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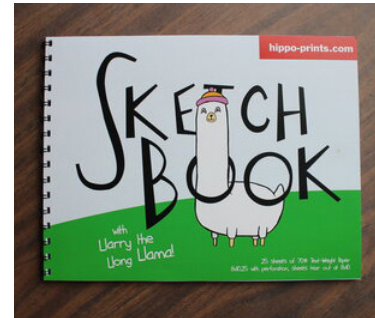
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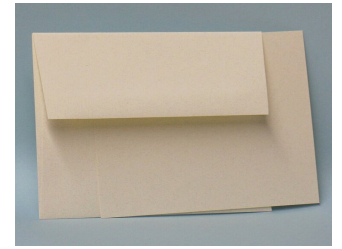
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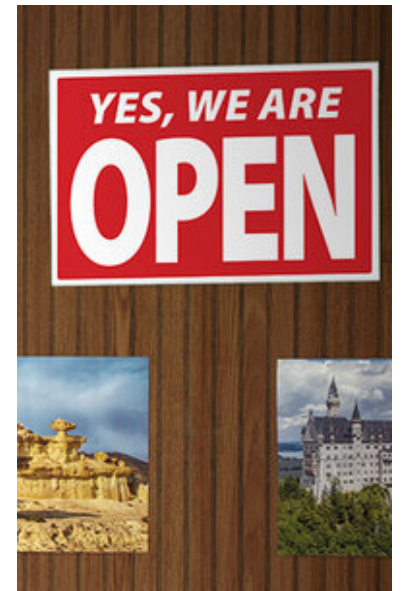
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Why is school choice and expansion of the charter school system in New Hampshire such a political hot spot? If we simply think about offering every student

the opportunity to learn in the environment that works best for him or her, why would we not want to expand the charter school system, and why did the Democratic-led Fiscal Committee repeatedly reject a \$46 million federal grant? This federal grant was awarded to New Hampshire more than a year ago, and in a decision that defies logic and reason, the Fiscal Committee rejected the funds (the only state in the nation to do so) multiple times. The funds were awarded for the expansion of charter schools statewide, and it was the largest charter school expansion grant in the country.

The argument against receiving the funds was essentially that by expanding the charter school system, costs in the public school system would increase. There are two important points here. First, charter schools are public schools. While they receive a higher per student reimbursement from the state than traditional public schools, they do not have access to local taxes or other state aid. While charter schools are able to educate their students at a much lower cost than traditional public schools, there is still a gap between funds received from the state and funds spent, requiring the schools to rely on private donations and fundraising. Second, if there are fewer students in the traditional school system due the expansion of charter schools, shouldn't the overall operating budget decrease? Enrollment in traditional public schools has steadily declined over the past 10 years; however, overall school budgets continue to increase.

With a change in party leadership, there is hope that the now Republican-led Fiscal Committee will immediately move to accept the federal grant. As a whole, our children are best served when the traditional public school system works with the charter school system to determine the best learning environment for the child. Education is not a one-size-fits-all reality, and when the focus is on "who gets the money," the mission of education is lost. By keeping our focus on the student first, we will see better outcomes.

Robin Milnes is a small-business owner and advocate with more than 30 years of experience in real estate acquisitions, property management, sales, leasing, budgeting, fiscal oversight, human resources and administration. She can be reached at rmilnes@inex.com.



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ON THE COVER

DEFINITELY TRY THIS AT HOME Between Covid, cold and snow, you might be spending a lot of time at home in the coming months. We have a few ideas to keep you from going stir crazy, from growing succulents to creating an indoor obstacle course that's fun for the whole family.

ALSO ON THE COVER, if you're looking for some holiday cheer, there's a home in Nashua that's lighting up the night, p. 15. Find new Thai eats in Manchester and new Italian eats in New Boston, p. 22 & 23. And there are lots of holiday brews that can help you get through the rest of 2020, p. 26.

INSIDE THIS WEEK

NEWS & NOTES

6 News in Brief.

7 Q&A

8 SPORTS

9 QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

THE ARTS:

10 ARTS ROUNDUP

The latest arts news.

INSIDE/OUTSIDE:

17 MERRY AND BRIGHT

Nashua home lights up the night.

19 KIDDIE POOL

Fun for the family.

19 TREASURE HUNT

There's gold in your attic.

20 GARDENING GUY

Henry Homeyer offers advice on your outdoors.

21 CAR TALK

Automotive advice.

FOOD:

22 THAI FOOD CONNECTION The Chef; Weekly Dish; In the Kitchen; Try This At Home; Beer.

POP CULTURE:

28 BOOK, MUSIC AND FILM REVIEWS Amy Diaz checks out the "blockbuster" that is *The Croads: A New Age* and Meryl Streep's new streaming movies.

NITE:

32 BANDS, CLUBS, NIGHTLIFE

Dan Blakeslee, Nite Roundup, Music This Week.

35 ROCK AND ROLL CROSSWORD

Puzzles for the music-lover.

ODDS & ENDS:

35 KENKEN, WORD ROUNDUP

36 SUDOKU

36 CROSSWORD

37 SIGNS OF LIFE

37 7 LITTLE WORDS

38 NEWS OF THE WEIRD



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Covid-19 news

On Dec. 10, Gov. Chris Sununu issued Emergency Order No. 75, an order authorizing certain qualifying nursing students in the state to obtain temporary licensure to join the frontlines of fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. For the duration of the state of emergency, senior nursing students who are scheduled to graduate on or before May 31, 2021, qualify for the licensure, provided they are practicing under a licensed health care provider.

Also on Dec. 10, the state Attorney General's office announced in a press release the autopsy results for Speaker of the House Dick Hinch, who died the day before. Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Jennie V. Duval determined the cause of Hinch's death to be Covid-19, according to the release. Hinch had been elected Speaker of the House just one week before his death. He was 71.

During a Dec. 10 press conference, state epidemiologist Dr. Benjamin Chan said that, statewide, New Hampshire has seen around 750 to 800 new infections per day in the last week. The state later reached 30,000 overall infections and 600 deaths — both reported from updates on Dec. 12 — since the start of the pandemic in March.

On Dec. 11, Sununu issued Emergency Order No. 76, so all health care providers administering the vaccine are required to participate in the New

Hampshire Immunization Information System, reporting all vaccination events within 24 hours. All patient-level information relating to vaccine administration will then be stored in the system as a medical record. Also on Dec. 11, Sununu issued Executive Order 2020-24, extending the state of emergency in New Hampshire due to the pandemic for another three weeks through at least Jan. 1, 2021.

On Dec. 13, the state Department of Health & Human Services announced in a press release the arrival of the first doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine to New Hampshire. The vaccine was distributed the following day to at-risk health care workers in the state, including frontline clinical staff providing direct patient care. Two doses of vaccine, administered 21 days apart, demonstrated an efficacy rate of 95 percent during initial trials. According to the release, the timeline for widespread access to a Covid-19 vaccine is expected to be approximately six to 12 months.

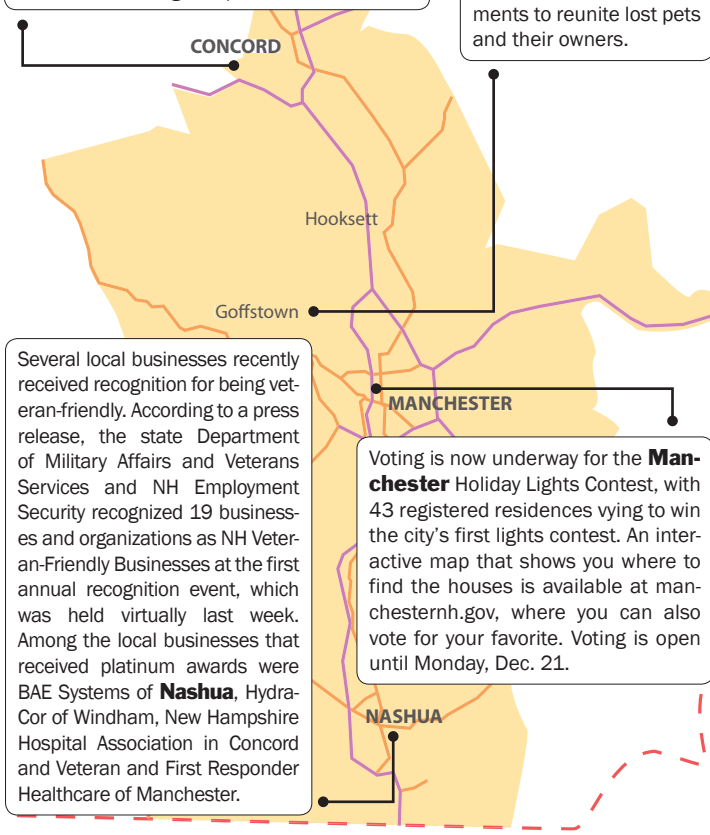
Charter schools

Last week, the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committee voted to accept the first \$10.1 million installment of a \$46 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to expand public charter school options in the state, with a focus on at-risk students, accord-

ing to a press release from the New Hampshire Department of Education. The state was first awarded the grant in August 2019 but had been voted down by the fiscal committee along party lines numerous times. According to a press release from the Office of the Governor, the committee has a new Republican majority. "Charter schools are public schools, and this game-changing grant will open up doors of opportunity for school children across the state," Gov. Chris Sununu said in a statement. House and Senate Democrats also released a statement after the vote, saying that the grant is unsustainable and is intended to double the number of charter schools in the state, which will create a \$17 million gap in funding for the traditional public school system. "With declining enrollments across the state, it is imperative that we invest more in our existing public schools, not create more schools that will be left underfunded," Senator Lou D'Allesandro said in a statement. Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut said in a statement that charter schools are an important part of the state's public school system, giving students non-traditional options to help them thrive. According to the Department of Education, there are 29 public charter schools in the state, seven of which

Here's something to look forward to in the new year: Winter Fest will be returning to **Concord** for its third year in a row! Presented by Intown Concord and The Hotel Concord, the event allows spectators to watch ice-carving demonstrations and meet some of New England's most talented ice carvers on Jan. 29, followed by an ice carving competition on Jan. 30, according to a press release.

The **Goffstown** and New Boston police departments now have pet microchip readers thanks to a donation from the NH Animal Rescue Alliance. According to a press release, the scanners will allow the police departments to reunite lost pets and their owners.



Several local businesses recently received recognition for being veteran-friendly. According to a press release, the state Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services and NH Employment Security recognized 19 businesses and organizations as NH Veteran-Friendly Businesses at the first annual recognition event, which was held virtually last week. Among the local businesses that received platinum awards were BAE Systems of **Nashua**, Hydra-Cor of Windham, New Hampshire Hospital Association in Concord and Veteran and First Responder Healthcare of Manchester.

Voting is now underway for the **Manchester** Holiday Lights Contest, with 43 registered residences vying to win the city's first lights contest. An interactive map that shows you where to find the houses is available at manchesternh.gov, where you can also vote for your favorite. Voting is open until Monday, Dec. 21.

Covid-19 update	As of December 7	As of December 14
Total cases statewide	25,816	31,875
Total current infections statewide	5,386	6,752
Total deaths statewide	566	604
New cases	4,822 (Dec. 1 to Dec. 7)	6,059 (Dec. 8 to Dec. 14)
Current infections: Hillsborough County	2,015	2,453
Current infections: Merrimack County	703	872
Current infections: Rockingham County	1,296	1,722

Information from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

for high-quality charter school replication. The \$46 million grant is intended to support efforts to increase the number of high-quality charter schools in New Hampshire, focusing on at-risk, educationally disadvantaged students, according to the press release.

Jury trials

All jury trials in the New Hampshire Superior Court have been canceled through the end of December, according to a press release. Chief Justice of the Superior Court Tina Nadeau made the decision based on the increase in Covid-19 infection rates, noting that

there's more than a 70 percent risk that one person in 25 will be infected in each of the remaining counties where jury trials were to take place in December. "As a result, based on scientific advice provided by the court's consultant epidemiologist Dr. Erin Bromage, we can no longer conduct jury trial proceedings with adequate protections in place," Nadeau said in the release. The court will continue to conduct virtual hearings, and as of now, jury trials scheduled to resume in January in Rockingham, Hillsborough Northern District, Cheshire and Merrimack counties will continue. 🗨️

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Jump\$tart on finances

Hillsboro man helping kids learn money management

Dan Hebert of Hillsboro has been named a winner of the 2020 Myra Kraft Community MVP Award, presented each year by the New England Patriots Foundation and Kraft Family to recognize exemplary community volunteers throughout New England. Hebert is the founder and president of NH Jump\$tart, a state chapter of the national nonprofit organization Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, where he has volunteered for the last 20 years. NH Jump\$tart was one of 25 organizations to receive a \$10,000 donation in honor of its MVP volunteer.

Q: *What is Jump\$tart all about?*

We have one singular mission, and that is to teach kids how to manage their money. ... We all need to be financially capable, right? Consumer behavior and financial capability is key to your success; it's key to my success; it's just what we have to do. We're in a country of free will where we can make our own choices about money, so my hope is that we give kids the tools and the knowledge to help them make those choices in an informed way.



Dan Hebert

bankruptcy filing ... and the financial landscape had become very complex. I got my heartstrings wrapped around this [issue] when I was asked to speak at a teacher conference about credit cards. ... It surprised me how little the teachers themselves knew about how credit cards work. More importantly, it wasn't being taught in the schools.

... I discovered this national nonprofit called Jump\$tart and saw that they operate independent state coalitions, and we didn't have one here in New Hampshire. ... I said, "When my banking career comes to an end, this is what I'm going to do for my next chapter."

What has been the most fulfilling thing about this work for you?

Lately, it's been working with the teachers. In order for them to help the kids, we have to help them improve their own knowledge and their own confidence in personal finance, and doing that just gives me a really good feeling.

How will Jump\$tart use the donation money?

We're planning on putting the funds away in an investment account. We're not even going to touch it; we're just going to let it grow. I guess you could say we're letting our actions match our words [about money management].

With NH Jump\$tart school programs on pause right now, how can parents help their kids be financially literate?

I would encourage parents to go on our website and the national organization's clearinghouse [jumpstartclearinghouse.org], which has teaching resources for all different levels, languages and concepts, and most of them can be downloaded for free. There are coloring books and reading books for younger kids and games and simulations for teenagers. ... The national organization also has an initiative called Check Your School; we know the power rests with the parents and that superintendents and school boards listen to parents, so we need parents to contact their local school leadership and ask them to teach personal finance and money management concepts.

How did you get involved?

I founded New Hampshire Jump\$tart when I was still in banking. My banking background is in consumer lending and collections, so, particularly in collections, I saw all the consequences of poor credit and all the opportunities of good credit. Back then, New Hampshire was leading the country for the highest percentage increase in

What's next for you, personally?

I'm at the retirement point, but I have no desire to take that hook. I just want to keep going. It's great to get up in the morning and come up with new ideas and new approaches [for Jump\$tart]. I'm sticking to it.

— Angie Sykeny



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SPORTS DAVE LONG'S LONGSHOTS

Sun goes down on Pats



With the Patriots' 10-day trip to Wallyworld hitting the high point of the season — a 45-0 beatdown of the San Diego, er, L.A. Chargers — and its low point four days later — being literally run over in a 24-3

loss to the Cleveland, er, L.A., er, Anaheim, er, St. Louis, er, L.A. (again) Rams — their chances to make the playoffs are basically over. Thus plans for this week's column to talk about how the left coast trip boosted their playoff hopes are scrapped. Instead we'll catch up on stories we'll be following as the Patriots spend January watching the playoffs on TV for the first time in 13 years.

Having said that, who should we root for? I'm going with **Bill Belichick's** coaching tree of **Mike Vrabel** in Tennessee, **Brian Flores** in Miami and, while it doesn't look likely after Sunday's loss, **Joe Judge** if the G-Men sneak in.

Sports 101: Of the NFL's Top 20 career TD pass leaders, nearly half (nine) were either drafted below Round 1 or were street free agents. How many can you name? Hint: That list ranges from the all-time best 571 to 261.

Also rooting for Buffalo because I like seeing players who got abuse from the so-called experts prove them wrong like QB **Josh Allen** has with an MVP-caliber season. Plus, after 25 years of misery the city deserves a little football joy.

How come no on **Tom Brady**? (a) I don't dig **Bruce Arians'** finger-pointing act. (b) I haven't particularly dug TB since he left either. (c) But mostly at a time when people and small businesses are being ravaged by Covid-19's economic impact, we've learned that the company of a guy worth \$200 million got nearly \$1 million in PPP Cares Act funds and then showed how desperately TB-12 needed that money by spending \$2 million on a new yacht not long after. Hard to root for a story like that, especially with he and **Yoko** about to make another \$15 million on a So-Ho condo they're selling. So hoping for an early playoff exit there.

Chaim Bloom surfaced Monday with big news; he signed masher Hunter Renfroe for \$3 million per. Yup — a .156 hitter.

The hot stove league in baseball has been another casualty of the pandemic. Other than that, there has been zero buzz this off-season. And with the winter meetings being done by Zoom, I don't expect that to change.

The chatter following the death of Phillies great **Dick Allen** sparked the classic "was he or wasn't a Hall of Famer?" that always follows the death of someone on the outside looking in. The 351 homers and just three 100-RBI seasons are at the bottom end. However, he played in baseball's greatest pitching era and his 10 best years had him

among the best offensive players of his time. Then if you play the "if he's in, then Dick should be in" game, I'll take him over several, including **Joe Tinker**, **Johnny Evers**, **Alan Trammell** and **Harold Baines**. The best comparison may be contemporary **Ron Santo**, whose stats came in hitter-friendly Wrigley and who only got in after he died, when he couldn't enjoy it. To the voters I say wake up, people.

Does Jets running backs coach **Jim Bob Cooter** have the greatest name in NFL history or what? OK, not better than **Bronko Nagurski**, but it does sound more like it should be for a NASCAR driver or the bass player for **Lynyrd Skynyrd**.

Speaking of great nicknames, shouldn't my new favorite player, bulldozing Titans running back **Derrick Henry**, have a good one? Some will say **Adrian Peterson** and/or **LaDainian Tomlinson**, but I'd say best pure NFL runner since the 1990s trio of **Barry Sanders**, **Emmitt Smith** and **Terrell Davis**.

I'm in the chorus who think **Danny Ainge** overplayed his hand with a proposed sign and trade deal with Indiana in the **Gordon Hayward** affair. But achieving the off-season's most critical task of signing **Jayson Tatum** to a five-year extension shouldn't go unnoticed. Phew on that one.

I know my friend **Dick Lombardi** the insurance magnate will agree that the annual saga of an NBA star holding up his team to get traded to a locale of his choice is a reason to turn off the Association. This year it's **James Harden** with internet wags transfixed on where he'll go. My comment is, who cares?

Speaking of turn-offs, after hearing **Aubrey Huff** say in response to the president-elect's plea for wearing them for 100 days after he takes office, "**Joe Biden** will have to make me wear a mask," it's not hard to see why the SF Giants don't want Huff (and puff) around during alumni events.

Sports 101 Answer: The list of nine includes three of the top four, Brady (571), **Drew Brees** (565) and **Brett Favre** (508). Followed by 340, **Fran Tarkenton** (third round); 291, **Warren Moon**, and 290, **Johnny Unitas** (both undrafted); 273, **Joe Montana**, and 263, **Russell Wilson** (both third round), and 261, undrafted, Seahawks and Chiefs QB **Dave Krieg** out of football power Milton College.

Finally, from the "now I've seen everything" department, is **Steve Kornacki** parlaying his Kornacki-gate presidential map guru work on MSNBC into a gig mapping out NFL playoff possibilities for Football Night in America on NBC. The segment is pretty silly and almost like an SNL parody. But, what the heck, he seems like a likable dude and was a lot better than **Dennis Miller** was on Monday Night Football.

Email Dave at dlong@hippopress.com.



QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

Light at the end of the tunnel

On Dec. 14, the first doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine arrived in New Hampshire, and on Dec. 15, Heidi Kukla, RN, a nurse at Elliot Hospital's intensive care unit, was the first person to get the vaccine. During the press event, where several other health care workers also got the vaccine, Kukla said she volunteered to go first because she knows a lot of people have reservations about the vaccine, and she hoped to alleviate some of those concerns. The vaccine was recently approved and given Emergency Use Authorization by the Food and Drug Administration and will first be distributed to at-risk health care workers in the state. According to a press release from the Department of Health and Human Services, two doses of vaccine, administered 21 days apart, demonstrated an efficacy rate of 95 percent during initial trials. The timeline for widespread access to a Covid-19 vaccine is expected to be approximately six to 12 months.

Score: +3

Comment: "This is the beginning of that light at the end of the tunnel that we have talked about for so long," Gov. Chris Sununu said Tuesday morning.

Sweet experience for Bearded Baking Co. owner

Auburn resident Jon Buatti's run on *Holiday Baking Championship* came to an end on Dec. 7 with his elimination from the Food Network show. The owner of the Bearded Baking Co. in Manchester was one of 12 contestants selected from a pool of thousands of candidates to create the best holiday-themed desserts for judges Nancy Fuller, Duff Goldman and Carla Hall. He made it to the top six before he was voted off. Shooting took place in Los Angeles over the summer; the remaining bakers will compete to win a grand prize of \$25,000, and the finale will air on Food Network on Dec. 21.

Score: +1, for representing New Hampshire bakers on a national stage

Comment: "I had never been on national TV before, so I was definitely nervous," Buatti told the *Hippo* last month. "The competition was super stiff, and that's definitely in your mind when you're out there."

Tips for toys

A server at the Northeast Cafe in New Boston is donating \$1,108 — the amount she made in tips over the course of two days — to Toys for Tots. Though the server (who wished to remain anonymous) has been making less money for months now because of limited customer capacity, she was thrilled to rake in extra tips not for herself but for kids in need.

Score: +1

Comment: Customers really stepped up to help her meet her challenge of earning at least \$1,000 in tips; one, for example, left a \$100 tip and another left \$100 for a \$23 bill.

Neighbor helping neighbor

Miracles do happen, according to a man in Bow who got some help from a neighbor during the recent snowstorm. Marc Lippmann posted on the town's Nextdoor Digest forum that he "woke up to a miracle" after a series of unfortunate events: "Tractor chains broke as I started to clear the double black diamond slope that is my driveway. Plow couldn't come up because three large birches were bent 180 degrees over it, completely blocking it. When I hiked down to cut them I took a bad spill ... then the saw pinched in the third tree and threw the chain ... and with the AFib that kicked in after the fall it took me half an hour just to limp back up the driveway," he wrote. He woke up the next morning to a plowed and sanded driveway, thanks to Kris Reynolds (owner of On-Demand Snow Plowing), who, in the middle of the night, took it upon himself to get his own chainsaw, cut and move the trees out of the way and clear the driveway.

Score: +1

Comment: "That's who Kris Reynolds is," Marc wrote. "And that's what New Hampshire is all about."

QOL score: 67

Net change: 6

QOL this week: 73

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ARTS — THE — ROUNDUP

The latest from NH's theater, arts and literary communities

• **Catch a holiday show:** The Majestic Theatre presents a show, **“Deck the Halls: Christmas at The Majestic,”** live in person at The Majestic Studio Theatre (880 Page St., Manchester) and virtually on Saturday, Dec. 19, at 7 p.m. The musical revue features an all-ages cast singing holiday songs. Tickets for the in-person show are \$20, and tickets for the virtual show are \$10. Visit majestictheatre.net or call 669-7469.

The Garrison Players Arts Center's Readers' Theater of Rollinsford presents a virtual show, **“A Very CoVid Christmas,”** on Saturday, Dec. 19, at 7:30 p.m. The show will feature theatrical readings from classic and new holiday tales. Tickets are free, but registration is required, and donations are appreciated. Visit garrisonplayers.org/showsandevents or call 750-4278.

The Northeastern Ballet Theatre of Wolfeboro is streaming a video of its 2019 performance of ***The Nutcracker*** now through Jan. 3. Also streaming are *The Legend of Sleepy*

Hollow and *The Wizard*, the ballet's interpretation of the first Harry Potter book. Tickets cost \$8 for access to one show, \$15 for two and \$20 for all three. Visit northeasternballet.org.

• **Outdoor student exhibit:** Three arts educators and 80 students from the Nashua School District present a new public art display, **“Brave New World: Resilience in the Time of Covid,”** located outside Amherst Elementary School (71 Amherst St., Nashua) now through Feb. 14. It features paintings that convey a message of hope and resilience amid the challenges of Covid-19. The paintings, attached to a chain link fence, have been treated with a marine-grade clear coat to withstand the elements. “We hope that this project will have a positive impact on the community by changing someone's day and making it better when they see it, especially for these difficult times,” participating student Natalia Pineda of Brentwood Academy said in a press release. The organizers plan to continue the display at other outdoor locations after the initial exhibition closes, according to the release. An opening reception at the exhibit location to celebrate the student and teacher artists will be held on Friday, Dec. 18, at 2 p.m. Visit sites.google.com/nsd42.net/bravenewworld/home.

• **The gift of art:** There's still time to do some art gift shopping at these holiday art shows and sales.

Two Villages Art Society and the Hopkin-



Northeastern Ballet Theatre streams its 2019 performance of *The Nutcracker*. Courtesy photo.



Art featured in “Brave New World” exhibit. Courtesy photo.

ton Historical Society have their **“Home for the Holidays: an Art Show & Sale”** now through Dec. 20 in Contoocook and online. The show features all kinds of art, including oil and watercolor paintings, ceramics, tapestry, woodworking, wearable art, book making and more, created by local artists and artisans. It's being held in person at the Bates Building (846 Main St.; masks required) on a drop-in and by-appointment basis and virtually at shop.twovillagesart.org. Show hours at the Bates Building are Thursday and Friday from noon to 4 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Visit twovillagesart.org.

Creative Ventures Gallery in Milford presents its annual holiday exhibit, **“Small Works**

— Big Impact,” virtually now through Dec. 31, featuring small works of art in various media, priced affordably for gift buying. Visit creativeventuresfineart.com or call 672-2500.

The Craftworkers' Guild's Holiday Fair is going on virtually now through Tuesday, Dec. 22, with curbside pickup at the historic Kendall House (3A Meetinghouse Road, Bedford) daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The fair features seasonal decor, photography, fine art and prints, cards, gourmet treats, woodworking, fiber and fabric, stained and fused glass, mixed media, jewelry and more by more than 40 juried artisans and craftspeople. Visit craftworkersguild.org.

— Angie Sykeny 🍀

Art

Exhibits

- **“MOMENTS IN NATURE”** The New Hampshire Art Association presents oil paintings by BJ Eckardt. Concord Chamber of Commerce Gallery, 49 S. Main St., Concord. On display now through Dec. 17. Visit nhartassociation.org or call 431-4230.
- **“UNSEEN LIGHT”** The New Hampshire Art Association presents infrared photography by Mark Giuliucci. 2 Pillsbury St., Concord. On display now through Dec. 17. Visit nhartassociation.org or call 431-4230.
- **“AN EXTRAPOLATION OF CLOSE OBSERVATION”** The

New Hampshire Art Association presents prints and paintings by Kate Higley. 2 Pillsbury St., Concord. On display now through Dec. 17. Visit nhartassociation.org or call 431-4230.

- **“THREADS: A COMMUNITY QUILT FOR 2020”** A Portsmouth Historical Society exhibit. Discover Portsmouth, 10 Middle St., Portsmouth. On view now through Dec. 22. Visit portsmouth-history.org or call 436-8433.
- **“BIG GIFTS IN SMALL PACKAGES”** Artwork priced under \$100. Presented by the Seacoast Artist Association. On display now through Dec. 26. 130 Water St., Exeter. Gallery hours

are Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and by appointment. Visit seacoastartist.org or call 778-8856.

- **“THIS MERRY MOMENT”** The New Hampshire Art Association hosts its holiday exhibition and sale featuring a variety of artwork and greeting cards created by NHAA members. Online and at the NHAA's Robert Lincoln Levy Gallery (136 State St., Portsmouth). Now through Jan. 2. Gallery hours are Monday and Tuesday by appointment; Wednesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. An opening recep-

tion will be held virtually on Zoom on Fri., Dec. 4, at 6 p.m. Call 431-4230 or visit nhartassociation.org.

- **“BRAVE NEW WORLD: RESILIENCE IN THE TIME OF COVID”** Outdoor public art display features paintings by 80 students from the Nashua School District that convey a message of hope and resilience amid the challenges of Covid-19. Amherst Elementary School (71 Amherst St., Nashua). Now through Feb. 14. An opening reception at the exhibit location to celebrate the student and teacher artists will be held on Friday, Dec. 18, at 2 p.m. Visit sites.google.com/nsd42.net/bravenewworld/home.

Theater

Shows

- **A CHRISTMAS CAROL** A one-man adaptation performed by Christopher Savage. Virtual. Tickets \$24 for adults, \$20 for students and seniors, \$15 for kids under 12. Visit playersring.org or call 436-8123.
- **THE NUTCRACKER** Ballet Misha performs. Dana Center at Saint Anselm College, 100 Saint Anselm Drive, Manchester. Sat., Dec. 19, at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Tickets cost \$28. Call 641-7700 or visit anselm.edu.
- **A VERY IDA CHRISTMAS** Written and performed by Susan Poulin. Sun., Dec. 20, 2 p.m. The

Music Hall Historic Theater, 28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth. Tickets cost \$35. Visit themusicall.org.

- **BOLSHOI BALLET: THE NUTCRACKER** Rebroadcast screening. Bank of New Hampshire Stage, 16 S. Main St., Concord. Sun., Dec. 20, 2 p.m. Tickets cost \$15 for adults and \$12 for students, plus a \$3.75 per ticket fee. Visit banknhstage.com.
- **THE NUTCRACKER** Safe Haven Ballet presents. Sat., Jan. 2, 2 and 6 p.m., and Sun., Jan. 3, 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. The Music Hall Historic Theater, 28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth. Tickets cost \$50 for adults and \$45 for seniors and children. Visit themusicall.org.

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7 IDEAS FOR PROJECTS TO LIVEN UP YOUR WINTER



Between Covid, snowstorms and shorter days, we'll all likely be spending a lot of time at home over the next several months. Here are seven ideas for projects, from the giftable truffles to the ongoing satisfaction of indoor greenery, that can add some fun to your winter.

Angie Sykeny
asykeny@hippopress.com

Build a Rube Goldberg machine

Kids, adults and families can stimulate their creativity and STEM skills this winter by building a Rube Goldberg machine, a contraption made from household items that uses a series of interconnected steps to perform a simple task.

Zach Umperovitch of Bedford is a contracted Rube Goldberg machine builder for Rube Goldberg Inc. and Synn Labs and a two-time Guinness World Record-setter for the longest Rube Goldberg Machine. He said that, traditionally, the machine's final task is something mundane, and the fun lies in the irony of making the process "incredibly complicated."

"Say you want to water a plant," he said. "You might blow up a balloon, and that balloon hits a seesaw, which causes a [toy] car to roll down and trigger something else, and all those steps link together in order to water the plant."

Once you've decided what your machine's final task will be, start looking around for materials and thinking about how they could work together.

"Rube Goldberg is all about repurposing everyday objects and using them in a new, creative way," Umperovitch said. "You're using resources in your own home, so you don't even need to leave the house."

Dominoes or objects that could act as dominoes, such as books or DVD cases, and objects that roll, like balls or marbles, are good ones to start with, he said. Kitchen utensils work well as catapults.

Six to 10 steps is appropriate for a beginner, Umperovitch said, and it's eas-



Build a Rube Goldberg machine. Photo courtesy of Zach Umperovitch.

iest to start with the last step — the one that will directly trigger your goal task — and work backward.

You may prefer to plan out all of the steps before you start building, or you may prefer to start building and let inspiration come to you along the way; both styles are valid, Umperovitch said, but if you're a pre-planner, you'll need to be flexible.

"When I try to build a fully designed machine, I would say between 70 and 90 percent of it gets changed from the initial design to the final product, and this is my profession," he said.

Finally, while not as exciting as building, testing your machine is one of the most important parts of the process and will probably be the most time-consuming. That said, Umperovitch said, make sure the steps in your machine are made with stable or infinite resources and are relatively easy to reset.

"I have a rule: 50 out of 50 [successful attempts]," he said. "You want to

be able to test every step, individually, over and over, because if one step fails one time, what's to say it won't happen again when you're trying to run the entire machine?"

Set up an at-home obstacle course

Start your ninja training this winter by building your own obstacle course using the layout of your home and common household items.

Tabitha Stevens, youth coach and lesson planner for Ninja Fit Club, an obstacle-based fitness center in Londonderry, shared some ideas to get you started. The exercises themselves are mostly aimed at kids, she said, but engineering the course can be a fun creative project for parents or for parents and kids to do together.

"You can turn it into a family activity," Stevens said. "It's something to get everybody moving."



Set up an at-home obstacle course to help kids stay active. Courtesy photo.

A good obstacle to start with is one for balance, she said. Lay a trail of spaced-out cans, buckets (flipped over), sturdy boxes or heavy books on the ground for the kids to walk across. You can up the challenge with the same idea using softer objects like pillows or couch cushions and having the kids jump across.

"It's basically the 'the floor is lava' game," Stevens said. "You have to use balance not to touch the floor."

Space the soft objects out further to make it a jumping obstacle; have the kids jump from one object to another, increasing the distance a little more each time.

If you don't want the kids elevated off the ground, there is a simple way to modify these balance and jumping obstacles.

"You can use the objects just as markers and have the kids jump to them while staying flat on the floor, or you can stick colored tape on the floor to mark the distances," Stevens said.

For a jumping obstacle focused more

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Build your own indoor succulent garden. Photo courtesy of Apotheca Flowers.

on height than distance, hang an object from the ceiling — Stevens suggests a balloon — and have the kids jump up and try to touch it.

“You can hang several balloons in a row at various heights and have the kids jump, tap, and move on to the next one as quickly as they can,” she said.

Regular chairs from your kitchen or dining room table can be used for all kinds of obstacles. You can line them up like “little hurdles,” but for climbing over, not jumping over, so that it’s safer, Stevens said. The kids can also do an army crawl and weave around the chairs or, if there’s enough space, they can crawl under the chairs.

Finally, no obstacle course is complete without somersaults.

“Forward rolls, backward rolls — those are always great to add into the course,” Stevens said.

Grow an indoor succulent garden

If you want to have some fun with indoor gardening this winter, Alyssa Van Guilder, owner of Apotheca Flowers in Goffstown, said succulents are the way to go.

“They’re clean, they’re modern, there are so many different styles to choose from, and the overall care [requirement] is much lower than [it is for] other house plants,” Van Guilder said. “I think that’s why people are really drawn to them.”

Before you start designing the succulent garden of your dreams, there are a few things you should know about caring for them, Van Guilder said.

When planting your succulents, start with a layer of rocks to help with water drainage, followed by a layer of gardening charcoal to help control bacteria and excess moisture. Then, place the succulents in a succulent-specific soil.

They do need sun, which can be difficult in the winter when the days are shorter, so just be sure to put them by your sunniest window. If that doesn’t seem to be enough, consider supplementing with a fluorescent plant light.

There is no objective rule about how long you should wait between watering; the key, rather, is to allow the plants to dry out completely, then water them thoroughly, and repeat, so how often you need to water them will depend mostly on the size of the container and amount of soil you use.

There are more than 100 kinds of succulents, Van Guilder said, including ones in various shades of green, purple and mauve tones and some with white spotted or striped patterns. She suggests putting three to five plants in a cluster, depending on the size of the container.

“It’s hard to pair succulents that don’t look good together,” she said. “I think it’s nice to design a medley and have different colors, shapes and textures play off of each other.”

Succulents will grow in almost anything, so “if you really want to go crazy with containers, you can,” Van Guilder said.

“We all have things laying around that we could turn into some really interesting plant containers,” she said.

Van Guilder said her favorite containers are terrariums — clear glass globes — because the layers are visible, giving you another design element to play with.

You still need to have the rocks-charcoal-soil foundation, but you can layer on top of that with decorative sand, rock, moss, wood and shells (being careful not to layer too thickly or too tightly so that the soil can still air out).

“You can put all kinds of embellishments or found objects on top,” Van Guilder said. “Plastic animals are a fun one, so that it looks like a little habitat.”

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If you can melt chocolate, you can make truffles. Courtesy photo.

Make truffles

Before you begin this recipe, you need to know that making truffles can be messy and time-consuming — but the end result is a delicious and decadent truffle that’s well worth the trouble. Even for those of you who wouldn’t normally head to the kitchen when you’re bored, I want to highlight one important thing: When you are done with this recipe, you will have twenty-four rich and

delicious chocolate truffles. From start to finish, it is about 2½ hours of mainly active time — the perfect amount of time to fill a cozy afternoon at home. Once they are done, you have a delicious treat to enjoy while you watch a movie or read a book. Despite being a bit time-consuming, this recipe really is pretty simple. As long as you can stir melted chocolate and form it into a ball, you have all the skills you need.
— Michele Pesula Kuegler

Triple Chocolate Truffles

Makes 24

- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 8 ounces semisweet chocolate chopped
- 4 ounces semisweet chocolate chopped
- 1/2 cup chocolate sprinkles

Combine the cream, corn syrup and butter in a small saucepan over medium heat; bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Add 8 ounces of chocolate; gently swirl the pan. Allow to sit for 5 minutes off heat. Whisk to combine. Transfer to a small mixing bowl, and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Stir mixture, return to refrigerator for two more 15-minute periods, stirring after each for a total of 45 minutes. At this point the mixture will begin to harden more quickly, so the mixture should be stirred every 5 minutes. When mixture is thicker but not hard, remove from refrigerator.* Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Using a teaspoon, scrape a small amount of mixture from the bowl. Using hands, roll into a ball approximately 1 inch in diameter; place on parchment paper. Repeat until all mixture is used.



Photo courtesy of Michele Pesula Kuegler.

Place baking sheet in refrigerator for 15 minutes. Place remaining 4 ounces of chocolate in a small bowl and microwave in 30-second increments, stirring after each, until melted. Pour sprinkles into a separate small bowl. After 15 minutes, remove baking sheet from refrigerator. Place an individual ball in melted chocolate and roll until fully coated. Using a fork, transfer the ball to the sprinkles bowl. With a clean hand or fork, roll the ball in sprinkles; return to baking sheet. Repeat with remaining balls, and refrigerate for 10 minutes to set.

**I found that my chocolate mixture reached the thick but not firm stage after 10 minutes, for a total of 55 minutes in the refrigerator.*



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Give jigsaw puzzles a try. Photo courtesy of Diversions
Puzzles & Games.

Do a jigsaw puzzle

Doing a jigsaw puzzle can be a great way to unwind and unplug this winter, said Laura Keith, general manager of Diversions Puzzles & Games in Portsmouth.

"It's such a nice break from screens," she said. "It's tactile, it's relaxing, and you feel a sense of accomplishment. Putting the pieces into place is so satisfying."

Most puzzles have between 300 and 3,000 pieces, with 1,000 pieces being the most popular, Keith said, but there are some puzzles that have up to 40,000 pieces.

The difficulty depends not only on the number of pieces but also on the shapes of the pieces and the image.

"We find that collages are usually easier, while landscapes with large sections of similar colors are much harder," Keith said.

You can find a puzzle with an image of "almost anything you can think of," Keith said, including cartoons, pop culture subjects, landscapes, plants, animals, fantasy themes and more.

"I've recently done a Pokemon puzzle

New Hampshire puzzle makers

- **Ravensburger**, leading European jigsaw puzzle publisher based in Germany, with its warehouse for its North American division located right here in New Hampshire, at One Puzzle Lane in Newton. It offers a wide variety of jigsaw puzzles for kids and adults through its online shop, ranging from puzzles with under 100 pieces to puzzles with more than 40,000 pieces. Call 257-1500 or visit ravensburger.us.

- **Piece Time Puzzles** (746 1st NH Turnpike, Northwood, piecetimepuzzles.com) a puzzle store specializing in custom and made-to-order photo puzzles.

- **Fool's Gold** (based in Harrisville, 827-9825, foolsgoldpuzzles.com) creates handmade wooden jigsaw puzzles without pictures to assist the puzzler, making the image of the finished puzzle a surprise.

- **Platinum Puzzles** (9 Stark Hill Road, Canaan, 632 1105, platinumpuzzles.com) creates custom, handmade wooden jigsaw puzzles.

followed by a tranquil mountain scene followed by a fun veggie collage I'm going to hang in my kitchen," she said.

Keith recommends that first-time puzzlers choose a puzzle with 500 pieces if they're going solo and 1,000 pieces if they have a partner. An image with a lot of variation in colors and patterns will be easier than an image with big blocks of the same color, like a landscape with a large blue sky.

There is no right or wrong method to do a jigsaw puzzle; it's a matter of personal preference, Keith said, but starting with the edges is a good way to start. Then, try putting together pieces with distinct colors and patterns that only appear in one localized area of the image.

"Keep doing that over and over [and] whittle down the pieces available until it's just the hardest pieces left," she said. "By then, there are fewer options, so it's a little easier to find where [the pieces] go."

Create a cozy outdoor space

Just because it's cold doesn't mean you can't relax outdoors this winter. Keith MacKay and Jody Ferreira are the owners of Snug Life, a private campsite in Wilton that's heated and equipped for winter camping. They shared some ideas over email about how to create your own cozy outdoor space.

First, consider how you're going to warm up. A natural fire is ideal, MacKay and Ferreira said.

"Even pulling out a small charcoal grill and getting some coals going adds a cozy feel, a little radiant warmth, and beauty," they said. "It also provides an opportunity for comfort food [like] hot dogs, a kettle of water for cocoa, s'mores or plain old marshmallows."

If a fire source isn't feasible, there are other ways to keep warm.

Seating, for example, can make all the difference, MacKay and Ferreira said. Use seating that gets you above the ground or puts a physical barrier between you and the ground. If you really want to lounge you can even use an air mattress or sleeping pad.

"The thermal mass of the planet is huge relative to the thermal mass of a person," they said. "As a result, the earth will draw the heat right out of you if you're laying on it."

Wearing a heavy winter coat will keep you warm but not necessarily comfortable, so be sure to wear comfy clothes under your outdoor gear.

"Your most snuggly sweater, your warmest and softest fleece or your favorite plush sweatpants ... can give the tactile triggers for coziness," MacKay and Ferreira said, adding that a blanket or

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Candles make a cozy atmosphere. Courtesy photo.

◀14

two can also contribute to that “cozy feeling” while providing additional warmth.

A thermos of cocoa, coffee or even a hot alcoholic drink can provide an element of comfort, too, they said.

Atmosphere can be just as important for creating a cozy space as physical warmth, MacKay and Ferreira said.

Candles or incense sticks can add a bit of “campfire ambiance” if you can’t have a full-scale fire, they said, and there’s “nothing more magical” than warm-toned LED string lights (you can get battery-powered ones).

“Aside from helping to define something that feels more indoors (and psychologically warmer), [they’re a bit fancy], which adds to the cozy feel,” they said.

Bringing some nature into the picture by hanging up bird feeders or throwing some seeds for birds and other nearby critters is a nice touch and provides some entertainment, MacKay and Ferreira said.

Finally, think about what kind of soundscape, if any, would help foster the atmosphere you’re going for.

“It’s a matter of individual taste, of course, but music can provide immediate mood alteration,” MacKay and Ferreira said. “Choosing your favorite chill playlist can set the right comfy tone.”

Declutter your digital life

If it’s been on your to-do list for a while, this winter may be the perfect time to finally sort through all the photos and videos taking up storage on your devices.

“We’re all taking more photos than we ever have before because we always have a camera in our hands. We can easily take 1,000 photos in one week,” said Angelina McGlashan, certified photo manager and owner of Preserving Memories, a photo management service based in Windham. “The goal is to get to a point where you aren’t so overwhelmed,



Back up your files to an external hard drive and a reputable cloud storage. Courtesy photo.

so you’re able to actually enjoy your photos and find the photos you’re looking for when you need them.”

Your first order of business, McGlashan said, should be to back up your photos. She recommends the 3-2-1 backup rule: three copies of your media, two of which are on two different devices (a computer and an external hard drive are preferable) and one in a reputable cloud storage.

“Getting those photos off your phone is the most important thing you can do,” she said. “A phone can easily be lost, stolen or broken, and then all those photos are gone.”

Next, pick one device to serve as a “digital hub” where you can do all of your organizing, McGlashan said. Start by deleting screenshots, duplicates and photos that are blurry or unusable. The photos that remain will fall into three categories: the “best of the best” album-worthy photos, photos that aren’t aesthetically perfect but serve as reminders of a time or place that’s important to you, and photos that have no personal significance, like a random sunset or flower you saw. The latter you should delete, McGlashan said.

“If they don’t tell a story or mean something to you, or you can’t even remember where or why you took it, you’re never going to use it,” she said.

Once you’ve got your collection culled down, you can sort your photos into different folders. How you sort them is a matter of personal preference.

“Everybody’s different,” McGlashan said. “I tell people to think about how they would put things in a filing cabinet at home. Do they like to have things alphabetical? By year? By [subject]?”

Once you’re totally done backing up and organizing your media, build a habit of maintaining going forward so that it doesn’t get out of control again.

“Set aside 15 minutes one day a week to go through and delete photos off your phone ... and back up your photos monthly,” McGlashan said. 🐾

Merry and bright

Christmas lights at Countryside Drive



Photo courtesy of Shane Jozitis.

Turn down Countryside Drive in Nashua and you'll find your way to a festive display that would give Clark Griswold a run for his money. Nashua resident Whitney Swain has transformed his front yard into an illuminated winter wonderland, with bright lights and a radio broadcast that airs popular holiday tunes played in sync with the display. The show runs from 4:30 to 10 p.m. every day until New Year's. Swain talked about his process and his motivations for creating the show.

Q: *How did you get started with this display?*

I've been living here for about 10 years now, and my old roommate, Nic, used to do this with me before he moved back to Wisconsin. He still comes out here sometimes and helps me with the show, and I do the same for him.

Was it always this big?

Originally I started with roof lining, and I had this big Christmas tree out in the yard so I figured I'd make it look like the one inside. We added all of the lights and Nic and I built the star at the top. We just went from there, and each year I add more decorations, and program more songs to go along with the lights.

How did you get the radio station?

It's my own radio frequency. I broadcast music out to the cars that drive by through stations that aren't being used, and I get about a block's worth of radius, which is usually sufficient enough. We air all types of Christmas songs, like "Baby It's Cold Outside" by Bing Crosby. We also throw in some up-to-date tunes like "Uptown Funk" by Bruno Mars, and we play a lot of Trans-Siberian Orchestra because their beats pair really nicely with the lights.

How long does it take to get everything set up?

This year it was a long project because I own a diner now, so I'm limited on time.

I had some chipmunks get into my Christmas stuff so I had to fix some of the wiring as well. For the most part it takes about a month to a month and a half. I usually start around Halloween and finish by Black Friday, and they usually come down after New Year's.

I have to know, what does your electric bill look like?

That's the question on everyone's mind. It's only an extra \$300. Sometimes I come out when there's a line of cars and I talk to the kids and I see all of the smiles on their faces. I got a letter in my mailbox the other day from a kid who wanted to thank me and tell me how awesome all of the lights were. To be honest, that's all I need from this. I think it's a great thing for the community, and I'm glad people enjoy it as much as I do.

What do your neighbors think?

All of them are super cool with it, so I haven't heard any complaints. My next-door neighbor used to come over and [she and her husband would] dress up as Mr. and Mrs. Claus before her husband passed away a few years ago, and we would hand out hot cocoa and candy canes. I want to do it this year, but I need to figure out the safest and easiest way to facilitate that with the pandemic. Whenever Christmas time rolls around I check up on my neighbors across the street and make sure they're OK

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◀ 17

with the lights, and they love them. They tell all of their friends and watch the show from their window. All they have to do is turn on their radio and tune in.

Do you have any competition?

There's a community of us on Facebook, some would call us light enthusiasts. I don't know of anyone in Nashua that's doing animated lights and music, but there's people in Merrimack, Manchester and all over Massachusetts. However, since I've been doing this, a lot more people on the street decorate their houses with lights for Christmas, which is awesome. When I moved here there weren't a lot of lights, so it's cool to see people getting in the spirit. It would be really cool if I could get the whole block synced up with the music.

Are there any cons to doing this every year?

I enjoy wiring all of the lights, but things do break, and lights burn out over time. It's a bit of a hassle fixing stuff out in the cold, but creating something that everyone can enjoy, and the sounds of the kids and honking cars, is something I feel good about. Knowing that I made somebody's night or putting a smile on someone's face is really great.



Photo courtesy of Whitney Swain.

Does the inside of your house match the outside's aesthetic?

We're still decorating the inside. We wanted to get the outside done first, mainly because we didn't decorate last year due to a lack of time. But we really like Christmas here. When I was growing up my mom always tried to make Christmas a special day, and that stuck with me. I still love cutting my own tree and making that a family tradition.

Does your mom come see the show?

I actually had her fix a couple of blow-up decorations for me because I can't sew. She loves it, though. She came over the other night to see the show, and we usually try to do Christmas here, for obvious reasons.

— Shane Jozitis 🍷

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A Shaker Christmas

Take a **A Magic Journey through the North Shop Barn** at Canterbury Shaker Village (228 Shaker Road, Canterbury), now through Dec. 23, and from Dec. 27 through Dec. 30, daily, from 1 to 5 p.m. The North Shop Barn, which has been transformed into a winter wonderland, will feature art vignettes like a Shaker Christmas, a dollhouse, a skating panorama and snowy forest scenes; a Find-the-Elf treasure hunt; hot cocoa and cider, and shopping at the Village Store. Additionally there will be a Christkindlmarkt-inspired artisan market of handcrafted holiday gifts on weekends, and food trucks with sweet treats on Saturday, Dec. 19. Admission costs \$10 for adults and is free for youth. Visit shakers.org or call 783-9511.



Ballet Misha. Photo by Larry Gray

Express on a large projector. Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus will be stopping by for a live reading of “’Twas the Night Before Christmas.” Tickets to the brunch are by the table only, and there is a six guest limit per table (price breakdowns are \$22.99 per person). Visit labellewineryevents.com.

There’s still time to visit with Santa Claus at **Bass Pro Shops** (2 Commerce Drive, Hooksett), where he’ll be now through Dec. 24. Santa will have an acrylic “magic shield” barrier in place between families. Free online reservations are required, as spots are limited to allow social distancing. Visit basspro.com/santa.

Holiday tales

Ballet Misha performs *The Nutcracker* at the Dana Center (Saint Anselm College, 100 Saint Anselm Drive, Manchester) on Saturday, Dec. 19, at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Ballet Misha’s production of the holiday classic won the 2019 Hippo Best of award for “Best Dance Performance of the Year.” Tickets cost \$28, and reservations must be made via phone at 641-7700.

Watch *Eleanor’s Very Merry Christmas — A Musical* from the comfort of home. Based on the book by the same name, the musical tells the story of a rag doll at the North Pole searching for a family of her own. This production is available for livestream via the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord, through Dec. 27. Tickets start at \$20 (plus a \$3 fee) for streaming during a 48-hour window; packages with games and other items are available. 🍪

Meet Santa

Enjoy a **Polar Express family brunch** with LaBelle Winery (345 Route 101, Amherst) on either Sunday, Dec. 20, or Thursday, Dec. 24, from 10 a.m. to noon. The event will feature a multi-course brunch menu accompanied by a screening of the family holiday film *The Polar*

TREASURE HUNT

Dear Donna,
I’m hoping you can identify this little piece that was unearthed when we dismantled a shed. It’s about 7 1/2 inches by 15 3/8 inches and appears to be copper. The raised design and patina are quite lovely. We would love to know its origin.



why it is tough. It definitely was applied to something judging by the tiny nail holes on the edges.

What you have is a raised design metal panel. It’s in very nice condition, and the design is a sweet one. I believe it would date to the late 1800s to 1900s and because it is an architectural fragment the value would be in the \$100 range. Nice piece to come across.

Sandy
Dear Sandy,
What a nice piece to come across. Without any markings to go by, it’s tough to tell its original origin or purpose. What we have now is a nice piece of antique metal with a raised design.

If it is copper you might think it was part of an exterior design on a building such as a Victorian home, or a panel from a commercial building from around the early 1900s, etc., and that is perhaps where it got all that sweet patina as it aged. But it also could have acquired the patina just from being outside in the shed as well, so this is

Donna Welch has spent more than 30 years in the antiques and collectibles field, appraising and instructing, and recently closed the physical location of *From Out Of The Woods Antique Center* (fromoutofthewoodsantiques.com) but is still doing some buying and selling. She is a member of *The New Hampshire Antiques Dealer Association*. If you have questions about an antique or collectible send a clear photo and information to Donna at footwdw@aol.com, or call her at 391-6550 or 624-8668. 🍪

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By Henry Homeyer
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Alder catkins provide seeds now.
 Photo by Henry Homeyer.

By now many of us are providing seeds to the neighborhood birds. Of course the seeds we provide are just a part of the diet of a wild bird. It's important to grow a diverse selection of native trees, shrubs and perennials to help provide shelter and nesting places for our wild friends, and to provide food all year long. Why native?

Native species evolved with the birds and they are genetically programmed to feed on them.

Doug Tallamy, an entomologist living in Pennsylvania, counted the number of butterflies and moth species that, as caterpillars, fed on an oak tree on his property. He counted over 400 species. He also counted species on a non-native shrub, burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), and found only one. The caterpillars of those butterflies and moths are what birds feed their babies each spring and summer, providing protein and fat needed for their development.

If you watch the birds at your bird feeder carefully now you will see that not only are many of the birds eating the seeds you provide, they are also nibbling things on the trees they perch on. In crevices in the bark are dormant insects and their larvae. Chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers — three of the most common birds at our feeders — are constantly pecking at bits of food.

There is a huge native cherry tree (*Prunus serotina*) right by our feeders, a white pine and several Canadian hemlocks along with a couple of mature pear and apple trees nearby. The birds grab a seed at the feeder, zoom off to eat it and rest before returning. But while they are in those trees they almost always find something tasty to peck at. Planting trees near your house and bird feeders is a good plan if you want to support your birds.

Fruit trees are great for your birds. Apple, pear and especially crabapple trees hold on to some fruit in winter. And while a chickadee might not tear into a dry and wizened apple, bigger birds do. I have seen turkeys feeding in a small weeping crabapple tree that could barely support them. Blue jays, crows, cardinals, grosbeaks and finches and other birds enjoy fruit in winter, too.

So what shrubs have edible fruit that is available to your birds in winter? Right now I see berries on cranberry bush viburnum (*Viburnum opulus*) and nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*). Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), a native deciduous holly, produces myriad bright red berries visible now in swamps and drainage ditches along the road. It is only eaten by a few birds, so the berries linger on into the winter — and are great for decorating wreaths. Junipers, a low-growing bush on low-fertility fields, has berries now too. Eaten by grouse, pheasants, grosbeaks and others, juniper berries are also used to flavor gin!

Alders (*Alnus spp.*) generally are considered weedy and not planted in the landscape. They grow in wet places as large shrubs or small trees. They are nitrogen-fixing plants, and their seeds are eaten by sparrows and finches, among others. The seeds persist well into December.

Roses that bear fruit are important food sources, too. The invasive climbing wild multiflora roses (*Rosa multiflora*) are loved

by birds, but they drop seeds that grow and take over and smother other shrubs and trees. Beach roses (*Rosa rugosa*) produce lots of rose hips, and these are eaten by some birds. And although this species of rose is originally from Asia, it does not seem to take over the landscape the way multiflora roses do.

Of the big trees useful to birds, white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) are two of the most important. Some 40 species of birds eat seeds of the white pine, and at least two dozen eat seeds of Canadian hemlock. Importantly, both are used in winter for shelter. They hold their leaves (needles), providing a break from cold winter winds. Both are used for nesting in the summer.

Any plant that holds onto its berries or seeds into winter is eventually eaten by birds. One of the small trees, staghorn sumac (*Rhus hirta*), is the least favorite of our birds. The red fruit generally is ignored until spring, when returning robins and other migratory birds arrive and food is scarce. The fruit is sour and low in the fats that birds love, but a hungry robin will chow down on sumac if earthworms are not available. Sumacs grow mainly along roadsides in sandy, low-fertility soil. They spread by root and I don't recommend planting them. But if you have some, leave them be if you can.

Mentioned above as food for caterpillars that feed baby birds, oaks are important winter food sources, too. Acorns are a preferred food for turkeys and grouse, and can be cracked by a surprising number of small birds. Others eat the meat of acorns that are broken by cars or people, or clean out shells opened by large birds or mammals. Bears and squirrels love acorns, too.

Gray squirrels have been pirating my bird feeders, so I looked up online just how much they eat per day. Only a quarter of a cup of sunflower seeds per day will feed one, so I am letting the two portly, geriatric squirrels eat, and only chase them away if they get too greedy when my little chickadees are waiting.

Henry is offering one of his books, *Organic Gardening* (not just in the Northeast, a *Hands-On, Month-by-Month Guide*, as a holiday special for \$15 including shipping. To get a signed copy, mail him a check at PO Box 364, Cornish Flat, NH 03746. 🍷

Should accessories be turned off when shutting off the car?

Dear Car Talk:

When I was learning how to drive back in the 1970s, I was told that before turning off the car, a driver should first make sure all of the accessories (wipers, radio, heater blower, rear window defroster, etc.) are turned off.

By Ray Magliozzi

The idea was that it would be “easier” and better for the car to not have to power everything all at the same time when you next start the car. Also, if you have a weak battery, better to have it using all its juice to start the engine only, instead of all the other stuff, too.

Was that true back then? If so, is it true now? — David

It was true generations ago, David, but it’s certainly not true now.

On modern cars, all of the battery’s power is automatically directed to the starter motor when you turn the key to the crank position. Anything else that draws power is automatically shut off while the car is cranking. The car takes care of that itself. You don’t have to do it.

You can demonstrate this for yourself, David. Next time you go out to start your car, before you start it, turn the key to the “run” position (right before “crank”). Then turn on your windshield wipers.

They’ll start wiping. If you then turn the key to the “crank” position to start the engine, the wipers will momentarily stop while the car cranks, and then start moving again once the engine is running. And that’s true for every accessory.

In the really old days, you may remember that if you’re lights were on, they would dim when you cranked the engine — as the starter motor drew most of the available electric power.

So back then, it made sense to be sure to turn your lights off when you turned off the engine the night before. Of course, it made sense to turn your lights off the night before anyway, because if you didn’t, your battery would be stone-cold dead the next morning.

In any case, it makes absolutely no sense now to worry about turning off accessories when you turn off the engine. The car has that covered. The only exception is that, if you live in the great, frozen north, you should turn off your windshield wipers when you park your car outside in the winter.

That way, if you get heavy snow or freezing rain before you come back to start your car, you won’t strip your wiper transmission when the wiper arms flash-freeze to the windshield and then try to start wiping the second the car starts.

Dear Car Talk:

We have a 2009 Subaru Forester Limited with a stick shift. We had no problems until 171,000

miles. Back in February, it began to have trouble starting. I took it to our trusted garage, and it started fine for them. The battery was replaced, and we finally told them to try a new starter. No luck.

The problem is still happening. The repair shop had it for a month, and they continued to have no problem with it. Back home, same starter problem. When trying to start it, we either hear nothing at all, or sometimes a little noise, not like it is trying to do something. When it does start, it starts immediately.

Help! — Connie

Hmm. They had it for a month and couldn’t figure it out, and you want me to diagnose it through the newspaper? Have you tried Hints from Heloise?

It sounds electrical to me, Connie. Based on your description, I assume that, when it doesn’t start, there’s no current getting to your starter. The first thing I’d check would be the clutch interlock. On this car, you have to depress the clutch in order to start the car. That keeps you from driving through your garage door before you open it.

There’s a little switch connected to the clutch pedal mechanism that prevents electricity from going to the starter unless the clutch is fully depressed. That switch could be faulty. Or it could just be out of adjustment. Perhaps the big, hairy gorillas who work at the garage are stomp-

ing on the clutch so hard that they always engage the switch, but when you’re at home, you don’t push quite so hard, because you’re not an animal.

You might also check to make sure the floor mat isn’t bunched up behind the pedals. We’ve seen that interfere with the clutch interlock, too.

Next time it doesn’t start, while you’re holding the key to the start position, try really mashing down the clutch pedal, and see if you can break through those shag carpet disco floor mats you bought in the ‘70s. Maybe buy a pair of size 12, steel toed hiking boots first.

If that doesn’t help, I would guess that there’s another connection that’s failing intermittently. So when it won’t start, while you hold the key to the start position, have someone else jiggle all of the relevant wires under the hood, one connection at a time.

Start at the battery and check both cables. Then try the cable at the starter that comes from the battery. Then the ground connection from the negative terminal. If you can get the car to start while jiggling a wire or moving a connector, you’ve found your problem.

Finally, I know they replaced the starter, but if they put in a rebuilt rather than a new starter, it’s possible you got another bad starter. But not very likely.

I think the clutch interlock is the most likely problem, and that’s certainly where I’d start.

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News from the local food scene

By Matt Ingersoll
food@hippopress.com

• **LaBelle Winery expanding to Derry:** LaBelle Winery will be expanding its business into Derry next year, according to a press release. Owners Amy LaBelle and her husband, Cesar Arboleda, recently announced the purchase of Brookstone Events & Golf on Route 111. The property, according to the release, will undergo significant renovations beginning this month, with the intention of creating a Champagne house, a restaurant and a wedding and event center. Plans also include an “artisan village” with several outdoor and indoor gathering areas, including a nine-hole par-3 golf course and a miniature golf course. The Champagne house will include a tasting room and a space where a new line of sparkling wines will be produced, while the restaurant will feature farm-to-table American cuisine and wood-fired pizzas served in an upscale casual environment. The golf courses and event center are scheduled to reopen in April 2021, with the restaurant and retail marketplace opening in June, followed by the winery tasting room in July. Visit labellewinerynh.com.

• **Farm-fresh feasts: The Farmer’s Dinner,** a New Hampshire-based farm-to-table dinner series, recently announced the schedule for its ninth season in 2021, according to a press release, and it will start with a dinner at Live Bee or Die Farm in New Boston on May 23. The series will continue with dinners at Dunk’s Mushrooms in Brentwood on June 12, a colonial dinner on July 18 in Derry, a dinner at Kimball Fruit Farm in Pepperell, Mass., on Aug. 14, and a dinner at Vernon Family Farm in Newfields on Aug. 29. Since 2012, The Farmer’s Dinner has hosted nearly 90 farm-to-table events across New England, feeding more than 17,000 people and raising more than \$125,000 for local farms. Tickets are available now at thefarmersdinner.com.

• **Blueberry farm retires: Durocher Farm** in Litchfield, known as a destination for its early and late season varieties of pick-your-own blueberries for more than four decades, will not be returning in 2021. “The Durocher family has decided that the time is right to retire,” read a recent post from the farm’s Facebook page from Bob Marr, who has leased and operated the blueberry farm with his wife, Jennifer, for the past three years. “Both Jen and I have done our best to keep the farm open to the public but as in life, all good things must come to an end.” The farm, which was established in 1943

FOOD

Tastes of Thailand

Thai Food Connection opens in Manchester



Chicken krapow. Courtesy photo.

By Matt Ingersoll
mingsoll@hippopress.com

Not long after Republic Cafe moved all its operations down the street into its sister restaurant Campo Enoteca in August, Thailand native Annie Nault was walking down Elm Street in Manchester and saw a “for rent” sign in the window. She had worked in several Thai restaurants in southern New Hampshire and had been searching for a space that could be her own.

“I knew it was a great opportunity, because I walk around here often and it’s always busy,” said Nault, who comes from Phetchabun, Thailand, and whose mother worked as a high school culinary instructor. “I’ve wanted to open a restaurant my whole life.”

Thai Food Connection, which opened Dec. 1, features a menu of authentic Thai dishes like soups, curries, appetizers, entrees and street foods — all of which showcase the diversity of flavors and options available from within the country, Nault said.

“In Thailand, when you go to any one place, they don’t have a variety [of options],” she said. “If you want chicken and rice, you have to go to this place, or if you want khao soi [cur-

ry with egg noodles], you have to go to another place, and they don’t sell anything else.”

Nault purchased a three-station wok for the restaurant and, during the months of renovation leading up to her opening, added all new furniture, curtains and kitchen equipment. A Thai mural and photos of her homeland taken by her friends adorn the walls, while an open kitchen is featured near the back of the restaurant.

Due to its location downtown, Nault said she expects Thai Food Connection to be a popular spot for takeout during the lunch hour. A full page of the menu is dedicated to lunch specials, like chicken, beef or tofu and vegetable noodle soup; pad Thai with chicken, tofu or shrimp; rice dishes, like stir-fried steamed jasmine rice with a hot basil sauce; and curries, like a mild coconut massaman curry and a coconut green curry with sliced



Khao soi. Courtesy photo.

chicken and roasted eggplant.

Other items include street foods like krapow, or stir-fried ground chicken with garlic, fresh chili, onion, pepper and basil; and various house specialties, like roasted duck curry, casseroled shrimp or lemongrass chicken with coconut milk, turmeric and Thai spices.

A chili pepper-shaped icon on the menu indicates that dish’s normal level of spice, but you can request anything to be as mild or as spicy as you want, Nault said.

“When you combine everything and all the ingredients with the chili, it reduces the kick of the spice,” she said, “so it’s not burning your mouth.”

There is also a small selection of desserts, like deep-fried breaded ice cream, a deep-fried banana roll topped with honey, and roti, or fried pan bread, with caramel sauce and chocolate syrup.

Online ordering and deliveries within a five-mile radius of the restaurant are also available, and Thai Food Connection is currently in the process of acquiring a liquor license, Nault said.

“I knew it was a great opportunity, because I walk around here often and it’s always busy.”

ANNIE NAULT



Chicken satay. Courtesy photo.

Thai Food Connection

Where: 1069 Elm St., Manchester
Hours: Sunday through Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, until 10 p.m.
More info: Visit thaifoodconnection.com, find them on Facebook and Instagram or call 935-7257

New Italian option

The Chef opens in New Boston



Haddock puttanesca. Courtesy photo.



Cioppino. Courtesy photo.

By Matt Ingersoll
mingersoll@hippopress.com

For more than two decades, Angel Santiago has built his culinary resume at restaurants all over New Hampshire and Massachusetts, including local Italian spots Mangia Sano in Milford and Pasquale's Ristorante in Londonderry. His first restaurant as owner — aptly named The Chef, which opened in New Boston last month — features a variety of traditional Italian and Italian-American dishes, from pizzas and paninis to fresh seafood and pastas, plus a full bar with domestic and imported wines, local craft beers and cocktails.

Santiago, who lives in New Boston with his wife, Christine, said the couple

had looked at several potential spaces for a restaurant over the last few years before finding the one that fit the bill in August. The building on River Road near the Goffstown and New Boston town line most recently housed Sliders, an eatery that closed in the spring.

Since its opening, the chicken Parmigiana has been among the top sellers, as have the seafood entrees, which include seafood risotto and alfredo, cioppino (a fish stew), baked or fried haddock and stuffed lobster ravioli.

“We do a lot of seafood,” Angel Santiago said. “I buy a full case every week and I go through the whole thing. By Sunday I have probably one-third of a pan left over.”

Lunch is normally available from 11:30 a.m. to about 3 p.m., with options like fresh paninis and sandwiches, pastas, and seafood plates like fish and chips.

In addition to soups and salads, there are various house appetizers available on the dinner menu, like sauteed mussels, Buffalo chicken tenders, breaded and fried four-cheese ravioli, and arancini balls with peas, mozzarella and marinara.

The pizzas can be ordered with a gluten-free crust, and house specialty pastas include chicken or veal saltimbocca, piccata and marsala.

“One of the big things we’ve been doing is a family to-go meal,” Christine Santiago said. “It feeds a family of five and you get a half tray of chicken Parm or chicken broccoli alfredo,

then a Caesar salad or a garden salad, garlic bread and five sodas, all for \$50. We sell a lot of those.”

For dessert Angel Santiago makes cannolis and a tiramisu from scratch. A few other locally sourced treats, like a death by chocolate cake, are also available. 🍷

““ We do a lot of seafood. I buy a full case every week and I go through the whole thing. ””

ANGEL SANTIAGO

The Chef

Where: 737 River Road, New Boston

Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday, until 8 p.m.

More info: Visit thechef603.com, find them on Facebook @thechefofnewboston or call 384-2574



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Serves: 6

Ingredients:

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3 medium fresh oranges, peeled and diced OR 1 1/2 cups mandarin oranges packed in 100% fruit juice, drained
1 medium cucumber, peeled and sliced
1/2 cup fresh red onion, thinly sliced
1/3 cup Planters NUT-rition Heart Healthy Nut Mix
1 Avocado from Mexico, peeled and cubed
McCormick® Black Pepper, to taste
Balsamic vinegar, to taste
Optional: 1/4 cup crumbled goat cheese

Directions:

1. Mix spinach, oranges, cucumber and onion in a large bowl. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.
2. When ready to serve, top with nuts, avocado and optional goat cheese, and season with black pepper and balsamic vinegar.

Nutritional Information

Amount per serving: Calories 140; Total Fat 9 g; Saturated Fat 1 g; Cholesterol 0 mg; Sodium 40 mg; Total Carbohydrate 15 g; Sugar 8 g; Dietary Fiber 6 g; Protein 4 g

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IN THE KITCHEN



WITH COURTNEY PARKER

Courtney Parker of Nashua is the owner of Simple Sweets Bakery (simplesweetsbakery0.wixsite.com, or on Facebook @simplesweetsbakery11), a homestead business specializing in gluten-free baked goods made fresh daily, like cupcakes, cookies, muffins, doughnuts, brownies, whoopie pies and oatmeal cream pies. Orders are accepted via phone, text, email or Facebook messages, with deliveries within a 20-mile radius of Nashua. Dairy-free and soy-free options are also available. Now through Dec. 21, Parker is offering specialty Christmas orders for items like chocolate cream or pumpkin pies, peppermint brownies and gingerbread doughnuts.



What is your must-have kitchen item?
 Definitely a silicone spatula.

What would you have for your last meal?
 Chicken tenders and Jojo potatoes from Chicken 'n' Chips [in Nashua].

What is your favorite local restaurant?
 Bistro 603 [in Nashua].

What celebrity would you like to see ordering something from you?
 Obviously Carrie Underwood.

What is your favorite thing that you offer?
 Snickerdoodles! They are my absolute favorite and are so easy to make!

What is the biggest food trend in New Hampshire right now?
 Apple cider doughnuts.

What is your favorite thing to cook or bake at home?
 I love to bake and will try just about any recipe, but I'd have to say my favorite thing to bake is anything that contains apples. The aroma from [them] reminds me of Christmas.
 — Matt Ingersoll 🍎

Simple sugar cookies

From the kitchen of Courtney Parker of Simple Sweets Bakery in Nashua

- 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- ¾ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1½ cup flour (Parker uses Cup4Cup brand gluten-free flour, or you can use regular flour)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking pan with parchment paper. Cream butter and sugar together. Add in egg and mix until smooth. Add vanilla, salt, baking powder, baking soda and flour and mix. Using a cookie scoop, place a teaspoon-sized scoop onto the cookie sheet. Bake for eight to 10 minutes.

Weekly Dish

Continued from page 22

by the Durochers, according to its website, featured more than 2,500 blueberry bushes for picking that were originally planted in 1975.

• **NHLC launches new website:** The New Hampshire Liquor Commission has unveiled a new e-commerce website for its products, according to a press release. Online ordering with 90-minute same-day in-store pickup is now available at 10 Liquor & Wine Outlet stores across the state, including both stores on Interstate 93 in Hooksett and on Interstate 95 in Hamp-

ton, as well as the stores in Manchester, Londonderry, Salem, Pembroke, Rochester and West Lebanon. The new site also now has an educational platform with access to virtual and in-person experiences with celebrities, winemakers and master distillers. Users can create personal profiles on the site to search for and save their favorite brands. According to the release, the Commission recently surpassed \$1 million in sales from its curbside delivery and in-store pickup program, launched earlier this year. Visit liquorandwineoutlets.com. 🍷



TRY THIS AT HOME

Eggnog scones with almonds

Eggnog was something I used to always look forward to at the holidays when I was a little kid. Not only did I like the flavor, but its presence meant that soon it would be Christmas.

Since then my eating habits have changed, and I don't know the last time I drank a whole glass of eggnog. I do still enjoy its taste, but I find other ways to enjoy it. A splash in my coffee? Absolutely. Although that's not nearly enough eggnog for the season, is my thinking, so why not bake with it?

These scones really deliver on the flavor of the eggnog. Between the eggnog in the scone, the eggnog in the glaze, and the little bit of nutmeg, they taste like a cup of eggnog in a warm pastry format. They're simple to make and would be a delicious way to start a weekend morning.



Eggnog scones with almonds. Photo courtesy of Michele Pesula Kuegler.

Michele Pesula Kuegler has been thinking about food her entire life. Since 2007, the New Hampshire native has been sharing these food thoughts and recipes at her blog, Think Tasty. Visit thinktasty.com to find more of her recipes.

Eggnog Scones with Almonds

Makes 12

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons chilled unsalted butter diced
- 2/3 cup sliced almonds
- 3/4 cup eggnog
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2-3 tablespoons eggnog
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl. Add butter. Combine dry ingredients using a pastry blender (or two forks) until butter is reduced to the size of grains of rice. Add almonds to flour mixture, tossing gently.

Combine eggnog and vinegar in a 2-cup measuring cup, and allow to sit for 2 minutes. Add egg yolk and vanilla to eggnog mixture, and whisk to combine. Gradually add liquids to dry ingredients; mix until dough forms a ball. (You may not need to use all of the liquids.) Place dough on a lightly floured surface and press into an 8-inch round. Cut into 8 wedges. Transfer wedges to rimmed cookie sheet, preferably lined with parchment paper. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the scones are crusty on top and a tester inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes. Combine powdered sugar and nutmeg in a small bowl, and add eggnog 1 tablespoon at a time. Stir until you get a thick yet spreadable consistency. Top each scone with a heaping tablespoon of glaze. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup sliced almonds. (Do this before the glaze sets.)

Food & Drink

Farmers markets

• **Cole Gardens Winter Farmers Market** is Saturdays, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at Cole Gardens (430 Loudon Road, Concord), now through mid-April. Visit colegardens.com.
 • **Danbury Winter Market** is Saturdays, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Blazing Star Grange Hall (15 North

Road, Danbury), now through April. Visit blazingstargrange.org.
 • **Deering Winter Market** is Fridays, from 4 to 7 p.m., at the Deering Fish & Game Club (Fish & Game Road, Deering). Find them on Facebook @[deeringwintermarket](https://www.facebook.com/deeringwintermarket).
 • **Peterborough Farmers Market** is Wednesdays, from 3 to 5 p.m., at Peterborough Community Center

(25 Elm St., Peterborough). Find them on Facebook @[peterboroughnhfarmersmarket](https://www.facebook.com/peterboroughnhfarmersmarket).
 • **Rolling Green Winter Farmers Market** is on most Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Rolling Green Nursery (64 Breakfast Hill Road, Greenland). Upcoming market dates are Dec. 19, Jan. 2, Jan. 16, Jan. 30, Feb. 13 and Feb. 27. Visit rollinggreennursery.com.



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DRINK

'Tis the season

Beers for the holidays

By Jeff Mucciarone
food@hippypress.com

You need some beer to get you through the rest of 2020. Has a truer statement ever been made?

In a year like no other, I think we're all eager to get the rest of this year over with. Yes, OK, we should probably take a minute and try to enjoy a subdued holiday season, but really, let's get 2020 in the rearview mirror as quickly as possible.

Beer isn't going to help the end of the year get here any faster, but maybe it will help make the road a little less bumpy and the holidays a little more enjoyable. Well, we can all hope.

We're celebrating the holidays with fewer people all together this year, but I think we're still all looking for the same things when it comes to beer at this time of year: rich, malty, maybe a little sweet and maybe with a little spice. I'm thinking flavors of chocolate, caramel, mint, nutmeg and vanilla, and so on.

Here are a few beers to help get you through the holidays and through the rest of the minefield that is 2020.

Kringle's Krook by Portsmouth Brewery (Portsmouth)

This robust black ale has plenty of roasty, toasty malt character and it's balanced out by sweet flavors thanks to the addition of candy canes and fresh mint—so yes, this is like drinking a peppermint patty in beer form. A seasonal treat for sure.

Sundae Nights Mint Chocolate Chip Stout by Kettlehead Brewing (Tilton)

Wow. If Kringle's Krook is a peppermint patty in beer form, it sure sounds like this one is mint chocolate chip ice cream in beer form. This imperial milk stout, which comes in at 10.8 percent ABV, is brewed with cocoa nibs, mint and a "heavy dose" of milk sugar, says the brewery. My goodness — I look forward to trying this indulgent brew.

Bell's Christmas Ale by Bell's Brewery (Comstock, Mich.)

My dad said he and my grandfather used to take the Samuel Adams Scotch Ale and mix it with a Budweiser to lighten it up in terms of body and flavor, as the brew was quite "strong." Look, I was just a kid when he told me this, and at that time who was I to question the move? I'm an actual adult now and as such I have questions, like, I don't know, maybe just don't buy that particular beer if you need to water it down? I don't understand. Anyway, Bell's



Beer is your friend as we close out 2020. Photo courtesy Portsmouth Brewery.

Christmas Ale is a bold, richly flavored brew with big notes of caramel and a nice touch of warming alcohol — perfect for sipping by the fire.

Winter by Wachusett Brewing Co. (Westminster, Mass.)

This is a nostalgic pick for me from an underrated brewery as many family holiday gatherings featured this brew as a prime selection. Winter features a traditional holiday bouquet of vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice in a roasty, toasty brew that doesn't overpower your palate. Extremely well-balanced, Winter is the quintessential holiday brew.

Udder Vanilla Milk Stout by Loaded Questions Brewing Co. (Portsmouth)

I haven't tried this one but when you combine lactose, vanilla and chocolate malt together in a beer, are we not talking about a glass of chocolate milk? What could possibly be wrong with this one? The brewery says it has "restrained sweetness," which I think suggests this brew might have a good bit of versatility, too.

Jeff Mucciarone is a senior account manager with Montagne Communications, where he provides communications support to the New Hampshire wine and spirits industry.

What's in My Fridge

Pompador by Schilling Beer Co. (Littleton)

This is about as good an American pale ale as I've ever had. It's been a few years since I've had this one and it just did not disappoint. Characterized by flavors of citrus, peach and maybe apricot, this is easy drinking and delicious. Absolutely one of my favorite beers of all time. Cheers!



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CDs pg28

• Sculptor, *Untold Secrets*

B-

• Deafkids, *Ritos do**Colapso* A

BOOKS pg29

• *The Sentinel* B• **Book Notes**

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To let us know about your book or event, email asykeny@hippopress.com.To get author events, library events and more listed, send information to listings@hippopress.com.

FILM pg30

• *The Croods: A New Age*

B-



Is “melodic death metal” an oxymoron, a shameless way to sell out, or a sure sign that a band doesn’t belong together owing to artistic differences? This quintet is from Brazil, here tabling their debut album, which is released through one of the few record labels that actively seeks out this kind of stuff, specifically Evanescence-level power-metal sung by guys whose preferred vocal style is totally Cookie Monster. Well, maybe not strictly Cookie Monster; there’s black-metal devil-monster cater-

wauling too, and rainy gloom-death riffing if you tend to keep score when listening to this kind of album, not that I ever do. I mean, good luck to these dudes, is what I say, not that a Brazilian death metal band that sounds kind of like In Flames would need extra help in the form of best wishes from a critic as detached from the genre as I am — São Paulo is where I’d want to be personally if I were playing in a band like this. **B-** — *Eric W. Saeger*

Deafkids, *Ritos do Colapso* (self-released)

I honestly had no intention of turning this week’s column into a central repository of Brazilian doom-music, but that’s how the dice rolled, first with Sculptor’s debut album and then with this one, which basically caught my fancy after discovering that this slightly experimental ambient-noise-techno band landed a spot on the soundtrack for *Cyberpunk 2077*, a dystopian role-playing video game starring none other than Keanu Reeves (it seems Australia has some sort of problem with the game’s messaging, which means it’s probably

fun in some way). Whatever, this digital-only EP reads like a Whitman Sampler of experimental spazz-beats, starting with two dubstep-ish rinseouts that were apparently played on real drums. That’s a pretty cool trick, but “Tentáculos” is a lot more interesting, a creepy blend of tribal rhythm and random snake-taming bizarreness that would have fit in well on the *Hurt Locker* soundtrack. Like I said, strictly experimental, but cool; nicely organic, undoubtedly with an eye toward more soundtracking gigs. **A** — *Eric W. Saeger* 🍷

A seriously abridged compendium of recent and future CD releases

• OMG, it’s totally the last-minute holiday rush, when those 14 million newly unemployed Americans, all snug in their warm cardboard refrigerator-box condominium complexes comfortably located somewhere under the overpass, need direction as to where to spend that stray \$20 bill they found skittering across the parking lot at Whole Foods! Well, I’m here to help, homies, with the latest albums you can buy, all of which are coming to your stores and whatnot, on Dec. 18! As you’d guess, there is basically nothing new coming out except for metal albums and reissues from rich bands and whatever, and trust me, I already looked. First thing that jumped out at me was a 50th anniversary of **The Kinks’** eighth album, *Lola Versus Powerman And The Moneygoround*, a fine album that was released in 1970, in case you’re deficient in math skills like I am! I have to confess that I was never the biggest Kinks fan, like they were basically the prototype for every joke-band ever put together, but this album did have one awesome song on it, I’d be the first to admit it. No, I don’t mean the titular “Lola,” a song I could literally live forever without ever hearing again; it’s in fact “Apeman” to which I refer, a joke song about alienation or whatnot, and it was kind of ahead of its time. Check out these lyrics: “I think I’m so educated and I’m so civilized / ‘Cause I’m a strict vegetarian / But with the over-population and inflation and starvation / And the crazy politicians / I don’t feel safe in this world no more.” Cool, huh? Anyway, there you go, fam, the Kinks, with a new-old album, you are now free to go pay good money for whatever you’re going to get out of it, maybe extra cowbell or whatever.

• If you can stand the suspense and wait until Saturday the 19th, there is a new EP from hip-hop guy **Leto** coming out that day, called *Glocstarr VI!* There is already a user review (not a review from an actual music critic, in other words) on the Album Of The Year website, from someone identified as mlk, and that person says it’s awful. Actually they didn’t say anything, they just left a one-star rating and wrote “0” as a comment. All that goes to prove is that no one really uses the Album Of The Year website except for rock critics who are desperately trying to find albums coming out at the last minute, because nearly a half-million people have streamed at least one of the tunes, called “Ice Cold.” The beat sounds like some incidental theme music from *Lord of the Rings*, except for the beginner-level haunted house bass and the stupid trap drums. Can I shut this off now?

• OK, I give up, there’s nothing else coming out this week, and I refuse to talk about whichever black-metal bands are only putting out records because they either hate Christmas or don’t even know when it is, so we’re going to wrap up with chillwave/ambient techno guy **Tycho!** It’s not that he even has a real album coming out, just a remix album, called, appropriately enough, *Weather Remixes*, based on his 2019 Grammy nominated LP *Weather*. That one was great, a little bit guitar-tronic and a little indie-rock, so I’m sure all the remixes are good as well, if they’re even half as decent as the gorgeous remix of “Japan” by Satin Jackets. Awesome stuff. — *Eric W. Saeger* 🍷

Retro Playlist

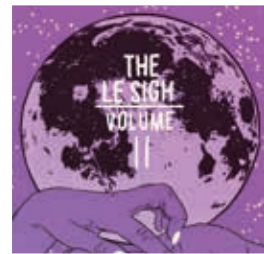
I have to admit, sometimes I’ve gotten it right the first time. For those who’ve subjected themselves to this column for the last 15 years plus, you may remember the bit in 2009 when I talked about New Orleans band **Stanton Moore/ Garage A Trois**’s then-new *All Kooked Out* album, and how there was “nothing wrong with you” if you’d never heard of him. On this one-man effort, I posited, Moore was trying to be “Spyro Gyra and That F--ing Tank in the same album,” a recipe for commercial failure if ever there was one, or, just as possibly, a spazzy version of Charles Mingus’ least listenable records. As you’d



guess, the random fricassee of honking, clattering and Wayne Shorter-style sax suddenly stopped about a third of the way in, for a decent-enough tune called “Purgatory,” and then a rather mellow version of Roberta Flack’s “The Closer I Get To You.” As well, there was “Fragile,” which sounded like the E Street Band

trying to weird each other out, and “Electric Door Bell Machine,” a look at what Weather Report might have sounded like if they’d been really idiotic hipsters. Nevertheless, believe it or not, in my review of the album, I didn’t cover Moore in snark gravy and bake him at 350 for an hour. I was pretty nice to the dude.

At times I’ve experienced the joy of dissing multiple artists at a time, when unwary compilation albums come in. But it’s not always mean-spirited claptrap I spew; in fact I was quite genial to the various artists featured on 2014’s **Le Sigh, Vol II**. *Le Sigh* is/ was an online zine based in Brooklyn, supporting women in the arts. In order to prove they were serious, the editors threw together a couple of female-punk comp albums, which gathered together such bands as **Slutever**, **Fleabite** and **Alice**. Soundalike touchstones ranged from **X-Ray Spex** to **The Waitresses**, but it was all good fun, really, with more attitude than a 13-year-old



girl threatened with losing her iPhone if she doesn’t wear the cute bunny pajamas Grandma sent for Christmas.

Moral: I can be nice at times. It really depends on the quality of our current dinner leftovers, to be honest.

If you’re in a local band, now’s a great time to let me know about your EP, your single, whatever’s on your mind. Let me know how you’re holding yourself together without being able to play shows or jam with your homies. Send a recipe for keema matar. Email esaeger@cyberontix.com for fastest response. 🍷

The Sentinel by Lee Child and Andrew Child (Delacorte Press, 253 pages)

As I settled down in a chair with this book, my husband asked what I was reading.

"It's the newest Jack Reacher novel," I replied.

"Jack Reacher?"
"Yeah, he's kind of like a scruffy James Bond. He always knows what to say and how to get out of a jam. He's actually pretty cool."

"Huh," was his reply.

My husband said this because thrillers are usually not my go-to kind of book, but give me a Jack Reacher story any day of the week and I will stop what I'm doing and start reading.

Reacher is ex-military. He's a bit of a lost soul and travels with only some cash and a toothbrush (when he needs to change his clothes he buys new ones). He is clever and he always outsmarts the bad guys. Sometimes that's what you need.

The fight scenes are the absolute best because we can read his thought process as he analyzes his opponent's strengths and weaknesses and then goes in for the kill. It's why he wins when he's faced with five opponents at the same time. A Reacher fight scene is pretty much scripted for the big screen.

Reacher helps people in trouble and in this book he's helping a young man who has been accused of orchestrating a ransomware demand on his town. The town has turned against him, making his life miserable. An elite bad organization (Russian) is after him because they believe he has some files that they need for election interference (and when I say bad, these guys have a basement where you go in whole and come out in several suitcases).

The storyline is a little predictable and seems to be "ripped from the headlines." That didn't bother me as it might others.

The pace in a Reacher novel is quick. Each chapter has plenty of action propelling the reader to the next scene. Reacher likes precision and much of his dialogue is about calling people on what they actually mean when they speak.



"Leave town. This morning. Right now, in fact. He has a car waiting outside to take you to the highway. And he wants your word you won't come back."

"Well what if I don't want to leave town?"

"Come on, Reacher. Work with me here. Yesterday you asked him for a ride."

"That was yesterday. The town has grown on me since

then."

All this is what makes a Reacher novel so desirable right now. We need a hero. We need someone who will kick the bad guys' butts and who will emerge victorious. We need hope even if it only comes from a fictional character in a book.

The Sentinel is co-written by Lee Child's brother, Andrew Child — it's the first collaboration and those who have read the Reacher books will notice some slight differences. Reacher is a little chattier now, a little more emotional. I didn't mind the evolution but purists might be put off by these subtle changes. I anticipate some growing pains before the new Reacher finds his sweet spot.

And I guess we need to talk about the love interest. Reacher always gets the girl in each of his books. In *The Sentinel* he does get the girl, but not with his usual panache. This time it seems a little forced.

With all of these comments you would think that I might not have liked this book. Nope. Although it wasn't my favorite Reacher novel, I did enjoy it. I liked seeing the bad guys get what is coming to them. I liked seeing Reacher come to the aid of people who need help.

And I liked reading about a character who has integrity (the first chapter cements that personality trait).

For these reasons, I'll be giving this book a solid grade. Who knows, if I had not read it during a pandemic I might have been more critical; however, in times like this when we could use a tough, smart guy, this Reacher book, even with a few bumps, gives us a little bit of much-needed escapism and is worth the read. **B**

— Wendy E. N. Thomas

Books
Author events
• **KJ DELL'ANTONIA** Author presents *The Chicken Sisters*. Hosted by Gibson's Bookstore in Concord. Online, via Zoom. Wed., Jan. 6, 7 p.m. Registration required. Visit gibsonsbookstore.com or call 224-0562.
• **GIBSON'S BOOKSTORE** Online, via Zoom. Monthly. First Monday, 5:30 p.m. Bookstore based in Concord. Visit gibsons-bookstore.com/gibsons-book-club-2020-2021 or call 224-0562.
• **TO SHARE BREWING CO.** 720 Union St., Manchester. Monthly. Second Thursday, 6 p.m. RSVP required. Visit toshare-brewing.com or call 836-6947.

Writing
• **POSTCARD POETRY CONTEST** Peterborough Poetry Proj-

ect seeks submissions of original poems written on picture postcards for an upcoming anthology. Deadline is Dec. 31. Visit peterboroughpoetryproject.org.

• **CALL FOR BLACK WRITERS** New Hampshire-based theater company New World Theatre announces an open call to Black writers to submit monologues that reflect their experience of living while black, to be published in an anthology titled "08:46." The deadline for submissions is Jan. 1, 2021. Visit newworldtheatre.org/08m46s.



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The Croods: A New Age (PG)

The Neanderthal-ish cave family the Croods meets some yuppie helicopter-parent homo sapiens in *The Croods: A New Age*, an animated movie in theaters now and coming to PVD soon, possibly this Friday, Dec. 18.

Meet the Croods: dad Grug (voice of Nicolas Cage), mom Ugga (voice of Catherine Keener), tween-seeming son Thunk (voice of Clark Duke), baby Sandy (voice of Kailey Crawford), Gran (voice of Cloris Leachman) and teenage daughter Eep (voice of Emma Stone), and Guy (voice of Ryan Reynolds), the teenage modern-human-like boy who joined the Croods pack in the first movie. He spends a lot of time flirtily saying “hey” to Eep, who flirtily says “hey” back. Guy is tired of the Croods’ family sleep-pile and other instances of too-much-togetherness and would like to strike out on his own with Eep, who is interested in this “privacy” thing he speaks of. Grug wants everyone to stay together to improve their chances of survival (and because of general dad-ness).

When Grug stumbles upon a wonderland

of delicious foods planted in neat rows in a lush paradise, he announces that he has found a place everybody can live happily forever, together. But what he’s actually found is a farm — specifically, the Bettermans’ farm, home to husband Phil (voice of Peter Dinklage) and wife Hope (voice of Leslie Mann, who is perfect here) and their teenage daughter Dawn (voice of Kelly Marie Tran). The Bettermans have found a, well, better way to be, as they explain: they live in a walled off compound of fresh food and drinkable water and a lovely tree house with a shower and a flush toilet and separate rooms for everyone. And, they know Guy — the Betterman family and Guy’s family were friends years ago, before Guy’s parents died in a tar pit. Guy seems like a perfect fit for the Betterman lifestyle and for Dawn, who has been lonely living in her parents’ protective paradise and is happy to see Guy again.

While wooing Guy away from the Croods might be the Bettermans’ plan, to this PG kids’ movie’s credit, it isn’t interested in any teen love triangle. Guy’s struggles seem to be between Eep and the comforts (and privacy) of the Bettermans’ way of living. Dawn isn’t on



The Croods: A New Age

his radar, nor is he on hers. Dawn is more interested in being friends with Eep; they become fast besties, both having an “ugh, parents” mindset and a desire for adventure.

Details of the first *The Croods* have largely vanished from my brain, just as details from this movie felt like they were fading from mem-

ory as I watched the movie. *A New Age* is full of fun vocal performances (Mann and Keener, in particular) and cute moments (Gran’s memories of the “Thunder Sisters” clan of female warriors sets up a solid action sequence in the movie’s climax) but there’s nothing sticky about the overall story. The characters are more types than personalities (the overprotective mom, the dad who doesn’t want things to change, etc.) and the story hits marks like an amusement park ride chugging past its various attractions — there’s the wacky monkey stuff, there’s the mid-movie couple fight. This movie is forgettable, but with its fantastical creatures (land sharks! wolf-spiders!) and landscapes, all colorfully rendered, it’s not unpleasant in the moment — not for me, the parent, or for kids old enough (age 7 or 8 maybe?) to sit through teenage drama. **B-**

Rated PG for peril, action and rude humor, according to MPA on filmratings.com. Directed by Joel Crawford with a screenplay by Kevin Hageman & Dan Hageman and Paul Fisher & Bob Logan, The Croods: A New Age is an hour and 35 minutes long and distributed by Universal Studios.

AT THE SOFAPLEX

Let Them All Talk (R)

Meryl Streep, Candice Bergen.

Also starring Dianne Wiest, Gemma Chan and Lucas Hedges. Famous serious novelist Alice (Streep) heads to the U.K. to accept an important literary prize. Because she won’t fly, her eager-to-please new agent Karen (Chan) books her transatlantic passage on the Queen Mary 2, which this Steven Soderbergh-directed movie sometimes seems like a giant ad for. Alice brings along guests, including her nephew Tyler (Hedges) and two friends from college, Susan (Wiest) and Roberta (Bergen). Susan seems to have had a full life and matured into a normal adult

who takes the trip as a fun getaway and a chance to see two people she hasn’t seen in three decades. Roberta is there to settle some old scores. Roberta is bitter about Alice’s most famous book, which she claims was taken from her life and led to the disastrous end to her marriage (and financial ruin). Roberta’s plan seems to be to either snag a wealthy man while on the ship or get Alice to pay up (or both).

By the end of the movie, I found myself mostly thinking about the ship — the nightly formal-wear requirements seem hellish but I do like the idea of fancy afternoon tea. It seems like it would be fun, for a little while at least, to wander around the Queen Mary 2, which was perhaps the thought that inspired this movie. At times it feels more like you’re wandering through a collec-

tion of scenes that are individually interesting and somewhat related but not entirely pulled together. Some of the scenes are funny, some feature nice acting moments from one of the performers and some just feel like a bit of filler. In the moment, though, the performances kind of carry you through this voyage. **B Available on HBOMax.**

The Prom (PG-13)

Meryl Streep, James Corden.

Other stars in this Ryan Murphy adaptation of a 2018 Broadway musical include Nicole Kidman, Kerry Washington, Keegan-Michael Key, Andrew Rannells, Mary Kay Place and Tracy Ullman.

When Dee Dee Allen (Streep) and Barry Glickman (Corden) see their newest play close on opening night after terrible reviews, they search

for a good cause to align themselves with to improve their public images. They pick Emma (Jo Ellen Pellman), a high schooler whose school has canceled prom rather than let her attend with her girlfriend. Dee Dee and Barry travel to her Indiana town with fellow actors Angie (Kidman), who longs to step out of the chorus and play the lead, and Trent (Rannells), whose career is currently in a holding pattern. The school’s patient principal Hawkins (Key) is trying to convince the PTA, headed by Mrs. Greene (Washington), to be more inclusive but the sudden appearance of the Broadway people throws the situation into disarray. Though their goals are well-intentioned (if very self-serving), the actors’ big publicity-generating plans often overshadow Emma and her desire to just go to a dance with her girlfriend

Alyssa Greene (Ariana DeBose), the not-out daughter of Mrs. Greene.

This movie, which started out feeling flat to me, improves as it moves through its two-hour-and-10-minute runtime time — or maybe it just sorta grew on me. Murphy is also the creator of *Glee* and this movie feels kind of *Glee*-ish in its staging. With a few exceptions, the musical numbers feel boxed in in a way that keeps them from dazzling you the way it seems like they might in a theater.

That said, Meryl Streep seems to be having a blast and is maybe even making a little fun of her own actorly self. Overall *The Prom* is a good time, with a delightfully hammy sensibility and occasional scenes (and songs) with sudden and genuine big, deep feelings. **B Available on Netflix.**

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THE ROUND UP

Local music news & events

By Michael Witthaus
mwitthaus@hippopress.com

• **Food music:** Though Covid-19 ate his annual booze cruise, **Chad LaMarsh** is still performing out at places like a Salem restaurant/bar and its Bedford counterpart. A set list can include everything from Peter Gabriel to the Eagles to Matchbox 20 to Nine Inch Nails. LaMarsh is a diverse guy, and a charitable one as well; his annual Bundles of Books effort has helped a lot of folks over the years. Thursday, Dec. 17, 6 p.m., Copper Door, 41 South Broadway, Salem. See chadlamarsh.com.

• **Song circle:** While live music continues in some venues, this year's **Holiday Java Jam** will be a virtual affair. Beloved Manchester native Alli Beaudry again hosts, inviting local musicians to sign up and play original or traditional holiday songs for the event, which is usually held downtown at Café La Reine. Dress up in seasonal finery and light the home tree for this unique evening. Friday, Dec. 18, 6 p.m., get a Zoom link by signing up at facebook.com/javajamwithhallibeaudry.

• **Brew-versary:** A Queen City craft brewery celebrates two years of business with **Paul Nelson** playing songs. "Song crafter, blues explorer, mystery musér" Nelson has appeared at Club Passim in Cambridge, opening for folk legend Ellis Paul, and has been featured on many big stages since he broke out as musician in 2018. Last year he released his first album, *Over Under Through*, to solid praise. Friday, Dec. 18, 4 p.m. at To Share Brewing, 720 Union St., Manchester, tosharebrewing.com.

• **Holiday giving:** While the Bank of NH Stage is dark until at least mid-January, **Seth Glier** will perform a free online show with the Concord venue's imprimatur. The Holiday Spectacular promises music, jokes and dancing offered by Glier and his good friends — he promises, "even Jesus Christ will be there!" While there's no cost to watch on Facebook Live or YouTube, those with the means can and should donate. Saturday, Dec. 19, 8 p.m., login information at banknhstage.com.

NITE Holiday cheerful

Dan Blakeslee celebrates Christmas LP with show

By Michael Witthaus
mwitthaus@hippopress.com

It takes real Grinch-iness to resist the ebullient charms of *Christmasland Jubilee*, the new holiday album from Dan Blakeslee. From the Dixieland-themed opener "Mister Candy Cane" and its story of a "boogie woogie Santa Claus ... bouncin' on the keys, makin' you believe" to his sincere reading of the disc-closing "O Little Town of Bethlehem," it's irresistible, one of the best in the genre to come out of New England.

Blakeslee celebrates the release with an afternoon outdoor show at Stone Church in Newmarket on Dec. 19, backed by his three-piece band and plenty of portable heaters. Senie Hunt will open.

A big reason the new record works so well is the way Blakeslee created it. In mid-December 2019, the Seacoast-born and -raised singer-songwriter decided he'd waited long enough to unleash his inner Bing Crosby — and he wanted to do it during the season. Dover producer Chris Chase offered him five hours of time at his Noise Floor studio in the days before Christmas, and the project was set in motion.

"I came in the studio, and I decorated the place like crazy," Blakeslee said in a recent phone interview. "I feel it reflects in the audio somehow; I get inspired looking at the stuff, it just makes me happy. Then my band came in and we recorded ... throughout the winter, while there was still snow on the ground."

Backed by his longtime group The Calabash Club they produced an ebullient mix of classics and originals that dated back to when Blakeslee began making Christmas songs as presents for his family. One of the first was "We Three Kings" — his version takes the line about "westward leading" musically to heart, giving the song a gentle twang.

The musicianship is stellar; keyboard

player Mike Effenberger is especially good, and the vintage rhythm team of bassist Nick Phaneuf and drummer Jim Rudolf is in the pocket throughout. A guest list including Soggy Po' Boys horn players Chris and Eric Klaxton, New Hampshire pedal steel legend Bruce Derr and string players Tim Moore and Dave Talmadge — among others — provided stellar support.

"I love the guys in my band," Blakeslee said. "I've seen them in so many different musical acts through the years and I'm still blown away whenever I see them play. And whenever I play with them, I feel like I'm in awe the whole time. ... I can't focus sometimes on playing the songs."

Blakeslee's timing in making the record was ideal in more ways than his good luck having a winter wonderland to work in.

"We had two things left to record when the pandemic came," he said. Thus, Derr's contribution was done in his home studio, and backing vocalists emailed their tracks. "We got most of it, though."

Other standouts include the whimsical originals "To Be An Elf" and "The Somerville Lights" — the latter provides a nice counterpart to "Silver Bells," which also appears. The rollicking "Reindeer Boogie" is a nugget Blakeslee unearthed from a Hank Snow Christmas album made in the 1960s.

"Over the past two years I've been obsessed with that song," he said, noting that an alternate take was his template. "It has such grit to it. ... I was literally playing it every single day throughout the holiday season."

A bonus track, "Let's Start Again" is one of the record's most endearing. It's an optimistic ode to better angels, and though it's over a decade old it fits perfectly with the times.

"Awaken with hope and forgiveness, surprise us with news that is good," Blakeslee sings. "Together let's move towards a differ-



Dan Blakeslee and personally bedazzled stockings done for his crowdfunders. Courtesy photo.

ence, whether you work in policy or wood."

The song was born after a painful breakup found him wandering around Somerville on New Year's Eve in 2009. He ended up at the Lizard Lounge, a Somerville music hub where Tim Gearan was appearing.

"Every time he takes the stage it's like it's New Year's Eve. He just has this delivery on all his songs," Blakeslee said of Gearan.

Blakeslee taped the New Year's countdown on a recorder he carried in his pocket.

"It was the most moving thing," he said. "Sometimes you can listen to a song for two minutes and have your outlook changed; that's what happened at that show. Then I walked outside and this girl shouts out, '2010, let's start again!' It just kinda happened. She gave me a hug, and I wrote the song that night." 🍷

Dan Blakeslee & the Calabash Club Christmas Show

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Auburn Auburn Tavern 346 Hooksett Road 587-2057	Cheers 17 Depot St. 228-0180	Telly's Restaurant & Pizzeria 235 Calef Hwy. 679-8225	The Goat 20 L St. 601-6928
Bedford Copper Door 15 Leavy Dr. 488-2677	Concord Craft Brewing 117 Storrs St. 856-7625	Exeter Sawbelly Brewing 156 Epping Road 583-5080	Shane's BBQ 61 High St. 601-7091
Bow Cheng Yang Li 520 S. Bow St. 228-8508	Lithermans 126 Hall St., Unit B	Goffstown Village Trestle 25 Main St. 497-8230	Wally's Pub 144 Ashworth Ave. 926-6954
Brookline The Alamo Texas Barbecue & Tequila Bar 99 Route 13 721-5000	Epping The Community Oven 24 Calef Hwy. 734-4543	Hampton Community Oven 845 Lafayette Road 601-6311	WHYM Craft Pub & Brewery 853 Lafayette Road 601-2801
Concord Area 23 State Street 881-9060	Holy Grail 64 Main St. 679-9559	CR's The Restaurant 287 Exeter Road 929-7972	Hooksett Granite Tapas & Cocktail Lounge 1461 Hooksett Road 232-1421
			Hudson The Bar 2B Burnham Road
			Luk's Bar & Grill 142 Lowell Road 889-9900
			Londonderry Coach Stop Restaurant & Tavern 176 Mammoth Road 437-2022
			Stumble Inn 20 Rockingham Road 432-3210
			Manchester Backyard Brewery 1211 S. Mammoth Road 623-3545
			Bonfire 950 Elm St. 663-7678
			Cercle National Club 550 Rockland Ave. 623-8243
			Derryfield Country Club 625 Mammoth Road 623-2880
			The Foundry 50 Commercial St. 836-1925
			Fratello's 155 Dow St. 624-2022
			Salona Bar & Grill 128 Maple St. 624-4020
			South Side Tavern 1279 S. Willow St. 935-9947
			Meredith Hart's Turkey Farm 223 Daniel Webster Hwy. 279-6212
			Twin Barns Brewing 194 Daniel Webster Hwy. 279-0876
			Merrimack Homestead 641 Daniel Webster Hwy. 429-2022
			Nashua American Social Club 166 Daniel Webster Hwy. 255-8272
			Fratello's Italian Grille 194 Main St. 889-2022
			Liquid Therapy 14 Court St. 402-9391
			New Boston Molly's Tavern & Restaurant 35 Mont Vernon Road 487-1362
			Newmarket Stone Church 5 Granite St. 659-7700
			Portsmouth The Gas Light 64 Market St. 430-9122
			The Goat 142 Congress St. 590-4628
			Rochester Mitchell Hill BBQ Grill & Brew 50 N. Main St. 332-2537
			Rye Atlantic Grill 5 Pioneer Road 433-3000
			Salem Copper Door 41 S. Broadway 458-2033
			Seabrook Chop Shop Pub 920 Lafayette Road 760-7706
			Stratham Tailgate Tavern 28 Portsmouth Ave. 580-2294

Thursday, Dec. 17

Bedford Copper Door: Tim Theriault, 7 p.m.	Merrimack Homestead: Amanda Cote, 5:30 p.m.
Concord Area 23: Dan Morgan, 6 p.m.	Nashua American Social Club: Malcolm Salls, 8 p.m. Fratello's: Joe Winslow, 5:30 p.m.
Epping Telly's: Clint LaPointe, 7 p.m.	Newmarket Stone Church: Dave Gerard, 6 p.m.
Exeter Sawbelly: Chad Verbeck, 5 p.m.	Portsmouth The Goat: Isaiah Bennett, 9 p.m.
Goffstown Village Trestle: Jeff Mrozek, 6 p.m.	Rochester Mitchell Hill BBQ: Game Time Trivia, 6 p.m.
Hampton CR's: Steve Subulkin, 6 p.m. Community Oven: Brad Bosse, 5 p.m. Shane's BBQ: Max Sullivan, 6 p.m.	Rye Atlantic Grill: Jodee Frawlee, 5:30 p.m.
Londonderry Stumble Inn: Pete Peterson, 7 p.m.	Salem Copper Door: Chad LaMarsh, 7 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 18

Auburn Auburn Tavern: Nicole Knox Murphy, 7 p.m.	Concord
--	----------------

Area 23: Swapping sets with Mikey G and Crazy Steve, 7 p.m. Cheers: team trivia, 9 p.m. Penuche's: Johnny Friday, 8 p.m.	Epping Community Oven: Brad Bosse, 5 p.m.
Exeter Sawbelly: Max Sullivan, 5 p.m.	Goffstown Village Trestle: Gardner Berry, 6 p.m.
Hampton CR's: Steve Subulkin, 6 p.m. The Goat: Rob Pagnano, 9 p.m. Wally's: Pat Dowling, 9 p.m. WHYM: Pete Peterson, 5 p.m.	Hudson The Bar: Carter on Guitar, 7 p.m. Luk's: Chad Verbeck, 6 p.m.

Merrimack Homestead: Marc Apostolides, 5:30 p.m.	Nashua American Social Club: Justin Jordan, 8 p.m. Fratello's: Dave Zangri, 5:30 p.m.
New Boston Molly's: Matt Bergeron, 6:30 p.m.	Newmarket Stone Church: Slow Coyote, 8 p.m.
Portsmouth Gas Light: Ben Lyons, 7:30 p.m. The Goat: Chris Toler, 9 p.m.	Seabrook Chop Shop: Fast Times, 6:30 p.m. ('80s tribute)
Stratham Tailgate: Elijah Clark, 7 p.m.	

Exeter Sawbelly: Pete Peterson, 1 p.m.; Rich Amorim, 5 p.m.	Goffstown Village Trestle: Becca Myari, 6 p.m.
Hampton The Goat: Jonny Friday, 9 p.m. Wally's: SantaCon costume contest to benefit the Hampton Food Bank starts at 1 p.m. featuring performances by Chris Toler WHYM: Lewis Goodwin, 5 p.m.	Hooksett Granite Tapas: Nicole Knox Murphy, 7 p.m.
Londonderry Coach Stop: Mark Lapointe, 6 p.m.	Manchester Backyard Brewery: April Cushman, 6 p.m. Bonfire: FatBunny, 9 p.m. Derryfield: Clint Lapointe, 7:30 p.m. The Foundry: Ryan Williamson, 6 p.m. Fratello's: Doug Thompson, 5:30 p.m. South Side Tavern: Justin Jordan, 8 p.m.

New Boston Molly's: Jared Rocco, 6:30 p.m.	Newmarket Stone Church: Christmas album release party with Dan Blakeslee and the Calabash Club, 1 p.m.; Wolf Man Jack Quartet, 8 p.m.
Portsmouth Gas Light: Jodee Frawlee, 7:30 p.m. The Goat: Brad Bosse, 9 p.m.	Seabrook Chop Shop: Wildfire, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 19

Bow Chen Yang Li: Andrew Geano, 7 p.m.	Concord Area 23: Saturday jam with Ross Arnold, 2 p.m.; Swapping sets with Craig Farrington and Ken Clark, 7 p.m. Concord Brewing: Mikey G, 4 p.m. Penuche's: Jared Steer & Friends, 8 p.m.
Epping Telly's: Tim Theriault, 8 p.m.	

Merrimack Homestead: Marc Apostolides, 5:30 p.m.	Nashua Fratello's: Paul Gormley, 5:30 p.m. Liquid Therapy: John Irish, 6 p.m.
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Brookline Alamo: Brad Bosse, 4:30 p.m.	Exeter Sawbelly: Blues & Brews with Alan Roux, noon
Goffstown Village Trestle: Bob Pratte, 3:30 p.m.	Hampton WHYM: Max Sullivan, noon
Manchester The Foundry: NH Music Collective artists, 9:30 a.m.	Portsmouth The Goat: Rob Pagnano, 9 p.m.
Salem Copper Door: Mark Lapointe, 11 a.m.; Dave Zangri, 4 p.m.	

Music plays on

These listings for live music are compiled from press releases, restaurants' websites and social media and artists' websites and social media. Call the venue to check on special rules and reservation instructions — and you may want to double check before you head out for the evening, as cancellations for weather or virus concerns are not uncommon. Get your gigs listed by sending information to music@hippopress.com.



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1875 South Willow Street, Manchester, NH 603-623-7705
139 Daniel Webster Hwy, Nashua 603-891-0055
545 Daniel Webster Hwy, Manchester, NH 603-628-6899
172 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 603-427-8319

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New Owners, Same Great Pizza

486 Chestnut St., Manchester
669-4533

NITE MUSIC THIS WEEK

Monday, Dec. 21

Manchester
Fratello's: Ralph Allen, 5:30 p.m.
Salona: music bingo, 6 p.m.

Merrimack
Homestead: Ryan Williamson, 5:30 p.m.

Nashua
Fratello's: Matt Luneau, 5:30 p.m.

Portsmouth
The Goat: Musical Bingo Nation, 7 p.m.; Alex Anthony Band, 9 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 22

Hampton
Wally's: Musical Bingo Nation, 7:30 p.m.

Manchester
Fratello's: Max Sullivan, 5:30 p.m.

Merrimack
Homestead: Jon-Paul Royer, 5:30 p.m.

Nashua
Fratello's: Brad Bosse, 5:30 p.m.

Portsmouth
The Goat: Isaiah Bennett, 9 p.m.

Stratham
Tailgate: Musical Bingo Nation, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 23

Concord
Area 23: Festivus and open mic, 6:23 p.m. (with a contest)

Hampton
Shane's BBQ: Brad Bosse, 5 p.m.
Wally's: Alex Anthony, 7 p.m.

Manchester
Fratello's: Andrew Geano, 5:30 p.m.

Meredith
Twin Barns: trivia night, 6 p.m.

Merrimack
Homestead: Sean Coleman, 5:30 p.m.

Nashua
American Social Club: Justin Jordan, 8 p.m.
Fratello's: Phil Jakes, 5:30 p.m.

Portsmouth
The Goat: MB Padfield, 9 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 24

Bedford
Copper Door: Nate Comp, 4 p.m.

Concord
Area 23: Brian Munger, 7 p.m.

Hampton
CR's: Jeff Auger, 6 p.m.

Nashua
American Social Club: Pete Peterson, 4 p.m.

Salem
Copper Door: Phil Jakes, 4 p.m.

Portsmouth
The Goat: Isaiah Bennett, 9 p.m.

Film

Movie screenings, movie-themed happenings & virtual events

Venues

Bank of NH Stage in Concord
16 S. Main St., Concord
225-1111, banknhstage.com

Capitol Center for the Arts
44 S. Main St., Concord
225-1111, ccanh.com

Chunky's Cinema Pub
707 Huse Road, Manchester; 151 Coliseum Ave., Nashua; 150 Bridge St., Pelham, chunkys.com

The Flying Monkey
39 Main St., Plymouth
536-2551, flyingmonkeynh.com

LaBelle Winery
345 Route 101, Amherst
672-9898, labellewinery.com

The Music Hall
28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth
436-2400, themusichall.org

Red River Theatres
11 S. Main St., Concord
224-4600, redrivertheatres.org

Shows

- **Red River Virtual Cinema** Red River Theatres is currently offering indie, foreign language and documentary films via a virtual cinema experience. Recent additions include *City Hall*, a documentary about Boston city government. See the ever-changing lineup on the website.
- **21+ Christmas Vacation** (PG-13, 1989) **Ugly Sweater Party** on Thursday, Dec. 17, at 8 p.m. at Chunky's in Manchester, Nashua and Pelham. Tickets cost \$4.99.
- **Lucinda Williams in studio concert series** livestreamed event offered by the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord. Tickets start at \$20 per event (with add-

on options). Remaining shows include "Have Yourself a Rockin' Little Christmas with Lucinda" on Thursday, Dec. 17, at 8 p.m., and "It's Only Rock and Roll: Tribute to the Rolling Stones" on Thursday, Dec. 31, at 8 p.m.

- **The Santa Clause** (PG, 1994) on Friday, Dec. 18, at 6:30 p.m. at Flying Monkey. Tickets cost \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and students.
- **Martini's 21+ It's a Wonderful Life** (PG, 1946) on Friday, Dec. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Chunky's in Manchester and Nashua and at 8 p.m. at Chunky's in Pelham. Tickets cost \$4.99.
- **We Banjo 3 — A Winter Wonderland** livestream via Cap Center on Friday, Dec. 18, at 8 p.m. with tickets starting at \$20 (packages with merch are available).
- **It's a Wonderful Life** (PG, 1946) on Saturday, Dec. 19, at 6:30 p.m. at Flying Monkey. Tickets cost \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and students.
- **Colin & Brad: Stream of Conscious-**

ness Improv comedians who appeared on *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood will offer live improv Zoom shows on Saturday, Dec. 19, all at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$35 (plus a fee) and give one device access to the show, which is being offered through the Cap Center.

- **Polar Express Family Brunch** on Sunday, Dec. 20, and Thursday, Dec. 24, at 10 a.m. Have brunch during a screening of *The Polar Express* (G, 2004) that will also feature a reading of "Twas the Night Before Christmas" by Santa and Mrs. Claus at LaBelle Winery. Tickets are sold by the table, maximum of six people per table, and cost \$22.99 (plus a fee) per child and \$41.14 (plus a fee) per adult.
- **It's A Wonderful Life** (1946) Wednesday, Dec. 23, at 2 p.m. at the Music Hall. Tickets cost \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors/students/military/first responders.

COMEDY THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Note: Some venues have canceled their slate of upcoming performances through the end of 2020 but still have early 2021 events listed on their websites with tickets for sale. Though schedules for the early part of next year are likely to change, we have included events where tickets are still on sale. See venues for safety procedures, ticket information and information

about rescheduled shows.

Venues

Chunky's
707 Huse Road, Manchester; 151 Coliseum Ave., Nashua; 150 Bridge St., Pelham, chunkys.com

Kathleen Irish Pub
90 Lake St., Bristol
744-6336, kathleensirishpub.com

The Music Hall
28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth
436-2400, themusichall.org

The Music Hall
28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth
436-2400, themusichall.org

The Flying Monkey
39 Main St., Plymouth
536-2551, flyingmonkeynh.com

Shows

- **Amy Tee** Chunky's Manchester, Friday, Dec. 18, 8 p.m.
- **Kelly MacFarland** Tuesday, Dec. 29, at 6:30 p.m. Chunky's Nashua, Friday, Dec. 18, 8 p.m.
- **Kelly MacFarland** Chunky's Manchester, Saturday, Dec. 19, 8 p.m.
- **Robbie Printz** Chunky's Nashua, Saturday, Dec. 19, 8 p.m.
- **Juston McKinney: The Last Laugh** Music Hall, Saturday, Dec. 26, and Sunday, Dec. 27, at 5 and 8 p.m. and

- **Bob Marley** Flying Monkey, Thursday, Dec. 31, 5:30 & 8:30 p.m.
- **New Year's Eve Live Comedy with Drew Dunn, Jody Sloane and Paul Landwehr** Chunky's Manchester, Thursday, Dec. 31, 10 p.m.
- **New Year's Eve Dueling Pianos Party** Thursday, Dec. 31, 10 p.m., Chunky's Manchester

Concerts

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Venues

Bank of NH Stage in Concord
16 S. Main St., Concord
225-1111, banknhstage.com

The Flying Monkey
39 Main St., Plymouth
536-2551, flyingmonkeynh.com

The Music Hall
28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth
436-2400, themusichall.org

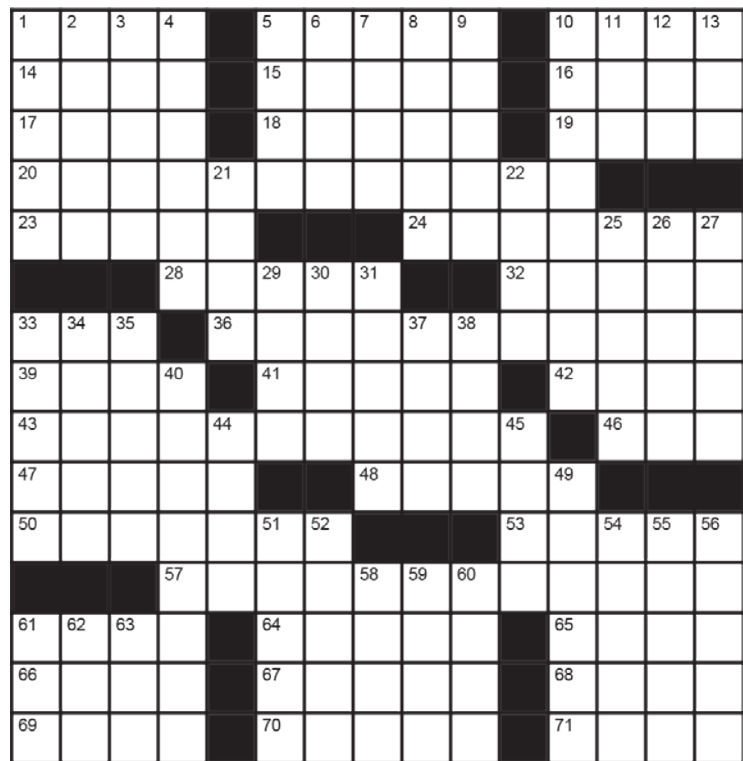
Palace Theatre
80 Hanover St., Manchester
668-5588, palacetheatre.org

Shows

- **Treason Quartet featuring Stuart Dias of Soggy Po' Boys** Thursday, Dec. 17, at 6 and 8 p.m., Music Hall
- **Sharon Jones Quartet** Saturday, Dec. 19, 6 and 8 p.m., Music Hall
- **Brooks Play Brooks (Garth Brooks tribute)** Friday, Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m., Palace

- **Matt Nakoa Band** Friday, Jan. 15, 8 p.m., Bank of NH Stage in Concord
- **GA-20** Friday, Jan. 22, 8 p.m., Bank of NH Stage (livestream available)
- **Andrew North and the Rangers** Saturday, Jan. 30, 8 p.m., Bank of New Hampshire Stage (livestream available)
- **The Slambovian Circus of Dreams** Friday, Feb. 5, 8 p.m., Bank of NH Stage
- **Croce Plays Croce** (A.J. Croce performs music of Jim Croce) Thursday, Feb. 11, at 7:30 p.m., Flying Monkey

I AIN'T NO FORTUNATE PUZZLE



Across

- 1. Red Hot Chili Peppers ‘ __ Tissue’
- 5. Pat of Foo Fighters
- 10. Punk band that loved tipping pin-ball machines?
- 14. Hothouse Flowers album that was where the heart is?
- 15. Sactuary jumps from the present and lives in the ‘Future __’
- 16. Atlantic Records division started in ‘55
- 17. Cube and Vanilla
- 18. Choirs, for example
- 19. Singer Watley
- 20. ‘74 REO Speedwagon album (4,2,1,5)
- 23. Beck “Temperature’s dropping at the rotting __”
- 24. Chitown band Maps And __
- 28. Joe Diffie is ‘Tougher Than __’
- 32. Three Days Grace ‘Animal __ Become’ (1,4)
- 33. Post-grunge ‘The Heavy’ band
- 36. Phil Collins ‘Something Happened On The __’ (3,2,6)
- 39. John Fogerty post-CCR tune ‘Dont You Wish It Was __’
- 41. ‘Rhythm Is Gonna Get You’ band __ Sound Machine
- 42. A photographer will have a fish-eye this
- 43. Elton John song-inspired ‘Free School Milk’ band (4,7)
- 46. Lady Gaga’s man was hungry when she wrote “He __ my heart”
- 47. Awards show mike holder
- 48. “Oh Cecilia, I’m down on my __”
- 50. ‘Sell Out’ __ Fish (4,3)
- 53. To accumulate albums you do this
- 57. Eagles classic “Take __, one more time” (2,2,3,5)
- 61. ‘Relish’ singer Osborne
- 64. ‘12 Lumineers smash (2,3)
- 65. “If I only had a dollar for every

- song I’ve sung” CCR song
- 66. Actress Bancroft that played ‘Mrs. Robinson’
- 67. Grammy-winning ‘Cold Shoulder’ Brit
- 68. CCR “Wrote a song for everyone and I couldn’t __ talk to you”
- 69. Bob of Furthur/Grateful Dead
- 70. AC/DC ‘Dirty __ Done Dirt Cheap’

71. Berklee education and working station

Down

- 1. Neil Diamond “ __ I was young, I used to call your name”
- 2. Roy Ayers uses this kind of ‘Butter’
- 3. Drug addled rocker (1,4)
- 4. Saliva gave a eulogy with ‘ __ Pieces’ (4,2)
- 5. What killer performance will do
- 6. Norwegian popster Maria
- 7. ‘In The Region Of The Summer Stars’ band
- 8. Third Asia album named after stars, in Kansas’ motto, perhaps
- 9. DVD button for seeing show over & over
- 10. Iconic bluesman named after mau-soleum in Indian city of Agra (3,5)
- 11. Jimmy Eat World “How else am __ make it clear?” (1,2)
- 12. ‘I Can Change’ __ Soundsystem
- 13. Eminem ‘Like __ Soldiers’
- 21. John Fogerty “I know it’s true, oh so true cause __ it on TV” (1,3)
- 22. What Milli Vanilli was (1,3)
- 25. Duran Duran ‘ __ Prayer’ (4,1)
- 26. Show, e.g.
- 27. LeAnn Rimes ‘Nothin’ ‘Bout Love Makes __’
- 29. Poison “Look what I’ve done __ shooting star” (1,2,1)
- 30. Misspelled untrusting Carpenters song ‘Somebody’s Been __’
- 31. You do this w/amp cabinet and head pieces
- 33. Barely sing
- 34. What you’re in at height of career
- 35. Liquid measurement of one of Sub-

WORD★Roundup™

by David L. Hoyt & Jeff Knurek

Find and Circle...

- Seven words with OO in the middle
- Four four-letter MLB teams
- Three words rhyming with “cedar”
- Gold, silver and bronze positions
- Three pieces of furniture

Last Week’s Answers: JUPITER NEPTUNE URANUS SATURN VENUS EARTH MARS / HISTORY SCIENCE MATH / COLONEL GENERAL / JULIA ROBERTS / JOHNNY CASH

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6/15

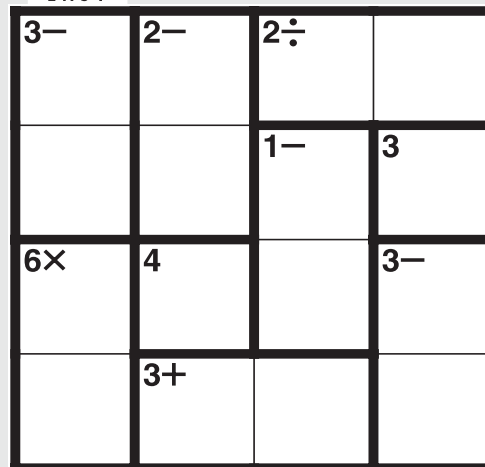
- lime’s ‘40’
- 37. Black cat-inspired LA metal band?
- 38. What Axl Rose will do, along w/ member fire
- 40. Popular rock makeup product
- 44. You work up this money owed to record company
- 45. Heidi Klum’s ex/singer that got a ‘Kiss From A Rose’
- 49. XTC winked back when their ‘Mermaid __’
- 51. Tom Petty “Yeah, __ to come in time” (2,3)
- 52. Shamen ‘92 electro smash ‘Ebe-neezer __’
- 54. Incubus told their chess opponent to finally ‘Make __’ (1,4)
- 55. Sammy Hagar knew there were two stories with ‘Both __ Now’
- 56. ‘82 EP ‘The Replacements __’
- 58. ‘A Weird Exits’ __ Oh Sees
- 59. De La Soul didn’t get a shot because they were ‘ __ Down’
- 60. ‘97 Yes album ‘Open Your __’
- 61. This part of your face might drop during Eddie Van Halen solo
- 62. “It ain’t me, it ain’t me, I ain’t no fortunate __”
- 63. Singer/songwriter DiFranco

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THE LOGIC PUZZLE THAT MAKES YOU SMARTER.

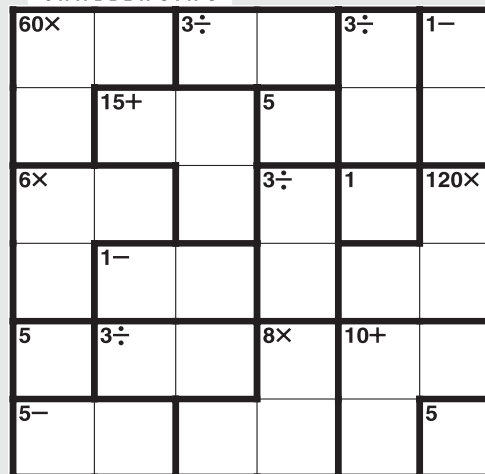
EASY



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CHALLENGING



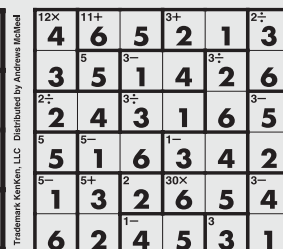
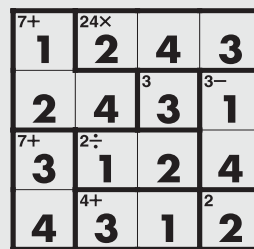
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RULES

- 1 Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 (easy) or 1 through 6 (challenging) without repeating.
- 2 The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners.
- 3 Freebies: Fill in single-box cages with the number in the top-left corner.

PREVIOUS ANSWERS



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“Shell Game” — maybe that’s why it’s green

Across

- 1 “Breaking Bad” sidekick
- 6 Written test format
- 11 Some mainframe computers
- 15 Follow, as an impulse
- 16 Pleas
- 18 QUESTION, PART 1
- 20 Cry bitterly
- 21 Blows away
- 22 ___ St. Soul (U.K. R&B/soul group)
- 23 Controversial ride-sharing app
- 25 Fall back, as a tide
- 26 ASPCA part

- 29 QUESTION, PART 2
- 34 “Forrest Gump” actor Gary
- 35 “The Man Who Mistook His Wife for ___” (1985 best-seller)
- 36 “Laugh-In” comedian Johnson
- 37 Like many indie films
- 38 “Buon giorno,” in Brisbane
- 39 Go over the limit
- 40 Green Day, e.g.
- 41 “Sorry if ___ you down”
- 42 NBA team formerly from Minneapolis
- 43 QUESTION, PART 3
- 46 Charlemagne’s realm, for short

- 47 Device program
- 48 Cranberry sources
- 49 Greek letter after zeta
- 50 “Battlefield Earth” author Hubbard
- 52 Director Van Sant
- 55 ANSWER TO THE QUESTION
- 61 Closest to the ground, stature-wise
- 62 Otherworldly
- 63 Mgr.’s helper
- 64 Creator of Yertle the Turtle
- 65 Laundry cycle

- 10 “While that might be true ...”
- 11 “___ be here soon”
- 12 Took the bait
- 13 “I really don’t care”
- 14 157.5 degrees from N
- 17 It’s a likely story
- 19 “You ___ one”
- 23 Sleep aid brand
- 24 Like a shopping mall on Black Friday, ordinarily
- 25 Online selling site
- 26 Wall, for one
- 27 Playful aquatic animals
- 28 Dated term for college students
- 29 Site for reflection?
- 30 Prompt
- 31 Corvair investigator Ralph
- 32 “They went ___-way”
- 33 Actress Lauren of 2020’s “The Wrong Missy”
- 34 Louis Armstrong’s nickname
- 38 Unidentifiable cafeteria food
- 39 Did some karaoke
- 41 Repercussions
- 42 “Ghost Town” actress Tea

- 44 Irritate
- 45 Fastening bars shaped like letters
- 49 Louisiana, to Louis
- 50 In ___ of (replacing)
- 51 Monica Geller’s brother
- 52 Jack-o’-lantern look
- 53 College team from Salt Lake City
- 54 “Auld Lang ___”
- 55 “Don’t text and drive” ad, for short
- 56 Acuity measures that don’t really matter
- 57 Questionable, in “Among Us,” slangily
- 58 Hustle, quaintly
- 59 High-jump hurdle
- 60 Peyton’s sibling

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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61										62			
63											64		
												65	

Down

- 1 Movie score with a famous two-note motif
- 2 Bounce back
- 3 Aimless attempt
- 4 Imbiber
- 5 Grind to a halt
- 6 Milne’s mopey donkey
- 7 Flaky precipitation
- 8 Comedians Gilliam and Goldsmith, for two
- 9 Rainbow shape

R&R answer from pg 35 of 12/10

ROAM	INOZ	SEWS	
UPFOR	WIPE	ILIE	
MERRY	MAKERS	GONE	
LONDON	NOUN		
ETTA	ROPE	S	
ROLL	HALL	LOFF	FAME
NOVEL	LIDS	NPG	
ONEX	ACHED	GALE	
ORR	ASHA	HUMOR	
SOMETH	INGTOS	SAY	
ENEMY	GOON		
BOBS	DOES	NT	
IFYOU	REALLY	LOVE	
NEED	MAKE	SAVOY	
NDRY	CLAY	MANE	

Jonesin’ answer from pg 36 of 12/10

PANDA	KPOP	SHED
ONEOF	ALVA	HYDE
COUNTS	SHEEP	EPIC
KURT	ALAN	SANTO
KOLANUT	NATO	
IDEA	RIGHT	TON
FUMED	WOK	SIRE
ABE	SWEATER	SEA
MELT	OXY	ARMOR
ERASURE	MOVE	
TERM	CYNICAL	
ATOLL	TROI	ISIS
RONI	TRYPTOPHAN	
TRIO	HOP	LEONE
SENT	ETTA	ESTES

NITE SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. See last week’s puzzle answers on pg 37.

Conceptis Sudoku Puzzle A By Dave Green

6	7		8		2		3	
	2	4			1	9	5	
			6					
	9		8		6			
3		1			5		9	
			3		9		7	
				7				
	1	8	5			6	2	
9		5		4		3		1

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Difficulty Level ★

Conceptis Sudoku Puzzle B By Dave Green

		7				6		
8			5		6			7
	9		7	8	2		5	
		5				8		
7		3				2		5
	2	4				1	7	
		8				9		
	3		2	9	8		6	
	4						1	

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Difficulty Level ★★★

Conceptis Sudoku Puzzle C By Dave Green

		8	6	2	7	5		
6								9
				9				
1			3		2			8
5		2				3		1
7			4		8			6
				8				
4								7
		6	7	3	5	1		

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Difficulty Level ★★★★★

SIGNS OF LIFE

All quotes are from *Let's Eat: Recipes from My Kitchen Notebook*, by Tom Parker Bowles, born Dec. 18, 1974.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 – Dec. 21) *The actual cooking takes a few minutes. Once the prep is done, you're laughing. There is still cleanup, though.*

Capricorn (Dec. 22 – Jan. 19) *I've travelled across America in search of burger perfection and found that one rule applies — the simpler the burger, the better. ... Lettuce, tomato, cheese, and bacon are all acceptable, even desirable, additions, not forgetting proper pickles, too. One of the best I've ever eaten was at the In-N-Out burger chain in California. Simple pleasures are the best.*

Aquarius (Jan. 20 – Feb. 18) *I added the soy and the rice wine because they were there and it seemed a good idea at the time. And it worked. Showing up is half the battle.*

Pisces (Feb. 19 – March 20) *For me, cooking is so much more than the application of heat to ingredients. For everyone.*

Aries (March 21 – April 19) *Professional chefs do have many advantages: when they dry-fry chillies, they have extractor fans that are so powerful they rip the words straight from their lips. Cut yourself some slack when you're working at a disadvantage.*

Taurus (April 20 – May 20) *I'm all for using up chicken bones and the like, but to chop up yesterday's beef for a pie not only gives an inferior filling — it robs me of roast beef sandwiches, too. Leftovers will be quite satisfying.*

Gemini (May 21 – June 20) *At the same time, after the bleak paucity of the rationing years, there was an increased consumption of animal fats. No surprises there. Fourteen years of mock goose and Woolton pie will do that to an appetite. The rebound effect may be at work.*

Cancer (June 21 – July 22) *It's the sort of food that renders talking irrelevant. Just writing about these noodles makes my mouth water. Noodles first, talk later.*

Leo (July 23 – Aug. 22) *Too much of anything, from rice*

cakes to lardy cakes, is never a good thing. You might run up against your lardy cake limits.

Virgo (Aug. 23 – Sept. 22) *You can use whatever vegetables you have to hand, from frozen peas to broccoli, sugar snaps, French beans, or bean sprouts. It even makes that ridiculous baby corn look useful. The key is a balance between the hot, sour, and salty. Balance and resourcefulness for the win.*

Libra (Sept. 23 – Oct. 22) *I roll [this recipe] out anytime anyone asks if my mother is a good cook — which is pretty much all of the time. She is, although she was always less bothered with the cakes, puddings, and pies side of things: anything that requires exact measurements. Measurements, shmeasurements.*

Scorpio (Oct. 23 – Nov. 21) *Purists may argue that Goodfellas, Martin Scorsese's red-sauce splashed classic, was the meatball's greatest ever cinematic moment. ... But it's actually in Point Break ... where the meatball reaches its peak. So fine is the sandwich that it actually causes the cops, who are on stakeout, to miss the bank being robbed. When done well, meatballs have that sort of effect. Effective meatballs have their moment, and you can enjoy a good film either way. 🍷*

7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 unforeseen development (9)	_____
2 cat's complaint (8)	_____
3 despicable person (9)	_____
4 hoops (10)	_____
5 accompaniment to spaghetti (8)	_____
6 brand of gobbler (10)	_____
7 "visionary" orb (7)	_____

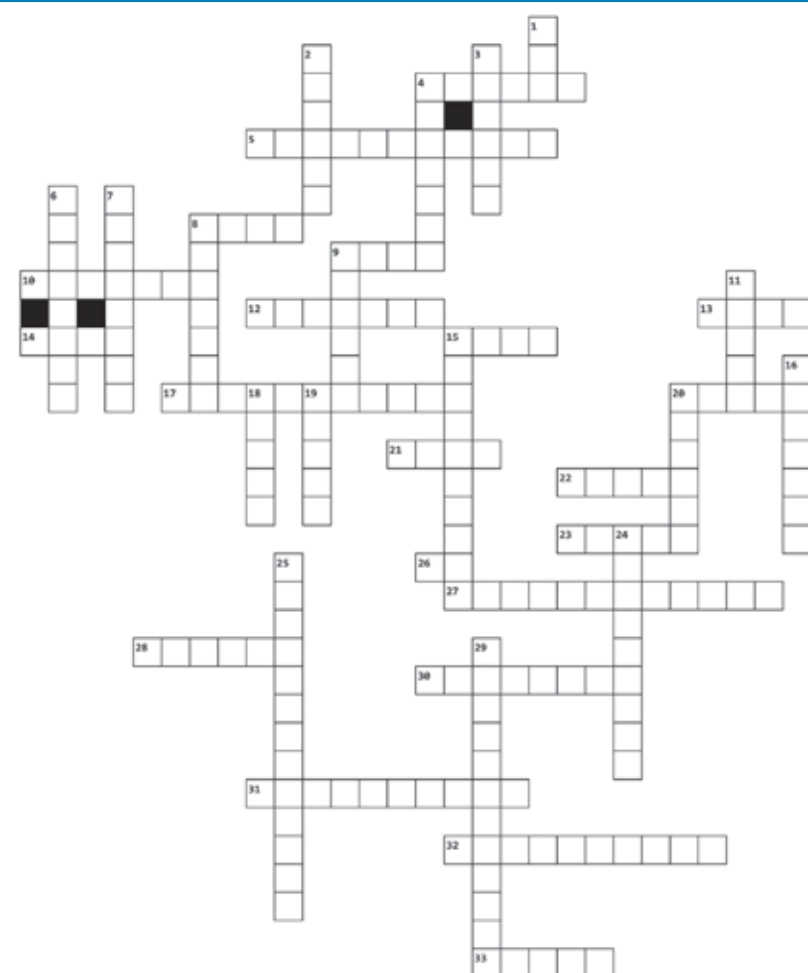
ME	BU	BALL	EYEB	IRBA
LL	BASK	ME	LL	LL
VEB	HA	ATBA	CUR	BALL
ALL	ALL	ETBA	SLI	TTER

Last Week's Answers: 1. DUTCH 2. IRISH 3. ITALIAN 4. RUSSIAN 5. CHINESE 6. HAWAIIAN 7. MEXICAN

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Past, Present & Future



- Across**
- Mexican city on the Yucatán Peninsula
 - Luxury hotel chain
 - Art museum in Manhattan
 - British writer
 - Fruit that can be used for its oil, water, milk or meat
 - Another name for a sub sandwich
 - Band from the 1980s with same first name twice
 - Testament
 - Third largest city in France
 - City where Sonny Bono was once a mayor
 - Thin Lizzy song
 - Alcoholic drink made from fermented grape juice
 - Team with winningest record at World Cup
 - Fourth letter of the greek alphabet
 - Abbr. for Maine
 - Home of the Golden Gate Bridge
 - Candy bar with two sticks
 - Unmarried German-speaking woman
 - City nicknamed the "Big Easy"
- Down**
- Second person singular pronoun
 - Home city of the Red Sox
 - Joined together
 - Heated sugar or syrup
 - A type of house
 - One of the five boroughs of New York City
 - Musical performed at the Cambridge Theatre
 - Home of five major league sporting teams
 - Unfermented drink made with apples
 - City of angels
 - Snack in Spanish cuisine
 - City where the oldest English-speaking library is located
 - Snack in Spanish cuisine
 - Second person singular pronoun
 - Home city of the Red Sox
 - Joined together
 - Heated sugar or syrup
 - A type of house
 - One of the five boroughs of New York City
 - Musical performed at the Cambridge Theatre
 - Home of five major league sporting teams
 - Unfermented drink made with apples
 - City of angels
 - Snack in Spanish cuisine
 - Underground railway system in London
 - To become joined with someone
 - Savory dish of Italian origin
 - Location of the inverted tower
 - Another name for the millennium wheel
 - Portuguese egg tart pastry
 - Fourth-most popular visitor attraction in London

Sudoku Answers from pg 36 of 12/10

Puzzle A

4	6	5	3	9	2	1	7	8
1	7	9	8	4	5	3	6	2
2	3	8	7	6	1	9	5	4
8	9	3	5	2	7	6	4	1
5	2	6	1	3	4	8	9	7
7	4	1	6	8	9	2	3	5
6	5	4	9	1	8	7	2	3
9	8	7	2	5	3	4	1	6
3	1	2	4	7	6	5	8	9

Difficulty Level ★

Puzzle B

8	4	3	2	7	1	9	5	6
6	2	9	5	3	8	7	4	1
7	5	1	9	4	6	2	8	3
2	8	4	7	9	3	1	6	5
9	6	5	4	1	2	8	3	7
1	3	7	6	8	5	4	2	9
3	7	2	1	6	4	5	9	8
5	1	8	3	2	9	6	7	4
4	9	6	8	5	7	3	1	2

Difficulty Level ★★★

Puzzle C

8	7	5	6	1	2	9	3	4
2	9	1	3	8	4	7	6	5
3	4	6	9	5	7	1	2	8
5	6	2	8	9	3	4	7	1
1	3	9	7	4	6	8	5	2
4	8	7	5	2	1	6	9	3
7	2	8	4	3	9	5	1	6
6	1	4	2	7	5	3	8	9
9	5	3	1	6	8	2	4	7

Difficulty Level ★★★

Nice try

Jin Wu, of Taiwan, told his Facebook followers on Nov. 21 about his good fortune in purchasing a PlayStation 5 the previous day, and marveled at the low price he paid for it, reported Taiwan News. The reason became clear when the seller revealed he had tried to pass the console off as an air purifier, but his wife wasn't fooled. "My wife wants to sell it," the middle-aged gamer told Wu. "It turns out that women can tell the difference between a PS5 and an air filter."

Bright idea

A Washington State Patrol officer pulled over a motorist on I-90 near North Bend on Nov. 30 after noticing the vehicle's "super dim" headlights, patrol spokesman Rick Johnson told CNN. Closer inspection revealed the unnamed driver had duct-taped flashlights to the front of his vehicle to replace the headlights, which had been damaged in a crash. Flashlights-as-headlights are illegal in Washington because they don't provide enough brightness, Johnson said, adding that the driver also had a suspended license.

Awesome!

The British Museum on Dec. 9 announced that among the historical finds it has registered this year was a cache of 63 gold coins dating from the reign of Henry VIII, dug up

by a family weeding their garden in New Forest. The coins, totaling 24 pounds and equivalent to more than \$18,000 in today's dollars, were probably buried around 1540, The Guardian reported. The museum has experienced an increase in garden finds this year, as Treasure Registrar Ian Richardson said people are spending more time in their gardens, "resulting in completely unexpected archaeological discoveries."

• French chef Benoit Bruel in Lyon struck a blow for French cuisine by capturing the Guinness World Record for most varieties of cheese on a pizza with 254 cheeses, United Press International reported on Nov. 30. Guinness posted a video of Bruel making and then enjoying the pizza with friends along with its listing of the achievement, noting also that "Benoit took this as a patriotic challenge, as one of the things France is most famous for is its cheeses."

• Ray Liddell, 49, of Hartlepool, England, was shocked when the inflatable toy Grinch he bought for his daughter turned out to be 35 feet tall — taller than his two-story house, Times Now News reported. The giant turned Liddell into something of a local celebrity as hundreds of people stop by to see the Grinch, so he decided to put the attraction to good use, asking visitors to donate to Alice House Hospice, where his father was cared for before dying of Covid-19. "I reckon we must have had over 5,000 people visit," Lid-

dell said on Dec. 7, and according to reports, he's collected more than \$13,000 for the facility.

Least competent criminal

Police in Jackson, Mississippi, had little trouble identifying the man who they said passed a threatening note to a teller at a Trustmark Bank on Dec. 3 and got away with an undetermined amount of cash, WAPT reported. Security cameras in the bank clearly captured images of suspect Richard Jiles, 41, wearing a white shirt and camouflage jacket with a blue face mask pulled down below his chin to reveal his entire face, police said. Jiles was later apprehended.

Superfan

Houston Astros fan Darren Johnson in Fort Worth, Texas, posted photos of the chicken coop he built on Facebook in November and was "totally shocked" by the overwhelming response, he told KTRK. The coop, which Johnson estimates took about 100 hours to construct, is an exact 1/60th-scale replica of the Houston Astrodome, including details such as an Astros logo and the numbers of all the Astros' retired jerseys, and the chickens who call it home are all named after Astros players. The social media attention "shows my kids that I'm not the only one obsessed with a stadium that's been closed for 20 years," Johnson said.

Schemes

• Residents in upscale neighborhoods of Woodway and Edmonds, Washington, have been visited recently by people carrying official-looking documents who knock on doors, tell homeowners they own the property and "they're there to repossess the home and want the people to vacate the premises," Edmonds police Sgt. Josh McClure told KIRO. The group identifies itself as Moorish Sovereign Citizens, McClure said, who "believe that they own all of the land between Alaska and Argentina." So far, the people have cooperated with police and left after being told they are trespassing.

• The 400 Rabbits tequila bar in Nottingham, England, has applied to the local registrar general to be declared a place of worship, namely the Church of the 400 Rabbits, in an effort to allow customers back inside the establishment, something that is currently prohibited by local COVID restrictions. The Guardian reports that the effort may have been inspired by a similar attempt made by a gym in Krakow, Poland, in October. Men's Health reported that Marta Jamroz, manager of The Atlantic Sports and Fitness Club, went to great lengths to rebrand her gym as the Church of the Healthy Body. The outcome of her efforts is unclear; the tequila bar's application is given little chance to be approved.

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