chance to reflect on simpler things, come back to the roots of community, the importance of belonging.” It is, she said, “a chance to be grateful for things that just ‘are’ – not necessarily deserved.”

Indeed, the reflections at the service focused less on material abundance, and more on gratitude for the simple things that make for a good life, for people, and for community. Rector Jan Hutslar of the United Universalist read from Mary Oliver’s poem It Was Early with the poignant line: “Sometimes, I need only to stand wherever I am to be blessed.”
In offering her words of thanks for community and work, rector Jenny Anderson of St. Barnabas invoked the common prayer’s overarching theme of gratitude for “the splendor of the whole creation; for the beauty of this world, the wonder of life; and the mystery of life.” Rabbi Malamut, in turn, reflected on the value in diversity as he expressed his thanks for citizenship and freedom, imploring all to “learn to see God in all men and women, and accept humbly and gratefully the gift that each person, no matter what, brings to our American life.”

As contributions were gathered for the Haven and 19 Days of Norwich and Beyond, the choir sang Mary Chapin Carpenter’s Thanksgiving Song: “Father, mother, daughter, son, neighbor, friend and friendless; All together everyone in the gift of loving-kindness,” aptly (and probably not coincidentally) invoking a key concept of compassion and empathy found in both Judaism and Buddhism.

**Peace in a Time of Discord**

At an interfaith Thanksgiving service in Chicago, a Lutheran minister observed, “We live in a time where anger and contempt reign throughout our political stratosphere – a time when respect has taken a submissive role to vitriol.” Rabbi Malamut echoed this sentiment, sensing a need for antidotes to the collective trauma of division.

Agreeing, Pastor Brownlow said, “People need more peace and harmony in their life. With all the terrible divisions and rancor in the world, they might appreciate having just 45 minutes or so at a service like this where there’s nothing you can disagree with anyone over.”

In her bio, Reverend Hutslar’s notes that as a Unitarian Universalist she “counts on the restorative power of community.” And an interfaith service would seem to be one way for our community to come together around common themes of peace and harmony. To sing Over the River and Through the Woods together, be silent for a spell, and reflect on a shared experience. To notice and appreciate the little things, instead of the ones we can all be miserable about. And then commit to doing better. Or, as Hanover High student, Gunnar Langhus, read from Fra Giovanni in praise of words of thanks between people: “No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant. Take peace!”

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**The Norwich Times**

Holiday 2018

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Mascoma Bank Named One of the Best Employers in NH

BusinessNH Magazine recently named one of the Upper Valley’s highly regarded banking institutions as one of the top employers in New Hampshire. With over 300 full-time employees, Mascoma Bank is thrilled to achieve this distinction for the first time in the publication’s annual rankings. “We’re proud to be a part of this ranking, along with these other great businesses,” says Bev Widger, Mascoma Bank’s chief human resources officer.

Some of the benefits offered by Mascoma to their employees include their profit-sharing program, bonuses offered when employees reach certain anniversaries with the company, and recognition from colleagues for work performed. Assistance to employees from others at the bank is a hallmark at Mascoma, says Bev. “There’s great support from the board, senior management, and all staff.”

It seems recognition of Mascoma’s corporate culture is becoming evident. Not only did they receive this distinction from BusinessNH, Widger says the bank also was named to the 2018 list of One of the Best Places to Work in Vermont, a ranking which was compiled by Vermont Business Magazine and the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. Mascoma Bank joins another Upper Valley employer, King Arthur Flour, on the list of the best large Vermont companies for which to work.

Mascoma received another prestigious award in Vermont in 2018, the Governor’s Excellence in Worksite Wellness Award. This honor awards businesses that offer health and wellness programs to their employees, and that encourage healthy choices at work and at home.

Not only does the bank offer its employees financial and special-recognition benefits, it offers assistance in other forms, says Widger. One of these is their Work United program, offered in conjunction with the United Way. This program features a resource coordinator who can offer a wide range of assistance to employees, including financial, personal, and help dealing with the non-work related everyday needs and concerns of the employees. Widger notes that the Work United program has “immense resources” from which employees can draw.

Mascoma Bank is well known for its philanthropic efforts, assisting many non-profit organizations throughout the Upper Valley. Part of this effort includes encouraging its employees to volunteer in community service pursuits, a great way to forge a bond between the employees and the communities they serve. — Frank Orlowski

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