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GRANITE VIEWS JODY REESE

Educational giveway



Some Republicans in the New Hampshire House are pushing legislation that could give about \$4,100 to anyone sending their kids to a private school or home

schooling them. As currently envisioned, it should not pass.

Arguments for direct grants to parents, like the ones this bill would set up, are that families should have the freedom to find a private school or home-school option if their public school is failing their children. It's a powerful argument. It is unfair that children can be deprived of a good or adequate education by being stuck in a failing school.

But this legislation does not focus on the needs of the low-income families who have the least financial ability to leave poorly performing schools. Let's be blunt here. This is largely a handout to parents who can already afford to send their children to a private school. If this legislation really wanted to address educational freedom then it would specifically target children in underperforming schools whose parents don't earn enough money to send them to a private school. This legislation as currently envisioned doesn't offer enough to truly bring school choice to those families. The proposed \$4,100 is probably not enough to completely cover the cost of a private school. (For example, the non-parish-sponsored tuition listed on the websites of Manchester area Catholic elementary schools seems to be over \$5,000 annually and many nonreligious schools are much more.) And it's highly unlikely that low-income parents would be able to afford to stay home and homeschool their children. For the parents and students who need it most, the legislation is still likely to leave families paying some of the private education bill.

This legislation could be re-envisioned to target those in need by means testing and targeting districts that fail to meet agreed-upon standards. Kids going to those schools could be eligible for a grant covering the entire cost of tuition to private school, charter school or a different public school district if their parents met agreed-upon low-income guidelines.

Rather than \$4,100 going to 16,000 private school students (or possibly more, if additional New Hampshire families jump on this universally available deal), New Hampshire could focus the aid on a few thousand families who really need help. An additional benefit would be continuing to provide aid to those schools in districts that aren't meeting expected standards for their students.

their students.

If we are truly trying to give each child the best opportunity to succeed then let's

target our aid to those that need it most.



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ON THE COVER

10 SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS this Valentine's season, spread the love from home. We've got 14 ideas that will help you show your loved ones, friends, neighbors and strangers that you care, safely.

ALSO ON THE COVER, It's time for the Best of 2021 readers' poll! Voting is open, so let us know your favorite places, people and events in southern New Hampshire; see details on p. 9. And find some funny this weekend, p. 28 & 30.

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NEWS & NOTES

Covid-19 news

On Feb. 3, Gov. Chris Sununu issued a statement in response to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky's announcement earlier that day that data shows returning to in-person learning can be done safely and successfully. "I urge the Union leadership in New Hampshire that have been resistant to follow the science, to embrace the Biden administration's call for schools to reopen," Sununu said in the statement. "The will of the students is there, the will of the parents is there, and the science is there. It's time to get these kids back in the classroom." All K through 12 school and child care staff will be eligible to receive their first doses in Phase 2A of the state's vaccination administration plan, beginning around the March to May timeframe.

During a Feb. 4 press conference, state epidemiologist Dr. Benjamin Chan said that, on average, there have been between 400 and 450 new cases of Covid-19 in New Hampshire per day, "down significantly" from a few weeks prior. Both the test positivity rates and the number of active infections in the state also continue to be on the decline.

Later during the same press conference, Sununu announced changes

to the state's scheduling process for Covid-19 vaccines in New Hampshire. As of Feb. 7, everyone will automatically be given a date and time for their second dose appointment as they leave their first dose appointment, he said. The state is also moving away from the federally run Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) website in favor of a new state run online system that is currently in development. If you've already received your first dose and the date of your second dose has been pushed back, you can go back into the VAMS system and reschedule for an earlier appointment within one week of your recommended window.

Opioid settlement

New Hampshire will receive \$3,332,762 over five years as part of a \$573 million multi-state settlement with McKinsey & Co. for the company's role in promoting the opioid crisis, according to a press release from the state Attorney General's Office. New Hampshire will share the settlement with 47 states, Washington, D.C., and five U.S. territories. The settlement "resolves investigations into the company's role in working for opioid companies, helping those companies promote their opioids, and profiting

from the opioid epidemic," according to the release. The complaints against McKinsey claimed that the company helped opioid manufacturers, including OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma, promote their opioid products to maximize profit. Proceeds from the settlement will go into a fund that will be used to abate problems caused by opioids.

Health insurance

Following President Joe Biden's recent executive order to reopen enrollment on the Federal Affordable Care Act Exchanges, New Hampshire residents will have a chance to buy health insurance for 2021 during a special enrollment period from Feb. 15 to May 15, according to a press release. Any residents who are uninsured can sign up for coverage without waiting until open enrollment at the end of the year by visiting healthcare.gov. New Hampshire Insurance Commissioner Chris Nicolopoulos said in the release that the premiums available on the Exchange are lower than they have been in the past. Plans are available from three insurance companies on the New Hampshire Marketplace: Anthem, Ambetter from NH Healthy Families and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. "Given that New Hampshire

	The NH Audubon team "Birding with Impunity" in Rye took home the Rockingham County Award for the most points in the county during the Semi-Superbowl of Birding that was
CONCORD	held Jan. 30, according to a press release. During the competition, which is run by Massachusetts Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center, teams look for as many bird species as possible in 12 hours.
The Old Academy Building at Pinkerton Academy in Derry has been named to the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. According to a press release, it was the school's first building when it opened in 1815.	MANCHESTER
Nashua high school seniors are invited to apply for the Rotary Club of Nashua's annual scholarship. According to a press release, applicants must plan to attend an accredited technical college, trade school or two- or four-year college. Visit nashuarotary.org.	Merrimack Londonderry
İ	NASHUA

A **Salem** resident rescued a neighbor from a burning home on the morning of Feb. 5, according to a post on the Salem Fire Department's Facebook page. The department thanked all of the neighbors on Lou-Al Lane who helped prior to the arrival of rescue personnel. The patient was transported to Parkland Medical Center with serious burns and smoke inhalation injuries and was later transferred to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, according to the post

Covid-19 update As of February 1 As of February 8 **Total cases statewide** 66,058 68,499 Total current infections statewide 4,662 3.245 Total deaths statewide 1.059 1.106 3,290 (Jan. 26 to Feb. 1) 2,441 (Feb. 2 to Feb. 8) New cases **Current infections: Hillsborough County** 1.106 1.587 **Current infections: Merrimack County** 389 292 Current infections: Rockingham County 1,096 771

Information from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

insurance companies are offering significantly lower average premium rates for the third year in a row and given the Covid-19 pandemic, this is an important opportunity for individuals to get an affordable health insurance plan," Gov. Chris Sununu said in the release.

Budget concerns

Last week, U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen hosted a virtual meeting with New Hampshire mayors and municipal leaders, including Manchester Mayor Joyce Craig and Nashua Mayor Jim Donchess, to

discuss severe budgetary shortfalls, according to a press release. The budget issues, which are due to a drop in state revenue stemming from the pandemic, could affect the ability to provide essential services within the state's communities. and teachers could face layoffs, the municipalities' leaders told Shaheen. Shaheen said she's working with the Biden administration to get direct local and state aid and funding for vaccinations, schools, housing and nutrition programs in the upcoming relief package, according to the release.



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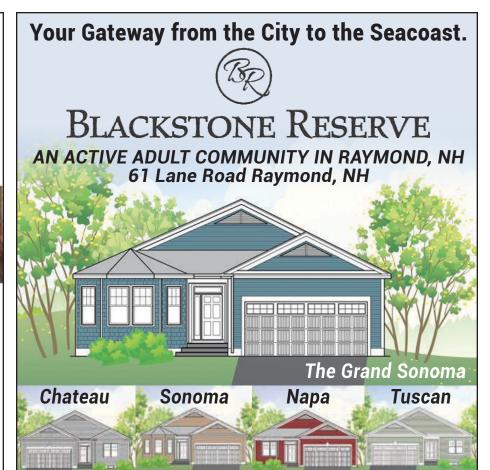
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NEWS & NOTES Q&A

Game on

Esports alive and well at New England College

Whereas many college sports have been suspended, competitive video gaming, known as esports, gives students an opportunity to compete nationally and be part of a team in a safe way during the pandemic. Now in its second year at New England College in Henniker, esports includes leagues for a number of match games, including Madden, Call of Duty, NBA 2K, Fortnite, Overwatch, Valorant, Super Smash Brothers and League of Legends. NEC junior and Valorant team captain Noelle Julian talked about the game, the team and what esports looks like this year.

How did you get into esports?

I've always played video games
— growing up and throughout high school and my early years of college — and I've always been a competitive person. Then, two years ago, I got an email from the director of [NEC] esports saying that they were holding tryouts, and I was like, 'That sounds like something I'd be interested in,' so I went and tried out.

How do practices work?

We practice for two hours five days a week, and we also have matches every week. ... We have an arena on campus, which is too? basically a computer lab, but instead of your typical computers that you do homework on they're very expensive PCs that are built specifically for gaming. Obviously, with Covid, it's been a bit more difficult to get together. ... During quarantine, we didn't have access to the arena, but all the players on my team have their own PCs, so we can practice remotely from our dorm rooms. When we aren't in quarantine, there is a 10-person limit in the arena, which basically means that only one team is able to practice at a time. Because we have so many teams and practices are a two-hour time block, [the practice schedule] can make for some very early days and very late nights. It's not ideal, but we make it work.

Exactly what do you do during practice?

Each game has different [skills] you need to work on, but for *Valorant* specifically, aim is a huge one. It can make or break the game. A lot of us, during practice time as well as on our own personal time, will just hop into an aim trainer, [which is a program] where you specifically practice your aim and handeye coordination. We also just play normal matches and get a feel for [the game layout and mechanics].

What does being a team captain entail?

I'm kind of the spokesperson for our team. I register our team each season with whatever leagues we decide to play in, and I reach out to the other teams we compete with to schedule matches and that kind of thing. I schedule our practices, make sure everyone is putting in the time and pulling their own weight, and I just make sure everything is running smoothly.



Courtesy photo.

Do you lead the team as far as strategy,

As far as strategy and stuff goes, we all work on it together. I do spend some time watching professional players in their matches to see how they play, and then I try to reflect that in our own practices, but I'm never going to be the most knowledgeable at games. I love hearing from my players, and if they have great ideas that's great, because I don't know everything.

How does esports affect you physically, and how do you take care of yourself?

Eye strain is probably the biggest thing when you're sitting in front of a computer for hours. I wear blue light glasses when I play. The lumbar support [on the chairs] in the arena that we have is pretty nice, and when you're sitting in a chair for at least two hours it's definitely important to have good chairs with good back support.

So, can you play these games just for fun after you've played them competitively?

[Laughs] Unfortunately, no. That's the toll that comes with it. After playing *Overwatch* [competitively] for a year and a half, when my friends from back home ask me, 'Hey, do you want to play *Overwatch*?' I'm like, 'Absolutely not.' I find myself still in that competitive mindset, thinking, 'I have to do this, and I can't mess up,' and if I do mess up, I get so angry with myself, so, no, I just can't.

What do you love most about esports?

The sense of community. ... Immediately when you join [a team], you have new friends, because you know you all have that similar ground with each other; we all love gaming, and we all want to be the best we can be at it. We're all in it together.

— Angie Sykeny 🕠

TB-12 rules the day



before Sunday's Super Bowl I got this overwhelming feeling in picking Kansas City to beat Tampa Bay I had made a mistake betting against **Tom Brady**. It came while I was watching the conclusion of

Bohemian Rhapsody, where in his return to Queen after the band's Beatles-esque breakup, despite his doubts **Freddie Mercury** rises to the occasion to wow the 100,000-plus on hand at London's Wembley Stadium and the billion-plus Live Aid audience tuning in around the globe to the famed concert of 1985.

Yes, it was Hollywood and a little over dramatic probably. But it showed how greatness is about rising to the moment and made me believe Brady was going to be Brady the next day and Tampa Bay was going to win. A little late for my own "stop the presses" Hollywood moment and bad for me, as my prediction was already on the street, because that's just how it happened. Forever young Tom looked exactly as he did in all six previous SB wins. This time he beat the young whippersnapper looking to challenge his G.O.A.T. status. Instead, the oldest goat in the NFL held serve to claim a seventh ring. It was all so familiar, except it was tinged with a bit of sadness as seeing him win this one was like watching dad get remarried to someone else after the divorce from

Here are some other thoughts from a Super Bowl that wasn't nearly as much fun as most thought it would be.

Reggie, Reggie, Reggie: Until last night I never thought Reggie Jackson's three-homer Game 6 to end the Dodgers in the 1977 World Series and conclude his tumultuous Bronx Zoo first season in New York had competition for giving critics the best Up Yours performance. But Brady being the game's MVP while winning in Year 1 after his divorce from Coach B comes close.

Speaking of the MVP: If I asked you what was more likely, Tampa Bay scoring 31 points or their defense holding the NFL's best offense to nine paltry points, what would you say? Exactly. So, Brady being named MVP is the product of lazy voters picking on reputation and maybe sentimentality. I think it's got to come from the defense. My vote is **Devin White** for being all over the field making a game-high 12 tackles and grabbing the end zone pick to close KC out.

Pat Mahomes is Worth the Price of Admission: Never seen anyone throw from normal to side arm to underhand to on the run while being chased like him. The two he threw in the fourth quarter into the end zone while falling to the ground after being chased back to around the 30 were incredible. Even though it didn't look like he could even see them, he somehow where in came or few male the crap play from early 20 the ground after being chased back to around the 30 were incredible. Even though it didn't com.

got it to receivers with a chance to catch them. No one else I've ever seen could have done that. Amazing.

Being The Goat Used to Mean Something Else: The dreaded goat horns go to KC coach Andy Reid for making the dumbest Super Bowl decision since Pete Carroll didn't give it to Marshawn Lynch on the one in the closing seconds of the 2014 game. What could Andy possibly have been thinking taking two timeouts in the final 43 seconds of the first half when TB had the ball? Forget the last 20 years on Brady's resume. Didn't he see what TB did to Green Bay in the exact same situation just two weeks ago? The exact same thing happened too, as Brady hit Antonio Brown for a final-seconds TD to turn a manageable 14-6 deficit with the ball to start the second half into a giant 21-6 hole they never climbed out of. Don't mean to rub it in, but wow that was

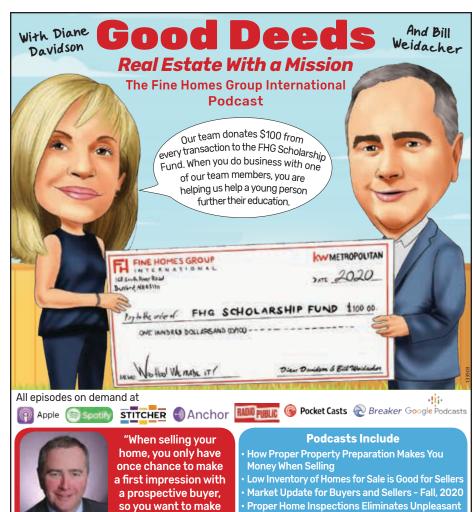
Where's Mike Curtis When You Need Him? Good thing for that idiot running on the field in the fourth quarter Sunday the ferocious '60s Colts linebacker wasn't there to run by. He once swung out his arm for a clothesline shot to drop a goofball runner like a box of rocks.

Will Coach B Learn from This? Wonder if Belichick will learn anything about moderating his approach from seeing Brady and Gronk hooking up for the game's first two TD's after he ran them off with his, ah, grating style. And he won't need a reminder either, as he's going to get pounded by the local media until he wins No. 7 himself. Learning that lesson would be good, as I've got to think Brady and Gronk bolting the castle in a revolt against how the king treated them won't be a big plus in efforts to recruit free agents going forward.

Tony Romo Gets the Last Word: The likable CBS color man had the clearest stat I've ever heard to define Brady's greatness when he said on Sunday he has highest winning percentage in history of any player in any of the four major sports and Tampa Bay has the lowest winning percentage in history of any team from the four major sports and they win the year he arrives. That tells you all you need to know. I generally think QB's get too much credit, but I've always believed 11 tiles in his 13 years make Bill Russell the greatest NBA player. So it should apply here with Brady as well.

One Final Thing: In playing at an extreme age only George Foreman winning the heavy-weight crown at 45 matches what Brady did this year. Yes, Jack Nicklaus won the Masters at 46, but it was done in one weekend in a sport where most play into their 40's. Brady's feat came over an entire season in a sport where few make it to their mid-30's because they get the crap kicked out of them in every game they play from the time they enter the league in their early 20's. Well done, Tom.

Email Dave Long at dlong@hippopress.



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NEWS & NOTES

QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

Acts of kindness

On this week's theme of acts of kindness: The Bedford Starbucks has recently changed the traffic flow of its drive-thru line. In order to keep parking spots in front of the shop and neighboring businesses free, there is now a large "do not block" area in the middle of the line, creating a little social experiment every time you go. Who will follow the rules? Who will try to zip forward in line? Who will misjudge the amount of space they need to pull forward? On a recent visit where QOL was stopped at the breach, the car behind honked and then zipped around QOL (who responded with a too-loud, too-long honk). QOL fumed a bit but reasoned the person possibly couldn't see why QOL had stopped in the first place (bring back the stop sign, Starbucks). When QOL got to the drive-thru, the line jumper had already paid for QOL's order.

OOL score: +1

Comments: A serving of caffeine and faith in humanity? What a good way to start the day. (And thanks for the coffee.)

Less crime in the Queen City

For the fifth year in a row crime in Manchester has decreased, according to a Feb. 4 post on the Manchester Police Department's Facebook page. The preliminary Crime Statistics for 2020 show the Part I crimes declined by 4 percent compared to 2019 — specifically, violent crime was down 5 percent and property crimes were down 4 percent. The city also saw "significant" declines in robberies, aggravated assaults, burglary and larceny. One area of concern is an increase in motor vehicle thefts, according to the post.

Score: +

Comment: In response to the report, Mayor Joyce Craig issued a statement thanking the department for its service and adding, "While this is good news, we know there's more work to do, and I'm grateful for MPD's ongoing commitment to community relationships, transparency, innovation and progressive training."

Bumpy road to get second vaccination

QOL has heard many stories about how difficult it has been to schedule an appointment for a second dose of the vaccine, including two-and-a-half-hour waits on hold after calling 211 and issues with the online vaccination scheduling system that prevented those who already had their first dose from making an appointment for the second within the necessary time frame. Gov. Chris Sununu acknowledged the problems with the scheduling system, WMUR reported on Feb 4, but said everyone in Phase 1B will be able to get the second dose of their vaccine within the recommended time frame. According to the report, Sununu asked for a little bit more patience and said workers were manually entering new appointment times so people would be able to sign up for them.

Score: -2

Comment: According to the report, Perry Plummer, who has been in charge of the vaccination effort, said, "We had a bump. It was bad. It was unfortunate. We own it. But we're fixing it as quickly as we possibly can."

Don't Quit!

On Feb. 8, the National Foundation for Governors' Fitness Councils announced that New Hampshire is one of four states selected for its 2021 Don't Quit! campaign. According to a press release, three elementary or middle schools in New Hampshire will receive a \$100,000 Don't Quit! Fitness Center. "So far we've delivered Don't Quit Fitness Centers to 36 states and Washington, D.C.," foundation chairman Jake Steinfeld said in the release. "Kids are excited about working out and being physically active and ... their academic performance and self-esteem have skyrocketed. Now, New Hampshire schools have an opportunity to make a change that will have a lasting impact on kids well into their future."

Score: +

Comment: School nominations will be accepted now through Friday, March 19; to nominate your school, visit natgovfit.org.

QOL score: 55 Net change: +1 QOL this week: 56

What's affecting your Quality of Life here in New Hampshire? Let us know at news@hippopress.com.

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No national chains, please — this is about the people and places unique to southern New Hampshire. Voting will be conducted online only. Go to hippopress.com and look for the "Hippo Best of 2021" link to find the survey. Online ballots must be completed by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 28. Only one online ballot will be accepted from each device. Only ballots with votes in 15 categories will be counted.

small kindness

14 ways to spread a little happiness this Valentine's season

This Valentine's Day, spread the love without spreading Covid with these acts of kindness that you can do right from home (or just outside your home). From leaving a small gift in your mailbox for your mail carrier to giving the critters in your backyard a place to escape the cold, here are 14 ways to bring some joy to family and friends, local businesses, and people and animals in need, all from a safe distance.

By Matt Ingersoll & Angie Sykeny news@hippopress.com

Purchase a wish list item for a local charity



For a more personal way to lend a hand than just donating money, most charities in the Granite State will post a "wish list" accessible on their website, kept

up to date with items of the greatest need. Some also provide a link to an Amazon Wish List page as well — items can be ordered online and shipped directly to that organization's address.

Marguerite's Place, for instance, a transitional living program in Nashua for women and children in crisis, is in need of basic home essentials like laundry detergent, towels, trash cans and storage bins. The full wish list is available to view on the website, according to director of development and public relations Christa Tsechrintzis, with an additional link to Amazon to help you choose the right product brands.

The Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, office administrator Teri Gladstone said, is in the greatest need of boots, ski gloves, jackets and other hand, foot and body warmers.

"Due to Covid restrictions by the CDC, we can only accept brand new clothing items," she said. Items can be shipped to its temporary location, at the First Congregational Church of Concord.

Pick up litter

Show some love to the environment by picking up litter around your neighborhood. "Picking up litter not only helps make the environment safer and healthier for people, but also for the plants and animals in the community," said Kim-



berly McCloy of Litter Crew (littercrew.com), a group of New Hampshire residents who are working to make the state litter-free. "Even if you only spend five minutes

a day, it will make a noticeable difference." All you need is some gloves and a trash bag, she said, and beware of any litter that could be hazardous to you, such as needles or any items that have been in contact with bodily fluids. "You can contact your local authorities to come dispose of these items safely," McCloy said.

Send a care package overseas



Make the day of an Army, Navy or other military branch member from New Hampshire who is currently serving overseas by assembling and sending

your own special care package.

Deborah Luszey of Operation Care for Troops, a nonprofit based in Nashua, has worked to send care packages out to local troops since around 17 years ago, when her son was first deployed to Iraq.

She said the process starts with obtaining a flat rate shipping box — you can order military service kits online for free from the United States Postal Service and have them shipped directly to you. The kits include address labels, custom envelopes and enough tape for six boxes.

Many of the most requested contents you can fill your care package with may also be items you already have in your home.

"It's usually very dry where they are, so a lot of times you can put some lotions

or some hydration products in the box," Luszey said. "Food is also a great thing, so things like protein bars, beef jerky, peanut butter, coffee [and] tea. We've done canned fruit. ... Zip-lock bags can be good, because you can roll them up tight and oftentimes they'll reuse them for other things."

You could even include a handwritten letter, or puzzles cut out of newspapers or magazines.

"Anything you can do to just give them five minutes where they can be somewhere else from where they are," she said. "You can get friends or your kids to draw pictures ... and put that stuff on top so that it's the first thing they see when they open it up."

Although Operation Care for Troops organizes several bulk shipping events, the next of which is scheduled for late March at the Hudson Fire Department's Burns Hill Road fire station, care packages can be sent at any time. More details can be found at octnh.org, or you can email Luszey directly at deborah@octnh.org.

Foster a pet



If you want to help a pet in need but don't have the means to give it a forever home, consider fostering, which allows you to care for an animal at your home tempo-

rarily until it gets adopted or can return to the shelter. Since kittens cannot be sold or adopted until they are at least eight weeks old, according to New Hampshire law, foster homes are most commonly needed for pregnant and mother cats and their kittens until the kittens are old enough to return to the shelter and be put up for adoption.

"In order to provide for these kittens and nursing feline mothers, we need a strong cadre of foster homes ready and able to take these creatures into their homes," says the New Hampshire Humane Society website.

Fostering protocol varies from shelter to shelter, but the most standard requirements are that you own your home or have permission from your landlord to foster a pet; any other pets currently living in your home are up to date on their vaccinations; and you have a space where you can secure the foster pets from other pets or young children in your home. Check with your local animal shelter to see if they have any pets in need of foster homes.

Buy Girl Scout cookies for someone



It's Girl Scout cookie season, and this year for the first time you can also get Girl Scout cookies delivered through GrubHub. Go to girlscoutcookies.org, where you

can enter in any street address for them to be shipped to.

"[The cookies] are \$5 per package, with proceeds staying right in the troop you ordered from," said Ginger Kozlows-

Local animal shelters with foster programs

- New Hampshire Humane Society (Laconia, 524-3252, nhhumane.org/adopt/foster)
- Salem Animal Rescue League (893-3210, sarlnh.org/foster)
- **Pope Memorial SPCA** (Concord, 856-8756, popememorialspca.org/volunteer)
- Humane Society for Greater Nashua (889-2275, hsfn.org/get-involved/volunteer)
- Manchester Animal Shelter (628-3544, manchesteranimalshelter.org/fosterform)
- •GreaterDerryHumaneSociety(434-1512, derryhumanesociety.com/we-need-vol-unteers/fostering-a-rescue-animal

And for your sweetheart...

There may still be time for you to get your Valentine's Day reservations or takeout orders in - visit hippopress.com for our annual dine-in and takeout listings at local restaurants, candy shops, bakeries and more. Be

sure to call or visit a participating eatery's website directly for the most up-to-date availability.



HIPPO | FEBRUARY 11 - 17, 2021 | PAGE 10

ki, communications manager of the Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains.

She said it normally takes anywhere between two and 15 business days for your shipped order to arrive at its destination.

The Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains also has a Gift of Caring program, which gives you the opportunity to buy cookies to donate to military service members and hometown heroes, like firefighters, police officers and EMTs. Visit girlscoutsgwm.org for details.

Knit for a cause



Use your knitting or crocheting skills to help someone in need. New Hampshire volunteer groups like Neighbors Helping Newborns, Stitching up the World and the

New Hampshire chapters of Project Linus collect donations of handmade knitted and crocheted items like blankets, caps, scarves and shawls and distribute them to patients at local cancer centers, premature babies at local hospitals and children dealing with illness or trauma. "We've had people as far away as Arizona donate hats for cancer patients," Stitching up the World's website states. "We gladly accept completed items and will make sure they get to the proper destination." If you need some inspiration, the groups also have a variety of patterns for knitted and crocheted items online.

Donate life



There are more than 5,000 people in New England waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, according to the Donate Life New England website. Registering to be

an organ donor means that, in the event of your death, your organs could add years of life or provide a better quality of life to as many as 50 people. If you aren't yet registered, you don't have to wait until the next time you renew your driver's license or go to the DMV in person; you can do it right from home in minutes online at dmv.org/ nh-new-hampshire/organ-donorregistering. Not only could you be helping people in need of an organ transplant, but you could also, in a different way, be helping your grieving loved ones, said Susan Diggins, RN, Quality Management Coordinator of the Center for Quality & Safety at Southern New Hampshire Health. "We understand [a death] is a difficult time for family members," Diggins said, "but knowing their loved one's death may help another person brings some level of comfort to them."

Leave a gift for your neighborhood mail carrier



Even though ethics guidelines prohibit postal employees from accepting cash from customers, or any gifts with a value greater than \$20 per household,

there are still all kinds of small gestures you can make to show your gratitude for your local mail carrier.

"We have seen a swell recently in homemade cards and window or lawn signs, sometimes created by children ... to show their appreciation," said Steve Doherty, strategic communications specialist for the United States Postal Service's Northeast Region. "Around the holidays many people will reward their carrier with a small gift, such as a mug or tie, or a gift card to a local restaurant or coffee shop."

If you know your neighborhood letter carrier personally, Doherty said, treats like home baked goods or store-bought candy can make good gifts. In the past year homemade masks, small hand sanitizer bottles and even rolls of toilet paper have become common, he said.

Talk on the phone to someone stuck at home



You can help someone who has experienced lone-liness from the pandemic just by picking up the phone and talking to them — in fact, that's exactly one

of the tasks you can volunteer to perform through the CareGivers, a program of Catholic Charities New Hampshire that services clients over the age of 62 in the Greater Manchester and Nashua areas.

They're known as reassurance calls, according to CareGivers executive director Jim Wilkie, and they're one of several volunteer opportunities you can sign up

Knitting and crocheting charity groups

- Neighbors Helping Newborns (serves southern New Hampshire, 382-8504, neighborshelpingnewborns.org, donations will be held until March due to pandemic)
- Project Linus (projectlinus.org; facebook.com/nhseacoastprojectlinus; facebook.com/projectlinussouthwestnewhampshire; dropoff locations in Candia, Derry, Raymond, Concord, Goffstown, Henniker, Hooksett, Manchester, Milford, Nashua, the Seacoast and other parts of the state.
- Stitching Up the World (based in Candia, 587-0603, candiawomansgroup.org/stitching)

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for, in addition to sending birthday cards to clients, delivering groceries to their doorstep and driving them to medical appointments.

"With the pandemic, we've recognized the need to really reach out to our clients that have been stuck at home and feeling really isolated," Wilkie said.

He said volunteers may be given a short list of phone numbers of clients who have expressed interest in receiving calls, talking once or a few times a week and building relationships.

"We always hear these little narratives ... from people sharing their happy moments and just talking about their lives," he said.

Have a meal delivered to a family member or essential worker



Give a relative, friend or essential employee the gift of delicious food right on their doorstep. Local Baskit in Concord is offering online options for gift meals to

be delivered to local health care workers and first responders, as well as to tip delivery drivers — go to shop.localbaskit. com and click the "tipping/donation" tab for details. Owner Beth Richards said she's arranged for meals to be delivered to employees at Concord Hospital and at Merrimack County Nursing Home in Boscawen, as well as to the local fire department.

"It can be either a meal kit or prepared food option from one of the selections that we have that week," Richards said of the available meals.

Ding Dong Deliver, a ghost kitchen launched last year by Great New Hampshire Restaurants, provides ready-to-heat meal packages to all addresses in Manchester and Bedford.

"We've seen a lot of people with older parents who aren't going out do dinner use Ding Dong Deliver, and even Realtors who gift the meals to new homeowners," said Nicole Barreira, director of marketing and menu development for Great New Hampshire Restaurants. Deliveries are

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Photo prints and gifts

- Concord Photo Service (31 N. Main St., Concord, 225-5891, concordphotoservice. com)
- **Hunt's Photo & Video** (4 Vinton St., Manchester, 606-3322, huntsphotoand-video.com)
- Chris Digital Photo Print (346 Merrimack St., Manchester, 264-6205, chrisdigitalphotoprint.business.site)
- EverPresent (99 Rockingham Park Blvd., Salem, 435-2202; 1301 Elm St., Manchester, 819-5182; 800 Islington St., Portsmouth, 967-4385; everpresent.com)

made on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, between 1 and 5 p.m.

Make backyard friends



Show some kindness to the critters in your yard by providing them with places to shelter. According to research by the UNH Cooperative Extension provided by Natural Resourc-

es Field Specialist Wendy Scribner, there are around 45 species of birds and mammals in New England that use cavities in trees and other wood materials and structures for denning, roosting and nesting. You can lay out some logs or brush piles, or install a birdhouse or bat house. Bats can be a bit picky, so if you're new to bat houses, be sure to do some research first. (Scribner recommends Bat Conservation International as a resource for building. buying and installing bat houses; visit batcon.org/about-bats/bat-houses.) Making your property more hospitable to wildlife benefits not only the animals, Scribner said, but also yourself if you're someone who enjoys having nature around. "There is joy in being able to watch wildlife, birds, and, yes, the squirrels too, and feel that you are helping them," she said. "Most of all, you will enjoy the opportunity to see and appreciate the creatures with whom you share your land."

Order a personalized gift basket



You don't need a special reason to show a friend, family member or even your local mail carrier that you appreciate them. Caring Gifts in Concord takes orders for

its own specialty or customized gift baskets and packages for all occasions, including "just because."

"People can call or email us ... and we ask them how much they want to spend, or maybe they give us a dollar amount, and then we go from there," shop co-owner Donna Mark said. "We can ship nationwide and we deliver within the greater Concord and Manchester area."

The shop has several of its own themed baskets and packages to choose from that will often feature foods or personal care items — a movie lover's package, for instance, features a jumbo popcorn box filled with caramel corn, chips, candy and cookies, while others can include wine bottles, crackers, bath gels, soaps and more.

"We recently did one for a corporate gathering where we shipped small bottles of sparkling cider or Champagne and different snacks ... and they enjoyed them during a cocktail party they had over Zoom," Mark said, "so they really can be for any occasion."

The Manchester Craft Market, a store located inside the Mall of New Hampshire, features all kinds of locally made items that can also be shipped as gifts, according to owner Jessica Moores, including cookie mixes, jams and jellies, teas and coffees, maple products and more. Sellers post details on their items to a public Facebook group, which can be accessed through the shop's website. Pop-up Facebook live sales are often featured too.

Make a mask



What better way
to show someone
you care during a
pandemic than with
a homemade mask?
Seacoast Mask
Makers, a group
of New Hampshire volunteers

who made masks for medical facilities and essential businesses when masks were in short supply, has written instructions and photo and video tutorials on its website for simple, pleated, and nose-fitting cloth masks. With some super basic sewing skills, you can make a simple mask with just a nine-inch by 12-inch piece of cotton fabric in a color or design you think your recipient would like, and a seven-inch-long piece of rope elastic or flat elastic. (For a pleated mask, you'll need an eight-inch by 14-inch piece of fabric, and for a nose-fitting mask you'll also need some flat plastic twist ties.) Visit seacoastmaskmakers. org/get-involved/#mask-making for the full instructions and tutorials and other mask-making information and resources.

Cherish memories



Send someone you're missing this Valentine's Day a personalized photo card or gift. "We are oftentimes reminding our customers that many photos they have on their

phones ... of friends, children, and events are memory makers that can make wonderful gifts for family and friends," said Michael St. Germain, owner of Concord Photo Service. Through Concord Photo Service and other local shops that offer photo services, you can place an order online to turn your digital photos into a print, collage, canvas wall art or photo book, or have them printed on mugs, jewelry, T-shirts, calendars, ornaments and even face masks. "Items as simple as a custom card with a photo on the front can tell a story that we have forgotten," Germain said.







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ARTS

The dream reimagined

Local musician creates new version of "America the Beautiful"

By Angie Sykeny asykeny@hippopress.com

What started as a song for a children's choir to sing at Hancock's Martin Luther King Day celebration last year has become an ongoing collaboration of musicians and music groups across the country.

As a member of the planning committee for the event, Hancock singer-songwriter Steve Schuch had taken on the task of organizing a musical performance. At the time, he had been reading about the history of the patriotic anthem "America the Beautiful," originally written as a poem by American author and poet Katherine Lee Bates in 1892, and studying the life and writings of American civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr.

"Then, I thought, what would happen if we took the opening lines of 'America the Beautiful' that everyone knows and added a chorus and new verses that reflected Martin Luther King's wider dream for all of America?" Schuch said.

The reimagined version of

"America the Beautiful," titled "America the Dream," received such a "strong response" at the celebration, Schuch said, that he decided to keep expanding on the project.

He teamed up with another local musician, Mike Bradley, to write more lyrics and reached out to Shelbie Rassler, a senior at Berklee College of Music at the time, who had produced a viral You-Tube video of a virtual choir of students singing "What the World Needs Now," to assist with the musical arrangement and assembling a virtual choir to perform the piece.

Rassler was "all in," Schuch said, and has produced three virtual performance videos of the song so far, with more on the way, including a contemporary country version out of Nashville.

"I hope that with each passing year, different singing groups around the country will want to do it," he said. "It would be neat if someday Keith Lockhart wants to do this with the Boston Pops for the Fourth of July, or, hey, in my wildest dreams, maybe Beyonce would sing it at the Super Bowl."

Late last year, Schuch and his collaborators launched the "American Dream Project" website where people can find the performance videos as well as sheet music for six different arrangements of the song, sound samples of the different choral parts and a piano accompaniment track for singing groups to use for rehearsals or performances if they don't have access to live musical accompaniment.

"[The arrangements] run from really simple ones that are appropriate for elementary schools or children's choirs up through ones for accomplished high school and college choirs and adult community choirs," Schuch said. "There is enough variety that any music director or conductor could find a version that's right for their group and their setting."

What makes "America the Dream" especially unique, Schuch said, is that it's an open source piece; not only can people access the sheet music and sound samples for free, but they also have permission to create and perform their own versions of the song with different musical arrangements and different or additional lyrics



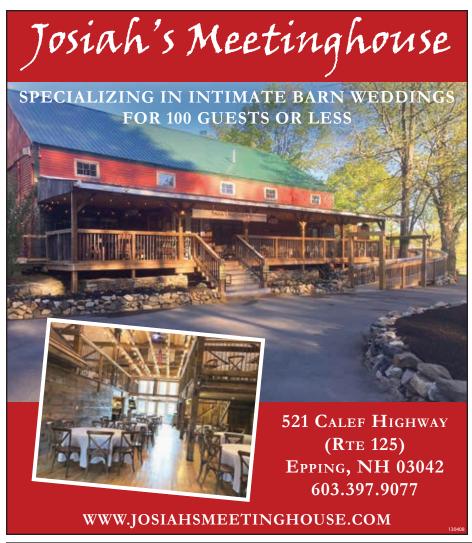
"America The Dream" virtual performance by Berklee College of Music students, Shelbie Rassler Orchestral Arrangement. Courtesy photo.

for non-commercial use.

"We encourage people to keep adding to it and would love for them to submit their recordings to add to the website," he said.

The website also includes a list of suggested reading material and resources for groups or individuals who want to use the "American Dream Project" as "a springboard for discussion," Schuch said

"It's more than a song," he said. "It's a chance for all Americans to think about what we hold in common for the dream of our country and what our country can become."







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

• NH Phil returns, virtually: The New Hampshire Philharmonic Orchestra will present a virtual livestreamed concert on Sunday, Feb. 14, at 3 p.m. "A romantic Valentine's Day concert, featuring our wonderful string section, will transport you to a different world, offering you a break from the stress of pandemics and discord," executive director Toni DeGennaro said in a press

release. "We all need to share the beauty of the viewer is invited to look deep into the music again. We miss performing for you." Tickets are free, and donations are appreciated. Visit nhphil.org or call 647-6476.

• Scenes of the seasons: The New Hampshire Art Association has an exhibition, "The View Through My Eyes," featuring the work of pastel artist Chris Reid, on view at the gallery in the Concord Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center (49 S. Main St.) now through March 18. Reid's pastels depict nature scenes from the four seasons, like emerging flowers and plants in the spring; gardens, farms and greenery in the summer; harvest landscapes and the changinging colors of leaves in the fall; and the natural shapes formed by ice and snow in the winter. "My work is a conversation with nature," Reid said in a press release. "My paintings are more than simple depictions of place. Rather, they invite a choreographed dance of the eyes, where depths of the work and see the subject's spirit and life-force." Gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visit nhartassociation.org or call 431-4230.

- Movie theater intermission: Cinemagic movie theaters, which has New Hampshire locations in Merrimack, Hooksett and Portsmouth, announced in a press release that it has temporarily closed. "This is just an intermission and we look forward to serving our community again in spring," the release said. Visit cinemagicmovies.com.
- Virtual variety show: The New Hampshire Theatre Project of Portsmouth will present its quarterly "Tiny Mayhem" event virtually on Friday, Feb. 12, at 8 p.m. The event will showcase 21 artists in eight acts including three new short plays: Something Gold, a drama by Terry Farish, A Couple Of Lab Rats, a comedy by Bretton Reis, and



Art by Chris Reid, featured in "The View Through My Eyes exhibition. Courtesy photo

Key, an excerpt of a sci-fi thriller by Catherine Stewart. Other acts will feature dance, music, visual art and experimental performance. Tickets cost \$20 per household. Call 431-6644 or visit nhtheatreproject.org.

— Angie Sykeny 🦚

Call for Art

 NHAA SPRING JURYING The New Hampshire Art Association accepts new members. Jurying takes place on Mon., March 22. For a prospectus and application form, visit nhartassociation.org and click on "Become a Member." Applications and application fee payment are due by Thurs., March 18, and can be submitted online or in person at the NHAA headquarters (136 State St., Portsmouth).

Instructions for dropping off and picking up artwork will be emailed after an application and payment is received. Call 431-4230.

Classes

 ART CLASSES In-person art classes for all levels and two-dimensional media. held with small groups of two to five students. Private classes are also available. Diane Crespo Fine Art Gallery (32 Hanover St., Manchester), Students are asked to wear masks in the gallery. Tuition costs \$20 per group class and \$28 per private class, with payment due at the beginning of the class. Call 493-1677 or visit dianecrespofineart.com.

Exhibits

• "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). On display now through Feb. 14. Visit sites.google.com/ nsd42.net/bravenewworld/home.

• "LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT I LOVE" Love-themed art exhibit by the Seacoast Artist Association. On view now through February in the windows at the gallery (130 Water St., Exeter) and inside by appointment and open to the public on Saturday, Feb. 13, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. for Valentine's Day

gift-buying. Visit seacoastartist.org or call 778-8856.

· GALLERY ART A new collection of art by more than 20 area artists on display now in-person and online. Creative Ventures Gallery (411 Nashua St., Milford). Call 672-2500 or visit creativeventuresfineart.com.

Shows

· CAT TAIL CABARET featuring DJ Esthera and performances by The Painted Ladies at the Bank of New Hampshire Stage (16 S. Main St. Concord, banknhstage com) Sat., Feb. 13, at 8 p.m. The venue will be transformed into a swanky jazz and cabaret nightclub with live music, a DJ, dancing and a variety of acts throughout the evening, according to the website. Tickets cost \$34 general admission and \$65 VIP in advance or \$50 general admission and \$65 VIP at the door (VIP includes two drink tickets and balcony access).



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INSIDE/OUTSIDE

Bird search

NH Audubon needs your help counting backyard birds

By Sadie Burgess listings@hippopress.com

There are rules when it comes to counting birds in your backyard. The first: Only count on Feb. 13 and Feb. 14. The second: Only report the maximum number of birds that can be seen at one time — so say that in the morning you see three blue jays and two cardinals, and in the afternoon, you see four blue jays and three cardinals. Don't add the numbers together; report four blue jays and three cardinals. The third: Only report the birds you can identify for sure or can photograph.

At least, these are the rules for this year's New Hampshire Audubon's Backyard Winter Bird Survey. Biologists at the New Hampshire Audubon are asking the state's residents and families for help getting a look at the Granite State's winter bird populations. On Saturday, Feb. 13, and Sunday, Feb. 14, New Hampshire residents can lend a helping hand simply by counting the birds in their backyard.

Dr. Pamela Hunt, a senior biologist at the New Hampshire Audubon, says a large number of birds native to the north have already been seen visiting southern parts of the state

this season. These influxes of visitors are called "irruptions," which take place when the bird's native crops are bad. They're forced to migrate away from their usual homes to find locations with better crops.

This year white pine cone crop has brought an irruption of red-breasted nuthatches, winged guests many feeders in southern New Hampshire haven't seen in years, according to the New Hampshire Audubon. Red-breasted nuthatches feed on cones — pine cones, spruce cones, fir cones. The majority of nuthatches live in northern New Hampshire and Canada, where they will remain over the winter unless the cone crop is bad. When this is the case the birds will come south for the season.

"This year in the southern part of New Hampshire we have a really good pine cone crop," Rebecca Suomala of the New Hampshire Audubon said.

Survey participants should keep an eye out for these visitors in particular while counting, but Suomala said not to worry — nuthatches don't pose any threats.

"They're great birds. They're really cute [and] really fun," Suomala said.

Red-breasted nuthatches can often be heard

before they're seen, according to Suomala.

"They have a funny little noise ... almost like a little tin horn."

Look up into the trees if you hear these guys — they'll probably have their beak inside a pine cone if you spot them.

These nuthatches aren't the only "winter irruptives" being seen this year. Others include the pine grosbeak, which can be found in fruit trees such as crabapple, and two northern finches: the pine siskin and the common redpoll. All three of these winter visitors are native to northern Canada.

However, the New Hampshire Audubon isn't just looking at these winter irruptives. They also want to hear about the everyday backyard birds: robins, cardinals, blue jays, even ducks. But they only want to hear about the ones in *your* backyard. So if you go for a walk and see ducks in a pond half a mile from your house, don't count them. Also, don't stress out over flocks; just make your best estimate.

Suomala encourages people to take photographs of anything that they can't identify and email those photos to the New Hampshire Audubon. Additionally, she suggests the Merlin app for help with bird identification.



Pine grosbeak eating crabapple. Photo by Rebecca Suoma

"Don't guess," she said.

Whether you have a flock of birds in your backyard or none at all, filling out the survey will provide important insight for the Audubon. Suomala said it's key to report even a small number of birds, which helps track declines in populations.

"Then we can see both the ups and the downs," she said.

New Hampshire Audubon Backyard Winter Bird Survey

When: Saturday, Feb. 13, and Sunday, Feb. 14 Where: Your backyard More Info: nhbirdrecords.org/

backyard-winter-bird-survey



Package bees are available for ordering now. Pick up your bees and find all the quality beekeeping supplies you will need now.



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INSIDE/OUTSIDE

Family fun for the weekend

L.O.V.E. bingo

Have a sweet Valentine's Day celebration at Chunky's Cinema Pub. The theater is hosting family-friendly Theater Candy Bingo on Saturday, Feb. 13, at 6 p.m. at its Manchester location (707 Huse Road) and its Pelham location (150 Bridge St.), and on Sunday, Feb. 14, at noon at its Nashua location (151 Coliseum Ave.). It's traditional bingo with a little more heart — each round will feature Valentine's Day patterns, like a heart shape and Xs and Os, and there will be Valentine's Day-themed prizes for the winners, along with traditional boxes of theater candy. Purchase a ticket online to reserve a spot; for \$4.99 you get a ticket and a box of Chunky's theater candy. Turn in your candy to the host to get a bingo card and play a few rounds to try to win back that candy and more. Visit chunkys.com.

Skate outside

Local cities and towns have outdoor ice skating rinks that are free and open to residents and non-residents. The rinks may be open on and off, depending on the temperatures, so call or check the city's or town's website or social media before you go. Here are a few local rinks to check out:

- Bow Town Pond, 3 Bow Center Road, Bow, 223-3920, bow-nh.com.
- · Concord has three public rinks: Beaver Meadow Pond, 1 Beaver Meadow Dr.; Rollins Park, 116 Broadway St.; and White Park Pond & Hockey Rink, 1 White St. Call 225-8690 or visit concordnh. gov. When open, hours are daily from dawn to dusk.
- Dorrs Pond, 56 Hooksett Road, Manchester, 624-6444, manchesternh.gov. When open, hours are daily from dawn to dusk.
- Ice Skating Rink at Watson Park, 441 Daniel Webster Hwy., Merrimack, 882-1046, merrimackparksandrec.org. When open, hours are daily from
- Kimball Lake, 47 Kimball Lake Road, Hopkinton, 746-8263, hopkintonrec.com. When open, hours are daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- Nashua has two public rinks: Jeff Morin Fields at Roby Park, 126 Spit Brook Road (when open, hours are daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. for general skating, and from 8 to 10 p.m. for hockey) and Four Corners, behind Holman Stadium, Sargent Avenue (when open, hours are daily from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 6 to 10 p.m. for general skating, and before 11 a.m. and between 4:30 and 6 p.m. for hockey). Call 589-3370 or visit nashuanh.gov.

TREASURE HUNT

Dear Donna,

Can you give me an idea what this crock might be worth or how I can find out?

Cathy

Dear Cathy,

Your crock is an unusual size to have made it this far in time. They were used for pickles, lard, etc., so seeing them in

10-gallon. The crown is the mark of Robinson ing, and recently closed the physical location of Ransbottom Co. They were located in Ros- From Out Of The Woods Antique Center (froeville, Ohio. You can do further research on moutofthewoodsantiques.com) but is still doing your piece by searching that information.

Now for the pricing, remember that conmade crocks out there with the same markings. So if yours is an antique one and in good condition with no cracks, the value would be

in the \$120 range. If it's a modern made one, the value would be less in the secondary market.

This size crock is great for dog food, or maybe for use as an end table — you can probably get a round wood top for it at a hardware store.

Donna Welch has spent more than 30 years in the antiques

good shape is a plus. The 10 on it means it is a and collectibles field, appraising and instructsome buying and selling. She is a member of The New Hampshire Antiques Dealer Association. If dition and age matter. There are still modern 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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Winter trees

Holly, hemlock and more seasonal favorites

By Henry Homeyer listings@hippopress.com

I recently asked a few readers, garden friends and tree experts a question: "What is your favorite tree in winter?" It's not easy to pick just one, any more than most of us would be willing to name a favorite child. I invite you to think about the question, and perhaps, come spring, you will want to plant one if you haven't already.

Pamela Kirkpatrick of Swansea, Massachusetts, sent me this: "I love the winter landscape, and, next to my family, trees are my greatest love. American holly, which comes into its own in winter, both for its gleanings and the way it reflects light. Beech of any kind, for showing off its muscular trunk when not in leaf. White pine, troublesome as it is with its brittle limbs, because it is home to an owl who returns there every winter and serenades us with his call."

Lynn Schadd of Cornish emailed me saying, "Amur maackia is for me the best four season-interest tree in the garden. And right now its magnificent bark is stealing the show peeling, curling, showing off plates of designer colors all of which may be easily seen since the tree has no oak-like aspirations of bigness."

Lisa Lovelette of Waterbury Center, Vermont, wrote, "My favorite winter tree is the pine tree when dressed in white. I am a hobbyist photographer and nothing is more beautiful than a stately pine dressed in white when placed in front of a beautiful Vermont sunset, sunrise, or majestic sky ... and a rising bright and bold full moon in the background makes the dressed pine a standout."

Anne Raver of Providence, Rhode Island, is a former New York Times garden writer. Here's what she said: "My favorite tree is the scarlet oak, or the white oak, or the red oak, any kind of oak. They support hundreds of species of insects, whose caterpillars feed on the leaves, and who provide crucial food for birds. Also, the red and scarlet oaks turn beautiful colors."

Donnamarie Kelly of Salem wrote, "By far my favorite winter tree is the hemlock. When snow-laden, the boughs remind me of ballerina hands dipping delicately downward. Hemlocks are full, projecting a sense of being in the 'woods' even when in a simple grove of two or three trees."

Julie Moir Messervy is a world-renowned garden designer and author of many great garden books. She emailed, "Our land in Vermont was an old sheep farm, as were so many. My favorite tree (in winter and also all year long) is a stately white oak (Quercus alba) that may well date from the 1800s. For me, it's a "cosmic tree" that shades and shields our deck and screen porch from the harsh western sun, while opening its boughs to the cool summer winds. It is home to squirrels, porcupine and at least 13 types of birds in winter...."

Christine MacManus of Narragansett, Rhode



Flower buds on my Merrill magnolia are like pussywillows all winter. Photo by Henry Homeyer.

Island, emailed, "A favorite winter tree of mine is a neighbor's Stewartia with its wonderful bark of mottled patterns and colors. I've kept my eye on this tree for 40 years and sometimes pull mulch away from the trunk flare. And of course the summer flowers are a bonus too."

My favorite tree authority, Mike Dirr, author of *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, could not limit himself to just one or two. He emailed, saying, "I love Nyssa sylvatica (black tupelo), Fagus grandifolia (American beech), Quercus alba (white oak), Liriodendron tulipifera (Tulip tree) and Quercus bicolor (swamp white oak) for starters."

I know Professor Dirr is particularly fond of "majestic trees"—trees that tower over the land-scape and last for 100 years or more, and all of those he mentioned can do so.

J.D. Lavallee of Henniker loves blues spruces: "In the winter, I just loved how the snow is caught in their branches forming beautiful white pillows. And light snows simply add a beautiful dusting of their needles."

Tom Bacon of Hanover emailed, "I love the majesty of the hemlocks in general, but the way they hold the snow is beautiful in the winter and just stunning compared to other evergreens."

As for me? My favorite is the hybrid Merrill magnolia I planted long ago as a specimen tree in the back of the house. I love its smooth gray bark and the fuzzy buds like pussywillows on steroids. Those buds remind me that spring is coming, no matter how cold the weather now. Of the native trees, I love the hop hornbeam (Ostrya virginiana) in winter. The bare branches are fine and delicate, with tiny buds. The lateral branching patterns are so ornate and beautiful that I hung one on the ceiling above my computer.

One last perspective came from my friend Alicia Jenks of Weathersfield, Vermont. She noted that American beech trees produce a lovely rustling sound on breezy winter days. The young trees hold their leaves until May and provide a quiet symphony in winter. And pines make such a soothing song on breezy days, too. So go outside to look — and listen — to the trees. Pay attention, and your trees may surprise and delight you.

Henry is the author of four gardening books. His website is Gardening-Guy.com. You may reach him at PO Box 364, Cornish Flat, NH 03746 or henry.homeyer@comcast.net.





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Soft ride and towing capacity don't always go hand in hand



By Ray Magliozzi

Dear Car Talk:

I bought a barely-used 2009 Nissan Frontier Pro4X Crew Cab in 2010. It was the best money I ever spent. It now has 77K miles, and I plan to keep it until I can't drive anymore. My question: Is

there anything I can do to make the ride softer, yet still keep the towing capacity at a little over 6,000 pounds? — Carl

Unfortunately, there's not a heck of a lot you can do. In order to have a towing capacity of some 6,000 pounds, the truck has to have heavy-duty springs. And those springs are what give your truck that Conestoga wagon ride that you've come to know and not really love. If you want to spend \$60,000 for a pickup, you can get both a soft ride and towing capacity. But at the 2009 Frontier's price point, it's one or the other.

The only possible area for improvement is your tires. First, make sure they're not overinflated. Overinflated tires will definitely add more bounce to the ride, and that's the last thing you want. Don't underinflate them either but go to the low end of the recommended pressure range, especially when you're not towing anything.

And when it's time for new tires, shop with comfort in mind. Because so many "off road"

vehicles never go further off road than the Wendy's parking lot, tire makers have started making off-road tires that are really on-road tires.

They call them On/Off Road All-Terrain tires. But they function like on-road tires, recognizing that for most people, off-road ability is more fashion than function. These hybrid tires are designed for people who buy an off-road truck because it looks cool, and then realize they hate every minute of driving it because it rides like an off-road truck. So you might look at something like the Continental Terrain Contact A/T, for instance, which gets a pretty good rating for comfort, along with everything else. And that won't reduce your towing capacity, as long as the tires carry the ratings your truck requires. But don't expect a miracle, Carl. Less off-road-y tires will help, but you'll still want to wear that mouth guard when driving.

Dear Car Talk:

You recently had a column about roadside emission test stations. I live in an area where our cars are required to be tested every two years to renew license plates. The testing stations here are mostly along interstate highways, and I drive by them frequently. I seriously doubt with thousands of cars going by and with the wind blowing that they are able to test emissions and somehow determine which car the exhaust came from. I recently received my notice and am required to take my car to a testing facility and pay \$25 for the privilege. The whole deal is nothing more than a revenue source for the state and does nothing to take polluters off the road. — Ed

As I would often say to my brother when he said something off the wall, "Au contraire, piston puss." I can tell you're a skeptic, Ed. But I think your information is a little bit out of date.

You're thinking of the old days when your emissions were checked by sticking a probe up the tailpipe. Kind of like taking a kid's temperature. The mechanic would insert a metal probe with a hose on it in the tailpipe, and it would suck exhaust gasses into the analyzer. That would tell us how much carbon monoxide and unburned hydrocarbons you were putting out.

But that's not how it's done anymore. Now, the vast majority of emissions tests are done by tapping into the car's computer directly. We have a device that we plug into the car's diagnostic port, and it gives us readings from the car's own internal sensors. It tells us, for instance, the composition of the exhaust before it goes through your catalytic converter, and after it goes through. And from that, we can tell whether the converter is doing its job.

We can also tell if, for instance, there are too many unburned hydrocarbons going into your converter, which means the problem is in the engine, not the emissions equipment. And because it's all measured deep inside the exhaust system, nothing nearby will affect the reading, not a car idling in the next bay, not a passing FedEx truck, not even my brother puffing on one of his 25-cent stogies.

Now, there may still be places in the country where they use a probe. Emissions testing requirements are determined by the states, in order to meet the Environmental Protection Agency's clean air rules and collect their fair share of federal highway funds. But since the computer diagnostic method is quicker, easier, more accurate and provides more useful diagnostic information, I'd be surprised if there are many emissions probes still being used out there.

So we can accurately determine whether individual cars are polluting more than they should. That means we can require that those cars be fixed. Sometimes, those fixes are covered by warranty, since the feds mandate that certain emissions equipment is guaranteed for eight years or 80,000 miles. California requirements are even more pro-consumer. And fixing those cars really does make the air cleaner for us all to breathe. And sure, it also means an extra \$25 for the repair shop in your area. But we don't make any money on those emissions inspections. It's those new catalytic converters we clean up on.

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EQUIPMENT

WORLD



News from the local food scene

By Matt Ingersoll food@hippopress.com

- Rally for restaurants: On Feb. 1, the New Hampshire Lodging & Restaurant Association announced the launch of the Rally for NH Restaurants movement, a two-month-long statewide marketing campaign throughout February and March that's dedicated to informing restaurant customers about the ongoing challenges the industry continues to face due to the pandemic. Visit rallyfornhrestaurants.com for ideas, from the consumer's perspective, on how to make a positive impact on New Hampshire eateries, from purchasing gift cards and ordering takeout to donating to the New Hampshire Hospitality Employee Relief Fund.
- All about superfoods: Join the Derry Public Library for a virtual presentation on foods that support immune health, happening on Wednesday, Feb. 17, at 6 p.m. Hannaford dietitian Heidi Tissot will highlight different nutrient-dense foods, such as probiotics, prebiotics and antioxidants, as well as the role of vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc and omega-3 fats. She will present a live demonstration of a simple recipe and will leave time at the end for a question and answer session. Visit derrypl.org to register.
- Celebration of chocolate: Ancient Fire Mead & Cider (8030 S. Willow St., Manchester) will host a Valentine's Day weekend celebration Thursday, Feb. 11, through Sunday, Feb. 14, when it will offer release two new chocolate meads on Thursday, serve complimentary hot chocolate on Saturday and offer a "chocolate lover" snack special on Sunday. "Only the Sexy People," its first product made with cacao, is a raspberry blossom mead with red raspberries and Haitian cacao nibs, while "Sparks Will Fly" is a Hawaiian macadamia and coffee blossom mead with habanero peppers and Ghanaian cacao nibs. Both will be available for dine-in or growlers to go. Tables can be booked and takeout orders can be placed at ancientfiremeads.com.

FOOD

Crafty sips and casual eats

Industry East Bar opens in Manchester

By Matt Ingersoll mingersoll@hippopress.com

Jeremy Hart and Dan Haggerty have around four decades of combined bartending experience across the Granite State. Now the two have gone into business together to open their own craft cocktail bar, complete with a rustic ambience and a unique food menu to match.

Industry East Bar, which opened Feb. 2 just a stone's throw from Elm Street in Manchester, was in its planning stages well before the start of the pandemic. Hart and Haggerty first came across the vacant storefront on Hanover Street in mid-2019. During continually delayed renovations that lasted more than a full year, repurposed butternut wood was brought in for the bar, as well as additional wood paneling for the walls to give the bar rails a distinctive look.

According to Haggerty, the bar's name comes from its development as a destination spot for professionals of all types of service industries to enjoy a meal or a cocktail at the end of the work day — the word "east" comes from its being on the east side of downtown.

"Even before we wrote the business plan, we knew we wanted it to be a place that's super laid back and unpretentious to anyone that comes in," he said. "We wanted it to be nice, but not too nice where you feel like you need to wear a suit or anything. ... Just a super-cool place with high-quality cocktails and wicked awesome food. That was our main goal."

The bartending duo recruited Jeff Martin, formerly the sous chef at The Birch on Elm, to oversee the food menu. There's no hood system in the kitchen, so they can't serve any fried or sauteed items; instead, Martin has been working on a menu of charcuterie boards, flatbread pizzas, paninis, and shareable plates, from duck





Industry East Bar co-owner and bartender Jeremy Hart serves a cocktail. (Right) Charcuterie board with cured meats and cheeses, candied nuts, local honey, crostini, pickles, preserves and wholegrain mustard. Courtesy photos.

confit-stuffed popovers to braised short ry and lemon.

"We're also going to be doing things like shrimp cocktail, beef or tuna tartares, ceviche, oysters, some crudos ... and gourmet hot dogs," Haggerty said. "We've done a kimchi dog with gochujang sauce and our housemade pickles and sesame seeds. ... Jeff is really good at making his own mignonettes, sauces and aiolis and just making everything taste great."

Some featured desserts that Industry East has introduced right out of the gate have been a brownie sundae trifle with chocolate mousse and whipped cream, and a s'mores sundae with a graham cracker crumble, bruleed marshmallow and chocolate drizzle.

As for the cocktails, that menu combines modern takes on the classics with all kinds of experimental concoctions, all using syrups, juices and other ingredients made in house. The Gentleman's Choice, for example, incorporates orange and carrot flavors with vodka or mezcal, while the Participation Trophy is a cocktail featuring Branca Menta and vodka, with flavors of strawber-

"My approach is ... that I never try to think of something," Haggerty said. "You just kind of play with it and then maybe you add something in or take something out. ... There are some things, though, that you just can't mess with, so we'll definitely always have the classics, your Old Fashioneds, your Manhattans, things like that."

Industry East can sit about 20 people at a time with social distancing regulations in place, including nine at the bar and additional tabletop seating. By the spring and into the summer, Haggerty said, outdoor seating will also be available, both right outside the front of the bar and under the adjoining alcove next door.

Industry East Bar

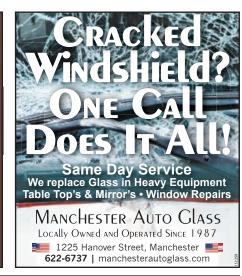
Where: 28 Hanover St., Manchester Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 5 p.m. to midnight (may be subject to change) More info: Visit industryeastbar.com, find them on Facebook and Instagram, or call

456-7890









Eat organic

NOFA-NH's annual winter conference returns (virtually)

By Matt Ingersoll mingersoll@hippopress.com

Whether you're looking for advice on how to grow your own organic food at home or you want to learn about the state's many networks connecting consumers to the local food system, you'll find those topics and more during the Northeast Organic Farming

Association of New Hampshire's 19th annual winter conference. Normally a one-day event with more than 40 workshops, a keynote speaker and a Q&A session, this year's conference will be held virtually over two days, on Saturday, Feb. 13, and Sunday, Feb. 14, featuring seven sessions on each day.

The theme of the conference is "cultivating stewardship," with workshops that will cover topics such as soil health, herbalism and immune health, growing organic seeds and more.

"Farmers, gardeners, homesteaders and anyone who's just interested in organic food and the sustainable food system in New Hampshire can attend," said Nikki Kolb, operations manager for the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire.

Previous conferences have split the workshops into several tracks to choose from. But this time around, Kolb said, ticket holders have access to all 14 workshops — each is an hour long, beginning at 9 a.m. and with 15-minute intervals in between.

Notable speakers will include Maria Noel Groves, clinical herbalist at Wintergreen Botanicals in Allenstown and author of the book *Grow Your Own Herbal Remedies*. She'll be leading a discussion about how simple herbs grown in your garden can benefit your immune system. Keith Morris of Willow Crossing Farm in Vermont is on the schedule to talk about growing organic fruit and nut trees, while regenerative farmer and author Acadia Tucker will explore the topic of container gardening at home, both indoors and outdoors.



Keynote speaker Mukhtar Idhow. Courtesy photo.

treamed over Zoom, and each workshop incorporates a Q&A session, so you'll be able to interact with the speaker during that period," Kolb said. "Everyone will be emailed a link to access them. ... They'll also be recorded, so ticket holders will be able to go back and view them afterward if they can't attend all of them."

The workshops will conclude with a 90-minute keynote address on Sunday at 4:15 p.m., featuring Mukhtar Idhow, executive director of the Manchester-based Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success, as the speaker. The organization also operates the Fresh Start Farms program, a collective brand of local farms run by new Americans.

An ongoing Green Market Fair is also usually held during the conference, featuring dozens of local craft vendors, demonstrations and other exhibitors. That too is going virtual this year, Kolb said — exhibitors' listings are available to view on NOFA-NH's winter conference web page.

"MainStreet BookEnds [in Warner] ... has books published by several of the authors that we have speaking at the conference, and they've added other books for sale that fit under the umbrella of the discussions," Kolb said. "Twenty percent of the proceeds of all books sold will go to the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire."

19th annual NOFA-NH Winter Conference

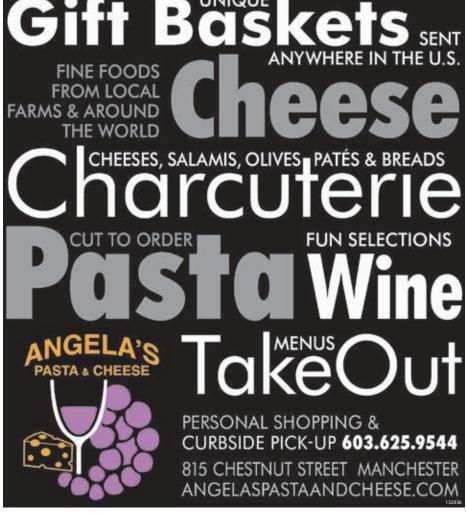
When: Saturday, Feb. 13, and Sunday, Feb. 14; seven one-hour sessions will be held virtually over each day via Zoom, beginning at 9 a.m.; the keynote speaking event is Sunday, from 4:15 to 5:45 p.m.

Cost: \$50 for NOFA-NH members, \$60 for non-members; includes access to all workshops throughout each day, as well as the virtual Green Market Fair





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EKITCHEN

Corayma Correa's family launched the Tropical Food Truck (tropical-food-truck.business.site, find them on Facebook) last October, its primary location at 80 Elm St. in Manchester. The truck's menu combines authentic options native to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, where Cor-



Corayma Correa and her stepfather, Victor Rodriguez, Courtesy photo

rea's mother and stepfather respectively are from. Among the most popular items are appetizers like beef and chicken empanadas; alcupurias, or fritters stuffed with beef or crabmeat and veggies; and the french fry supreme, featuring fries loaded with beef, cheese sauce, sour cream, light ketchup and bacon bits. After taking a month off in January, Correa said, the Tropical Food Truck will return to 80 Elm St. on Feb. 18, where you'll find them most Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings. The truck is also available to hire for private events.

What is your must-have kitchen item?

I would say a nice solid spatula, just because I'm always turning things.

What would you have for your last meal?

A burger, cooked medium, with caramelized onions, barbecue sauce, an egg over easy, American cheese, lettuce and tomato.

What is your favorite local restaurant?

Puerto Vallarta Mexican Grill on Second Street [in Manchester].

What celebrity would you like to see ordering from your food truck?

I'd be flattered to have Adam Sandler stop by, just because he's from New Hampshire.

What is your favorite thing on your menu?

Our chimis. It's a Dominican dish that's similar to a burger. We do them with your choice of beef, chicken, pork or all three, and then they are topped with cabbage and a special chimi sauce.

What is the biggest food trend in New Hampshire right now?

Birria tacos. It's basically a taco with slowcooked tender meat, melted cheese ... and a sauce that you use as a dipping sauce. I've seen it in an empanada too.

What is your favorite thing to cook at home?

We are huge steak lovers at home. A nice warm and juicy steak is all we need.

— Matt Ingersoll 🦡



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Pernil (pork roast)

From the kitchen of Corayma Correa of the Manchester-based Tropical Food Truck

- 1 (8- to 10-pound) bone-in pork shoulder
- 1 head of garlic, peeled
- 4 tablespoons sofrito
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper 2 tablespoons adobo
- 2 packets sazón

Rinse pork shoulder with vinegar and water, then pat dry. With a knife, make 1/2-inch stabs all over the pork. Place all ingredients in a food processor or blender and mix together. Fill each slit in the pork with about a teaspoon of the paste. Sprin-

kle all sides of the roast with the adobo and sazón and rub pork with the spices. Place in a roasting pan that has sides at least two inches deep, cover with foil and refrigerate overnight for the best results. When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Leave the roast covered with foil and bake for four to five hours (approximately 30 to 45 minutes per pound). Pork should read 180 degrees on an internal thermometer and shred easily with a fork. Uncover roast and bake for 15 to 20 minutes to crisp up the fat, or broil at 500 degrees for 10 minutes, watching carefully not to burn. Let cool and serve. The pork can also be refrigerated and used the next day on a panini.



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TRY THIS AT HOME

Polenta cups

Polenta is an ingredient that has been gaining popularity on restaurant menus in the past few years. Looking for a creamy side dish to accompany your braised lamb? Polenta can do that. Want a sturdier version of polenta that can be used as a savory tart base? It can do that as well. Polenta is a versatile ingredient that should be in your home kitchen, so you can make things like this appetizer recipe.



Polenta cups stuffed with blue cheese and bacon. Photo by Michele

Pesula Kuegler.

What's to like about this recipe for polenta Tender polenta cups filled with warm cheese cups stuffed with blue cheese and bacon? The quick answer is everything. The polenta base is tender yet firm with enough weight to make it

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

sweetness to finish this snack.

What do you need to know about the ingredients? When you're shopping for polenta you should be looking near other grains. If you don't see polenta, look for medium or coarse cornmeal. They're all the same thing. Also, when cooking the polenta, be sure to whisk constantly and add the polenta slowly to the boiling water. You want to avoid

and crispy bacon — how can you go wrong with a recipe like that?

top it with a tiny bit of honey if you want some of her recipes.

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Polenta cups stuffed with blue cheese and bacon Makes 12

2 cups water

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 cup polenta or medium/coarse cornmeal

a substantial appetizer. Next is the blue cheese

that adds a nice amount of funkiness and fla-

vor. Of course, there's bacon, which so many

love, to add salt and crunch. Finally, you can

1/2 pound thick cut bacon

2 ounces blue cheese

Honey

Combine water and salt in a small saucepan Cook until polenta thickens, about 35 minutes. (Should be stiff and harder to stir.)

and then make an indentation in the center

of each cup.

Remove polenta cups from refrigerator 30

until crispy; drain on paper towel-lined plate.

Remove from oven, and allow to cool for 5 minutes

Carefully remove cups from pan, and top



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From our family to yours :

Grease 12 muffin cups with butter.

over high heat, and bring to a boil. Slowly add polenta, whisking constantly. Reduce heat to low, stirring frequently.

Divide polenta among muffin cups. Smooth polenta with the back of a spoon,

Refrigerate uncovered for 1 hour.

minutes before baking.

Cook bacon using your preferred method Cool, and dice bacon.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Put 2 teaspoons of blue cheese in each polenta cup; gently press into centers.

Bake for 10 minutes.

with bacon.

We LOVE our

community!

Drizzle with honey, if desired.





Binge-watching and beer

Beer can be a critical component to pair with Netflix

By Jeff Mucciarone food@hippopress.com

The problem is that when one episode on Netflix ends, you've got less than five seconds to shut off the television before the next episode starts. If you haven't made a conscious effort to have the remote in your hand the second the episode ends, you have missed your chance.

And once the next episode starts, forget about it.

That's where I've found myself over the past couple weeks, cranking out episodes of the show *Broadchurch* on Netflix as if my life depended on it, as if I were playing a crucial role.

I couldn't stop. The plot, the characters, those amazing British accents — the show had full control over me. (Did I watch it with subtitles because sometimes, just maybe, I have trouble understanding what exactly



Photo by Jeff Mucciarone

is being said with those heavy accents? Maybe. I don't regret it.) The show first aired on ITV in Britain between 2013 and 2017.

I'm a sucker for murder mysteries, in show or book form, and I just feel that Netflix really takes advantage of me. Every night I'm thinking about how I can maximize my viewing time and considering just how much sleep I really need — or don't need.

Anyway, binge-watching shows isn't a new concept but I think it's safe to say the practice has become more commonplace as we've all maintained a heightened state of isolation in our homes over the past year.

I think you need some beer to help you watch. Still, you can't binge-watch an intense murder mystery show and drink a bunch of beers. Well, OK, you can—I'm not the boss of you—but the characters are relying on

you to help them solve the case and you're no help if your senses aren't sharp.

I think you do need a little something to help you deal with the intensity. For me, that means a nice, rich stout or porter that I can sip slowly as I try to predict whodunnit. You might be in for a long night so you don't want something that's going to just knock you out. You just need something to take the edge off.

If you're binge-watching something more lighthearted, like, say *Schitt's Creek*, I think you can be a little more liberal with your drinking. But, frankly, I don't think you binge-watch a comedy in the same way you just can't stop watching something more serious. But that's really your call.

Here are five beers to support you through your next binge-worthy show.

Smoke & Dagger by Jack's Abby Craft Lagers (Framingham, Mass.)

This is lighter than you'd expect but it is packed with layers of richly flavored roasted malts. This is perfectly balanced and welcoming.

Geppetto by Schilling Beer Co. (Littleton)

This milk stout brewed with coffee is a decadent brew that hits you with big notes of chocolate and a little bit of roasted coffee too, as you might expect. It's got a little sweetness as well.

Boneshaker Brown Ale by Moat Mountain Brewing Co. (North Conway)

This is a wonderful brown ale featuring notes of chocolate, roasted nuts and caramel in a fairly light package.

Maritime Lager by Newburyport Brewing Co. (Newburyport, Mass.)

You don't have to think about this beer; you can just drink it and enjoy the show, and sometimes that's all you need.

Oatmeal Stout with Honey by Throwback Brewery (North Hampton)

Don't let the honey throw you off; while this has just a touch of sweetness, this beer is really all about delicious roasted malts and big notes of chocolate.

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

Budweiser by Anheuser-Busch Am I allowed to drink Budweiser without people throwing things at me? I'm not sure. It's been a long time and the Budweiser drinking experience was pretty much as I'd remembered it — crisp, clean, not especially flavorful, but also not at all off-putting. It's a beer. Relax, everybody, it's a beer and it's fine. Cheers.



Two-Ingredient Pizza Dough

Makes 2 10-inch pizza crusts

Ingredients:

2 cups self-rising flour, plus extra flour for dusting 1 cup Stonyfield® Organic Whole Milk Plain Yogurt



Directions:

- 1. Combine flour and yogurt on a clean cutting board or a large bowl. Mix with hands until dough starts to form. The dough may appear dry and crumbly at first, but it will come together as you mix it.
- 2. Turn the mixture out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until the dough is smooth, yet slightly elastic. Dust with more flour as needed.
- 3. Divide the dough in half, and using a rolling pin, roll out each dough until it's 10 inches in diameter. Spread the dough out onto nonstick baking sheets. Top each dough with desired toppings. Bake at 450°F until the crust is golden, about 8 to 10 minutes.



Nutritional Information

Amount per serving (1/3 of one pizza crust): Calories 170; Fat 2 g; Saturated Fat 1 g; Carbohydrate 33 g; Fiber 1 g; Sugar 2 g; Sodium 520 mg; Protein 5 g

Thank you to our sponsors for partnering with Hannaford to offer free dietitian services.

Source: Recipe adapted from stonyfield.com

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BOOKS

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Book Notes

Includes listings for lectures, author events, book clubs, writers' workshops and other literary events.

let us know about

your book or event, email

com. To get author events,

asykeny@hippopress.

library events and more

listed, send information to

listings@hippopress.com.

FILM

Malcolm & Marie C+

POP CULTURE

MUSIC, BOOKS, GAMES, COMICS, MOVIES, DVDS, TV AND MORE

Ashnikko, Demidevil (Parlophone/Warner)



Eh, this is OK for what it is, a nauseating wad of enthusiastically moronic, hip-hop-infused bubblegum roughly in the vein of Billie Eilish and whatnot, in other words blocky, straightforward YouTube-pop that gets to the (more or less) melodic point. The 24-year-old from North Carolina struck a vein of TikTok gold with the viral "Stupid" (featuring Yung Baby Tate, the daughter of former Arrested Development singer Dionne Faris), and is now poised, she hopes, to break a bit bigger in the States than she has in the U.K. Place

your bets; she's obviously got a lot of competition, meaning every Tumblr girl with good teeth and a webcam, but like I said, it's OK, fronting boomy post-Avril Lavigne righteousness on the Kelis-guested "Deal With It" and a decently bloopy hearing-test beat on "Slumber Party" (alongside Princess Nokia). (OK, I know I've been remiss in covering the flood of hilariously disposable TikTok divas, and I'll readily admit that her social media-professed fascination with intersectional feminism is probably already so, like, totally 2019, but I gotta start somewhere, right?) C — Eric W. Saeger

Cult of Luna, The Raging River (Red River Records)



Awesome, a new Nile album, it's been a while! Wait, what, this isn't Nile? Well, I never! Who — exactly who — is this then, sounding like Nile, with a side of Silkworm, I demand an answer this instant! Wait, Cult of Luna, you say? I thought they were just a permanent slow-mathmetal fixture, destined to be trapped on the Epitaph Records label forever, or whatever indie it was. Nope, it's them. Figures. I'd kept forgetting to write a little bot that would delete any promos like this from landing safely in my email lest I end up lis-

tening to it by mistake, but here it is. They sound a little different for the first eight minutes or so (roaring-drunk-pirate-bellowing vocals, slow doom-metal guitars, stormy proto-emo angst) but then come the pinched math chords, fortified with more yo-ho-ho Blackbeard roaring, and of course no guitar solos. It doesn't seem like this'll ever end, you know? C — Eric W. Saeger

PLAYLIST

A seriously abridged compendium of recent and future CD releases

- Feb. 12 is a Friday, which means that there will be a new set of random albums available for sale in the stores and whatever, and now let's talk about hipster rocker Ariel Pink, the one-time Lilys member who has been trolling his fans and the music media for over a decade now. His hobbies include posing as a really crazy political extremist, which had gone largely unnoticed until the other week, when I wrote a piece on Medium.com about him. To my knowledge, no journalist has ever come out and accused him of being an Andy Kaufman-style super-troll (one YouTube commenter said that's exactly what Pink is), and there's the outside possibility that I'm wrong (I'm not), but he pulled a too-obvious publicity stunt in the wake of the January 2021 invasion of the U.S. Capitol that instantly put him in the same league as Sacha Baron Cohen (Borat). He actually got interviewed on the Tucker Carlson Show by claiming that he was dropped by his record company "simply for attending the event," which did cause a bit of a stir. No one actually did have any video or photographic evidence of Pink hanging out at the rally that led to the insurrection; there was just a mysterious Instagram post that "outed" him, which later resulted in a tweet from his record company claiming they'd dropped him. Long story short, fans and casual observers who've been well aware of Pink's over-the-top pranking over the years did notice a particular clue that gave up the jig. I'm pretty proud of this journalistic moment, but I won't take up this whole space by elaborating further. If you want to read about it for some ungodly reason, just google "Eric Saeger Medium" and click on the first link you see. The story will be in the list.
- Speaking of intolerable college-pop bands, look guys, it's Philadelphia/Brooklyn-based one-hit-wonders Clap Your Hands Say Yeah's new album, New Fragility, fresh out of the oven! The band hasn't charted since 2011, back when half the emails in my inbox were from public relations hacks trying to get me to write about the band's *Hysterical* album (even after I'd already done so), but here we are again, I can hardly contain my enthusiasm! The latest single, "Where They Perform Miracles," basically rips off Bright Eyes, which actually might be a selling point to some of you people. It's an OK-sounding indie-folk strum-fest, naturally without a discernible hook, but plenty of strummy, alt-folkie vibe.
- Man, I don't know how people can stand what passes for "music journalism" these days, really. It's always the same annoying overuse of litotes (double-negatives — for example, writing "not bad" instead of "good") just to fill space. There's a new album from dream-pop duo **Sports**, called *Get a Good Look Pt. 1*, and this is what UnderTheRadar said about it: "'Never Know,' the latest track from the band, wastes no time in delivering the band's established blend of indie pop and funk, infused with touches of psychedelia." Why would some band waste any time in the first place, right? And why didn't the writer just say, 'It sounds like the Bee Gees singing underwater, like everything else they do'?
- Finally, L.A. indie band Bodies of Water releases Is This What It's Like this week. Test-drive single "Every Little Bird" starts off like a Rocky Horror bit, then becomes the boring Brooklyn-hipster gymnasium-pop nonsense I expected, yay. — Eric W. Saeger

Retro Playlist

It was February 2013 eight years ago. Let's commemorate that week, shall we, by briefly looking at the dilemmas on whose horns I was ... you know, dealing with or whatnot, on these pages.

Emmylou Harris' Old Yellow Moon album was on the way, which found her

proper bluegrass.

a duo calling themselves Javelin. Released falsetto."



through David Byrne's Luawere getting away with. I actu-

teaming up with Vince Gill and her old gui- so: "Javelin is a pair of guys who squeeze how you look at it." In other words, the band technical end, but my God, someone took That was nice and everything, but this col- some advanced voice lessons — the vocals umn's main focus that week was, as usual, two at startup tune 'Light Out' could be mistak-

Still a highly recommendka Bop record label, it was a ed album, as is the other album pretty amazing achievement in I talked up that week, Fear Battles-like tech-indie, at least Inside Our Bones from Floriinsofar as the vocals weren't da roots-emo/radio-rock dudes the same old tedious Beach The Almost. I suppose you Boys-nicking that the band's could have tagged them as kind contemporaries (Animal Col- of a metal band, but my first lective, Grizzly Bear, etc. etc.) impression was a "toned-down Iggy, next-gen emo, or Collecally liked that record, and said tive Soul redux, depending on

tarist Rodney Crowell in a cohort-palooza of every resistor for every bit of worth on the was slightly difficult to pin down style-wise, to let me know about your EP, your single, but after charting in the Top 200 in 2009, they were more accessible than before. I particu- vou're holding vourself together without being larly liked the tune "Ghost," saying that it's able to play shows or jam with your homies. albums, one of which was High Beams, from en for Yes' Jon Anderson's sweet unobtrusive made of "a few no-wave sounds soldered onto Send a recipe for keema matar. Email esae-



my mind I'll hear that one in a movie theater lobby or something and won't be able to remember who the band is for the life of me."

I still haven't heard it played at a movie theater or a sports bar, so there went that theory. It's still pretty awesome, though.

If you're in a local band, now's a great time whatever's on your mind. Let me know how '70s Foghat-style blues — there's no doubt in ger@cyberontix.com for fastest response. 🧢

Chatter, by Ethan Kross (Crown, 229

Ethan Kross had a problem, and not one you'd expect to plague a psychology professor with a Ph.D. and a family.

He'd gotten a threatening letter, postmarked locally, from someone who had been inexplicably enraged by his appearance on the CBS Evening News to talk about a scientific study. The letter contained violent drawings and so disturbed Kloss that he reported it to the police. Nothing happened, but he couldn't stop thinking about it. In his mind, he imagined the face of the writer — "with a little help from Dexter and the Saw movies" — and he stayed up late at night, listening for an intruder. He even considered hiring a bodyguard, an idea so silly that it caused him to speak sharply to himself, saying, "Ethan, what are you doing? This is crazy!'

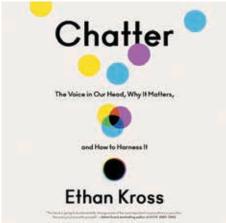
With those words came a revelation: Viewing a distressing situation from another point of view, from a distance, can help people feel better. It is one of social science's recent discoveries about how reframing can improve our outlook and mental health.

What Kross had been doing is often called rumination, the constant recycling of negative thoughts. Kross, director of the Emotion & Self Control Laboratory at the University of Michigan, has another word for it: chatter. We all have "voices in our head," he says; "the inner voice is a basic feature of the mind.

"The flow of words is so inextricable from our inner lives that it persists even in the face of vocal impairments. Some people who stutter, for example, report talking more fluently in their minds than they do out loud." Deaf people talk to themselves too, using sign language in their minds, Kross says.

But it's the negative talk that is the focus of *Chatter*, the kind that derailed a promising pro-baseball pitcher and a Harvard undergrad on a track to a CIA career. Theirs are among the stories that Kross tells to illustrate the way in which destructive self-talk can ruin a career or a relationship, before telling us how to turn off the poisonous fountain, or at least slow it down to a drip.

Often all it takes is a shift in the language of



how we talk to ourselves; for example, thinking about ourselves and our situations in the third person has been shown to relieve painful thoughts within seconds. (For example, imagine advising a friend with the same problem.) Conversely, the most common way of dealing with distressing situations or thoughts - talking it over with friends — can backfire and turn into "co-ruminating," which Kross describes as "tossing fresh logs onto the fire of an already flaming inner voice."

Star Trek fans will enjoy Kross's explanation of how to avoid this ("When supporting each other, we need to offer the comfort of Kirk and the intellect of Spock"); in this chapter, he offers useful advice for anyone struggling to help a friend or relative in distress. But mostly the book is designed to help people struggling with chatter to help themselves in practical, evidence-based ways. One way is to organize our homes and workspaces, which "stimulates a sense of order in the world — and by extension in our own minds."

More surprising suggestions that he offers include clutching a lucky charm of some sort or embracing a superstition. (The placebo effect is real.)

Although everyone talks to themselves, there's wide diversity in what we think is the source of the voice. Some people sincerely think the voice comes from aliens or the government; those are deemed auditory hallucinations by mental health professionals. Kross makes clear that he believes the voice is his own; when panicking over the hate mail in the

BOOK NOTES

Georgia congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene was ousted from her House committees for what Sen. Mitch McConnell called "loony lies and conspiracy theories."

Meanwhile, Avi Loeb still teaches at Harvard University, which means that his theories about extraterrestrial flybys must be ... true? Or at least reasonable enough to take seriously. Now we can learn more in Extraterrestrial: The First Sign of Intelligent Life Beyond Earth (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 240 pages).

Loeb's Ivy League colleagues have been dubious about his insistence that the oblong UFO that sped through our solar system in 2017, dubbed Oumuamua, was from an advanced civilization. To make his case to a more accepting public (a third of Americans tell pollsters they believe in aliens), Loeb wrote a book that, from its opening pages, looks surprisingly user-friendly.

And neither Harvard nor Mitch McConnell has denounced him as loony, which seems an endorsement in itself.

For less controversial works about the universe, MIT professor Alan Lightman has a new collection of essays out this week. Probable Impossibilities, Musings on Beginning and Endings (Pantheon, 208 pages) is a physicist thinking out loud about subjects such as what came before the Big Bang and whether consciousness is greater than the neurons of an individual brain. We gave his previous collection, 2018, Searching for Stars on an Island in Maine (Pantheon, 210 pages) an A.

Michael Leinback and Jonathan Ward also had an eye on the heavens in Bringing Columbia Home (Arcade, 416 pages), an account of the loss of the space shuttle Columbia and the efforts to recover the shuttle parts and human remains. With so much attention paid to the 1986 loss of the Challenger, with New Hampshire teacher Christa

McAuliffe aboard, the 2003 Columbia disaster has fallen into its shadow. This book, released in paperback last year, is a poignant memorial to that crew.

And just because we love the title, check out Astrophysics for People in a Hurry by Neil deGrasse Tyson (W.W. Norton & Co., 224 pages).

— Jennifer Graham

middle of the night, he tells himself, "Ethan, go to bed," and finds comfort in the direction.

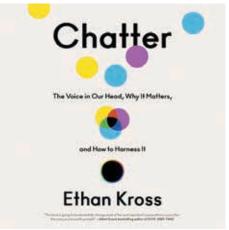
Elizabeth Gilbert also heard a similar instruction that she relays in the opening to Eat, Pray, Love ("Liz, go back to bed") but she attributed the voice to God.

God doesn't make the index of Chatter; a failing of the book is Kross's unwillingness to address what (or who) many people believe

to be the source of the interior voice. It also seems a little thin and anecdote-heavy for the complexity of the topic.

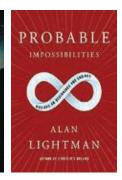
In both the cases of Gilbert and Kross, whatever the source, the directive worked, so if God doesn't tell you to go to bed the next time you're up at 3 a.m. ruminating, just tell yourself. Kross promises it works. B

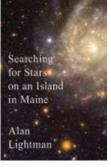
— Jennifer Graham 🦛

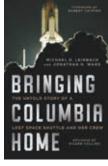


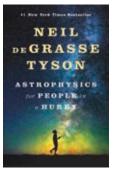














Malcolm & Marie (R)

A couple argue in *Malcolm & Marie*, a movie somewhat reminiscent of the talky (if mannered) indies of the 1990s.

Did you like your *Clerks* and your *Blue in the Face*-type movies? This is slicker than those but there is something in it that reminds me of them. Like those movies (with their backstories of being funded by credit cards), this one leans on dialogue in part because of behind-the-scenes constraints. According to media reports, *Malcolm & Marie* was made during Covid times. So while multiple characters — an actress, past girlfriends, a "white lady from the LA Times" (who becomes a stand-in for all film critics) — and a big fancy party are in the narrative mix, on screen there are only two people at one location.

Malcolm (John David Washington) is a filmmaker ecstatic after the premiere of his new movie. He is so giddy that it takes him a while after he and his girlfriend, Marie (Zendaya), return home to notice that she's mad. We learn that while introducing the film at the event, Malcolm thanked all the people involved in the film but not Marie. And, in the hours since, the lack of a thank you has become A Whole Thing.



Malcolm & Marie

Thus this relatively spare setup digs into relationship stuff, relationships-in-a-Holly-wood-environment stuff, ideas about the art of film, ideas about the criticism of film, stuff about who gets to make art with whose life experiences. Has that description made you say "ugh, pass" or "OK, tell me more"? I feel like if you have a low tolerance for this much self-conscious, very movie-scripty talkiness, *Malcolm & Marie* may not entirely win you over. But I found all of this self-aware mov-

ie-ness kind of charmingly spunky even when it's being A Lot.

Washington joins his father (Denzel Washington) in that group of actors who I just enjoy watching, no matter how good or flawed or adequate the scene they're in is. He's fun here and seemingly having fun and also turning in an engaging performance that at times maybe feels a little like an audition for a better movie but it was thoroughly watchable. Zendaya is often fine but not always able to match the

heft that Washington brings to a scene, a state exaggerated by the way her character is written and their age difference (Zendaya is 24 and Washington is 36). I'm not sure how much older the movie wants us to believe Malcolm is than Marie or how we're supposed to think that plays in to their relationship. In a movie so all about who is telling whose stories and why, it's an oversight that gets in the way.

So, yeah, there's a lot of talking about what we're talking about. And it's not a relaxing good time to watch couples fight. The setup does occasionally border on stagey and the movie continues for a few minutes past the point of its natural ending. But I had enough nostalgia for this kind of chatty movie and Washington delivered enough moments of a fun performance that I had a better than average time. C+

Rated R for pervasive language and sexual content, according to the MPA on filmratings. com. Written and directed by Sam Levinson (son of Barry, and this movie about a movie-maker takes on a whole new entertaining layer when you know that), Malcolm & Marie is an hour and 46 minutes long and is available on Netflix.

SOFAPLEX

Locked Down (R)

Anne Hathaway, Chiwetel Ejiofor.

A couple stuck in lockdown in London eventually plan a half-baked diamond heist in a movie that is just so much more pie crust scraps than pie.

Paxton (Ejiofor) and Linda (Hathaway) have broken up but are still stuck living together in the same (really pretty, with multiple stories and a garden) London townhome early in the pandemic. Linda, an American, is working remotely at her job as a luxury goods executive and Paxton has been laid off, I think, from his usual job as a delivery driver. After a lot of unnecessary shagginess, we get to the action, which is that Linda has to assist with the pack-up of high-end clothes and accessories from Harrods, which is locking away all its goods during this quarantine era. One of the items she is charged with packing up is a very large diamond that has been sold to a Bad Person and is going to be sent to a vault in New York City where it is unlikely to be even looked at for decades. Coincidentally, Paxton has been tasked by his old employer to help transport these items.

According to the little sneak peek of this movie on HBO Max, the film was not only made in a house with minimal crew during Covid (actors like Ben Kingsley, Ben Stiller, Stephen Merchant, Mindy Kaling and Dulé Hill appear in Zoom or Face-Time sequences) but filmmakers were given access to the inner workings of the closed Harrods. But this gem of a setting doesn't show up until the last 30 minutes. That's 90 minutes of not-heisting in this heist movie.

Somewhere here is 72 minutes of a tight, light, fun movie of the "heck, let's make something" style of Covidera creation. But way too much time is spent underlining the unhappiness in Paxton and Linda's relationship and the crazy-making state of being locked down (which, and this won't be true in 10 years but it is true now, movies don't need to explain; like, we're here, we get it). C+ *Available on HBO Max*

Bliss (R)

Owen Wilson, Salma Hayek.

Wilson is either a man experiencing drug addiction and mental illness or a volunteer caught in an experiment in this odd sci-fi, I guess, movie. Wilson plays Greg, a man who has recently, in his words, messed up his marriage and is spacing out at work but still tries to convince his grown daughter, Emily (Nesta Cooper), that he is OK. But then a meeting with his boss goes fatally wrong and Greg runs to a bar, where he meets Isabel (Hayek), a

woman who seems to have the power to move things with her mind. She claims that the world and most of the people in it are not real but that Greg is real and, like her, can manipulate objects after popping some yellow crystals. He stays with her in her tent under the underpass and together they grift food and get into petty trouble. When his faith in her claims about "simulations" and "crystals" starts to falter, she takes him back to the "real" world, which unlike the "simulation" (basically this world, with its pollution and income inequality and muted gray color scheme) is a brilliantly colored place of universal wealth, a healthy environment and so much happiness it's turned people into ungrateful jerks. There, Isabel is actually a doctor who has developed the Brain Box, a device that sends people to the unhappy simulation existence so they can see how lousy things could be, to appreciate what they have. Greg is her boyfriend or husband or whatever and together they live in a beautiful house, like the one he's been sketching during his "life" in the simulation. "Real" life is perfect and Greg never wants to leave — but he can't shake thoughts of his children back in the simulation.

I'm not totally sure what this movie is doing, if it's trying to say something about the state of our world, how it feels not be able to trust your own perceptions, or something about the reason people fall into addiction. Whatever it's doing, *Bliss* is not doing a great job of it. It also never made me care about the central characters of Greg and Isabel. Ultimately, I didn't really care which world was real; I was just happy when the movie was over and I could leave both of them behind. **D** *Available on Amazon Prime*

$\underline{\textit{Palmer}}\left(R\right)$

Justin Timberlake, June Squibb.

Palmer (Timberlake) is released from prison and returns to his small hometown to live with his grandmother, Vivian (Squibb), and try to start over in life. The small town-ness makes that extremely difficult — everybody knows his trajectory from promising high school quarterback to man who took part in a burglary that went bad. But his grandmother's reputation in her church also helps to get him his job as janitor at the local elementary school.

Vivian is strict with Palmer but a giving person; when Shelly (Juno Temple), the woman renting a neighboring trailer from Vivian, takes off, Vivian watches Sam (Ryder Allen), her elementary school-aged son. Sam is sweet and happy despite his family turmoil and loves all things fancy, especially a cartoon princess show and its costumes and toys. This makes school difficult for him but he is confident in his personality and his interests, despite the bullying from kids and some adults — and he has a caring teacher in Miss Maggie (Alisha Wainwright).

When Vivian dies, Sam is basically left alone. Though Palmer initially plans to send Sam to child services, his own childhood experiences with family upheaval lead him to agree to take care of Sam while they wait for Shelly to return. Palmer, Sam and to some degree Miss Maggie, who sort of hovers on the edges (initially, it seems, to make sure Sam is all right but later because, you know, Palmer is played by Justin Timberlake), become a kind of found family, with Sam and Palmer helping each other to find some stability.

For all that this movie has some grim and violent moments, it is a kind and gentle story - but sweet fancy molasses, is it slow. You know the joke that goes "I spent a year in [some boring place] one weekend"? Palmer is the movie version of that. It goes exactly where you think it will but it takes so very long getting there. This movie sets the scene just fine but then hangs around making sure "Do you get it? Do You GET IT?" an unnecessarily long time and it does this repeatedly. You could cut a good 30 minutes out of this movie and lose nothing. **B-** *Available on Apple TV+*

By Michael Witthaus mwitthaus@hippopress.com

- Truffle man: Leading one of the Seacoast's most enduring bands, Dave Gerard brings the same good-time vibe and constant smile to his solo music. Normally the group that began as Savov Truffle would be marking 2021 with shows celebrating 35 years together, but these aren't those times. At least there's still the chance to dine out and enjoy live performers, abbreviated though it may be. Thursday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m., Telly's Restaurant, 235 Calef Highway, Epping, 679-8225.
- Wide ranging: Take in a stunning view of the Merrimack River as Brien Sweet entertains at a Queen City eatery. The curly haired singer and guitarist plays covers that range across decades, from Elvis to Coldplay and The Weeknd. Recently he did a full set of boy band songs on his Facebook Live. When warm weather allows he'll again be seen as David Bowie in area tribute band Young Americans. Saturday, Feb. 13, 6 p.m., The Foundry Restaurant, 50 Commercial St., Manchester, 836-1925.
- Off the road: Because Providence-based singer-songwriter Kevin Horan began as a drummer, his original tunes are pulsing and percussive. In addition to his solo work, such as the local brewery show he's doing at midpoint of the three-day weekend, Horan fronts Ocean State rockers the Stone Road Band, who are currently at work on a follow-up to their debut album, Alive At Dusk. Sunday, Feb. 14, 3 p.m., To Share Brewing Co., 720 Union St., Manchester, 458-2033.
- Sushi country: Throughout the past challenging months, April Cushman has managed to keep her calendar full, even packing rooms with fans on occasion — using the pandemic definition, of course. The countrified singer plays a Valentine's Day set at a Gate City Japanese restaurant. Cushman's autobiographical single "Hometown Girl" is lately getting traction on download and streaming sites, and local radio. Sunday, Feb. 14, 6 p.m., San Francisco Kitchen, 133 Main St., Nashua, 886-8833.

Family man

Comedy showcase features Francis Birch

By Michael Witthaus mwitthaus@hippopress.com

In standup comedy, a weekend booking represents validation. Francis Birch's first was at Veronica Laffs in Strikers East, a Raymond bowling alley. The pop-up club closed mid-decade, when comic and entrepreneur Jay Grove opened a dedicated venue. Curlie's Comedy Club in Rochester.

The laughs are returning to Strikers East — as is Birch, who'll share the stage with headliner Graig Murphy on Feb. 13.

The upcoming show is presented by Laugh Riot Productions and will be hosted by its CEO, Michael Smith.

"It's kind of cool to go back," Birch said recently by phone. "To work there as a more polished comic who has a little bit of a reputation now."

Birch began doing comedy in 2011, egged on by friends who said he was funny. However, his first attempt at an open mic night wasn't a triumph.

"I did not know what I was getting myself into," he said, ruefully noting that a friend taped his 11-minute, laugh-free set and posted it on YouTube. "Sometimes when I need to humble myself, I'll watch that."

Unbowed, Birch persisted, finding a home at a Monday night gathering called Punchlines, hosted by Grove at Penuche's Ale House in Concord. While there, he worked the same five minutes repeatedly, "to just see if I could nail my timing" in front of a tough, sometimes unforgiving crowd.

One night, the antipathy in the room broke his rhythm — and led to a breakthrough.

"Some drunk guy was yelling at me," Birch said. "I just had a conversation with him, and it really went well. Jay said to me, 'Any time you can engage and shut down a heckler, and he comes up to shake your hand afterward, is a good thing."

big family is a major source of material, but it was also parenthood that caused him to step away from comedy, from 2015 to 2018. The decision came after he'd received one too many videos of his son, now 8, "doing awesome stuff, and I wasn't there," he said. "I missed my other boys I was raising because I was in my 20s and being an idiot. Now I was missing this one growing up because I was doing comedy."

Along with his children, Birch's mother was a big part of his act. It was her death in 2018 that helped spur him back into the

"I had the itch," he said. "I wanted to go out and tell some jokes, make fun of her a little bit. Because she helped me write those jokes."

He did a midweek open mic, then a Saturday night guest slot at Curlie's.

"Maybe if I got 10 minutes on a weekend that'll be scratchy enough to satisfy," he reasoned, but "that did nothing. It made it more itchy. Since then, I've been working full steam ahead, just growing my act and incorporating some of the things that happened since."

Birch said he came back more confident, and more honest — "I started to speak to my stories, being them instead of reciting it."

He also quit smoking and gave up drinking in the months after returning to standup; again, he was guided by his mom.

"She got pneumonia and her body wasn't strong enough to fight it, because she had COPD," Birch said. "[I realized that] if I don't make changes in my life, that's gonna be me. My kids are gonna have to watch

A fitness regimen "to make my body as strong as it can be to fight off any infection" soon began, an effort that grew into a coaching business.

"I help people create habits and become Birch is married with three boys of his better versions of themselves," Birch said. own, and he's a stepfather to one more. The He believes telling jokes is not dissimilar.



Francis Birch. Courtesy photo.

"When I do comedy, I feel like I'm helping people escape their reality and laugh a little bit."

Asked if the health focus had an effect on his act, Birch replied with a laugh, "I got a lot of fat jokes I can't use anymore! That's something Jay taught me when we first started ... don't write jokes about your beard or being fat because you might not always have that beard, you might not always be fat."

One subject remains, though: Birch's beloved mother.

"I make fun of her like never before." he said. "I've actually written more material about her, and I like to deliver it with a smile. Because I know that's what she's doing — she's smiling. She's my rock, my heart and soul, and she's with me every performance."

Graig Murphy, Francis Birch & Mike Smith

When: Saturday, Feb. 13, 8 p.m.

Where: Strikers East, 4 Essex Dr., Raymond Tickets: \$20 at laughriotproductions.com

or call 895-9501





LaBelle Winery 345 Route 101 672-9898

Auburn

Auburn Pitts

167 Rockingham Road 622-6564

Bedford

Copper Door 15 Leavy Dr. 488-2677

Bow

Cheng Yang Li 520 S. Bow St. 228-8508

Brookline

The Alamo Texas Barbecue & Tequila Bar 99 Route 13 721-5000

Chichester

Flannel Tavern 345 Suncook Valley Road 406-1196

Concord Area 23

State Street 881-9060

Cheers 17 Depot St. 228-0180

Concord Craft Brewing 117 Storrs St.

856-7625 Penuche's Ale House

16 Bicentennial Square 228-9833

Epping The Community Oven 24 Calef Hwy. 734-4543

64 Main St. 679-9559

Telly's Restaurant & Pizzeria 235 Calef Hwy. 679-8225

Exeter **Sawbelly Brewing** 156 Epping Road

Sea Dog Brewery 9 Water St.

Goffstown Village Trestle

583-5080

25 Main St. 497-8230

Hampton **Community Oven** 845 Lafayette Road 601-6311

Epsom

Exeter

Goffstown

Hampton

nopoulos, 6 p.m.

CR's The Restaurant 287 Exeter Road 929-7972

The Goat 20 L St. 601-6928

Shane's BBO 61 High St. 601-7091

Smuttynose Brewing 105 Towle Farm Road

Wally's Pub 144 Ashworth Ave. 926-6954

WHYM Craft Pub & **Brewery** 853 Lafayette Road 601-2801

Londonderry **Coach Stop Restaurant** & Tavern 176 Mammoth Road 437-2022

Hill Top: Jennifer Mitchell, 7 p.m.

Sawbelly: Rich Amorim, 5 p.m.

Village Trestle: Charlie Chro-

CR's: Ross McGinnes, 6 p.m.

Adam Fithian, 9 p.m.

Londonderry

Manchester

p.m.

6 p.m.

The Goat: Rob Pagnano, 9 p.m.

Wally's: Josh Waterman and

WHYM: Emily Rae Shively, 5

Coach Stop: Ted Solo, 6 p.m.

Stumble Inn: Jodee Frawlee, 8

Backyard Brewery: Brien Sweet,

Derryfield: Clint Lapointe, 7:30 p.m. Foundry: April Cushman, 6 p.m.

Fratello's: Doug Thompson, 5:30

South Side: Jonny Friday, 8 p.m.

Cercle: Chris Perkins, 7 p.m.

Stumble Inn 20 Rockingham Road 432-3210

Hall

42 Main St.

404-6123

623-3545

623-2880

Manchester **Backyard Brewery** 1211 S. Mammoth Road

Cercle National Club 550 Rockland Ave. 623-8243

Derryfield Country Club 625 Mammoth Road

The Foundry 50 Commercial St. 836-1925

Fratello's 155 Dow St. 624-2022

Piccola Italia Ristorante 815 Elm St. 606-5100

1279 S. Willow St. 935-9947

603 Brewery & Beer South Side Tavern

Meredith Hart's Turkey Farm 223 Daniel Webster 402-9391 Hwv.

Twin Barns Brewing 194 Daniel Webster Hwy. 279-0876

279-6212

Merrimack Homestead 641 Daniel Webster Hwy. 429-2022

Moultonborough Buckey's 240 Governor worth Hwy. 476-5485

Nashua **American Social Club** 166 Daniel Webster Hwy. 255-8272

Fratello's Italian Grille Rochester 194 Main St 889-2022

Liquid Therapy 14 Court St.

San Francisco Kitchen 133 Main St. 886-8833

New Boston Molly's Tavern Restaurant 35 Mont Vernon Road 487-1362

Pittsfield Main Street Grill & Seabrook Bar 32 Main St.

Portsmouth The Goat 142 Congress St. 590-4628

435-0005

The Statey Bar & Grill 238 Deer St. 431-4357

Mitchell Hill BBQ Grill & Brew 50 N. Main St.

332-2537 Porter's Pub 19 Hanson St.

330-1964

Salem **Copper Door** 41 S. Broadway **&** 458-2033

> Michael's Flatbread 8 Stiles Road 893-2765

Chop Shop Pub 920 Lafayette Road 760-7706

Red's Kitchen + Tavern 530 Lafayette Road

Stratham **Tailgate Tavern** 28 Portsmouth Ave. 580-2294

Thursday, Feb. 11

Brookline

Alamo: Matt Borrello, 4:30 p.m.

Concord

Area 23: NH Vintage Vinyl spins, 6:30 p.m.

Epping

Exeter

Telly's: Dave Gerard, 7 p.m.

Sea Dog: Chad Verbeck, 5 p.m.

Village Trestle: Clinton Lapointe, 6 p.m.

Hampton

Community Oven: Game Time Trivia, 6 p.m. CR's: Ross McGinnes, 6 p.m.

Shane's BBQ: Brad Bosse, 5 p.m. Wally's: Galentine's Party with DJ Provo, 6 p.m.

Londonderry

Stumble Inn: Malcolm Salls, 7 p.m.

Manchester

Cercle National Club: Justin Jordan, 7:30 p.m. Fratello's: Ralph Allen, 5:30 p.m.

music@hippopress.com.

Music plays on

Meredith

Merrimack

p.m.

Nashua

American Social Club: April Cushman, 8 p.m. Fratello's: Ted Solo, 5:30 p.m.

Portsmouth

The Goat: Isaiah Bennett, 9 p.m.

Salem

Mary-Ann, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 12

Brookline

Alamo: Travis Rollo, 4:30 p.m.

Concord

Cheers: Team Trivia, 8:30 p.m. Penuche's: Masceo Williams, 8 p.m.

Community Oven: Brad Bosse, 5 p.m.

Telly's: Tim Theriault, 8 p.m

Hart's: Game Time Trivia, 7 p.m.

Homestead: Sean Coleman, 5:30

Michael's Flatbread: trivia with

Strand: Mica's Groove Train, 8 p.m.

Epping

These listings for live music are compiled from press

releases, restaurants' websites and social media and art-

ists' 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 eve-

ning, as cancellations for weather or virus concerns are not

uncommon. Get your gigs listed by sending information to

Meredith

Twin Barns: Eric Grant, 5 p.m.

Merrimack Homestead: Amanda Cote, 5:30 p.m.

Nashua American Social Club: Alex Roy,

Fratello's: Tim Kierstead, 5:30 p.m.

New Boston

Molly's: Tom Rousseau, 6:30 p.m.

Portsmouth

The Goat: Chris Toler, 9 p.m.

Rochester

Mitchell Hill BBQ: Gabby Martin, 6 p.m. Porter's: Max Sullivan, 6 p.m.

Stratham

Tailgate: Chad Verbeck, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 13

Amherst

LaBelle: My Funny Valentine dinner with Rich DiMare, 6:30 p.m.

Auburn

Auburn Pitts: Nicole Knox Murphy, 6:30 p.m.

Bow

Chen Yang Li: Mikey G, 7 p.m.

Brookline

Alamo: Justin Jordan, 4:30 p.m.

Concord

Concord Craft Brewing: Steve Chagnon, 4 p.m. Penuche's: Mac & Kelsie, 8 p.m.

Epping

Exeter

Telly's: Brian Johnson, 8 p.m.

Sawbelly: Chad Verbeck, 1 p.m.

Goffstown Village Trestle: Brian James, 6 p.m.

Hampton

Community Oven: Max Sullivan, 6 p.m. The Goat: Johnny Friday, 9 p.m.

Wally's: Chris Toler, 9 p.m. WHYM: Gabby Martin, 5 p.m.

Londonderry

Coach Stop: Brad Bossse, 6 p.m. Stumble Inn: Munk Duane, 8

Manchester

Backyard Brewery: Tim Kierstead, 6 p.m. Cercle: Henry LaLiberte, 7 p.m. Derryfield: Ryan Williamson,

7:30 p.m. The Foundry: Brien Sweet, 6 p.m. Fratello's: Dave Zangri, 5:30 p.m. South Side: Pete Peterson, 8 p.m.

Meredith

Twin Barns: Music bingo, 6 p.m.

Merrimack

Homestead: Mark LaPointe, 5:30

Nashua

Fratello's: Andrew Geano, 5:30 p.m. Liquid Therapy: The Human Beings, 6 p.m.

New Boston

Molly's: Clint LaPointe, 6:30 p.m.

Portsmouth

The Goat: Alex Anthony, 9 p.m. The Statey: Dave Gerard, 7 p.m.; Woodland Protocol, 8 p.m.

Seabrook

Chop Shop: Hit Squad, 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 14

Bedford

Copper Door: Mark Lapoine, 11 a.m.; Phil Jakes, 5 p.m.

Brookline

Alamo: Ryan Hood, 4:30 p.m.

Chichester

Flannel Tavern: Piano man Dan Carter, 4 p.m.

Sawbelly: Beats, Brews & Blues, noon; Dave Corson, 4 p.m.

Exeter

Goffstown Village Trestle: Bob Pratte, 3:30

p.m.

Hampton CR's: Rico Barr Duo WHYM: Max Sullivan, noon

Londonderry Stumble Inn: Justin Jordan, 3 p.m.

Nashua

Pittsfield

SF Kitchen: April Cushman, 6 p.m.

Main Street Grill & Bar: Nicole Knox Murphy, 5 p.m.

Portsmouth The Goat: Rob Pagnano, 9 p.m.

Copper Door: Phil Jakes, 11 a.m.;

Mark Lapointe, 5 p.m. Seabrook

Red's: Max Sullivan, 7 p.m.

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

Piccola's: April Cushman, 5 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 15

Merrimack Homestead: Phil Jakes, 5:30 p.m.

Nashua Fratello's: Chris Lester, 5:30 p.m.

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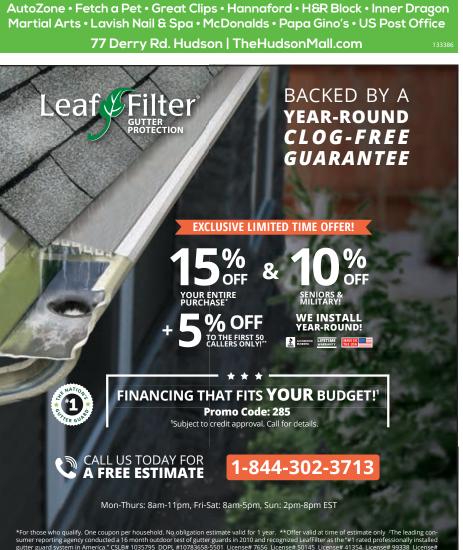


SELL

PARTS!







Portsmouth

The Goat: Alex Anthony, musical bingo, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 16

Hampton

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

Manchester

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

Merrimack

Homestead: Clint Lapointe, 5:30 p.m.

Nashua

Fratello's: Sean Coleman, 5:30

Portsmouth

The Goat: Isaiah Bennett, 9 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 17 **Brookline**

Alamo: Brian Weeks, 4:30 p.m.

Hampton

Wally's: Chris Toler, 7 p.m.

Manchester

Fratello's: Jeff Mrozek, 5:30 p.m.

Meredith

Twin Barns: trivia night, 6 p.m.

Merrimack

Homestead: Chris Gardner. 5:30

Nashua

Fratello's: Chris Cavanaugh, 5:30

Portsmouth

The Goat: Alex Anthony, 9 p.m.

COMEDY THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

Venues

Chunkv's

707 Huse Road, Man- Manchester, Friday, Feb. Chunky's Manchester, 8 p.m. chester; 151 Colise- 12, and Saturday, Feb. Sunday, Feb. 14, 8 p.m. um Ave., Nashua; 150 13, at 8 p.m. Bridge St., Pelham, • Comedy Nights (Best Nashua, Sunday, Feb. Feb. 20, 8 p.m. chunkys.com

The Strand

20 Third St., Dover 343-1899. thestranddover.com

Shows

• Jody Sloane Chunky's

- of Boston) The Strand, 14, 8 p.m.
- Robbie Chunky's Nashua, Sat- 18, 8 p.m. urday, Feb. 13, 8 p.m.
- Printz Pelham, Thursday, Feb. urday, Feb. 20, 8 p.m.

Mark Riley Chunky's

Robbie

- Bill Simas Chunky's Chunky's Manchester, Friday, Feb. 26, and Sat-Pelham, Saturday, Feb. Friday, Feb. 19, 8 p.m. urday, Feb. 27, at 8 p.m.
- Tom Cotter Chunky's Printz Nashua, Friday, Feb. 19,
 - Tom Cotter Chunky's Manchester, Saturday,
- Joe Yannetty Saturday, Feb. 13, 8 p.m. • Tom Cotter Chunky's Chunky's Nashua, Sat-
 - Mike · Harrison Stebbins Chunky's Manchester,

Venues

The Flying Monkey

39 Main St., Plymouth 536-2551, flyingmonkeynh.com

Franklin Opera House

316 Central St., Franklin 934-1901, franklinoperahouse.org

LaBelle Winery

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

The Music Hall

28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth 436-2400, themusichall.org

Palace Theatre

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

Shows

- Croce Plays Croce (A.J. Croce performs the music of Jim Croce and more) Thursday, Feb. 11, at 7:30 p.m., Flying Monkey
- My Funny Valentine dinner Feb. 20, 8 p.m., Music Hall with Rich DiMare and Rob Poster & The Sinatra Ambassa- p.m., Music Hall

- dors Saturday, Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m., LaBelle
- · The Rockin' Daddios Saturday, Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m., Franklin Opera
- My Mixtape: the Sounds of the '80s Friday, Feb. 19, 7 p.m., virtual concert via Palace
- · Phil Vassar Friday, Feb. 19, at 7:30 p.m., Flying Monkey
- · Vapors of Morphine Friday, Feb. 19, at 8 p.m., Music Hall
- Livingston Taylor Saturday,
- Jelani Remy Friday, Feb. 26, 8

Venues

Chunky's Cinema Pub

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

Red River Theatres

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

Wilton Town Hall Theatre

40 Main St., Wilton, 654-3456 wiltontownhalltheatre.com,

Shows

- Red River Virtual Cinema Red River Theatres is currently offering indie, foreign language and documentary films via a virtual cinema experience. See the ever-changing lineup on the website.
- Theater Candy Bingo at Chunky's in Manchester and Pelham on Saturday, Feb. 13, at 6 p.m. and at Chunky's in Nashua at noon on Sunday, Feb. 14. Admission costs \$4.99.
- 7th Heaven (1927) silent sion costs \$4.99. romance film accompanied by live
- music performed by Jeff Rapsis screens on Sunday, Feb. 14, at 2 p.m. at Wilton Town Hall Theatre. Admission is free but a \$10 donation is suggested.
- Daytona 500 screening on Sunday, Feb. 14, at 2:30 p.m. at Chunky's in Manchester and Nashua. Admission costs \$5 per person.
- Karate Kid 21+ Trivia Night on Thursday, Feb. 18, at 7:30 p.m. aat Chunky's in Manchester. Admis-

Books

Author events

- presents Landslide. Hosted by Gibson's Bookstore in Concord.
- discusses The System: Who or call 589-4610. Rigged It, How We Fix It. Host- • DIANE REHM Author presents chall.org.

ed by Nashua Public Library, in partnership with Newton Free Library. Virtual. Thurs., Feb. 11, 7 p.m. Space is limited, and registration is required at tinyurl.com/ Online, via Zoom. Thurs., Feb. 11, npllectures by 5 p.m. the day of 7 p.m. Registration required. Visit the event. Information on how to gibsonsbookstore.com or call 224- access the event will be sent to registered participants the day of • ROBERT B. REICH Author the event. Visit nashualibrary.org

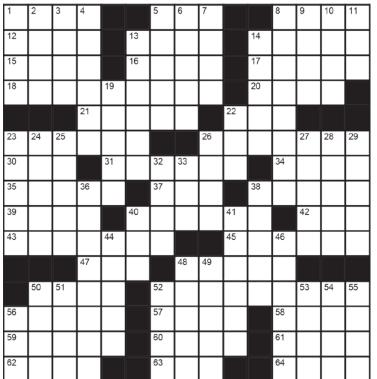
When My Time Comes. Virtual livestream hosted by The Music Hall in Portsmouth. Tues., Feb. 23, 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$5. Call 436-2400 or visit themusichall.org. • PAUL KRUGMAN Author

presents Arguing with Zombies. Virtual livestream hosted by The Music Hall in Portsmouth. Tues., March 2, 7 p.m. Tickets cost \$5. Call 436-2400 or visit themusi-

SUSAN CONLEY Author

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Y NAME IS PRINCE! AND I AM



Across

- 1. Prince 'Could Be Us'
- 5. Bluesman Mahal
- 8. Katy Perry 'Last Friday Night ()'
- 12. Sauteed dish catering might serve for
- 13. On '93 Primus album they opened a can of 'Pork
- 14. Bonnie Tyler "I need __ _! I'm holding out..." (1,4)
- 15. Kenny Wayne Shepard did her 'Knoxville Rag' with this Baker
- 16. Meek Milk song about final prayer word?
- 17. Fall Out Boy "__just to retox"
- 18. '07 Arcade Fire album about a bright sign lighting up the holy scripture? (4,5)
- 20. The Firm '__ Business' when they get mad
- 21. Iceland guitarist Guðlaugur Óttarsson had crowded or this kind of 'Time'
- 22. Wynter Gordon won't stop playing '__ Death'
- 23. Torso clothing that shows love for band (hyph)
- 26. Pogues grab the guitar and '___ By The Fire' (3,4)
- 30. Prince "__ look me over, tell me do you like what you see?"
- 31. Offspring "Just a sucker w/no self"
- 34. 'Lips Like Sugar' __ and the Bunnymen
- 35. Like dead-on manager
- J Geils '__ Last Kiss'
- 38. The Platters 'Pretender' was epic or this
- 39. Truly frontman Robert
- 40. 'Looking Through Patient Eyes' hip hoppers (2,4)
- 42. Type of pint sold at beer stand
- 43. Bands in talent competition fill out these
- 45. "One eyed, one __, flying purple people eater"
- 47. Prince 'Baby, ___ Star' (2,1)
- 48. Prince "All I've got to say, you're gon-
- 50. A confident Stereo Kicks sang "Always seemed so sure that you love ___ " (2,2)
- 52. Upper Midwest state Prince is from

- 56. Joe Public got a lesson with 'Live And
- 57. "My name is Prince __ _ am funky"
- 58. Roxy Music classic 'More __ This
- 59. What you do with great studio time offer
- 60. Sublime smash "Lovin', is what ____
- 61. James Ingram "Just __ can't we figure out what we keep doing wrong"

WORD ★Roundup™

Last Week's Answers: ALBATROSS FLAMINGO PELICAN GOOSE HERON

C D

DUCK SWAN / MOROCCO ALGERIA / SILENT HORROR / JOHNNY CASH /

62. 'Shaker' ___ Tengo (2,2)

Find and Circle...

Four pieces of furniture

Two five-letter planets

© 2021 Andrews McMeel Syndication

Three mammals starting with C

Sea

RODENT

- 63. Kasabian song Mark Ronson covered w/ them (abbr)
- 64. 'The Art Of Breaking' Thousand Krutch

Down

- 1. Prince "What she told me __ got me so hot"
- 2. Nine Inch Nails debut 'Pretty __ Machine' 3. Donna Summer "And all I want ___
- know" (2,2) 4. Sinnamon that did 'He's A Dream' from Flashdance
- 5. 'Winter Hours' band with archaeological finds?
- 6. Topped almost every chart with her 2011 album '21'
- 7. 'Don't Wanna Fall in Love' Child
- 8. '81 Kiss bomb 'Music From _____'(3,5)
 9. Built To Spill told us losers to '____ Life' (3,1)
- 10. 'Run To The Hills' Maiden
- 11. Neko Case "__ Confessor Brings The
- 13. Paul Simon feels the 'Rhythm' of them 14. What music school will do to prodigy applying
- 19. Prince said she wore a 'Raspberry' one 22. Replacements '85 'Dose Of Thunder'
- album 23. ' Will Never Be Another Tonight' Brvan Adams
- 24. Kings Of Leon smash '___
- 25. Post-show hotel chain
- 26. Neil Young "I ____ woman in the night"
- 27. Led Zep 'Houses Of The Holy' jam 'The
- 28. Folky Noah's partner might be a humpback one
- 29. Like prominent musician
- 32. Suzanne Vega '__ Diner'
- 33. Apolcalyptica w/Gavin Rossdale '__ Of

 \square

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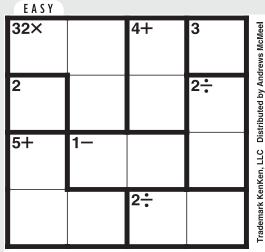
- 36. 'Fool (If You Think It's Over)' Brit (5,4)
- 38. Munchkin Syd Barrett wrote of for Pink Floyd's debut
- 40. Red Hot Chili Peppers song for green
- 41. '00 Everclear single '__ _ All Goes Wrong Again' (4,2) 44. Alabama "You got plans and ___ lucky
- man" (2,3) 46. Cheap Trick said rock! for 'The __ _
- My Life' (4,2)

- 48. ABC 'When Smokey _
- 49. Prince "Until the ____ time I'll be there for you" (3,2)
- 50. Hailee Steinfeld begged 'Let ___ 51. 'One Woman Army' sing/songer Kate
- 52. Used to get fan letters by this 53. "__ lets go! Let's go crazy, let's get
- nuts" (2,2)
- 54. Beck was feeling like Mexican food with 'Satan Gave Me A_
- 55. Self-producing might be working without ___ (1,3)
- 56. Ratt is going to take their rules and ' It Down'

WORKSPACE:

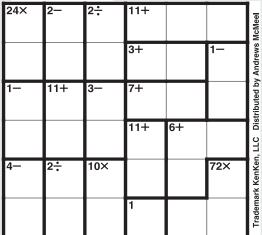
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THE LOGIC PUZZLE THAT MAKES YOU SMARTER.



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CHALLENGING



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RULES

 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

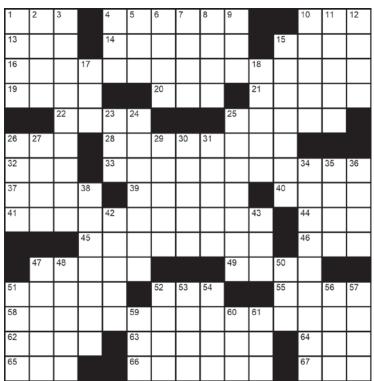
combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners. 3 Freebies: Fill in single-box cages with

the number in the top-left corner.

3 PREVIOUS ANSWERS 3 4

6 4 2 4 5 6 50× 1 4 6 3

Quiet Onset" — I can't hear you



R&R answer from pg 31 of 02/04



Jonesin' answer from pg 32 of 0204



Across

- 1 Life force, to an acupuncturist 4 One of the Three Musketeers
- 10 Consumer protection gp.
- 13 " Wiedersehen!"
- 14 Like the opening letter of each of

15 "Dog Barking at the Moon" art-

- the four longest answers
- ist Joan
- 16 Magazine whose website has a "Find a Therapist" feature
- 19 "Away!"
- 20 Stunned state
- 21 How hair may stand
- 22 Maritime patrol org.
- 25 "The mind ___ own place ..."
- (John Milton)
- 26 Offer on eBay
- 28 Japanese grills
- 32 "Common" chapter of history
- 33 Flavor on a German schnapps bottle
- 37 Rank between marguis and viscount
- 39 Bell or whistle?
- 40 "Peter Pan" henchman
- 41 Device that records respiration
- 44 Went nowhere
- 45 Tightly cinched
- 46 "How We Do" singer Rita
- 47 "Fun. Fun. Fun" car in a '60s hit
- 49 British mil. decorations

- 51 Breezes (through)
- 52 Scrooge's comment
- 55 Filmmaker Ephron
- 58 Math conjecture regarding a quadrilateral inscribed in a circle
- 62 "I identify," in online comments
- 63 Ear ailment
- 64 Baseball stat
- 65 "Bill ___ Saves the World"
- 66 Hastily arrive at, as a conclusion
- 67 Celebrity chef Martin

Down

- 1 Pen parts
- 2 Period of quiet
- 3 Haunted house challenge
- 4 Hearth leftover
- 5 Brazilian beach city, briefly
- 6 "It was blur"
- 7 "Feed me or I'll knock your drink over"
- 8 "Splendor in the Grass" Oscar
- winner
- 9 Piglet's home
- 10 High-end hotel amenity
- 11 Fiber-rich cereals
- 12 "Cheers" bartender Woody
- 15 Philosophies that regard reality as
- one organic whole
- 17 Lettuce variety
- 18 ", With Love" (Sidney Poiti- © 2021 Matt Jones
- er movie)

- - 23 Golden State traffic org. (as seen in an Erik Estrada TV show)
 - 24 Philbin's onetime morning cohost
 - 25 "It's Shake 'n Bake!" "And!"
 - (old ad tagline)
 - 26 Pager noise
 - 27 Persian Gulf country
 - 29 Arctic floaters
 - 30 Burning
 - 31 B equivalent, in music
 - 34 Contrite phrase
 - 35 A few feet away
 - 36 Greek consonant
 - 38 Happy fun Ball?
 - 42 Code where B is -...
 - 43 Some TVs
 - 47 Frayed
 - 48 Ecological community
 - 50 "Be My Yoko" (Barenaked Ladies song)
 - 51 "Wheel of Fortune" action
 - 52 Eight bits, computerwise
 - 53 One side of the Urals
 - 54 Address abbreviation
 - 56 Country star McEntire
 - 57 Former dictator Idi
 - 59 "Boardwalk Empire"
 - Gretchen
 - 60 Battleship score
 - 61 That, in Madrid

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 33.

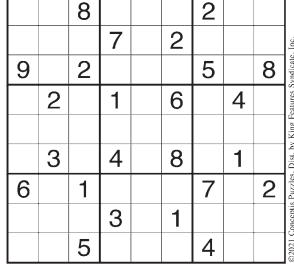
Conceptis SudoKu Puzzle A By Dave Green									
3					2			9	
			7			8			
	7	8	6			5			
5						4	3		
	2	7						1	
		6			1	7	8		
		1			6				
8			9					2	

Conceptis SudoKu Puzzle B By Dave Green

	5					6		1	
7			8	3			5		. Inc.
		3			1			8	vndicate
	1					3			catures S
	2						4		King F
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4			6			1			Puzzles
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2		9					7		©2021 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Difficulty Level ★★

Conceptis SudoKu Puzzle C By Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★★

Difficulty Level ★★★★

All quotes are from Where I Come From: Life Lessons from a Latino Chef, by Aarón I needed the formal training, and later Sánchez, born Feb. 12, 1976.

peel the shrimp, I watched to see how they were prepared after I finished that part, what plates they ended up on and how they were *cooked.* You can do more than peel shrimp.

Pisces (Feb. 19 – March 20) When we got back to the city, it seemed bigger and more chaotic, yet somehow emptier than ever. You'll find your niche.

Aries (March 21 – April 19) But I wasn't there as a guest — I was there to cook. So cook, already.

Taurus (April 20 – May 20) We had a service class, where we dressed up in little bow-tied tuxedo shirts and learned to take orders, drop food, and interact with customers. I'd never worked front of house before, so I enjoyed the contrast. It's a great time to try something new.

Gemini (May 21 – June 20) After about a month of prep, I got a little bit of a promotion to stocks and sauces. And if you succeed at sauces, there's no telling what you can do.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22) Those first few days, though, it was all Greek to me. Or, to be more precise, all Cajun and Creole. And a whole slew of other things that were totally foreign. But I paid close attention to everything I was given to do. You can pay attention in any language.

Leo (July 23 – Aug. 22) I taught them about enchiladas and they taught me about whatever it was they brought back from their homes. An exchange knowledge benefits evervone.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) Trying to listen, talk, and cook at the same time was like trying to scratch your belly and rub your head while walking on hot coals. Even if you can't manage everything, you can still get something done.

Libra (Sept. 23 – Oct. 22) I didn't think realized so many times that I really could have used it (that aspic did rear its wobbly Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) I didn't just head, and those French techniques I didn't care to learn crop up in almost every cuisine). Do your algebra homework.

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21) But when I got there, they dropped another small detail on me: The food had to be entirely vegetarian. Some details are large.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) Dedication means not only peeling potatoes twelve hours a day, trying to get faster, to get more accurate, to minimize waste and mistakes. It also means understanding why things are done in a certain way, being cognizant of history and technique and not just memorizing something.... Peel more, peel better.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) We spent practically a day just on pork from Shandong province, and another just on noodles. For a dude who could never sit still in classes before, I was totally enthralled. Finally, something interest-

LITTLE W©RDS

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.

SOLUTIONS CLUES 1 National Park with gators (10)

- 2 done with exceptional skill (9)
- 3 person needing a ransom (7)
- 4 expression of mild concern (9)
- 5 smallest amounts (8)
- 6 Colbert and Stewart (9)
- 7 state's rep in court (10)

TER	ADA	HOS	PRO	DES
IRI	SECU	EVE	MIN	ISY
UPS	STS	MAS	IM	UMS
FUL	RGLA	TOR	SAT	TAGE

7/2 4. GRANDCHILD 5. GRANDMOTHER 6. UNCLE 7. FATHER

Sudoku Answers from pg32 of 02/04

Pu	ZZ	le	A						
2	5	4	7	6	9	1	3	8	
9	6	1	2	3	8	5	4	7	ž
7	8	3	1	4	5	9	2	6	s officate
6	1	8	4	5	7	3	9	2	Conseptis Duzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate. Inc
5	3	9	6	2	1	8	7	4	King B
4	2	7	8	9	3	6	5	1	Dist. by
8	4	5	9	1	2	7	6	3	Pazzles
1	9	6	3	7	4	2	8	5	conception
3	7	2	5	8	6	4	1	9	12003
Difficulty Level ****									

Puzzle B

3	8	9	7	2	6	1	5	4
2	6	1	3	5	4	8	9	7
4	5	7	8	9	1	6	3	2
6	2	8	5	7	3	4	1	9
5	7	4	9	1	2	3	6	8
9	1	3	4	6	8	2	7	5
1	4	5	6	8	9	7	2	3
8	9	6	2	3	7	5	4	1
7	3	2	1	4	5	9	8	6
Difficu	lly Lev	el **						270

Puzzle C

			•					
1	7	4	8	5	2	9	3	6
5	9	6	1	7	3	8	4	2
3	8	2	9	4	6	1	5	7
6	1	3	7	9	5	4	2	8
8	2	7	6	1	4	3	9	5
9	4	5	2	3	8	6	7	1
7	5	9	3	8	1	2	6	4
4	6	8	5	2	9	7	1	3
2	3	1	4	6	7	5	8	9
Difficulty Level ★★★								

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The way the world works

The Staten Island Zoo is weathering a storm of controversy over the prediction made by its resident groundhog, Staten Island Chuck, on Feb. 2 — an annual event at the zoo. Chuck popped up on a Facebook "livestream" at the designated hour, on the designated day, but something seemed ... off. After hours of accumulating snow in the New York area, the New York Post reported. Chuck was seen to emerge into bright sunlight with no snow on the ground, his handlers wearing sweatshirts. "So there ya have it, folks, we're gonna have an early spring," announced zoo executive director Ken Mitchell. Viewers weren't fooled, one commenting, "Welppp this isn't live." Previous Groundhog Day celebrations at the zoo have also raised a ruckus. In 2014, a standin groundhog named Charlotte died after being dropped by Mayor Bill de Blasio, and in 2009 Chuck bit Mayor Mike Bloomberg's finger.

Least competent criminal

Edner Flores, 34, entered a PNC Bank branch in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood on Jan. 27 and allegedly tried to rob it by handing a teller a note stating that he wanted \$10,000, with "no die (sic) packs," and that he was armed, according to a federal criminal complaint. The teller activated a silent alarm and told the man to fill out

a blue withdrawal slip, which he did, then asked for his ATM card. The helpful Flores instead produced a temporary Illinois state ID card, authorities said. WMAQ-TV reported police arrived while Flores was still at the window, arrested him and found a knife in his jacket, according to a police report.

Bright idea

Drag queen Spar-Kelly and her neighbors in St. Johns, Florida, are tired of parents parking along their street during school pick-up to avoid the traffic at the nearby Creekside High School. So she dressed in her finest and for three days held up a simple sign that read, "THIS IS NOT STUDENT PICK-UP, HONEY." "If what it takes is just me standing here and telling people to move along, I'll be a diva and I'll tell someone to move right along," she told WJXT-TV. On Jan. 27, her efforts paid off: A St. Johns County Sheriff's deputy showed up to patrol the street, and plans are being made to install new "no parking" signs.

Mountain > molehill

Roger Broadstone, 67, was at home in Twining, Michigan, when state police officers arrived on Jan. 20 to investigate allegations of \$1,500 worth of merchandise purchased with a stolen credit card, but he refused to let them in without a search warrant, WJRT-TV reported. When the troopers

returned with the warrant, they found the illegally purchased items inside the house, but they also found that Broadstone had barricaded himself inside and allegedly set a booby trap and other items designed to harm the officers. Broadstone was charged with two counts related to the credit card transaction, and 16 counts related to the confrontation with authorities, including five counts of attempted murder and four counts of resisting police. He was being held on a \$1.125 million bond.

Weird science

Researchers have solved the mystery of how bare-nosed wombats, native to south-eastern Australia, produce poop in cubes, reports the International Business Times. Wildlife ecologist Scott Carver of the University of Tasmania is lead author on a study, published Jan. 28 in the journal Soft Matter, that details the particular inner workings of the wombat's digestive tract that produce the square-shaped dung. "This ability ... is unique in the animal kingdom," Carver said. "Our research found that ... you really can fit a square peg through a round hole."

Oh, that old thing?

Italian police arrested an unnamed 36-year-old in Naples on Jan. 16 on suspicion of receiving stolen goods and found a 500-year-old copy of Leonardo da Vin-

ci's "Salvatore Mundi," a painting they returned to the museum it belonged to, surprising museum officials, who had no idea it had been missing. The painting is part of the Doma Museum collection at the San Domenico Maggiore church in Naples, where the room it had hung in "has not been open for three months," Naples prosecutor Giovanni Melillo told The Guardian. The copy was made by Giacomo Alibrandi in the early 1500s; da Vinci's original painting sold in 2017 for a record-breaking \$450 million at auction and hasn't been seen in public since.

Misinformed

Authorities in Essex County, England, received a tip on Jan. 16 and arrived at the Freemasons' Saxon Hall expecting to put an end to the illegal "rave" reported to be happening there, but instead of loud music and wild teenagers, officers found old people lining up to get their COVID-19 vaccines, Echo News reported. "Grumpy old men and grumpy old women were in abundance," confirmed Dennis Baum, chairman of the hall, with "wheelchairs, Zimmer frames and walking sticks." Baum said things got testy when the vaccine was late arriving: "It was absolute chaos ... The car park became chock a block with 80-year-old-plus drivers." Police remained to offer their assistance with the traffic.

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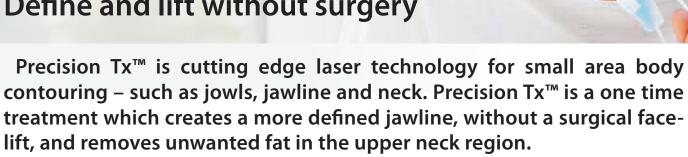


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