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FEBRUARY 8 - 14, 2024

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ON THE COVER

10 Maybe you want to woo your sweetheart with a big romantic gesture. Maybe you want to cover for the fact that you forgot about Valentine's Day (Wednesday, Feb. 14). Whatever your reasons for wanting to construct a delicious meal for two, John Fladd walks you through it. And, if that sounds too much, go straight to his recipe for a decadent, chocolatey but surprisingly easy dessert. Or how about a romantic cocktail?



ALSO ON THE COVER Vote now in Hippo's Best of 2024 readers poll! Go to hippopress.com to vote for best ice cream, best margaritas and best doughnuts! See page 31 for details. And in the food section: On Friday, Feb. 9, the Amherst Lions Club holds its annual chili competition and ice cream social (page 27). And next Tuesday, Feb. 13, is Mardi Gras, the annual celebration that calls for a King Cake (page 28).

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Poetry competition

Due to its growing popularity, the New Hampshire Poetry Out Loud competition will hold four semi-finals this month, as announced by the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts. The program, which involves around 5,000 students from 39 high schools and school groups, encourages the mastery of public speaking skills and self-confidence through the memorization and recitation of classic and contemporary poetry. Open to all high school students, including those from home school groups, the competition will progress from classroom to school championships, and then to regional semi-finals hosted at Rochester Opera House, Silver Center for the Arts in Plymouth, Tupelo Music Hall in Derry, and New England College in Henniker on specified dates in February. Finalists will compete at the state final in Concord on March 15, with the winner advancing to the national finals in Washington, D.C., to compete for \$50,000 in awards. These events are free and open to the public. Visit nh.gov/nharts.

Mail concerns

U.S. Sens. Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan and Reps. Annie Kuster and Chris Pappas expressed their concerns about proposed changes to the Manchester Processing and Distribution Center by the United States Postal Service (USPS). At a press conference in Manchester on Feb. 5, they highlighted the potential negative impact these changes could have on mail service in New Hampshire,

especially for rural communities and the elderly. The delegation, having previously sent a letter to Postmaster General DeJoy, urged the USPS to reconsider its plans, warning of significant consequences if the facility's operations were moved to Boston. They emphasized the importance of timely mail service for New Hampshire residents and businesses, especially for critical deliveries like paychecks and medications. Shaheen and Hassan have been active in supporting USPS reforms to ensure prompt mail delivery across the state and have called for financial relief and operational improvements for the USPS, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, they have addressed issues like security in change of address requests and the timely delivery of ballots during elections. Following a report requested by Sen. Hassan, the USPS hired more than 150 new permanent employees in New Hampshire in 2021 to address staff shortages contributing to postal delays.

Historic properties

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources recently added five properties to the New Hampshire State Register of Historical Places. According to a press release, the Fitch-Brown-Patten House in Claremont, built in the 1830s with Greek Revival details and renovated in the 1930s, now serves as a space for the Claremont Historical Society. The Bridgman House in Hanover's Etna Village, dating back to circa 1820, is notable for its association with the education of the deaf-

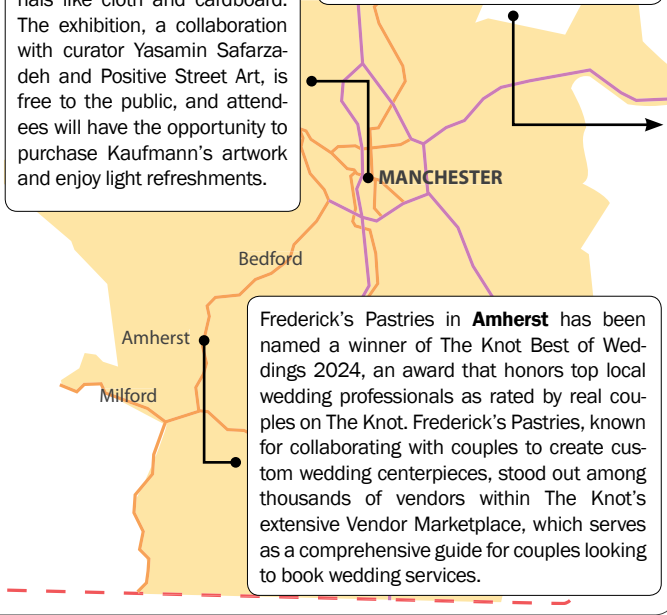
blind, including Anne Sullivan, Helen Keller's teacher. The William Peabody House in Milford, constructed around 1740, has historical significance tracing back to the Revolutionary War. The Antirum Grange #98, originally built circa 1791, evolved from a meetinghouse to a town hall and now a Grange hall. Lastly, the Sunset Hill Golf Course and Clubhouse in Sugar Hill, established in 1897, represents one of New Hampshire's earliest golf courses, with its 1900 clubhouse being a rare example of early golf architecture. These additions aim to celebrate and preserve New Hampshire's historic resources, and property listing in the State Register does not place restrictions on owners. Visit nhdhr.dncr.nh.gov.

Child care

On Feb. 5, U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen visited Easterseals New Hampshire Child Development Center in Manchester to discuss the challenges of the child care crisis in the state, particularly issues related to access and staffing. According to a press release, this visit follows New Hampshire's loss of nearly 1,500 child care slots since 2019 due to pandemic-related closures. Sen. Shaheen has been involved in advocating for child care solutions, urging Congress to approve a \$16 billion funding request for child care stabilization grants and securing federal funding through the American Rescue Plan. She has supported legislation such as the Child Care Stabilization Act, the Child Care for Working Families Act, and the Childcare Workforce and Facilities Act, and contributed to increased funding for child care

On Thursday, Feb. 8, from 5 to 7 p.m., the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, at 54 Hanover St., Manchester, will host an exhibition showcasing the works of Jane Kaufmann. According to a press release, this event, celebrating the one-year anniversary of art installations at the Chamber's Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Boardroom, will feature Kaufmann's artistic journey over 45 years, highlighting her innovative use of materials like cloth and cardboard. The exhibition, a collaboration with curator Yasamin Safarza-deh and Positive Street Art, is free to the public, and attendees will have the opportunity to purchase Kaufmann's artwork and enjoy light refreshments.

New Hampshire residents pursuing post-secondary education in medicine, nursing or social work are invited to apply for the Yarnold Scholarship. Funded by a trust established by **Rollinsford** couple Alice M. Yarnold and Samuel Yarnold, scholarships are awarded to 30 to 40 students each year in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000, according to a press release. Interested students may call Yarnold Scholarship administrative representative Laura Ramsdell at 766-9121 to receive an application.



Frederick's Pastries in **Amherst** has been named a winner of The Knot Best of Weddings 2024, an award that honors top local wedding professionals as rated by real couples on The Knot. Frederick's Pastries, known for collaborating with couples to create custom wedding centerpieces, stood out among thousands of vendors within The Knot's extensive Vendor Marketplace, which serves as a comprehensive guide for couples looking to book wedding services.

initiatives in the fiscal year 2023 government funding bill.

Awardee sought

Granite VNA is inviting nominations for the 25th annual Kay Sidway Award until Feb. 16. According to a press release, this accolade recognizes an individual's commitment to the well-being of children and families within the 82 communities served by Granite VNA in New Hampshire. Established in 1998 and named after educator Kay Sidway, the award

celebrates those who have made significant contributions to improving quality of life, health and education for children and families in central New Hampshire and the Lakes Region. Nominees should exemplify leadership, community health and well-being, meaningful contributions to families and collaboration with local agencies. The recipient will be honored an event on May 1 at the Barn at Bull Meadow in Concord. Nominations can be made through Granite VNA's website at granitevna.org/passionforaring.



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Art and wellness

A talk with the new director of the NH State Council on the Arts

Adele Bauman, who recently transitioned from the New Hampshire Division of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to become the director of the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, shared insights into her career shift, her plans for utilizing the arts to bolster New Hampshire communities and her major goals for the Council, and offered some advice for aspiring artists in the state.

Q: What made you switch from health and human services to the arts sector?

The arts became a part of my life in childhood. They remained a parallel passion throughout my adult life. I worked as a studio photographer and graphic designer prior to my joining NH DHHS. I had been with NH DHHS for almost 16 years when this opportunity arose at the NHSCA. I found myself leaping for the chance to transfer my state level government skillset to a state arts agency. I also had a previous focus on service to New Hampshire's children and youth as a child protection service worker and then as an administrator at the Bureau for Children's Behavioral Health. My time at the



Adele Bauman. Courtesy photo.

NHSCA offers me the ability to think about ways to support New Hampshire's residents throughout their entire lifespan through the wellness the arts can bring to each of us.

How do you plan to use the arts to help New Hampshire communities?

The arts can provide wellness to our New Hampshire residents. Stronger individuals lead to stronger communities. Stronger communities lead to a stronger state. The arts can regenerate communities as well as provide opportunities for increased social connection, interface, collaboration and open-mindedness across populations regardless of race or socioeconomic status. Increased arts participation

among New Hampshire students could enhance academic performance, increase their chances for success after high school and encourage them to become more dynamically engaged with their communities through participation with such things as voting and volunteerism. The arts are a major player for increasing economic drivers within communities. Increasing access and equity within the arts literally translates into health benefits for the community, which has a positive impact on the quality of life for all residents. This is true whether one is creating or viewing the arts.

What is one major goal you have for the Arts Council?

My major goal is to continue to support and strengthen both the mission and vision of the NHSCA. The State Arts Council provides a wide variety of services, competitive grants and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations, schools, health care facilities and to individual artists with the intent to support the arts to thrive in New Hampshire and increase accessibility to all New Hampshire residents in all ages and stages of their lives.

Are there any specific groups or sectors you're looking forward to working with?

Not especially. I have been learning so much about New Hampshire in my first few months of work. Seeing New Hampshire through the lens of our many local artists and art organizations fills me with so much pride and hope for what lays ahead.

How has your personal interest in art influenced your approach to this role?

In the same way that I could never fully put my camera down, I cannot take the 'social worker' out of who I am. Educating myself about how the arts impact wellness for humans of all ages drives my work. My wish is for all individuals to welcome the arts into their lives. The benefits are there to support and offset some of the more challenging aspects of our daily lives.

What's one piece of advice you'd give to aspiring artists in New Hampshire?

We all need you to keep creating, whether we all know it yet or not. Your dedication and hard work makes us all stronger.

— Angie Sykeny 🗨️



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Big game kicks off at 6:30 p.m. Sunday



The Big Story – The Tom Brady Super Bowl:

Even though the great man is retired, Sunday's Big Game between the Chiefs and 49ers is still sorta the Tom Brady SB without him even playing. It features

Patrick Mahomes, who's likely going to break all Brady's passing records someday. And after being drafted lower than TB-12's 199 slot, 2022's Mr. Irrelevant Brock Purdy is taking his team to the Super Bowl in his second season just as Brady did. So the game's top storyline is this: Will today's top QB take another step toward Brady's seemingly untouchable record total of seven by winning his third SB? Or will Purdy's Cinderella story match Brady by winning his first in his Year 2? We'll know on Sunday night.

Sports 101: Only two players have won championships in two different professional sports. Who are they? Hint: One won one of his playing for the Celtics.

News Item – Theo Epstein is Back at Fenway: Everyone is hoping that means as overlord of Fenway Park. But it's as senior advisor to what John Henry values more than the Red Sox these days, his Fenway Sports Group investment arm. But at a time when co-owner Tom Werner builds ridiculous expectations by saying the rebuild will go "full throttle" this winter and then pass off last week's signing of 29-year-old reclamation project Melvin Adón as "exciting" after posting a 7.56 ERA with a 2.10 WHIP and .297 batting average against last year in SF because he hits 100 mph on the gun, any news of Theo being close to JH is welcome to a desperate Red Sox Nation.

News Item – Sports Word of the Week: Disgraceful, used to describe the completely unprofessional state of mental readiness and contemptible lack of effort put forth by the Celtics in a 114-105 loss last week to the undermanned L.A. Lakers playing without LeBron James and Anthony Davis. The best evidence for their "who gives a bleep" attitude was their mindlessly turning it over nine times in the first quarter.

The Numbers:

... Of the Week Awards

Why Can't We Get Guys Like That Award – Joe Thuney: The guard the Pats cheaped out on in free agency a few years back, sending him to KC, where he made first team All-Pro this year thanks to leading all linemen with an astonishing 99.1 pass block win rate. Though ironically, the

incredibly durable Thuney may miss the SB with a pectoral tear.

Nikki Haley Was 100% Correct Award: As if we needed more evidence of what a fool Vivek Ramaswamy is, now we have his conspiracy theory about the Taylor Swift-Travis Kelce romance being part of a plot that involves fixing the NFL playoffs to make sure her boyfriend's team got to the Super Bowl so a presidential endorsement of Joe Biden during the halftime show would have the biggest possible TV audience. It's so idiotic it backs up Gov. Haley saying in the first GOP debate, "Every time I hear you I feel a little bit dumber."

Thumbs Down – Joe Mazzulla: It's one thing to back your players against an unfair media assault, but to stand up against their, ah, effort being called "embarrassing" by calling that reaction "disrespectful" to a team that clearly mailed in it should be embarrassing to Joe. While losing the locker room is a way to get fired, a quicker way is to let non-efforts like that utter embarrassment slide.

Random Thoughts: Reminder to folks saying Coach B should take a year off to decompress. Moot now, but that's what people said Andy Reid should do after he bounced out in Philadelphia. Instead he went to KC, where he's won less than 10 games just once in 10 years, while winning two SB's, and he'll be in the big game Sunday for the fourth time in five years.

Sports 101 Answer: The dual title winners are Gene Conley and Otto Graham. Conley pitched for the champion 1957 Milwaukee Braves and won three times as Bill Russell's backup with the Celtics. For Graham it was for the Cleveland Browns and Rochester Royals of the NBL, which merged with the Basketball Association of America the next year to form the larger NBA.

A Little History – Otto Graham: He took Cleveland to the championship game 10 times from 1946 to 1955, winning seven times to set the mark TB matched. Except he only played 10 years to Brady's 23. His winning 81 percent (103-17-6) is the highest winning percentage in NFL history, as is his 8.63 yards career yards per pass attempt. So is Brady the G.O.A.T. or is it Otto?

Final Thought – Super Bowl Prediction: When the young Brady won his first SB he faced football's best QB in Kurt Warner. That mirrors Purdy's task and since he'll get more time to throw from his OL than Mahomes will from his patched up group, I'll go with the younger Brady version in a, ah, Taylor-made SF win over KC: 27-23. Email Dave Long at dlong@hippopress.com.

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NEWS & NOTES

QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

Child care aid

The New Hampshire Department of Health of Human Services (DHHS) has launched "Child Care Accelerate," an 8-week business support initiative designed to aid child care providers in the state. According to a press release, the program, created in collaboration with Seed Collective, aims to help these providers improve their business operations and financial management to ensure their long-term viability and to enhance the availability of quality child care. Participants will have the chance to apply for the Opportunities to Succeed (OTS) grant, supported by \$5 million from American Rescue Plan Act Discretionary funds, to fund projects like facility improvements. This initiative is a continuation of the state's efforts to utilize \$29.7 million in ARPA-D funds for critical needs within the child care sector, which includes various capacity-building and workforce expansion projects.

QOL score: +1

Comment: *Since March 2020, more than \$150 million in federal relief funds has been invested in the New Hampshire child care system.*

UNH deadline extension

Students and their families will have more time to make decisions about their higher education, as the University of New Hampshire (UNH) has extended the application deadline for the 2024-25 academic year. This change comes in response to recent updates to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), providing applicants with a buffer to understand their financial aid options fully.

QOL score: +1

Comment: *Despite the challenges posed by the FAFSA changes, the university has noted an increase in applications.*

Sewage in the river

The Merrimack River faced a significant environmental challenge last year, as around 2 billion gallons of raw sewage mixed with stormwater runoff entered the river, surpassing previous sewer overflow records, NHPR reported. This increase is attributed to factors such as climate change impacts, increased rainfall and ongoing riverfront development. Outdated combined sewer systems struggled to handle heavy rain, leading to untreated sewage entering the river. Sewer overflow advisories were in place for 39 days during June and July. Approximately 500,000 to 700,000 people rely on the Merrimack River for drinking water.

QOL score: -2

Comment: *Manchester, one of the most affected areas, is working on a project aimed at reducing sewer overflows into the river, estimated to cost over \$300 million and extend over two decades.*

QOL score: 55

Net change: 0

QOL this week: 55

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



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THIS WEEK

BIG EVENTS

FEBRUARY 8 AND BEYOND



Thursday, Feb. 8

Dancing Queens, the Ultimate ABBA Disco Tribute, begins its final weekend run tonight, with a show at 7:30 p.m. at the Palace Theatre (80 Hanover St. in Manchester; palacetheatre.org, 668-5588). Other shows this weekend include

Friday, Feb. 9, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 10, at 2 and 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 11, at 2 p.m. Tickets cost \$28 to \$49. Find Michael Witthaus' story about the show in the Jan. 25 issue of the Hippo at hippopress.com.

Friday, Feb. 9

Lotus Land, the American Rush tribute band, plays two nights at Tupelo Music Hall (10 A St. in Derry; tupelomusichall.com) — tonight and tomorrow

night, Saturday, Feb. 10, at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$39. Find more ticket concerts this weekend and beyond on page 42.

Saturday, Feb. 10

Looking for a new outdoor winter hobby? NH Audubon's Massabesic Center's (26 Audubon Way in Auburn; 668-2045, nhandubon.org) "**Beginner Bird Outing**" will be held today from 8:30 to 10 a.m. All ages and skill levels of birders are welcome, according to the website, where you can register for the class, which costs \$10 per person.

Saturday, Feb. 10

Join your fellow Swifties at "**Swift Me Away**," a dance party featuring the music (but not, it should be noted, the person) of Taylor Swift today at 8 p.m. at the Bank of New Hampshire Stage (16 S. Main St. in Concord; ccanh.com). Tickets cost \$21.75 (plus \$5 at the door).

Tuesday, Feb. 13

Learn about the plans of scientists and artists for the April 8 solar

eclipse at "Science on Tap: **Science in the Shadow of Eclipse 2024**" today at 6 p.m. at Stark Brewing Co. (500 Commercial St. in Manchester), an adult program presented by SEE Science Center. The event is free but advance registration is appreciated; go to see-sciencecenter.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 14

Catch a screening of the silent film **Speedy** (1928), a romantic comedy starring Harold Lloyd and featuring Babe Ruth and presented with live musical accompaniment by Jeff Rapsis, today at 7 p.m. at the

Rex Theatre (23 Amherst St. in Manchester; palacetheatre.org). Tickets cost \$10. Find more Valentine's Day and Galentine's Day special screenings in the film listings on page 35. 🗨️



Save the Date! Saturday, April 6

Comedian Preacher Lawson comes to the Nashua Center for the Arts (201 Main St. in Nashua; nashuacenterforthearts.com) on Saturday, April 6, at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$29 to \$49. Find videos of his comedy via preacherlawson.com.

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Cook FOR YOUR Valentine

HOW TO IMPRESS WITH FANCY EATS, COZY EATS AND A DECADENT DESSERT

By John Fladd
food@hippopress.com

Generally speaking, as a grownup on Valentine's Day, you have four paths open to you:

(1) Sitting alone on your couch, in the dark, eating ice cream and watching kung fu movies. This will seem very familiar, as this was probably how you spent New Year's Eve a few weeks ago.

(2) If you are young, enthusiastic and employed, there are Champagne, jewelry and optimistically intimate undergarments. These are grand, romantic gestures. They are undeniably effective, but also set expectations for the evening uncomfortably high, and at the same time make you look bad on the next gift-giving holiday, when you aren't so demonstrative. It's a risk.

(3) If you are older, and somewhat trampled upon by Life, there is the panicked last-minute purchase of traditional gestures of romance — grocery store roses (\$15), a heart-shaped box of chocolates from the drug store (\$25 for a big one), or getting a heart tattooed on your butt, with your loved one's name on it (around \$150, plus tip).

(4) Or, if you have been with your loved one for a while, a greeting card and dinner. This has some advantages:

(a) Nobody expects anything profound on a card. You can buy a generically romantic or even blank one, then look up a poem on the internet and copy a couple of stanzas into the card. Don't try to take credit for good poetry. Cite your source, and you'll look classy. Alternatively, you can try to be funny. Your joke might not go over, but you will still get points for trying, even if you've drawn a zombie holding a bouquet of dead roses, with a caption that says, "I love you for your brain."

(b) Dinner is a winning strategy; we all like food. Even if you've been arguing with your loved one and things have been a little tense, we all have to eat sometime, and your sincere cooking gesture will not

go unappreciated.

So if you've decided to cook a Valentine's Day dinner, again, you have a few different approaches.

A FANCY DINNER

As Valentine's Day cooking goes, this is a big swing. If you pull it off, you will look confident and accomplished. If you and your dining companion are still getting to know one another, this will hint that you have hidden depths.

Even if things go spectacularly wrong — even if there are billows of smoke from the kitchen, even if the dog races through the living room with your main course in his mouth, even if you injure yourself dramatically in some way — you can smile gamely, wipe a tear from the corner of your eye, and ask, "How do you feel about pizza?" You will still come out ahead.

You want to cook something that is legitimately delicious, grown up, and impressive, but not actually very hard to make.

Steak

If your Valentine is a fan of red meat, this is the time to double down on a really good piece of beef. Here's the recipe for a truly excellent steak:

Go to a real butcher. Describe how you'd like your evening to go. He or she will show you some steaks. To you, they will look like most of the meat in the case. Trust the professional. Say, "Yes, please," then ask them how to cook it. They know meat better than you ever will. Write down their directions, go home, and do what they told you to do.

This will be a Very Good Steak.

Chicken

If you are a strong and confident cook, roast a whole chicken. Stuff the cavity with lemon quarters and thyme, and baste it with olive oil and garlic.

If you aren't quite that confident, your best bet is Chicken Piccata.



Grilled portabella mushrooms, mashed potatoes, and grilled asparagus. Photo by John Fladd.

Chicken Piccata

2 skinless and boneless chicken breasts, butterflied and then cut in half — you can buy them this way at the grocery store
coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
all-purpose flour, for coating
6 Tablespoons ($\frac{3}{4}$ stick) butter
5 Tablespoons (3 big glugs) olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (75 grams) fresh squeezed lemon juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (113 g) chicken stock
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (55 g) brined capers, rinsed
chopped parsley for garnish

Season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper. Coat them with flour, dusting off the excess.

Fry the chicken over medium heat in 4

tablespoons of the butter and the olive oil, until both sides are golden brown, about three minutes per side. Remove the chicken and set aside.

Add the lemon juice, chicken stock and capers to the pan and bring to a boil, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pan to get all the little bits of fried chicken — if you want to impress people, call this *fond* — and incorporate it into the sauce.

Return the chicken to the pan and give it a brief spa day in the sauce, five minutes or so.

Remove the chicken again. At this point it is probably getting confused and a little frustrated, trying to figure out what you want from it. Plate it with your apologies.

Add the last 2 tablespoons of butter to the



Sauce. Photo by John Fladd.



Grilled asparagus. Photo by John Fladd.

sauce and whisk it vigorously, like it owes you money. Again, if you want to use a fancy cooking term, this is called *mounting* the sauce. If you tried to work that term into a joke later on, who could blame you? If you whisk briskly enough that your sauce doesn't break, you'll probably get away with making a *mounting* joke.

Pour the sauce — the *piccata* sauce — over the chicken, and top with the chopped parsley. Congratulations, you've made Chicken Piccata.

This is delicious. It is a classic but went out of style 20 or 30 years ago, so there's a good chance your dining companion hasn't heard of this before. The acid from the lemon juice plays off the bright, salty flavor of the capers. This would be a bit too sharp, but the butter has rounded off the edges and given the sauce a richness that complements the chicken. The effort-to-deliciousness ratio of this dish is excellent.

Vegetarian

Your best bet here is an omelet or roasted portabella mushrooms. The mushrooms will have a rich flavor and a meaty texture. The eggs are dependably delicious and look good on the plate. If you mess them up it will only take a couple of minutes to redo them.

Grilled Asparagus

Some people find asparagus intimidating. Cooked properly it is probably the easiest vegetable to cook. It looks good on the plate. It tastes good and establishes your grown-up credentials.

Buy a bunch of baby asparagus, the pencil-thin ones.

Rinse the stalks, then break off the woody base of each spear. Bend it like you are going to break it in half. Surprisingly, it won't actually break halfway across the spear, but toward the end, where it starts to get woody.

Soak the stalks in bottled balsamic vinaigrette for about an hour.

Spread the asparagus on a baking sheet, then broil it in the oven under high heat for about four minutes, until it looks cooked and the vinaigrette looks foamy.

That's it. It is incredibly easy. The asparagus actually tastes like something, unlike when you were a child and one of your relatives boiled it for an hour or so. This is a sophisticated side dish.

Your Starch

Two straightforward side dishes are mashed potatoes and couscous.

The secret to excellent mashed potatoes is boiling the potatoes until they start to fall apart. Drain them, then return them to the pot and stir them to dry them out. They will continue to fall apart. When they look dry — well, drier — mash them with a potato masher, then add a truly injudicious amount of butter and cream. Season it, and again you look like a pro. If nothing else goes right tonight, good mashed potatoes will save you.

On the other hand, there's couscous. It looks like rice. It's faster and easier than rice. It's not rice. Mix dry couscous with an equal amount of boiling water or broth and a little butter. Cover it and leave it alone for seven minutes. Stir it with a fork and boom, you've cooked couscous, baby!

A COMFORT FOOD DINNER

Valentine's Day comfort tastes delicious, is bad for you and doesn't have to be paired with *anything*. However, here are some notes.

Grilled Cheese Sandwich

Don't believe what anybody has told you: Do *not* spread mayonnaise on the bread instead of butter. No, it is not "just as good." Try to remember to leave but-

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Toasted ravioli. Photo by John Fladd.

ter out in the morning to soften up. Make sure you thoroughly butter each exterior side of the sandwich before you grill it in a pan. Fancy cheese doesn't make for a better grilled cheese. Don't let anyone shame you out of using American, if that's how you roll. Cheddar or pepper jack are always good. Edam is about as fancy as you want to go. Serve your sandwich with a crunchy pickle.

Tater Tots

Don't try to save time or energy by using your air fryer. That's fine 364 days a year, but on Valentine's Day, actually bake your Tater Tots in the oven. Cook them on a wire cooling rack that you've placed inside a baking sheet. This will let the hot air get to all sides of the Tots, and you won't have to flip them halfway through cooking.

Toasted Ravioli or Pierogi

Don't worry about thawing or pre-cooking them. Fry them — frozen — in butter over medium-low heat. By the time they are golden brown on both sides, the insides will be warm and creamy. If you're making pierogi, spend 20 minutes beforehand and caramelize some onions to go with them.

Buttered Noodles

Follow the instructions on the box. Boil the pasta for that long; don't depend on your memory. Drain it and add real, full-fat, salted butter. I recommend radiatori, but you know what kind of noodle your loved one likes. If you don't, you need to do some hard thinking about your place in the World.

A DECADENT DESSERT

Maybe you want to make some kind of romantic gesture but you'd really rather not make a huge production out of it. There is a middle ground: a decadent dessert — something rich and chocolatey. You want it to be a celebration, just not with trumpets and confetti — maybe something you can share with the lights low and the music romantic.

Ultra-Rich Brownies with Malted Ice Cream & Homemade Chocolate Sauce

The Brownies

6 ounces (1½ of the big bars you find at the supermarket) 99 percent dark or unsweetened chocolate, broken up
18 Tablespoons (2¼ sticks) butter
4 eggs
2½ cups (495 g) sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon salt
1¾ cups (210 g) all-purpose flour
Preheat the oven to 350°F.
Butter a 9"x 9" baking pan, and line it with parchment paper.

Melt the chocolate and butter together in the microwave. Heat them in a plastic or glass bowl for 30 seconds, stir, then microwave them for another 20 or 30 seconds, stir, then another 15 or so, until they have melted and combined. Set aside.

With an electric beater or in a stand mixer, beat the eggs, sugar, vanilla and salt at high speed for three minutes, until the mixture is extremely light and creamy. There isn't any leavener in this recipe, so the air you beat in now will do any raising these brownies get.

Turn down the speed on your mixer, and blend in the chocolate mixture. Wish it luck and Godspeed. Salute it, if you feel so inclined.

At very slow speed, add the flour, a couple of spoonfuls at a time. More flour or a higher speed will cover you with flour.

When the flour is completely mixed in, stop the mixer. Stir the mixture once or twice with a rubber spatula to make sure everything gets combined thoroughly, then pour the batter into your prepared pan.

Bake for 45 to 55 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean.

Set aside to cool.

The Ice Cream

Plain, store-bought vanilla ice cream is just about perfect for this dish. If you wanted to go a step further — make a semi-grand gesture, perhaps — homemade malted milk ice cream might be 10 percent more delicious.

3 cups (680 g) half-and-half
¾ cup (106 g) malted milk powder
3 egg yolks
½ cup (99 g) sugar
¼ cup (53 g) brown sugar
1 Tablespoon vanilla

Heat the half-and-half and malted milk powder, stirring, over medium heat until it comes to a simmer.

In a separate bowl, mix the egg yolks and sugars together.

When the cream has come to a simmer, very, very slowly pour it into the egg mixture, stirring vigorously. You're adding the



Ultra-rich brownies with malted ice cream and homemade chocolate sauce. Photo by John Fladd.

cream slowly to keep it from scrambling the eggs.

When everything is mixed together, return it to the saucepan and heat it again until it has thickened slightly. If you are keeping track of the temperature, this will be at around 175°F.

Remove your ice cream base from the heat, and strain it into a one-quart container. Let it cool, then stir in the vanilla, and store, covered, in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight. It has had a traumatic day. Say something comforting to it as you close the refrigerator door.

When the ice cream base has thoroughly chilled, churn it in your ice cream maker, according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Transfer the soft ice cream to a container, then put it in your freezer to harden up.

This is a delicious, fairly subtly flavored ice cream that will complement the rich chocolate in the brownie and the chocolate sauce.

The Chocolate Sauce

1 cup (250 g) water
½ cup (160 g) corn syrup
½ cup (100 g) sugar
¾ cup (75 g) unsweetened cocoa powder
½ cup (2 ounces, 55 g) chocolate chips

In a small saucepan, combine everything but the chocolate chips. The cocoa is hydrophobic, which makes it sound like it has rabies, but that just means that it doesn't like to mix with water. It will take some energetic whisking and a stern look to bring everything together.

Keep whisking the sauce over medium heat, until it just starts to boil. Remove it from the heat and whisk in the choco-

late chips. They will melt and incorporate within a few seconds.

Let the sauce sit for an hour or two to thicken and for the ingredients to get to know each other. Let's face it; you forced the issue with your whisking. It's only fair to give everyone time to calm down and settle in.

This is not an overly sweet chocolate sauce. It's definitely a dessert sauce, but there's a seriousness about it. It tastes like chocolate, not like candy. You may have noticed that there is no vanilla in the ingredients; that would have rounded out the edges of the chocolate and given it a mellowness. Without it, this sauce is a handsome man in a dark suit.

Putting It All Together

It's pretty straightforward. Plate a brownie, top it with slightly more ice cream than you might think, and spoon your homemade chocolate sauce on top. You might want to heat the brownie for a few seconds in the microwave, but just until it is gently warm, not hot and gooey. That's for another occasion.

This dessert is all about contrast. There are chocolate purists who insist that you should use all chocolate — the brownie, the ice cream and the sauce — chocolate, chocolate, chocolate. That would be too much here. The brownie and the sauce are two shades of very serious chocolate. They need vanilla or malted ice cream to stand out and show off their depth.

A note: These are extremely dense and rich brownies. For Valentine's Day, especially if you're sharing, go ahead and plate a conventional-size serving. Even the two of you might not finish it — it's that rich — but this dessert is a Medium Dramatic



Romantic cocktail. Photo by John Fladd.

Gesture (MDG), so now is not the time to start being practical. When you eat the rest of the brownies over the next few days, you'll probably want to cut them into 1½-inch squares.

A ROMANTIC COCKTAIL

In the end, love is tricky. Sometimes it sneaks up on you; you wake up one morning and realize that you've fallen like a 50-pound sack of cement. Sometimes it hits you between the eyes instantly — again, like a sack of cement. Sometimes it consumes you, filling every cell with fire and bubbles. But not cement.

So how do you express that? Love letters? Fighting a duel? A prenuptial agreement?

This year Valentine's Day falls on a Wednesday. That doesn't leave much opportunity to express what's in your heart.

But a good cocktail might be a good symbolic gesture.

Unnamed Valentine's Day Cocktail

3 ounces dry gin – a botanical gin might seem like an obvious choice for this, but you don't want to muddy the other ingredients; a crisp London-style gin like Fords is just right for this

1 ounce fresh squeezed lime juice
1 ounce elderflower liqueur – I like St. Germain

3 drops rose water – as you add this, it won't seem like enough, but three drops is just about exactly the right amount; you

just want a subtle back-note of roses, you don't want this to be too perfumey.

Several ounces of Asti spumante – you'll be tempted to go up-market on this, to break out your expensive bubbly, but the spumante brings a sweetness that really adds to the finished cocktail. If this cocktail goes over well enough, you can save the Dom for another occasion.

In a cocktail shaker, combine the gin, lime juice, elderflower liqueur, and rose water over ice. Shake for 30 seconds.

Strain into two cocktail glasses, and top with spumante.

Drink together while listening to Frank Sinatra's cover of "Fly Me to the Moon." Warning: This might lead to dancing.

The gin is the driver of this particular limousine. The spumante and the elderflower are the couple in the back seat saying, "Keep your eyes on the road, Fords."

"Yes, ma'am," Fords says.

The wine is what you notice in the front end, but with a floral aftertaste. This is not an overly boozy cocktail. (With that said, three of these could lead to questionable decision-making, which in a Valentine's Day context might be just what you're looking for.)

After all, isn't that what Love is? The triumph of the heart over common sense?

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Not all hearts and flowers

Mosaic Art Collective takes on Valentine's Day

By Michael Witthaus
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In its latest month-long themed exhibition, Mosaic Art Collective in Manchester turns to matters of the heart; fitting, given Valentine's Day falls in the middle of February. However, the pieces submitted thus far — photos, sculptures, paintings and prints — cover the spectrum of emotions, and the depth of feelings.

"It's not just lovey-dovey," Mosaic's founder and president Liz Pieroni said by phone recently. "I would say the ones that are depicting heartache are more definitely gripping." One example of this is "Release," a jarring graphite-on-paper drawing by Jaida Mei that depicts a woman facing a powerful wind that's literally tearing her up.

"This is a new artist to us, so I haven't met them," Pieroni said, calling Mei's work "really, really powerful and almost a little bit scary, almost surreal."

More playful is "The Love Letter," from New Hampshire Institute of Art graduate

All Heart Statuses

Where: Mosaic Art Collective, 66 Hanover St., Suite 201, Manchester
When: Through Wednesday, Feb. 28 (opening reception Saturday, Feb. 10, at noon

Andrew Freshour. The ink and watercolor print is reminiscent of a Tomie dePaola illustration. It shows a royal coach carried by two dogs in powder wigs. "It's about self-love, self-indulgence ... living your most authentic life," Pieroni opined, calling its style "like a fairy tale but also very over the top ... kind of like the Muppets meet real life."

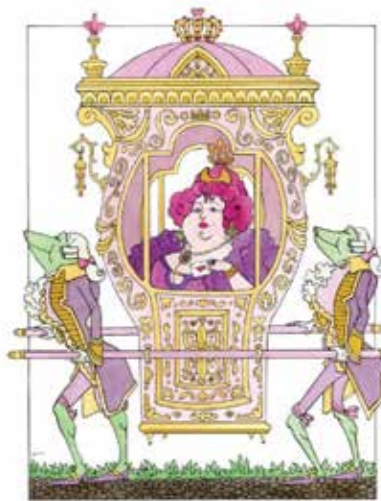
Yes, there are flowers as well, Pieroni continued.

"We also have some beautiful botanical paintings that are probably more palatable to some people, they're just really beautiful," she said. "Red Between the Lines," from Manchester painter Susanne Larkham, is a zoomed-in pastel of a rose in many shades of red. Jonathan Pereira's "Love in the Form of Time and Growth," on the other hand, is multicolored and brimming with childlike innocence.

More submissions are expected for the open call event, Pieroni continued.

"We don't really know what we're going to get until the night before we select pieces," she said, adding that invitational shows like the one in March with Manchester high school students to celebrate Youth Art Month are more predictable.

A Hooksett native and an artist herself, Pieroni moved back home from Vermont in the wake of the pandemic. "I have three small kids, [and] after homeschooling and



"The Love Letter" by Andrew Freshour. Courtesy photo.

trying to figure out all that, we were really in need of a little bit more help ... and we wanted to be closer to family," she said.

Searching for a gallery and realizing that the closest ones were either on the Seacoast or in Boston, she opened Mosaic Art Collective in September 2022.

"I was searching for a place to show my work locally, but I also needed an art studio," she said. "I felt like I couldn't be the only one in that same boat; ultimately, I was correct."

Recently Mosaic began offering live music, and Pieroni is planning more.

"We're trying to open up the gallery as much as possible," she said. "The music event was one way, but then we're also offering art talks. The Struggle Bus improv group did a performance here, and we also have run some workshops. We're trying to



"Love in the Form of Time and Growth" by Jonathan Pereira. Courtesy photo.

find different ways of bringing people in, for all sorts of reasons."

Art is available for purchase at Mosaic; some pieces can be acquired for as little as \$36.

"The majority of things that we hang on the wall are under \$500 typically, so they're pretty reasonably priced," Pieroni said. "Ultimately, you're supporting a local artist, so you get good-person points."

She urged anyone with uncertainty about ownership to consider Mosaic.

"Our biggest challenge is trying to bring people in who maybe haven't purchased art before or considered themselves as collectors," she said. "Finding those people and making it relevant to them and, also, a little less scary than walking into a gallery." 🌟

Art

Events

• **"ART CONVERSATIONS FROM HOME"** Zoom conversations about collections and current exhibitions at the the Currier Museum of Art (150 Ash St. in Manchester; currier.org) take place Wednesdays at 1 p.m., are free and last 30 minutes; registration is required (go online), the newsletter said.
• **DRAWING NIGHT** Two Villages Art Society's gallery (846

Main St. in Contoocook; two-villagesart.org) offers a series of free monthly drawing nights. Hosted by local artists Ty Meier and Jo Gubman, the events allow artists to work alongside peers and receive feedback if desired, according to the website. Bring your own art supplies.

• **FIBER ARTS** Derry Public Library (64 E. Broadway in Derry; 432-6140, derrypl.org) will hold a knitting/crochet meet-up every other Tuesday from 6 to

7:30 p.m. Bring a project to work on and talk with other crafters. Register online.

• **ARTIST CIRCLE** Two Villages Art Society (846 Main St. in Contoocook; two-villagesart.org) offers a monthly Artist Circle. Bring your work to have it critiqued or just enjoy conversation with fellow artists, the release said.

• **ART 'ROUND TOWN GALLERY WALK** The Portsmouth downtown area hosts the Art

'Round Town gallery walk on the first Friday of every month from 5 to 8 p.m. (14 Market Square). Explore the art scene in this creative historical community by visiting different art galleries downtown. Visit arroundtown.org.

Exhibits

• **"40 YEARS OF PLAY"** The Children's Museum of New Hampshire (6 Washington St. in Dover; childrens-museum.org) continues its "40 Years of Play" exhibit through Thursday, Feb. 29, in Gallery 6. The exhibition includes artwork, puppets and other items that look back at the museum's 40 years, including photographs, according to a press release. The museum and gallery are open Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to noon; Wednesdays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m., and Sundays from 9 a.m. to noon. You don't have to pay admission to visit the gallery; to visit the museum as well, reserve a play slot online. Admission costs \$12.50 for everyone over 12 months, \$10.50 for 65+.

• **"WE ARE WATER"** Works by painter Sharyn Paul will be on display through February at The Art Center (1 Washington St. in Dover; theartcenteronlinegallery.com). For a look at Paul's work, see sharynpaul.com. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
• **"NATURE IN FOCUS: IMAGES OF FLORA, FAUNA AND LANDSCAPES OF NEW ENGLAND"** will be on display at the McLane Center (84 Silk Farm Road in Concord; nhaudubon.org) Friday, March 8. The show features nature photography by Bob Fleck, a New Hampshire author and photographer, according to a press release. Visit the exhibition Tuesdays through Fridays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
• **"PHOTO AS CANVAS"** a show featuring the digital artwork of photographer Dean Scott of Exeter, will run at the Seacoast Artist Association (130 Water St. in Exeter; seacoastartist.org) through Sunday, Feb. 25, according to a press release. An artist

reception will be held on Friday, Feb. 9, from 5 to 7 p.m. as part of the Second Friday Artwalk and will feature SAA exhibiting artist Cheryl Sager and her husband, Neal Zweig, in a Valentine concert, the release said.

• **"SEA CREATURES"** At the Seacoast Artist Association (130 Water St. in Exeter; seacoastartist.org), Cleo Huggins' show of oil paintings "Sea Creatures" will run through Sunday, Feb. 25, according to a release. Huggins will also be at an artist reception Feb. 9, from 5 to 7 p.m., which will feature a raw bar provided by Huggins and her husband, according to the release.

• **"BLOSSOMING BEYOND,"** an exhibition that "showcases work that embodies the resilience, strength and beauty of both the natural world and the LGBTQ+ community," according to queerlective.com, at the New Hampshire Audubon Massabesic Center (26 Audubon Way in Auburn). The exhibit will be on display through Saturday, March 30.

• **"TOWARD THE NEW: A**

MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION

Celebrate Mardi Gras (Tuesday, Feb. 13) with a performance by the Soggy Po Boys at the Rex Theatre (23 Amherst St. in Manchester; palacetheatre.org) on Saturday, Feb. 10, at 7:30 p.m. The show will feature New Orleans-style jazz, Caribbean music, funk, soul and brass band/street beat music, according to the website. Tickets cost \$29.



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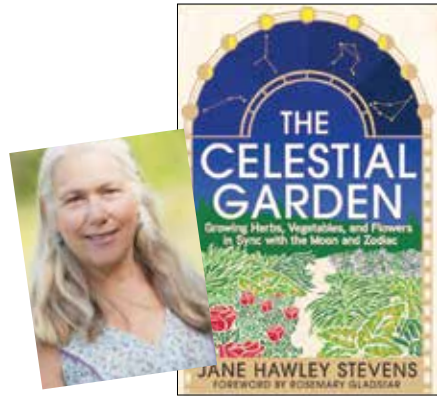
The latest from NH's theater, arts and literary communities

• **Own an original Tomie dePaola:**

The Currier Museum of Art (150 Ash St. in Manchester; Currier.org, 669-6144) is selling 200 tickets at \$50 each for a raffle of two original artworks by artist, author and illustrator Tomie dePaola. The sale runs through Feb. 29. See the website for a look at the pieces being raffled and to purchase tickets. The funds raised support the Tomie dePaola Art Education Fund, which was "created by the Currier in Tomie's memory" and "awards scholarships to lower-income families and disadvantaged youth, allowing them to participate in our classes and camps throughout the year," according to the website.

• **Save the date for Chris Bohjalian:**

Author Chris Bohjalian will discuss his new novel *The Princess of Las Vegas* and more at the Bank of NH Stage (16 S. Main St. in Concord; ccanh.com) on Wednesday, March 27, at 7 p.m. The event is part of Authors on Main and is a collaboration



Author Jane Hawley Stevens will discuss her book at Gibson's Bookstore. Courtesy photos.

between Gibson's Bookstore, New Hampshire Public Radio and the Capitol Center for the Arts and will feature Bohjalian in conversation with NHPR's Rick Ganley, according to a press release. Tickets cost \$39 (one admission and one hardcover copy of *The Princess of Las Vegas*) and \$49 (for two admissions and one book).

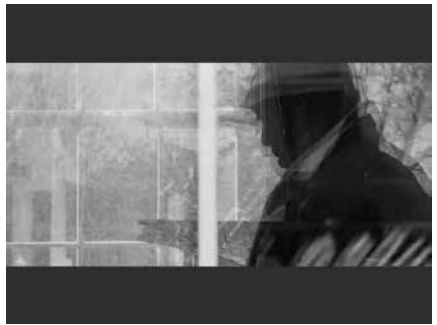
• **More coming up at Gibson's:**

Gibson's Bookstore (45 S. Main St. in Concord; gibsonsbookstore.com, 224-0562) has several author events coming up. On Tuesday, Feb. 20, at 6:30 p.m. Margo Cooper will discuss her book of photographs and interviews *Deep Inside the Blues* with Holly Harris, host of

WUMB's *Spinning the Blues*. On Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 6:30 p.m. Leila Philip will discuss her book *Beaverland: How One Weird Rodent Made America*. On Tuesday, Feb. 27, at 6:30 p.m., Matthew J.C. Clark, a Maine carpenter, will discuss *Bjarki, Not Bjarki: On Floorboards, Love, and Irreconcilable Differences*. On Wednesday, Feb. 28, at 6:30 p.m., Pembroke-based author Avree Kelly Cark will discuss her book *Malice Aforethought: A True Story of the Shocking Double Crime That Horrified Nineteenth-Century New England*. On Tuesday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m. author and gardener Jane Hawley Stevens will discuss her new book *The Celestial Garden: Growing Herbs, Vegetables and Flowers According to the Moon and Zodiac*. On Thursday, March 14, at 6:30 p.m. Casey Sherman will discuss her book *A Murder in Hollywood: The Untold Story of Tinseltown's Most Shocking Crime*.

• **New exhibit:**

Mariposa Museum & World Culture Center (26 Main St. in Peterborough; 924-455, mariposamuseum.org) features an exhibit from New Hampshire photographer Becky Field called "Crying in the Wilderness" that illustrates "the physical and emotional toll of immigrant detention," according to a press release. The exhibit features the story of an African man who sought asylum



Photograph by Becky Field from *Crying in the Wilderness*.

in the U.S. in 2018 and moved in 2020 to the Seacoast, where his movements were tracked via an ankle monitor, according to a press release. Admission to the museum costs \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors. The exhibit will be on display through Sunday, April 14. The museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

• **On display in Rochester:**

The Rochester Museum of Fine Arts (rochester-mfa.org) exhibition "Neither Created Nor Destroyed" featuring works by Julie K. Gray is on display in the Bernier Room at the James W. Foley Memorial Community Center (150 Wakefield St. in Rochester) through Friday, March 1. The building is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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ARTS

JOURNEY INTO ABSTRACTION at the Currier Museum of Art (150 Ash St. in Manchester; currier.org, 669-6144) through March 31. The Currier is open Wednesday and Friday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursday, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (with Art After Work, when admission is free, from 5 to 8 p.m.). Admission costs \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors and students, \$5 for youth ages 13 through 17, and is free for children under age 13.

Workshops and classes
• **TAX WORKSHOP** Queerlective (queerlective.com) will present "Taxes for Artists, Freelancers, and Creative Businesses with Hannah Cole," a virtual workshop, on Thursday, Feb. 8, from 6 to 8 p.m. See bit.ly/taxes4artists to register; the workshop is free with a suggested donation of \$15.

Theater

Shows
• **DANCING QUEENS:** The Ultimate ABBA and Disco Tribute runs through Sunday, Feb. 11, at the Palace Theatre (80 Hanover St. in Manchester; palacetheatre.org, 668-5588) with shows at 7:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, plus Thursday, Feb. 8, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$28 to \$49.
• **I SEE NO ARLECCHINO** The Players' Ring Theatre (105 Marcy St. in Portsmouth; playersring.org) will present an original commedia dell'arte running through Sunday, Feb. 11. Showtimes will be Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 2:30 and 7:20 p.m., and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. According to a press release: "Jessica Miller, a cast member ..., described commedia as a 'highly physical slapstick comedy with a cast of stock characters ... lovers, the old miser, etc.'" "I like to think of it as a live-action cartoon with a very thin, if at all existent, fourth wall," Miller said according to the release. "It's pure, raucous comedy." Admission costs \$28, \$25 for students and 65+.
• **CHILDREN OF EDEN** will run

at the Seacoast Repertory Theatre (125 Bow St. in Portsmouth; seacoastrep.org, 433-4472), through Sunday, Feb. 25. The website describes the production as "the story of Genesis from Adam and Eve through Noah" and a "compelling blend of theater and tech, where ancient stories meet modern possibilities." Tickets start at \$37. Shows are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.; Fridays at 8 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m.; Sundays at 8 p.m. and Wednesday, Jan. 31, at 7:30 p.m.

• **CUE ZERO CABARET** presented by Cue Zero Theatre (cztheatre.com) with the theme of villains and anti-love songs takes place Friday, Feb. 9, at Arts Academy of New Hampshire (19 Keewaydin Drive, No. 4, in Salem).

• **BLANCHE AND STELLA** a play by A. A. Brenner presented as part of the "Expanding the Canon: A Play Reading Circle" by Theatre Kapow on Sunday, Feb. 11, at 2 p.m. See tkapow.com for details.

• **MAMMA MIA!** The Londonderry High School Drama Club will present *Mamma Mia!* Thursday, Feb. 15, through Saturday, Feb. 17, at 7 p.m. daily plus 1 p.m. on Saturday at the Derry Opera House (26 W. Broadway in Derry). Tickets to this show, which they rate as PG-13, cost \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors and students. See lancerdramaclub.org.

• **BEATING A DEAD HORSE** a comedy in which "two brothers on the brink of closing their failing pet funeral home ... until an eccentric, rich old lady offers them a fortune for the funeral of her nearly dead racehorse.... There's only one problem: the horse won't die," according to the Majestic Theatre website, will be presented by the Majestic (880 Page St. in Manchester; majestictheatre.net, 669-7469) on Friday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 17, at 2 & 7 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 18, at 2 p.m. Tickets cost \$15 to \$20.

• **WITNESS FOR THE PROSE-**

CUTION a play by Agatha Christie, is described as a "suspenseful thriller" about a man accused of murdering a rich widow, according to communityplayersofconcord.org, presented by the Community Players of Concord on Friday, Feb. 16, and Saturday, Feb. 17, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 18, at 2 p.m. Tickets cost \$20 for adults, \$18 for 65+ or 17 and under. See communityplayersofconcord.org.

• **ON THE EXHALE** presented by Theatre Kapow, will run at the Bank of NH Stage (16 S. Main St. in Concord; ccanh.com) on Friday, Feb. 16, at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 17, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 18, at 2 p.m. See tkapow.com.

• **HAMMERED: A THOR AND LOKI STORY** presented by the Peacock Players on Friday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 17, at 2 & 7 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 18, at 2 p.m. at the theater at 14 Court St. in Nashua. See peacockplayers.org.

Classical

• **VALENTINE'S CONCERT** at Concord Community Music School (23 Wall St. in Concord; ccmusicschool.org). Thursday, Feb. 8, at 12:10 p.m. called "Bach's Lunch: Share the Love Valentine's Day Concert with Peggo, Paul and Friends." The event is held in the Recital Hall and is free and open to the public, according to a newsletter.

• **MAHLER'S "RESURRECTION" SYMPHONY** will be presented by the New Hampshire Philharmonic on Sunday, Feb. 18, at 2 p.m. featuring choruses from Plymouth State University and Keene State University at Silver Center (114 Main St. in Plymouth). Tickets cost \$25 and \$30. The piece will also be performed at the Seifert Performing Arts Center (55 Geremonty Dr. in Salem) on Saturday, Feb. 24, and Sunday, Feb. 25, at 2 p.m. (with a streaming option for the Sunday show). Tickets cost \$35 for adults, \$30 for seniors and \$10 for students. See nhphil.org.



CIRQUE US

Circus company Cirque Us, featuring "acrobats, aerials and quirky clowns," will present *One Man's Trash* on Thursday, Feb. 22, at 7 p.m. at Stockbridge Theatre (44 N. Main St. in Derry; stockbridgetheatre.showare.com, 437-5210), according to a press release. Tickets cost \$22.

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 Combine all ingredients into a shaker with ice. Rim glass with caramel. Shake and strain into glass.

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1 oz. ChocoLat Deluxe White Chocolate Liqueur (NH#6011)
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INSIDE/OUTSIDE

Growing and eating cardoon

It's like an artichoke, but with more food per plant

By Henry Homeyer
listings@hippypress.com

— THE GARDENING GUY —

Most years I start some onion seeds and perhaps a few artichokes indoors in February; this year I will also start some cardoon seeds at the same time. Cardoon, which is a lovely-looking plant related to artichokes, is a delicious vegetable too.

Artichokes and cardoon are in the thistle family, and closely related. With artichokes, we eat the flower bud before it matures. The edible part of cardoon is the midrib of the long leaves, much as we eat the stalks of celery. But cardoon stalks are eaten cooked, not raw.

Since cardoon plants are rarely sold at garden centers, you may wish to buy some seeds now and plant them indoors in February. It grows best in full sun with rich soil and plenty of moisture. Like artichokes, cardoon seems to have few pests or diseases. It is also

a lovely decorative plant in the flower garden. It is a big plant that is vertical in growth habit and has silver-green leaves with toothed edges. You may need to stake it to keep it from encroaching on nearby plants.

Toward the end of the growing season and before it flowers, you must blanch the leaves before eating them. Blanch in this use means depriving them of light, not steaming them. In the Piedmont district of Italy (in the northwest part, near Turin) farmers do this by digging up cardoon before the first frost in the fall. They lay it in a trench and cover it with soil for 2 weeks to blanch it and give it a bittersweet flavor. Easier yet, according to the Johnny's Selected Seeds catalog, you can blanch the plants by wrapping them with several layers of newspapers (avoid colored print), enough to keep out the light. You don't dig them up to do that. By the way, I find I always learn something when I read the Johnny's catalog. The variety I ordered from Johnny's Seeds is called "Porto Spineless."

Cardoon is in the thistle family, and if you don't harvest the leaves it will eventually pro-

duce gorgeous purple flowers like those you see on wild thistle plants. I have read that if you are in Zone 6 or warmer, it will survive the winter just like a perennial flower — just cut it back, leaving the stubs of leaves at 10 inches.

In Italy there is a cardoon dish called "bagna cauda." It is to the people of the Piedmont what haggis is to the Scots. If you meet someone you like, you invite them over for a bagna cauda, which translates loosely as "hot bath." But cardoon goes in the bath, not people.

An evening with bagna cauda features a container of hot olive oil, an inch or two deep, with a whole head of thinly sliced garlic and a can or two of anchovies in it. It is brought to a simmer and kept simmering with a hot plate or flame. As with fondue, you spear food and cook it in the hot oil — the midribs are cut into 1-inch pieces for cooking. But the one key ingredient is always cardoon. Yes, there can be radishes, cubes of beef, celery and perhaps peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, mushrooms or fennel. But without cardoon, it is not a proper bagna cauda. It is good to add an occasional splash of red wine in the pot to keep the garlic and anchovies from burning. You need loaves of good French bread that you tear — not slice — into pieces and use to catch any drips of oil.

For the less adventurous and the garlic-averse, here is the recipe I adapted from Ellen Ogden's wonderful cookbook *From the Cook's Garden*:

- 1 pound cardoon stalks (1 plant), rinsed clean and towel-dried
- 3 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 Tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk, heated
- ½ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup dried bread crumbs



Cardoon with one of my shovels for size comparison. Photo by Henry Homeyer.

Preheat oven to 375°F, and warm an 8x11-inch baking dish, lightly buttered. Prepare midribs of leaves by cutting off the leaf portion and cutting into 4-inch pieces. Cook the cardoon by boiling in lightly salted water for 10 minutes or until tender. Melt butter and whisk in flour, cooking for two minutes. Gradually whisk in milk and bring to simmer. Remove from heat and stir in cheddar cheese. Add salt and pepper to taste. Spread bottom of baking dish with a little sauce, arrange half the stalks in dish, and cover with sauce and half the Parmesan cheese. Repeat and sprinkle with bread crumbs. Bake until top is lightly brown, about 20 minutes.

As much as I love artichokes, you really only get a few tablespoons of food from a plant that takes up a 2- or 3-foot square section of garden. Cardoon has a similar flavor, but you get enough from one plant to serve as a side dish for four people. And because it is so vertical, it takes up less space. It is a gorgeous foliage plant that can get to be 3 to 4 feet tall, so you can plant it in either the flower garden or the vegetable garden.

Part of the fun of gardening, for me, is in the eating. Fresh is better than store-bought. And for cardoon, growing your own is probably the only way to have some. So if you plan to start your own tomato seedlings indoors in April, why not start early with some cardoon?

Henry is the author of four gardening books. Reach him by e-mail at henry.homeyer@comcast.net. This winter his column will appear just once a month. 🍎

Spring flower shows

• Thursday, Feb. 22, through Monday, Feb. 25: **Connecticut Flower and Garden Show.** Connecticut Convention Center, Hartford. The biggest show in New England with plenty to learn and see. ctflowershow.com

• Friday, March 1, through Sunday, March 3: **New Hampshire Orchid Society Annual Show and Sale.** Courtyard Marriott, Nashua, New Hampshire. If you love orchids, this is a must-see. nhorchids.org

• Saturday, March 2, through Sunday, March 10: **Philadelphia Flower Show.** The biggest and oldest show of its kind in America. Go mid-week to enjoy smaller

crowds. Buy tickets in advance, as admission is less expensive that way. phsonline.org/the-flower-show

• Friday March 22, through Sunday, March 24: **Capital Region Flower and Garden Expo.** Hudson Valley Community College, Troy, New York. flowerandgardenexpo.com

• Thursday, April 4, through Sunday, April 7: **Rhode Island Home Show:** This home show includes two areas devoted to flowers, including the Federated Garden Clubs of Rhode Island competition. Ribahomeshow.com

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Long commutes require a reliable — and comfortable — car



By Ray Magliozzi

Dear Car Talk:

I love reading your column every week in the paper. Anyway, I got a new job that requires a long commute — 160 miles a day round trip.

I bought a new Toyota Crown because it gets 42 mpg using regular gas and is a great value. However, I've only had the car for two months and I'm already at 7,000 miles on the odometer. At this rate, I'll blow through the warranty quickly.

My question is this: Should I just keep driving this car until it's dead, or should I get a second used car in order to spread out the mileage? — Dan

You should drive it 'til the last letter of the "Toyota" badge falls off, Dan. And based on Toyota's reputation for quality, that could take quite a while.

I'm guessing that if you're driving 160 miles a day, a lot of that is highway driving. That's far easier on a car than stop-and-go city driving. So it wouldn't surprise me if you get 200,000 or 250,000 miles out of this thing. Maybe more. Especially if you take good care of it.

It doesn't make any sense to buy another used car just to keep the Crown's warranty in force longer. First of all, you'll be spending hours a day in that other used car. Wouldn't you rather spend all that time in your new Crown instead? Wouldn't that be more comfortable? More reliable? Wouldn't it cost less with its higher mpg? Wouldn't it have better Bluetooth so "Sleepy LaBeef's Greatest Hits" streams without dropouts?

If running out of warranty coverage is what's making you lose sleep, Dan, there's a better solution to that. Instead of spending money on a second car, spend it on an extended warranty for your new car. I believe Toyota has plans that cover you for up to 125,000 miles or 10 years. Or in your case, 125,000 miles or 15 minutes.

Still, that's a better solution than spending three hours a day in a 2003 Suzuki Esteem. And by the time the extended warranty runs out, you can get a job at the local Starbucks. Enjoy your new car, Dan.

Dear Car Talk:

I live in Fairbanks, Alaska. I drive a 2011 Chevrolet Silverado, 5.3 liter. I noticed the other day that the inside of the cab was not

heating up, despite driving for a while. I checked, and my antifreeze level was low, so I filled the reservoir to the "full" line.

I drove the truck this morning, and again, it was blowing cold air, even after 20 minutes of driving. I checked the reservoir, and it was down maybe an inch.

Then I noticed that while I was driving at speed, the heat would be sufficient, but when I stopped the truck to drop my daughter off at work, the air coming out of the vents got colder.

By the time I drove off again to go back home, the air was cold and wouldn't warm up again until I was about a mile down the road.

Do you think I have a bad water pump? What could cause my truck to go from hot to warm to cold after a brief stop, and then warm up again down the road? — Joyce

Have you considered relocating to Honolulu, Joyce? I feel certain this problem will bother you a lot less there.

Here's what's going on, Joyce: When you're low on coolant — or right on the borderline between OK and low — the speed of the engine can determine how much heat you get in the cabin.

How? The water pump (which circulates

the hot coolant) is driven by a belt from the engine. So the faster the engine turns, the more pressure the water pump produces.

If you're low on coolant, and the engine is idling, the pump may not produce enough pressure to push the coolant all the way to the heater core in the cabin. And if you don't get coolant to the cabin, you get no heat.

When you're driving along at a higher speed, the water pump is turning faster, and unless you're really low on coolant, that masks the problem, and the heat comes back.

So your problem, Joyce, is that you have a coolant leak. Unless there's a leak, you should never be low on coolant. What could be leaking? It certainly could be a water pump that's going bad. Your truck is the right age for that. But it could be a lot of things, from a leaking hose to a bad head gasket.

Have your mechanic pressure test your cooling system and see if he can figure out where the leak is. If it's a water pump, it'll probably set you back about \$400. If it's a head gasket, look at the apartment rental listings in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

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KIDDIE — POOL —

Family fun for whenever

Family shows

• Local family entertainer **Mr. Aaron** throws a **Valentine's Day Party** Saturday, Feb. 10, at 11 a.m. at the Bank of NH Stage (16 S. Main St. in Concord; ccanh.com). Tickets cost \$15.75. Give a listen to Mr. Aaron's music at mraaronmusic.com.

• See **Erth's Dinosaur Zoo**, an interactive show featuring live dinosaurs (operated by puppeteers) on stage, at the Capitol Center for the Arts' Chubb Theatre (44 S. Main St. in Concord; ccanh.com) on Saturday, Feb. 10, at 2 p.m. Tickets cost \$35.25 to \$48.25 (for an additional \$28.75, take part in a VIP meet and greet).

Free art

• Saturday, Feb. 10 features free admission for New Hampshire residents to the Currier Museum of Art (150 Ash St. in Manchester; currier.org, 669-6144) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., stop in at the **Creative Studio for family art fun**. Short family tours will be available in the galleries as well, according to the website.

Basketball weekend

• Catch the **Saint Anselm Hawks** this



Erth's Dinosaur Zoo.

weekend when both the men's (3:30 p.m.) and women's (1:30 p.m.) basketball teams take on the teams from Southern Connecticut State University at Stoutenburgh

Gymnasium (73 College Road on Saint Anselm College campus in Manchester). Tickets to either game cost \$10 (kids 5 and under get in free to regular season games) and are available for purchase starting one hour ahead of game time at the Gymnasium ticket booth. See saintanselmhawks.com. Both teams will also play the teams from the College of Saint Rose on Tuesday, Feb. 13; women's game starts at 5:30 p.m. and men's game starts at 7:30 p.m.

• At **Southern New Hampshire University**, the **Penmen** take on the Adelphi University Panthers with women's (1:30 p.m.) and men's (3:30 p.m.) basketball on Saturday, Feb. 10. The games take place at Stan Spiro Field House (at the Southern New Hampshire University campus, 2500 River Road in Manchester); regular season games are free to attend.

• Catch some mid-week basketball on Tuesday, Feb. 13, when the men's (5 p.m.) and women's (7 p.m.) **Rivier Raiders** teams play Mitchell College at Muldoon Fitness Center (440 Main St. in Nashua). See rivierathletics.com. 🍌

INSIDE/OUTSIDE TREASURE HUNT

Hello, Donna.

This quilt was given to my husband and me when we were married. It was a family piece so we kept it safe till today. Now we would like to use it and it's in need of some repair. Can you provide any information on a value and can it be reinforced for use on our bed?

Mary Anne



age, fine detailing, signatures and, as always, condition. A value to start with would be, it's safe to say, in the \$100 range in plain but good condition. Then it goes up from there for extra detailing.

As far as use, it's tough unless you remove it from the top of the bed daily. The trends are old and won't withstand night use. There are quilt repairers out there. I'm just not sure it would be cost-effective for hand work. You might just want to use it the way it is. Just decoratively and carefully.

I hope this was helpful, Mary Anne. Glad to see a family piece shared. Enjoy!

Donna Welch has spent more than 35 years in the antiques and collectibles field, appraising and instructing. Her new location is an **Antique Art Studio** located in Dunbarton, NH where she is still buying and selling. If you have questions about an antique or collectible send a clear photo and information to Donna at footwdw@aol.com, or call her at 391-6550. 🍌

Dear Mary Anne,

Your crazy quilt is most likely from the early 1900s, so wear from use is expected. Sometimes you can come across one that was never used, but not often. Crazy quilts were made mostly from scraps of a mixture of different materials with different colors, stitching, etc. Lots of them were made by a group effort of family, friends etc.

Some can be very plain with just stitching and others can have detail added in each fragment of material. To find them signed by the maker or makers and dated is a plus.

Mary Anne, the value is in the detailing,

the Y

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ON THE JOB

ALEXIEV GAVRILUK BEEKEEPER

Alexiev Gavriluk is a beekeeper and owner of Mad Russian Apothecary in Derry.

Q: Explain your job and what it entails.
I keep bees. I help the bees make honey, then I sell the honey. I also teach people about our best practices and how we co-exist ... and how they can coexist with the bees.

How long have you had this job?

My wife and I got the bees during the pandemic, so I've been keeping them for four years. I learn from the bees every day and every season, so I'm constantly growing as a beekeeper.

What led you to this career field and

your current job?
I'm disabled, and I've always worked blue-collar jobs. ... I needed to find something I could do comfortably on my own. We'd always loved the idea of keeping a few hives ... as a hobby. As I grew more involved in the meditation aspect of it, matching the energy of the bees, I also grew more in tune with the hives, and beekeeping became more than just a hobby ... Also, I'm just really good at it. I also love talking with our honey customers at fairs and markets about the benefits of pure local honey and how good bees are for the environment.

What kind of education or training did

you need?
I attended an online bee school taught by a master beekeeper. Everything else was self-taught, hands-on learning.

What is your typical at-work uniform or attire?

I wear long jeans, work boots, a beekeeping jacket, leather elbow gloves and a special veil attached to a hat. ... When I'm working with the honey, I wear whatever I don't mind getting sticky. When we're working at a market or fair, my wife and I wear matching yellow plaid shirts.

What is the most challenging thing about your work, and how do you deal with it?

I work with hundreds of thousands of stinging insects buzzing around me — most people would find that a little challenging. But since I learned to operate on the bees' frequency ... the hardest part now is dealing with my disability. I had to adapt beekeeping to fit what I could do with my hands. I attached special handles to the boxes, additional bars to lift the frames and other little techniques to make the job more accessible.

What do you wish you'd known at the beginning of your career?

The bees know more than I do, and I'm



Alexiev Gavriluk. Courtesy photo.

better off assisting them than trying to control them.

What do you wish other people knew about your job?

I'd want people to know the systemic harm ... lawn pesticide or poison causes to our environment. The bees, the wildlife — everything suffers. ... Also, I'd want people to know the value and importance of raw local honey, and why it's often more expensive than ... in supermarkets.

What was the first job you ever had?

Sweeping the parking lot and cleaning the dumpster area of a local convenience store when I was in fourth grade.

— Angie Sykeny 🍯

Five favorites

Favorite book: *Necroscope* by Brian Lumley
Favorite movie: *Big Trouble in Little China*
Favorite music: Punk rock and metal
Favorite food: I have two: shoo-fly pie, and obviously honey
Favorite thing about NH: We're in the woods but still close to everything — city, mountains, ocean.



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FOOD

Local farmers get together

NOFA winter conference fosters community

By Jill Lessard
food@hippopress.com

News from the local food scene

By Amy Diaz
adiaz@hippopress.com

Valentine's Day is Wednesday, Feb. 14, and if you haven't made those dinner reservations yet, now is definitely the time. A few of the dinner and take out offerings announced on area restaurants' websites and social media pages include:

- **Averill House Vineyard** in Brookline (averillhousevineyard.com) has multiple Valentine's Day themed events on its schedule including a Galentine's Felting Workshop & Wine Tasting on Friday, Feb. 9, at 6 p.m.; Valentine's Bottle Your Own Experience at various times Sundays, Feb. 11, and Feb. 18; Valentine's Igloo Experience Dinner & Wine Pairing on Wednesday, Feb. 14, at 7 p.m., and a five-course dinner and wine pairing, also on Valentine's Day at 7 p.m.

- **The Bakeshop on Kelley Street** in Manchester (thebakeshoponkelleystreet.com) has chocolate covered strawberries, among other sweet treats.

- **Bedford Village Inn** in Bedford (bedfordvillageinn.com) is offering a four-course meal for \$125 per person with seating times between 5 to 9:30 p.m. See the website for the menu (which includes options for either desserts for sharing or a dessert of your own) and to reserve a table.

- **Birch Wood Vineyards** in Derry (birchwoodvineyards.com) has a four-course dinner planned (doors open at 6 p.m. for a cocktail hour before dinner) with a vegetarian option — \$95 or \$120 with wine pairing. Call to reserve by Sunday, Feb. 11.

- **Bistro 603** in Nashua (bistro603nashua.com) will offer its Valentine's Day specials Feb. 14 through Thursday, Feb. 22, 41 ▶

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire (NOFA-NH) will host its 22nd annual Winter Conference on Saturday, Feb. 10, at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester. The event will include panel discussions, workshop sessions, awards and a keynote address by off-grid homesteader Philip Ackerman-Leist.

"As one of the founding chapters of the Northeast Organic Farming Association dating back to the early 1970s, NOFA-NH began with the hope of bringing together the organic community and building traction for the important work of sustainable agriculture in our state and region," said event coordinator Kyle Jacoby. "The conference has taken on many shapes and sizes over the years, but some things remain the same. Every conference is filled with impactful workshops, local organizations and businesses, delicious food, a keynote address, and community bonding."

According to Jacoby, the Winter Conference helps to foster the Granite State's organic farming and gardening community, allowing participants to share knowledge, get energized, and support local, sustainable, healthy food.

NOFA-NH annual Winter Conference

When: Saturday, Feb. 10

Where: Southern New Hampshire University, 2500 N. River Road, Manchester; check-in at dining center, workshops at Robert Frost Hall

Tickets: available on a sliding scale ranging from \$20 (keynote only) to \$125.

More: www.nofanh.org

"Every event is a place to continue learning and understanding organic practices, have discussions about our local food networks, connect with others in the community to discuss how to work together, recognize members of the community who are doing valuable work, and build enthusiasm for the work ahead," Jacoby said.

NOFA-NH's Winter Conference typically welcomes 200 to 300 people from throughout New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts, Jacoby said. "This includes farmers, gardeners, nonprofit management, food distributors, politicians, students, educators and more. Members of this entire community convene at the Winter Conference because of the workshops that are offered, networking opportunities, and the chance to engage in important dialogue about the future of food in our state."

Workshop topics will include growing techniques, business strategies, food systems, crop management, best practices for high tunnel construction, making tea from your garden, creating a diverse, inclusive and equitable food system in New Hampshire, policy and regulatory tools for small food producers, perfecting greenhouse tomatoes, and more. Sessions are geared toward farmers, gardeners, nonprofit professionals, educators, and community members interested in local food, sustainable agriculture, and cultivating community.

"The conference is also a perfect opportunity to learn new skills, develop important connections with local organizations and businesses, and recognize members of our community and the work they are doing," Jacoby said.

This year's keynote speaker is Philip Ackerman-Leist, author of *A Precautionary Tale: How One Small Town Banned Pesticides, Preserved its Food Heritage, and*



Courtesy photo.

Inspired a Movement and Rebuilding the Foodshed: How to Create Local, Sustainable, and Secure Food Systems.

"Philip has an incredible history of the past four decades exploring what it means to have a sustainable and equitable food system," Jacoby said. "We are excited to hear the stories from his experiences with policy efforts for pesticide-free communities, 'aha!' moments in educational systems, innovative shifts in local supply chains, lessons in agritourism, and increased financial support for ecological stewardship." Ackerman-Leist's address will highlight some of his experiences collecting stories of food systems across the U.S. and abroad.

Involved with NOFA-NH for two years, Jacoby acknowledges the dedicated team, passionate volunteers, members, and supporters who work together toward a more local, just and sustainable food system.

"It is a joy to work with these people and celebrate the successes of our work," Jacoby said. "You can see how gratifying that is at the Winter Conference when we present awards to members of our community to recognize the amazing work they are doing and have done. We certainly have challenges ahead but also so much to be proud of and grateful for." 🍓

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Feeling chili?

Try Amherst's best at the Lions Club cookoff

By Eleanor Quarles
food@hippopress.com

Warm up on a chilly Friday night at Fire & Ice, the Amherst Lions Club's 8th annual chili cookoff and ice cream social. The event takes place Friday, Feb. 9, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Amherst Middle School.

Entrants will be serving 2 gallons of chili each in people's choice, restaurant, and Lions Club categories. The chili is all you can eat until the slow cookers are empty.

"You go through the line and you can select as many different kinds of chilis as you want," explained Amherst Lion Joan Ferguson. Each contestant has a number that is written on their bowls, so you can keep track of your favorites and go back for seconds if you wish.

A panel of judges will be grading the chilis on taste, smell, heat, creativity and presentation. The judges will select the winner for the restaurant and Lions Club categories, and give feedback on the people's choice entries as well. However, attendees vote for the people's choice winner. While people's choice could theoretically be awarded to any category, in the history of the event an individual has always won people's choice, said Ferguson.

This year's judges will be Dan DeCourcay, Up in Your Grill owner and pitmaster; Amherst Police Chief Anthony Ciampoli, and local chili connoisseur Chad Camirand, described by Ferguson as having a "discriminating palate."

Expect a wide variety of chilis, including some you may never have encountered before. There are usually traditional recipes, green chili, veggie, chicken and more, said Ferguson. One year, Cincinnati Chili, traditionally served over spaghetti, was a big hit. In 2020 two middle school students worked with their aunt to make a chili with great ingredients and spices and won people's choice.

On the divisive debate of beans or no beans, Ferguson said, "It's about evenly divided — it really and truly is."

The restaurant category this year will

Fire & Ice Chili Cookoff and Ice Cream Social

When: Friday, Feb. 9, 5 to 7 p.m.

Where: Amherst Middle School, 14 Cross Road, Amherst

Tickets: \$10 for adults, \$6 for children 7 to 12, free for ages 6 and under. Families of four or more can buy a family ticket for \$30. Purchase tickets at e-clubhouse.org/sites/amherstnh or at the door.



Last year's chili cooks Irene Pyle (left) and granddaughter Charley Pyle will return to the Fire & Ice competition, Feb. 9 at the Amherst Middle School.

include an entry from previous winner Moulton's Kitchen and Market. The Amherst Lions will be going head to head with the Bedford Lions for the best Lions Club chili, which no club has ever won consecutively.

Each winner will get a silver bowl trophy to keep until next year's event, engraved with their name. They'll also get a long-handled wooden spoon engraved with 'Chili Master.' And of course, they get to brag about having the best chili in town for a whole year.

The event will also include a make-your-own ice cream sundae bar, hot dogs, face painting, and a visit from Officer Berry — a yellow lab puppy who is Amherst Police Department's new therapy dog. Weather permitting, there will also be ice skating and a bonfire at the school's outdoor rink.

The Lions Club will also be providing free eye screenings, one of their philanthropic causes, and they'll be raffling off a Napoleon Rogue propane grill.

"Winter is getting a little long in the tooth by February," Ferguson said, so several years ago a member of the club came up with this event so the town could gather over a meal. "The community is able to get together on a cold winter's night — there's eating, there's entertainment, there's a lot of talking. It's good to get everyone out of the house."

If you want to try all the chilis, especially the crowd favorites, make sure you come early.

"Their Crockpots tend to empty out well before the two hours are up," Ferguson said. 🍲

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FOOD

Mardi Gras takes the cake

Special dessert sweetens pre-Lent festivities

By Jill Lessard
food@hippopress.com



King Cake. Courtesy photo.

They don't call it Fat Tuesday for nothing. Celebrated around the globe with exuberant parades, exotic masks and the throwing of colorful beads and trinkets, Mardi (the French word for "Tuesday") Gras (which means "fat") is renowned for gastronomic indulgence, and Mardi Gras King Cake is the ultimate tasty extravagance.

Just ask Denise Nickerson, owner of The Bakeshop on Kelley Street, who knows a thing or two about delicious treats. A graduate of a Le Cordon Bleu-affiliated school, Nickerson has training in French cooking and baking that made her aware of the significance of using real butter, vanilla and heavy cream and not scrimping in any way.

"You can taste the difference," she said. "And our customers can taste the difference."

Mardi Gras King Cakes, which harken back to the story of the three kings who paid homage to the newly born Jesus, are a staple of Carnival and have been sold at The Bakeshop since the year it opened. "I opened The Bakeshop in 2010 with the intent of sharing some of my favorite sandwiches and desserts — I love dessert! — and have been successfully selling them for the past almost 15 years," Nickerson said. "I am always excited to make Mardi Gras King Cakes as they are whimsical, delicious, and, of course, have a baby inside!"

According to Mardi Gras tradition, the lucky individual who finds the tiny figurine hidden in the bread is considered king or queen for the day and is encouraged to provide a cake for the following year's festivities, host a party, or otherwise perpetuate the revelry.

"Mardi Gras King Cakes are sweet and fun to make," Nickerson said about the treats, which are said to have originated in France and made their way to New Orleans in the late 19th century. "They are made with our sweet bread recipe, spread with our cinnamon butter, rolled and then formed into a circle or ring. As we roll them, we place the plastic baby in the bread. Next comes a coating of glaze and then the fun part — alternate colors of purple, yellow and green sprinkles, which represent Mardi Gras season." (According to historians, the colors used to decorate these Carnival confections

signify justice, power and faith.) "The cakes are then boxed or placed on pastry trays, and we like to add a couple of Mardi Gras bead necklaces to help in the celebration."

Mardi Gras is always the day before Ash Wednesday, offering believers one last chance to binge on rich foods before the beginning of the austere season of Lent, a 40-day period leading up to Easter Sunday that emphasizes abstinence, fasting and repentance.

Fat Tuesday, which this year falls on Feb. 13, is not surprisingly The Bakeshop on Kelley Street's biggest day of Mardi Gras King Cake sales, "but we are willing and able to make them anytime for any celebration," said Nickerson, adding, "Pre-ordering is recommended as we tend to run out quickly!" The Bakeshop will also open its doors on Tuesday, when it is normally closed, to keep up with the seasonal demand.

In addition to Mardi Gras King Cakes and other cakes of all kinds, the Manchester bake shop and cafe is well-known for its array of doughnuts, pies and pastries, as well as a savory menu featuring quiche, soups, chili, and sandwiches served on their own freshly baked bread.

"A lot of my recipes were passed down from my grandmothers, mother, sister and aunts," said Nickerson. "I've found that many people relate to them, as they are simple reminders of flavors and tastes from childhood and beyond. Also, most importantly, using ingredients that are high-quality and often come from local growers and producers makes having a dessert worth it. I always say, if you are going to have dessert, make sure it's something made well and worth it!"

Nickerson readily admitted that "not everyone might know about the King Cakes." However, she added, "the ones that do [know] or that try them [for the first time] always come back. It's a celebration of sweetness and a way to ... be a part of the Mardi Gras season." 🍩

Mardi Gras King Cake

The Bakeshop on Kelley Street
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POP CULTURE

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Ekkstacy, Ekkstacy (United Masters Records)



This Vancouver, British Columbia-based singer is a mildly odd bird, extracting inspiration from a wide range of dark 1980s bands and SoundCloud rappers like XXXTentacion. I figured this'd be an unapologetic gesture of obeisance to his more gothy influences after hearing the Jesus and Mary Chain-begging opener, "I Don't Have One of Those," which, as you'd guess, turns in a half-asleep, very '80s shoegaze effort, its beat straight out of the Cure's earliest days. But there's a more quickened pulse to be found here: "Luv of My Life" reads like a kinder, gentler Buzzcocks, or, sure, Pink Flag-era

Wire, meaning that any Gen-Xer who wasn't one of the popular kids will be feeling comforted by all they've heard of the album thus far. The guitars are jangly and bright, and the from-the-mountaintop reverb setting is right where you'd want it to be, and then suddenly he's innovating rather nicely, as found in things like the shoegaze-twee experiment "I Guess We Made It This Far." Very listenable stuff overall. A —Eric W. Saeger

Wisp, "See You Soon" (Interscope Records)



The latest Residents-style mystery artist is this one, allegedly a 19-year-old woman about whom no one knows anything. There are big things planned for this person, obviously, being that Interscope is the record label pushing it, not to mention the fact that there's a writeup in Nylon, meaning that the intended audience is older zoomers who go to hair stylists, which is pretty much the only kind of place you'll ever see that magazine, aside from maybe Sam Goody's. The angle that's being pushed is that there exists somewhere an army of young artists who want to resurrect shoegaze, or at least get briefly

famous on TikTok for throwing together a tune like this one-off single, which, like her previous ones, is being offered without any explanation, background or anything else. If you think the whole thing sounds a bit odd, it is, but the guitars on this song are, I'll admit it, completely divine, sloshing over the listener like an island wave at dusk. That's the clean guitar layer anyway; the rest of it could be Raveonettes for all most listeners would guess. But sure, carry on, mystery TikTok person. A- —Eric W. Saeger

PLAYLIST

A seriously abridged compendium of recent and future CD releases

• Tally ho, there will be new albums released this Friday, Feb. 9, because that's how it's done around here! Winter is sure setting in, with random snowstorms and "frost heaves," I wonder who made up that phrase, an abominable snowman after drinking a few too many Jagermeisters? Bop! I'll be here all week, folks, no need to worry, but let's get to some music stuff, starting with *Part Time Believer*, the new album from alleged alt-country band **The Strumbellas**, who are from Ontario, Canada! I listened to one of their older tracks, "Holster," and it's a decent curveball, nice and bouncy, sort of like what Guster would sound like if they had a pulse, but the lyrics are dumb, which is OK! As for this new album, it starts out with "Running Out of Time," which is part '80s-synthpop and part Jackson Browne '70s-radio-mawkishness; it's nice overall. The singer does sound a lot like Jackson Browne, which is why I mentioned him, but it gets better with "My Home is You," which is obviously influenced by Kings of Leon — wait, here comes the chorus, yes, yes, definitely a Kings of Leon obsession here. There's even a variation of the Millennial Whoop in there to remind you that the guys in the band are getting old; this'll probably come out pretty cool when they play it live. See that, I don't hate everything, now let's move along and get back to normal, I'm sure I'll get triggered as we proceed.

• Oi there, Bob's your uncle, **Declan McKenna** is an English chap who won the Glastonbury Festival's Emerging Talent Competition in 2015, that after he self-released a tune called "Brazil," which was a protest song critical of FIFA's deciding to hold the World Cup in Brazil in 2014, which made for bad optics. FIFA is of course the international soccer federation, but don't call it soccer or they won't know what you're talking about, you must refer to it as "football," please nobody tell them that football is actually about the Super Bowl and funny commercials, not soccer, because this ongoing national troll has been funny for decades now. McKenna's new LP is titled *What Happened To The Beach*, and the leadoff single from this one is "Nothing Works." The beat sounds like a cross between The Beatles and Devo, all tempered by Weeknd-ish dance-electro. It's mildly catchy and definitely disposable.

• I'm sure you were wondering who actually cleared a path for the emergence of Poppy, and here she is, Sacramento, California-based singer-songwriter **Chelsea Wolfe**! She blends a lot of harder-edged genres into her tunes, stuff like goth-rock, doom metal and noise, which makes her officially relevant. Her new album, *Reaches Out To She Reaches Out To She*, features a couple songs of note, starting with "Dusk," a slow-burn noise-athon in which Wolfe tenders a yodelly Alanis Morissette vocal over the sonic equivalent of a goth lava flow. As well, there's "Whispers In The Echo Chamber," which combines scratchy Trent Reznor S&M-goth and Lana Del Rey whisper-pop. I really have no problem with this stuff at all.

• Lastly, it's **Zara Larsson**, a Beyoncé-influenced dance-pop singer who got her start in 2008, after winning the second season of *Talang*, the Swedish version of all that *America's Got Talent* stuff; she's famous for tweeting such tweets as "Man hating and feminism are two different things. I support both," because she is a little rascal. *Venus* is her forthcoming new LP; famous music producer and overrated fraud David Guetta had a hand in the single "On My Love," so it's probably dumb, but I'll go check it out if you insist. Yup, it sounds like Rihanna singing over a house beat from 2008. I remember those days and why the whole thing flopped. —Eric W. Saeger

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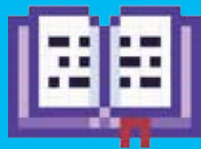
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POP CULTURE BOOKS

First Lie Wins, by Ashley Elston (Pamela Dorman Books, 340 pages)

How far will you read into a book if you don't like the protagonist? With her first novel directed toward adults, Ashley Elston is betting that we will keep reading so long as she provides little surprises around every corner, like *Willy Wonka*.

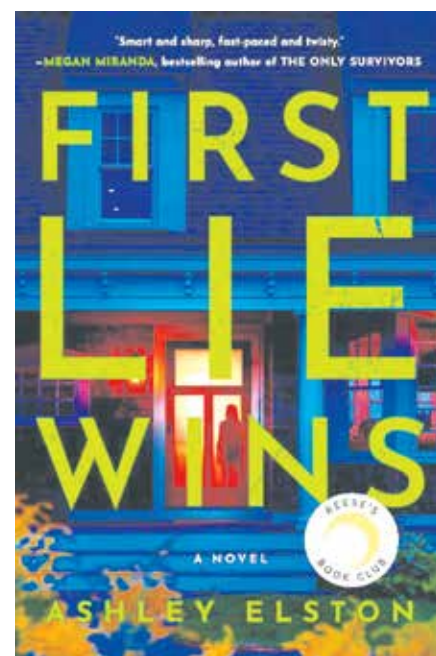
The formula seems to be working. The book was the January pick for Reese Witherspoon's book club and has garnered praise as a suspenseful thriller. To which I say meh. Not that *First Lie Wins* doesn't throw out many curve balls — it does. And an author's ability to craft a didn't-see-that-coming ending after multiple didn't-see-that-coming chapters is rightly valued in a day when the storylines of much popular fiction are painfully predictable. That said, it's nice to genuinely like at least *somebody* in a 300-page book.

We are supposed to kind-of, sort-of like the protagonist, initially introduced as Evie Porter, although we soon learn that Evie Porter is the latest in a long line of aliases. When we meet Evie she is suffering through a dinner in which she is meeting, for the first time, her boyfriend's circle of friends — people who grew up much differently than she did.

"They are the ones who started kindergarten together, their circle remaining small until high school graduation. They fled town in groups of twos and threes to attend a handful of colleges all within driving distance of here. They all joined sororities and fraternities with other groups of twos and threes with similar backgrounds, only to gravitate back to this small Louisiana town, the circle closing once again."

Evie, on the other hand, is a loner with a much different lineage. She'd grown up in a small town in North Carolina, an only child who lived with her single mom in a trailer. It was a wholesome enough environment — lots of love and dreams — until her mom got sick, and Evie started stealing jewelry from rich people at age 17 to help pay for her mother's cancer treatment. (Which is why we're supposed to kind-of, sort-of like her.) Her criminal skills landed her even more lucrative work as an operative for a shadowy criminal enterprise run by a mysterious Mr. Smith. She goes from job to job, always assuming a new identity that has been meticulously set up for her, in order to achieve some nefarious goal for her employer. Although she is described at one point as "morally gray," it's a dark shade of gray.

Evie's latest job is to infiltrate the life of Ryan Sumner, an affable frat-boy-



turned-businessman who inherited his grandfather's house and business and is happily living as a bachelor in a leafy suburb in Louisiana, a place where there's a lot of money "but it's the quiet kind."

An attractive woman, Evie inserts herself into Ryan's life with remarkable ease, setting up a "chance" meeting by having a flat tire at a gas station that she knows he visits every Thursday. She wears a short skirt, her intelligence having gathered knowledge that "his eyes almost always lingered too long on any female who crossed his path, especially those dressed in short skirts."

There is much suspension of disbelief required here and throughout the book — that this single encounter leads to Evie's moving in with Ryan a few months later, that this bachelor with a roving eye is suddenly ready for a long-term relationship — but OK. Again, surprises around every corner, and Elston has elegantly plotted this story, showing us snapshots of Evie's other lives in flashbacks even as she easily settles into domestic bliss with Ryan. There are shades of the movie *Pretty Woman*, especially when Evie dons a big hat to wear to a Kentucky Derby party.

But things take a turn when an old friend of Ryan's shows up at the party with a woman who looks astonishingly similar to Evie on his arm. Soon there's another big reveal that will be the hook that drags us, however unwillingly, through the rest of the book. Evie, it turns out, is not the only person presenting herself as someone she's not. And her unscrupulous employer has grown suspicious of her loyalty and has set out to test her, even as she tries to follow through with her "long con" of Ryan, while growing comfortable in the happy-couple-in-the-'burbs life.

Meanwhile, a fatal accident involving

people in the couple's circle leads to a police investigation that calls Evie's background into question and the story shifts to a murder investigation in another state that one of Evie's alter egos may or may not have been involved in. And we become aware that Evie is not a helpless pawn entrapped by a criminal mastermind, but that she has developed her own protective network, including an IT genius who'd entered MIT at age 17 but dropped out because he was bored and realized "the most profitable work isn't always legal."

Despite Elston's efforts to paint her as a "good" criminal, there is little reflection — for either Evie or the reader — of the moral issues involved. She's Walter White-like in this way: if a cancer diag-

nosis is involved when someone starts to break bad, we're supposed to look the other way. And as in the *Breaking Bad* universe, there are plenty of other "morally gray" people in the cast of *First Lie Wins*. (And there will be a cast: the film rights have already been acquired.)

A little sober reflection of the moral issues involved — some Tony Soprano on the therapist's couch — would have added complexity to the story, but slowed the pace — the story races to an every-mystery-resolved finish that is both a perfect Hollywood ending and an opportunity for countless sequels. Evie Porter will be with us for a while, I predict. Whether we like her or not.

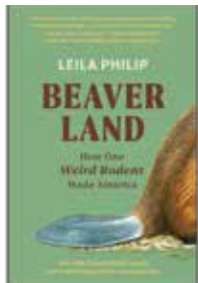
B—Jennifer Graham 🍷

Books

Author events

• **DEBORAH ROOF**, author of *Words, Wonder and the Divine in You*, will appear on Saturday, Feb. 10, at noon at Balin Books (375 Amherst St., Somerset Plaza, in Nashua; balinbooks.com).

• **MATTHEW H. JONES**, author of *Wish I Could Love You: A Collection of Failed Love Stories*, will talk about the book on Saturday, Feb. 10, at 5 p.m. at Bookery (844 Elm St., Manchester, bookerymht.com).



• **TED REINSTEIN**, a reporter for *Chronicle* and author of *Before Brooklyn: The Unsung Heroes Who Helped Break Baseball's Color Barrier*, will talk about the book on Sunday, Feb. 11, at 2 p.m. at Nashua Public Library (2 Court St., Nashua, 589-4600, nashualibrary.org).

• **AUDREY SCHULMAN**, author of *The Dolphin House*, will talk about the book on Sunday, Feb. 18, at 3 p.m. at Water Street Bookstore (125 Water St., Exeter, waterstreetbooks.com).

• **MARGO COOPER**, author of *Deep Inside the Blues: Photographs and Interviews*, will be at Gibson's Bookstore (45 S. Main St., Concord, 224-0562, gibsonsbookstore.com) on Tuesday, Feb. 20, at 6:30 p.m. for a conversation with Holly Harris, host and producer of the radio show *Spinning the Blues*.

• **LEILA PHILIP**, author of *Beaverland: How One Weird Rodent Made America*, will be at Gibson's Bookstore (45 S. Main St., Concord, 224-0562, gibsonsbookstore.com) on Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 6:30 p.m. for a talk and book signing.

• **ROMANCE AUTHORS** Ali

Hazelwood, Nikki Payne and Denise Williams will discuss their novels in an online discussion presented by the Manchester City Library and Tewksbury Public Library on Monday, Feb. 26, at 7 p.m. on Zoom. Register via manchesterlibrary.org. For more information call 624-6550, ext. 7620, or email emierswa@manchesternh.gov.

• **MATTHEW J.C. CLARK**, a Maine carpenter and author of the book of essays *Bjarki, Not Bjarki: On Floorboards,*

Love, and Irreconcilable Differences, will be at Gibson's Bookstore (45 S. Main St., Concord, 224-0562, gibsonsbookstore.com) on Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 6:30 p.m.

• **AVREE KELLY CLARK**, local author of *Malice Aforethought*, a novel about a true crime in Pembroke in 1875, will be at Gibson's Bookstore (45 S. Main St., Concord, 224-0562, gibsonsbookstore.com) on Wednesday, Feb. 28, at 6:30 p.m.

• **MATTHEW F. DELMONT**, author of *Half American*, will be at The Music Hall Lounge (131 Congress St., Portsmouth) on Wednesday, Feb. 28, at 7 p.m. for a discussion and Q&A. Tickets cost \$34 and include a signed book and reserved seat.

• **HANNAH MCCARTHY & NICK CAPODICE**, *Civics 101* podcasters and authors of *A User's Guide to Democracy: How America Works*, will sign and discuss their book on Saturday, March 9, at 2 p.m. at Balin Books (375 Amherst St., Somerset Plaza, in Nashua; balinbooks.com).

• **LISA GARDNER**, author of

the new thriller *Still See You Everywhere*, will be at Gibson's Bookstore (45 S. Main St., Concord, 224-0562, gibsonsbookstore.com) on Thursday, March 21, at 6:30 p.m.

• **OWEN KING** will be at The Music Hall Lounge (131 Congress St., Portsmouth) on Friday, March 22, at 7 p.m. for a discussion and Q&A about his new novel, *The Curator*. Tickets cost \$34 and include a signed book and reserved seat.

History, stories, discussions & lectures

• **SCIENCE ON TAP** "Science in the Shadow: Eclipse 2024" informal discussion led by a panel of experts, hosted by SEE Science Center, on Tuesday, Feb. 13, at Stark Brewing Co. (500 Commercial St., Manchester), doors open at 5 p.m., discussion begins at 6 p.m. Admission is free but advanced signup is appreciated; sign up at see-sciencecenter.org.

• **STORYTELLING THROUGH TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC** presented by local fiddler and guitarist Jordan Tirrell-Wysocki on Wednesday, Feb. 28, at 6 p.m. at Rodgers Memorial Library (194 Derry Road, Hudson) and again Wednesday, March 20, at 6:30 p.m. hosted by Paul Memorial Library at Newfields Town Hall (65 Main St., Newfields, 778-8169). See nhhumanities.org.

• **RALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG: THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR THROUGH FOLK SONG** presented by author and artist Marek Bennett on Thursday, Feb. 29, at 7 p.m. at Pembroke Town Library (313 Pembroke St.), hosted by the Pembroke Historical Society. Call 566-1031 or visit nhhumanities.org.

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Argylle (PG-13)

A successful writer of spy novels finds herself hunted by real-life spies in *Argylle*, an action romantic comedy thing that feels more like cool images and parts of ideas pinned to a bulletin board than an actual movie.

The suave, James-Bond-like Agent Argylle (Henry Cavill with just some of the most unfortunate hair ever given to a man so handsome) is on the trail of a hard drive that will expose the Directorate, the super spy organization he works for. Once a good guy organization, the Directorate is now in league with bad guys, and Argylle wants to bring them down.

But Elly Conway (Bryce Dallas Howard), author of four published books and one unfinished book about fictional spy Argylle, is just sort of stuck when it comes to how the last part of Conway's journey should unfold. On a phone call with her mom (Catherine O'Hara) she explains that her book ends on a cliffhanger. But her mom insists that she needs to finish the story — have Argylle go to London to meet the hacker, get the drive and take down his bosses. Elly tries but eventually Argylle is just standing on an empty page, giving her a confused look (possibly confused about why he would be given such a dumb green velvet-I-think suit and such terrible hair).

Elly decides to take a train to see her parents and is quickly accosted by a long-haired weirdo (Sam Rockwell) who claims to be a fan — well, first he says he's a fan, then he says he's a spy and he's there to protect her. Before she can grab the cat-carrier-backpack containing her cat Archie and run, another "fan" stops at her seat to get an autograph — but the pen is really a stiletto and he seems ready to



Argylle

stab her. Long-hair fights him off and then fights off a series of other would-be kidnappers and/or assassins before grabbing Elly and parachuting her out of the train as it goes over a bridge.

When she awakens in some random cabin, long-hair is now shaven and shorn and says his name is Adrian Wilde. Adrian tells her that he is a spy who, like her characters, needs to find a hard drive to bring down the Division, a super secret spy agency very close to the one she described. The Division is who has sent its operatives after her because it, led by Director Ritter (Bryan Cranston), has read her fifth, unpublished book and wants to know how it ends, believing it will help him find the real-life hacker.

Adrian, looking for the hard drive just like Argylle, takes Elly to London so she can "write" what happens next and help him figure out where the hacker with all the Division-destroying information is. The Division remains hot on their trail, leading to a variety of shootouts and fight scenes and so much slow-mo this movie, played entirely at regular speed, is proba-

bly at least 15 minutes shorter.

In addition to Cavill, John Cena, Ariana DeBose and Dua Lipa play characters in Elly's books, with Samuel L. Jackson and, briefly, Rob Delaney showing up in "real life."

Argylle is a mess. Just writing the plot description, there are things we learn at the beginning of the movie that actually make no sense with what we learn later on or are just clunky or unnecessary. The movie doesn't seem to figure out its vibe, maybe ever. It goes from wacky quiet-writer-lady-adventure (similar to Sandra Bullock in *The Lost City*) to full-on action cartoon like director Matthew Vaughn's *Kingsman* movies. I think, based on where this movie goes, maybe more of that cartoony action all the way through would be the way to go here. Instead that shows up just long enough to suggest a more tonally coherent version of this movie but not long enough to make *Argylle* actually be that version.

There are other problems. Howard is fine I guess, Rockwell is charming — together they are basically sparkless. Cranston feels like he belongs in the car-

toonier version of this movie. Here, he feels en-dumb-ened by the movie, like his scary villain boss character, in absence of a more comic-book-y world around him, feels not smart enough for the job we're supposed to believe he has. O'Hara just feels sort of ill served by everything the movie asks her to do — every scene she's in had the potential to be funny or fun or weird in that delightful O'Hara way but the movie chooses a direction that just sort of dims her star.

This whole movie has, not potential exactly, but maybe the possibility to have potential. There are ideas that reach "hey, maybe there's something in that?" stage but don't go beyond that. As a result, I found myself not really enjoying this movie or even wanting to enjoy it but wishing it was a movie that I could potentially enjoy. C+, with the plus being largely for Sam Rockwell and his dislike of Archie, who looked like a mostly CGI cat, though a cat named Chip (the cat of Vaughn and his wife Claudia Schiffer) is credited on IMDb. (Meanwhile: There is apparently a mid-credits scene, which I did not stay for but read about later, and everything about it sounds exhausting.)

Rated PG-13 because these things are always rated PG-13 but officially for strong violence and action and some strong language, according to the MPA on [filmratings.com](https://www.filmratings.com). Directed by Matthew Vaughn and written by Jason Fuchs (though the "written by" has its own story, feel free to Google, that somehow pulls in Taylor Swift because I guess everything has a Swiftian element now), Argylle is an unnecessary two hours and 19 minutes long and is distributed in theaters by Universal. 🍷

AT THE SOFAPLEX

Orion and the Dark (TV-Y7)

Voices of Paul Walter Hauser, Jacob Tremblay.

Based on the book of the same name by Emma Yarlett, this animated movie tells the story of Orion (Tremblay), an 11-year-old boy who is afraid of so many things — murder clowns, cell phone radiation, aging planetarium displays, girls, people in general, Sally a girl in his class in particular and especially dark. He plugs in half a dozen night lights and begs his parents to leave the door open but if his room goes dark he screams.

Enough with the screaming, says Dark



Orion and the Dark

(voice of Hauser). A large cloaked yet sort of cuddly entity, Dark is tired of being hated by everybody but he is especially tired of hearing Orion yell and scream every night. So he decides that the best way to help Orion conquer his fear of the dark

— and of Dark — is to take Orion with him for a 24-hour trip around the world. Dark introduces Orion to other nighttime entities: Insomnia (voice of Nat Faxon), Unexplained Noises (Golda Rosheuvel), Quiet (Aparna Nancheria), Sleep (Natasia Demetriou) and Sweet Dreams (voice of Angela Bassett). Some of their tasks are a little odd — Unexplained Noises decide that a crash with a hint of scraping is what's needed outside one house — but they are part of the rhythms of life. And they have to keep going so that Light (voice of Ike Barinholtz) doesn't overtake them. Light would knock Dark out of existence.

As Orion travels with Dark and friends, he slowly and sometimes indirectly overcomes or at least faces a variety of fears. The Dark — like other things in life — can be scary and sometimes we will be afraid

but we have to keep going and not let fear itself overtake us, is generally the message here. But the movie makes its points with a swirl of sweetness and cleverness that, in a particularly Charlie Kaufman way (he is the screenwriter), lets the story comment on itself. The result is a story full of fun cartoony kid adventure but nice moments for adults as well. **B+ Netflix**

Self Reliance (R)

Jake Johnson, Anna Kendrick.

Johnson also wrote and directed this dark comedy. Tommy plays a familiar Johnson character — sort of loveable shell-shocked goober in a life funk. He recently ended a two-decade-plus relationship and now lives with his mom, working a job that appears to barely keep him awake. Walking home

from work one day, Tommy sees a limo pull up next to him with Andy Samberg (Andy Samberg) in the back. Andy, reading a script, offers Tommy a chance to compete in a dark web reality show. As he learns when he talks to the show's creators, all Tommy has to do is stay alive for the next 30 days and he'll win a million dollars. The catch is that other people — hunters — will be trying to kill him. The loophole is that he can't be killed if he's with other people. Tommy decides that not only does the loophole make the game winnable, it might actually be the reason to compete, so he says yes.

He explains to his mother (an excellent Nancy Lenahan, who at one point refers to "Sandy Amberg," which is maybe my favorite part of the movie), sisters (Mary Holland, Emily Hampshire) and brother-in-law (Daryl L. Johnson) that they will need to trade off being with him around the clock to make it work. His family thinks he's nuts and says absolutely not, leading Jake to hire a random guy he calls James (Biff Wiff) to follow him around. He also posts a call for someone to hang with on Craigslist — which is how he meets Maddy (Kendrick), who explains she's also playing the game.

The movie quickly reaches a point of unhingedness when not only the characters, including Tommy, but we in the audience are not sure if Tommy is really competing for a million dollars or if he is in the midst of some kind of serious mental breakdown. It is, at times, unsettling but there is something about Johnson and his particular blend of earnestness, nuttiness, kindness

and weirdness that makes it all work more often than not. **B-** *Hulu*

The Underdoggs (R)

Snoop Dogg, Tika Sumpter.

In *The Mighty Ducks/Bad News Bears* fashion, onetime football star Jaycen Jennings (Mr. Dogg) winds up coaching a down at the heels, down on its luck Long Beach kiddie football team. Actually, Jaycen is sentenced to do community service picking up poop at a Long Beach park (after crashing his car into a city bus due to unnecessary rage and some truly terrible driving) but when he sees high school sweetheart Cherise (Sumpter) pick up her young son Tre (Jonigan Booth) from the practice, he takes the advice of old friend Kareem (Mike Epps) to volunteer to coach to pull a *Mighty Ducks* and woo Cherise. Jaycen is at first just as selfish as a coach as he was as a player but slowly he learns about the beauty of teamwork and to truly root for these kids.

The kids in *Underdoggs* are young enough that this movie, with some slicing away of R-rated material (a lot of language and also weed talk), would make a fun family film. And really that's what it should be. There's only so "R" — you can be in an upbeat sports comedy about a kid team and I don't think the movie benefits from the R-ness enough to make up for losing its natural family-film audience. As it is the movie feels like a fine-minus version of so many sports movies before it. **C+** (the + is in part because it introduced me to the fact that Snoop Dogg actually has long supported a youth football league in the L.A. area



The Underdoggs

and there is apparently a Netflix documentary series about it called *Coach Snoop* *Prime Video*

Role Play (R)

Kaley Cuoco, David Oyelowo.

David (Oyelowo) and Emma (Cuoco) have a nice life with two children — Wyatt (Regan Bryan-Gudgeon) and Caroline (Lucia Aliu) — and a suburban house and a marriage that seems solid if a bit flat due to usual work-life balance stuff. Emma returns exhausted from a work trip to realize that the fancy dinner her husband has arranged is in celebration of their anniversary — which she completely forgot about. To spice things up they decide to head into the city and spend a night at a hotel — after first "meeting" in the bar playing the roles of new people, with the flirting etc.

Actually, inventing new identities is easier for Emma than David realizes. Her "work trip" wasn't to the Midwest to talk to corporate middle managers. She went abroad to do a little light murdering. She

works as an assassin, taking a contract or two every few weeks to help pay Raj (Rudi Dharmalingam), her handler who helps keep her image scrubbed from the internet and just generally keep her off the radar of Sovereign, the international assassination concern she used to work for before giving it all up for David and family life.

Before the couple can do their little sexy role play at the bar, Bob (Bill Nighy) buys Emma a drink and comes over to hit on her, drunken businessman style. Except not really, which Emma realizes. Eventually, Emma and David — pretending to be Alice and "Jack Dawson," because David is bad at fake names — shoo Bob away and have their fancy meal. Later, when David falls asleep in their room, Emma goes to find Bob to deal with him, which doesn't go as cleanly as she hopes. Soon there is police involvement and Emma is exposed for the secret assassin she really is. David isn't sure what he believes, but he's not entirely ready to turn his wife in to Gwen Carver (Connie Nielsen), the woman investigating Emma, who is really named Anna.

Not long ago, Mark Wahlberg starred in a similar super-assassin-turned-family-guy movie *The Family Plan*. That movie wasn't great, but it had a more consistently comic tone. *Role Play* can't quite decide if it is an action comedy or something darker, a drama with occasional comic hints but also kids in peril. Oyelowo seems to think he is in a comedy, Cuoco seems to think she's in the darker thing. The actors are engaging enough together but they often seem like they're operating on different frequencies. **C+** *Prime Video* 🍷

Film

• *American Fiction* (R, 2023) will screen at Red River Theatres in Concord (redrivertheatres.org) on Thursday, Feb. 8, at 4:30 & 7:15 p.m.; Friday, Feb. 9, through Sunday, Feb. 11, at 1:30, 4:30 & 7:15 p.m.; Monday, Feb. 12, at 3:45; Tuesday, Feb. 13, through Thursday, Feb. 15, at 4:30 & 7:15 p.m.

• *Poor Things* (R, 2023) will screen at Red River Theatres in Concord on Thursday, Feb. 8, at 4:30 p.m.; Friday, Feb. 8, through Sunday, Feb. 11, at 1, 4 and 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 12, 4 and 7 p.m.; Tuesday, Feb. 13, 4, p.m.; Wednesday, Feb. 14, and Thursday, Feb. 15, at 4 & 7 p.m.
• *Saltburn* (R, 2023) will screen at the Music Hall in Portsmouth (themusichall.org) on Thursday,

Feb. 8, at 7 p.m.

• *The Flying Ace* (1926) an early all-Black motion picture from Norman Studios, according to silentfilmivemusic.blogspot.com, screens on Thursday, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. at the Aviation Museum of New Hampshire (27 Navigator Way in Londonderry).
• *The Zone of Interest* (PG-13, 2023) will screen at Red River

Theatre in Concord (redrivertheatres.org) in the 22-seat Simchik theater, on Friday, Feb. 9, through Sunday, Feb. 11, at 1:45, 4:15 & 6:45 p.m.; Monday, Feb. 12, through Thursday, Feb. 15, at 4:15 & 6:45 p.m.

• *Sabrina* (1954) the classic starring Aubrey Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart and William Holden, will screen Saturday, Feb. 10, at 10

a.m. at Red River Theatres in Concord (redrivertheatres.org).

• *Gloria Gaynor: I Will Survive, Hope, and a Magnificent Second Act* will screen via Fathom Events on Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 4 p.m. at AMC Londonderry (it will also screen here at 7 p.m.). O'neil Cinemas in Epping and Regal Fox Run in Newington.

• *A League of Their Own* (PG, 1992) will screen at Red River Theatres on Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 7 p.m.

• *Speedy* (1928), a silent film featuring live musical accompaniment by Jeff Rapsis, will screen on Wednesday, Feb. 14, at 7 p.m. at Rex Theatre in Manchester (palacetheatre.org).

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By Michael Witthaus
mwitthaus@hippopress.com

• **Cowgirl jazz:** Come for a light supper as the weekend approaches and enjoy **Hot Skillet Club** playing western-infused swing jazz. The acoustic trio of friends includes Val Blachly on upright bass and vocals, guitarist Liza Constable, who also plays with Blachly in *Swing a Cat*, and Ellen Carlson, a fiddler Blachly began working with in *Sweet, Hot & Sassy*, which had a 12-year run starting in the early 1990s. Thursday, Feb. 8, 6 p.m., Daniel's Restaurant and Pub, 48 Main St., Henniker. See hotskilletclub.com.

• **Laugh along:** An evening of stand-up comedy has Boston favorite **Al Park** along with a few special guests. Friday, Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m., Rex Theatre, 23 Amherst St., Manchester, \$25 at palacetheatre.org.

• **Valentine swing:** Start with a dance lesson, then get on the floor with the 18-piece **New Legacy Swing Band** for an event dubbed Tunnel of Love. It promises moody lighting, a light food menu that starts with a glass of complimentary bubbly, and lots of chocolate and flowers paired with music ranging from Blood, Sweat & Tears, Brian Setzer and Chicago to Sinatra and Ella. Saturday, Feb. 10, 7 pm., Rockingham Ballroom, 22 Ash Swamp Road, Newmarket, \$30 at rockinballroom.club.

• **Sixties vibe:** Conceived by New England native Brian Chartrand, **Live from Laurel Canyon** is a multimedia concert featuring the soundtrack of a generation, from the Byrds, Joni Mitchell, Buffalo Springfield and Mamas & the Papas to later standard-bearers like Jackson Browne, James Taylor, and The Eagles. Sunday, Feb. 11, 4 p.m., Bank of NH Stage, 16 S. Main St., Concord, \$53.75 at ccanh.com.

• **Carrying on:** Closing in on four decades as a band, **Big Head Todd & the Monsters** is still the core trio that formed in 1986: Todd Park Mohr on guitar, keyboard, sax and harmonica, drummer Brian Nevin and Rob Squires on bass; second guitarist Jeremy Lawton joined 20 years ago. They recently dropped "Her Way Out," from *Thunderbird*, their 12th album. Tuesday, Feb. 13, 8 p.m., Tupelo Music Hall, 10 A St., Derry, \$55 and up at tupelohall.com.

NITE

Axe-happy

Guitar-forward Winter Blues Fest

By Michael Witthaus
mwitthaus@hippopress.com

To celebrate an area band's new recording contract, the 14th New England Winter Blues Festival has a slight name change this year. It's now A Gulf Coast Records Revue, with four acts from the venerable Nederland, Texas, label sharing the stage: Popa Chubby, Albert Castiglia, Monster Mike Welch and The Wicked Lo-Down.

The first of four shows lands at Manchester's Rex Theatre on Thursday, Feb. 15, with the others happening across the region over the weekend. The run promises plenty of explosive guitar. Popa Chubby has been making waves in the blues world since legendary producer Tom Dowd helmed his solo debut in 1994. Castiglia is another firebrand, who one critic called the "heir apparent" to the title "America's King of the Blues."

Welch got his nickname as a teenager from Blues Brother Dan Aykroyd and is one of New England's premier blues rock guitarists. He signed with Gulf Coast last year. Finally, The Wicked Lo-Down is led by festival organizer Nick David. Their lead guitarist is Paul Size, well-known for his time in The Red Devils, who worked with Mick Jagger and Bruce Willis while cementing its reputation across Texas.

The official release date for The Wicked Lo-Down's Gulf Coast debut, *Out of Line*, is March 8, but the band will have advance CDs for sale and will play material from it at shows. It's a solid collection of blues rockers, and all but two are originals. Standouts include "If I," a love-gone-wrong burner that echoes the Allman Brothers' "Stormy Monday," and "The Wildest One," a poignant tribute to Lester Butler, Size's bandmate in The Red Devils.

"He would roll with the Stones, till that black hearted woman knocked him off his

New England Winter Blues Festival presents Gulf Coast Records Revue

When: Thursday, Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Rex Theatre, 23 Amherst St., Manchester
Tickets: \$35 at palacetheatre.org

Additional shows:
Friday, Feb. 16, 8 p.m. at Blue Ocean Music Hall, Salisbury Beach, Mass.
Sunday, Feb 18, 8 p.m. at Jimmy's Jazz & Blues Club, Portsmouth



The Wicked Lo-Down. Courtesy photo.

throne," David sings, a reference to Butler's tragic overdose death at age 38 that was later determined to be a homicide. In a similar vein, "Marchin' On" deals with the notion that no one cheats death. Speaking by phone recently, David called it one of his favorites.

"It's about our mortality," he said. "No matter what, time's gonna catch up with you and it's just gonna keep marching on, and once you're gone, time's moving still." All things considered, however, the singer and harmonica player appears to have had the most fun with one of *Out of Line's* covers, a recasting of the Britney Spears pop confection "Toxic."

"Say whatever you want about Britney Spears — it's pop, bubblegum, whatever — but the changes in that song are cool ... they're minor and dark and edgy," he said. "I started to hear in my head what it would sound like as a rock and blues tune. It made me think of the Stevie Ray Vaughan song "Change It."

Unsurprisingly, David's bandmates were incredulous. "They were like, 'dude ... what is this nonsense you're talking about?' I'm like, 'man, listen, you gotta hear what I'm hearing in my head.' I told Paul my concept; he messed around with

it and he sent me a little demo of what he thought I wanted to hear, and it was *exactly* what I wanted to hear."

Once in the studio, "we just turned it into this gnarly shuffle. It's as gut bucket and Texas shuffling as you can get, but it's a f-ing weird piece of bubble gum pop. I'm hoping it's going to make people pay attention a little more outside of the blues world [and] redirect their attention back to the original songs that we wrote.... I think we got a bunch of killers."

NICK DAVID

“No matter what, time’s gonna catch up with you and it’s just gonna keep marching on, and once you’re gone, time’s moving still.”

The five-piece band — David, Size, guitarist Jeff Berg (who also engineered) and the rhythm section of Brad Hallen and Nick Toscano on bass and drums — co-produced the record. Though the blues elements are apparent, The Wicked Lo-Down is looking to be more than vintage, David said.

"When people ask what kind of band we are, this is my little standard quote and I think it's pretty accurate. We're a very heavily blues-influenced rock 'n' roll band. I'll add this caveat: We're a very, very heavily blues influenced *all original* rock 'n' roll band. We're doing our own thing."

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MUSIC THIS WEEK

Alton Bay Docks Docks Restaurant 6 East Side Drive, 855-2222	285 Old Candia Road, 483-4888	4 North Road, 463-7374	Goffstown Village Trestle 25 Main St., 497-8230	126 W. Main St., 290-4887	Fratello's 799 Union Ave., 528-2022	The Foundry 50 Commercial St., 836-1925	6947
Foster's Tavern 403 Main St., 875-1234	Concord The Barley House 132 N. Main St., 228-6363	Derry Fody's Tavern 187 Rockingham Road, 404-6946	Hampton CR's The Restaurant 287 Exeter Road, 929-7972	Hooksett Chantilly's Restaurant & Pub 1112 Hooksett Road, 625-0012	Tower Hill Tavern 264 Lakeside Ave., 366-9100	Fratello's 155 Dow St., 624-2022	Wild Rover 21 Kosciuszko St., 669-7722
Auburn Auburn Pitts 167 Rockingham Road, 622-6564	Hermanos Cocina Mexicana 11 Hills Ave., 224-5669	Dover Auspicious Brew 1 Washington St., 953-7240	The Goat 20 L St., 601-6928	Luk's Bar & Grill 142 Lowell Road, 889-9900	Litchfield Day of the Dead Mexican Taqueria Mel's Funway Park 454 Charles Bancroft Highway, 377-7664	The Goat 50 Old Granite St.	Meredith Twin Barns Brewing 194 Daniel Webster Hwy., 279-0876
Bedford Copper Door 15 Leavy Dr., 488-2677	Lithermans 126 Hall St., Unit B	Cara Irish Pub & Restaurant 11 Fourth St., 343-4390	L Street Tavern 603 17 L St., 967-4777	Lynn's 102 Tavern 76 Derry Road, 943-7832	Londonderry Coach Stop Restaurant & Tavern 176 Mammoth Road, 437-2022	The Hill Bar & Grille McIntyre Ski Area 50 Chalet Ct., 622-6159	Merrimack Homestead 641 Daniel Webster Hwy., 429-2022
Murphy's Carriage House 393 Route 101, 488-5875	Tandy's Pub & Grille 1 Eagle Square, 856-7614	Epping Telly's Restaurant & Pizzeria 235 Calef Hwy., 679-8225	Smuttynose Brewing 105 Towle Farm Road	Wally's Pub 144 Ashworth Ave., 926-6954	Manchester Angel City 179 Elm St., 931-3654	KC's Rib Shack 837 Second St., 627-RIBS	Tortilla Flat 595 Daniel Webster Hwy., 424-4479
Bow Chen Yang Li 520 S. Bow St., 228-8508	Uno Pizzeria 15 Fort Eddy Road, 226-8667	Epsom Hill Top Pizzeria 1724 Dover Road, 736-0027	Whym Craft Pub & Brewery 853 Lafayette Road, 601-2801	Kingston Saddle Up Saloon 92 Route 125, 369-6962	Stumble Inn 20 Rockingham Road, 432-3210	Murphy's Taproom 494 Elm St., 644-3535	Milford The Pasta Loft 241 Union Square, 672-2270
Brookline The Alamo Texas Barbecue & Tequila Bar 99 Route 13, 721-5000	Contoocook Farmers Market 896 Main St., 746-3018	Farmington Hawg's Pen 1114 Route 11, 755-3301	Henniker Pats Peak Sled Pub 24 Flanders Road, 888-728-7732	Laconia Defiant Records & Craft Beer 609 Main St., 527-8310	Manchester Angel City 179 Elm St., 931-3654	Salona Bar & Grill 128 Maple St., 624-4020	Riley's Place 29 Mont Vernon St., 380-3480
Candia The Barnyard / Town Cabin Pub	Deerfield The Lazy Lion	Gilford Patrick's 18 Weirs Road, 293-0841	Hillsboro Main Street Grill and Bar	Jaffrey Park Theatre 19 Main St., 532-9300	Backyard Brewery 1211 S. Mammoth Road, 623-3545	Shaskeen Pub 909 Elm St., 625-0246	Stonecutters Pub 63 Union Square, 213-5979
				Kingston Saddle Up Saloon 92 Route 125, 369-6962	BluAqua 930 Elm St., 836-3970	South Side Tavern 1279 S. Willow St., 935-9947	Moultonborough Buckley's 240 Governor Wentworth Hwy., 476-5485
				Laconia Defiant Records & Craft Beer 609 Main St., 527-8310	Bonfire 950 Elm St., 663-7678	Stark Brewing Co. 500 Commercial St., 625-4444	Nashua Casey Magee's Irish Pub 8 Temple St., 484-7400
					Derryfield Country Club 625 Mammoth Road, 623-2880	Strange Brew 88 Market St., 666-4292	
						To Share Brewing 720 Union St., 836-	

Thursday, Feb. 8

Auburn Auburn Pitts: open jam, 7 p.m.	Epping Telly's: Freddy Catalfo, 7 p.m.	Kingston Saddle Up Saloon: karaoke w/ DJ Jason, 7 p.m.	p.m.	Seabrook Backyard Burgers: Jennifer Mitchell, 6 p.m.	Bedford Murphy's: Jamie Hughes, 6 p.m.
Bedford Copper Door: Chris Lester, 7 p.m.	Epsom Hill Top: music bingo w/ Jennifer Mitchell, 7 p.m.	Laconia Fratello's: Duke Snyder, 5:30 p.m.	Fody's: DJ Rich Karaoke, 9:30 p.m.	Bar 17 Grill: Max Sullivan, 6 p.m.	Brookline Alamo: Clint Lapointe, 6 p.m.
Brookline Alamo: open mic with Travis Rollo, 6 p.m.	Farmington Hawg's Pen: open mic, 7 p.m.	Londonderry Stumble Inn: Roc n Ron Duo, 7 p.m.	Shorty's: Peter Pappas, 6 p.m.	Red's: Rich Amorin, 7 p.m.	Epping Telly's: Redemption Duo, 8 p.m.
Candia Town Cabin Pub: Alan Roux, 6 p.m.	Goffstown Village Trestle: Justin Jordan, 5 p.m.	Manchester BluAqua: Brother Seamus, 8 p.m.	Pittsfield Over the Moon: open mic, 6 p.m.	Somersworth Earth Eagle: open mic w/Dave Ogden, 6 p.m.	Goffstown Village Trestle: J-Lo Duo, 5 p.m.
Concord Hermanos: live music, 6:30 p.m.	Hampton CR's: Steve Sibukin, 6 p.m.	Fratello's: Ralph Allen, 5:30 p.m.	Portsmouth The Goat: Isaiah Bennett, 9 p.m.	Friday, Feb. 9 Alton Bay Docks: music bingo, 7 p.m.	Hampton CR's: Bob Tirelli, 6 p.m.
Lithermans: Ryan Williamson, 5:30 p.m.	Wally's: open mic, 8 p.m.	Goat: Fighting Friday, 9 p.m.	Salem Copper Door: Jordan Quinn, 7 p.m.	Foster's Tavern: Tom Boisse, 6 p.m.	
Derry Fody's: music bingo, 8 p.m.	Whym: music bingo, 6:30 p.m.	The Rex: Chad Lamarsh, 7 p.m.			
	Hudson Lynn's 102: karaoke w/George Bisson, 8 p.m.	Merrimack Homestead: Doug Thompson, 5:30 p.m.			
		Tortilla Flat: Chris Powers, 6 p.m.			
		Milford Pasta Loft: musical bingo, 6:30 p.m.			
		Riley's Place: open mic, 7 p.m.			
		Nashua Casey Magee's: open mic, 7:30 p.m.			

Music, live and in person

These listings for live music are compiled from press releases, restaurants' websites and social media and artists' websites and social media. Call the venue to check on special rules and reservation instructions. Get your gigs listed by sending information to adiaz@hippopress.com.



AT THE INTERSECTION

Folk singer **Crys Matthews** has been combining her gift for music with a commitment to social justice issues. These dual inspirations influenced "Room," a new single she co-wrote with Sarah Potenza from the TV series *The Voice*. Don't miss her appearance at the Word Barn (66 Newfields Road, Exeter, 244-0202, thewordbarn.com) on Thursday, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$16 to \$22, plus fees.

Fody's Tavern 9 Clinton St., 577-9015	11 Charles St., 753-9372	77 Daniel St., 431-5186	Bar 17 Grill 15 Pine St., 760-2864
Peddler's Daughter 48 Main St., 821-7535	Pittsfield Over the Moon 1253 Upper City Road, 216-2162	Thirsty Moose Tap-house 21 Congress St., 427-8645	Chop Shop Pub 920 Lafayette Road, 760-7706
San Francisco Kitchen 133 Main St., 886-8833	Portsmouth The Gas Light 64 Market St., 430-9122	Rochester Porter's 19 Hanson St., 330-1964	Red's Kitchen + Tavern 530 Lafayette Road, 760-0030
Shorty's Mexican Roadhouse 48 Gusabel Ave., 882-4070	The Goat 142 Congress St., 590-4628	Salem Copper Door 41 S. Broadway, 458-2033	Somersworth Earth Eagle North 350 Route 108, 841-5421
New Boston Molly's Tavern & Restaurant 35 Mont Vernon Road, 487-1362	Grill 28 Pease Golf Course, 200 Grafton Road, 766-6466	Luna Bistro 254 N. Broadway, 458-2162	Sunapee Sunapee Community Coffee House 9 Lower Main St., 398-8214
Newbury Goosefeathers Pub Mt. Sunapee Resort, 1298 Route 103	Mojo's West End Tavern 95 Brewery Lane, 436-6656	T-Bones 311 South Broadway, 893-3444	Warner Cafe One East 1 E. Main St., 715-4818
Northfield Boonedoxz Pub 95 Park St., 717-8267	Napoletana 14 Market Sq., 570-3610	Seabrook Backyard Burgers & Wings 5 Provident Way, 760-2581	
Penacook American Legion Post 31	Press Room		

The Goat: Taylor Hughes, 9 p.m.
L Street: karaoke, 9 p.m.
Wally's: Juice Box, 9 p.m.
Whym: Liz Ridgely, 6:30 p.m.

Hillsboro Main Street Grill and Bar: Mikey G, 6 p.m.

Hooksett Chantilly's Pub: NKM, 8 p.m.

Hudson Lynn's 102: karaoke w/George Bisson, 8 p.m.

Jaffrey Park Theatre: Sophia & Kate, 6 p.m.; Ayla Brown & Rob Bellamy, 7 p.m.

Kingston Saddle Up Saloon: Lee Biddle, 7:30 p.m.

Laconia Defiant Records & Craft Beer: Fred, 5:30 p.m.
Fratello's: Kyle Dumais, 5:30 p.m.
Tower Hill: 90 Miles Away, 8 p.m.

Litchfield Day of the Dead: music bingo, 6:30 p.m.

Londonderry Coach Stop: Joanie Cicatelli, 6 p.m.
Stumble Inn: The Ride, 8 p.m.

Manchester Angel City: Standard Tuning, 9 p.m.
Backyard Brewery: Tyler Levs, 6 p.m.
BluAqua: Jared Rocco, 8 p.m.
Bonfire: Nate Ramos, 9 p.m.
Derryfield: Emily's Garage Band, 8 p.m.

Foundry: Paul Driscoll, 6 p.m.
Fratello's: John Chouinard, 6 p.m.
The Goat: 7 Day Weekend, 9 p.m.
Shaskeen: Lamont Smooth, 9 p.m.
South Side Tavern: Cox Karaoke, 9 p.m.
Strange Brew: Peter Higgins, 8 p.m.

Meredith Twin Barns: The Sweetbloods, 5 p.m.

Merrimack Homestead: Marc Apostolides, 6 p.m.

Milford Pasta Loft: Bush League, 8:30 p.m.
Riley's: Incidentals, 8 p.m.
Stonecutters Pub: DJ Dave O karaoke, 9 p.m.



LAUGHS AT THE REX

Al Park has made a name for himself as a warm, engaging comedian with a great skill for crowd work. He's won the Boston and Cleveland Comedy Festivals and appeared on Fox TV's *Laughs*. Now you can see him at the Rex (23 Amherst St., Manchester, 668-5588, palacetheatre.org) on Friday, Feb. 9, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$25 plus fees.

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PRESENTS

FEBRUARY



FRIDAY 9	7:30PM	
WED 14	Silent Film with Live Music: SPEEDY	7:00PM
THUR 15	14th Annual New England Winter Blues Festival: A Gulf Coast Records Review	7:30PM
FRI 16	A Valentine Dueling Pianos: Live at the Rex	7:30PM
SAT 17	A Musical Cooking Lesson with The Calamari Sisters	2 & 7:30PM
FRI 23	An Evening with Singer Songwriter Vance Gilbert	7:30PM
SAT 24	The Dave Matthews Tribute Band	7:30PM

MARCH

FRI 1	Comedy at the Rex with Jimmy Cash and Friends!	7:30PM
SAT 2	Symphony NH Present's: Penelope	7:30PM
FRI 8	An Evening With David, Luke and Will Mallett	7:30PM
SAT 9	Panorama: A Tribute to the Cars	7:30PM
SUN 10	Good Looking 'Hank' and his Cowboy Drifters: A Tribute to Hank Williams Sr.	2:00PM
FRI 15	St. Patricks Day with The Spain Brothers	7:30PM
SAT 16	Divas with a Twist in Concert	2 & 7:30PM

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NITE MUSIC THIS WEEK

Moultonborough

Buckey's: Red Hat Band, 6:30 p.m.

Nashua

Casey Magee's: karaoke, 9:30 p.m.

New Boston

Molly's: Lewis Goodwin, 7 p.m.

Northfield

Boonedoxz Pub: karaoke night, 7 p.m.

Penacook

American Legion Post 31: Jennifer Mitchell, 7 p.m.

Portsmouth

Gas Light: Dave Clark, 9:30 p.m.
The Goat: Pat Dowling, 9 p.m.
Grill 28: Johnny Angel, 6 p.m.
Press Room: The Taylor Party, 10 p.m.
Thirsty Moose: Woodland Protocol, 9:30 p.m.

Salem

Luna Bistro: Bella Perrotta, 7 p.m.

Seabrook

Chop Shop: Daisy Cutter, 8 p.m.
Red's: Jumpstreet, 8 p.m.

Sunapee

Sunapee Community Coffee House: Ian Galipeau, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 10

Alton Bay

Foster's Tavern: Justin Federico, 6 p.m.

Bedford

Murphy's: Richard Wallace, 6 p.m.

Bow

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

Brookline

Alamo: Lewis Goodwin, 6 p.m.

Concord

Downtown Farmers Market: Cat Faulkner Duo, 9 a.m.

Hermanos: live music, 6:30 p.m.

Contoocook

Contoocook Farmers Market: Mary Fagan, 9 a.m.

Dover

Auspicious Brew: Planet Parlor, Moon Snails, Glad Valley, 8 p.m.

Epping

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

Gilford

Patrick's Pub: Kitchen Party, 6 p.m.

Goffstown

Village Trestle: live music, 6 p.m.

Hampton

The Goat: Russ Six, 9 p.m.
L Street: Karaoke, 9 p.m.
Wally's: Grateful Dub + Roots of Creation, 9 p.m.
Whym: Rebecca Turmel, 6:30 p.m.

Henniker

Pats Peak: The 603s, 6 p.m.

Hudson

Luk's Bar: live music, 7 p.m.

Jaffrey

Park Theatre: Bernie & Louise Watson, 5:30 p.m.

Laconia

Fratello's: Richard Cumming, 6 p.m.

Londonderry

Coach Stop: Paul Lussier, 6 p.m.
Stumble Inn: Luminicity, 8 p.m.

Manchester

Backyard Brewery: Dan Fallon, 6 p.m.
BluAqua: Chris Perkins, 8 p.m.
Bonfire: Eric Grant Band, 9 p.m.
Derryfield: Chad LaMarsh, 8 p.m.
Foundry: Ryan Williamson, 6 p.m.

Fratello's: Johnny Angel, 6 p.m.
The Goat: Musical Brunch with Brooks Hubbard, 10 a.m.

The Hill: Bella Perrotta, 5:30 p.m.

Shaskeen: Sound Off Saturday, 9 p.m.

Strange Brew: Ken Clark Organ Trio, 9 p.m.

To Share: Lucas Gallo, 5 p.m.

Wild Rover: Casey Roop, 5 p.m.

Meredith

Twin Barns: Colin Hart, 5 p.m.

Merrimack

Homestead: Marc Apostolides, 6 p.m.

Milford

Pasta Loft: The Slakas Band, 8:30 p.m.
Riley's: Rubix Muse, 8 p.m.

Nashua

Casey Magee's: JD & The Stonemasons, 8 p.m.
Peddler's Daughter: live music, 8 p.m.
San Francisco Kitchen: Scott King, 6:30 p.m.

New Boston

Molly's: Acoustic BS, 7 p.m.

Newbury

Mount Sunapee: Dave Clark, 3 p.m.

Portsmouth

Gas Light: Sam Hammerman, 9:30 p.m.
The Goat: Ryan Flynn, 9 p.m.
Napoletana: Max Sullivan, 5:30 p.m.

Salem

Luna Bistro: Justin Jordan, 7 p.m.

Seabrook

Red's: Redemption Band, 8 p.m.

Sunday, Feb. 11

Bedford

Copper Door: Marc Hammerman, 11 a.m.

Brookline

Alamo: Caylin Costello, 4 p.m.

Goffstown

Village Trestle: Charlie Chronopoulos, 3:30 p.m.

Hampton

Smuttynose: Casey Roop, 4:30 p.m.

Whym: Max Sullivan, 1 p.m.

Kingston

Saddle Up Saloon: Brian Walker, 1 p.m.

Laconia

Fratello's: Kyle Dumais, 6 p.m.

Londonderry

Stumble Inn: Chad LaMarsh, 3 p.m.

Manchester

Bonfire: free line dancing, 7 p.m.
The Goat: Mike Forgette, 10 a.m.; Paul Wolstencroft, 7 p.m.
Strange Brew: One Big Soul Jam, 7 p.m.
To Share: open mic, 4 p.m.

Milford

Riley's Place: blues jam, 1 p.m.

Newbury

Mount Sunapee: April Cushman Duo, 3 p.m.

Northfield

Boonedoxz Pub: open mic, 4 p.m.

Portsmouth

The Goat: Rob Pagnano, 9 p.m.

Salem

Copper Door: Steve Aubert, 11 a.m.

Monday, Feb. 12

Dover

Cara Irish Pub: open mic, 8 p.m.

Gilford

Patrick's Pub: open mic with John McArthur, 6 p.m.

Hampton

L Street: karaoke, 9 p.m.

Hudson

The Bar: karaoke with Phil, 8 p.m.

p.m.

Jaffrey

Park Theatre: open mic, 6:30 p.m.

Laconia

Fratello's: Richard Cumming, 5:30 p.m.

Londonderry

Stumble Inn: Lisa Guyer, 7 p.m.

Manchester

Fratello's: Phil Jacques, 5:30 p.m.
The Goat: Musical Bingo Nation, 7 p.m.
Salona: music bingo with Jennifer Mitchell, 6 p.m.

Merrimack

Homestead: Chris Cavanaugh, 5:30 p.m.

Nashua

Fody's: karaoke night, 9:30 p.m.

Portsmouth

The Goat: Musical Bingo Nation, 7 p.m.; Russ Six, 9 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 13

Concord

Barley House: Irish music session, 6 p.m.
Tandy's: open mic, 8 p.m.

Hampton

Shane's: music bingo, 7 p.m.
Wally's: music bingo, 7 p.m.

Laconia

Fratello's: Duke Snyder, 5:30 p.m.

Manchester

Campo Enoteca: NKM, 6 p.m.
Fratello's: Jodee Frawlee, 5:30 p.m.
KC's Rib Shack: Paul & Nate open mic, 7 p.m.

Merrimack

Homestead: Jeff Mrozek, 5:30 p.m.

Portsmouth

The Goat: Isaiah Bennett, 8 p.m.

Press Room: Soggy Po' Boys, 9 p.m.

Rochester

Porter's: karaoke, 6:30 p.m.

Seabrook

Backyard Burgers: music bingo with Jennifer Mitchell, 7 p.m.

Warner

Cafe One East: open mic, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 14

Concord

Hermanos: live music, 6:30 p.m.
Tandy's: karaoke, 8 p.m.
Uno Pizzeria: Chris Lester, 6 p.m.

Derry

Fody's: karaoke, 7 p.m.

Jaffrey

Park Theatre: open mic, 6:30 p.m.

Kingston

Saddle Up Saloon: Musical Bingo Nation, 7 p.m.

Laconia

Fratello's: Richard Cumming, 5:30 p.m.

Manchester

Fratello's: Liz Ridgely, 5:30 p.m.
Stark Brewing: Cox karaoke, 8 p.m.
Strange Brew: open mic w/ Will Bemiss, 8 p.m.

Merrimack

Homestead: Joe Winslow, 5:30 p.m.

Milford

Riley's: karaoke, 7 p.m.
Stonecutters Pub: open mic, 8 p.m.

Portsmouth

The Goat: Taylor Hughes, 9 p.m.

FOLK AT THE LIBRARY

The producers at the Franklin Opera House are presenting a series of concerts at the Franklin Public Library (310 Central Street; franklinoperahouse.org). **Liz & Dan Faiella** kick off the series with their shimmering take on traditional folk. They take the stage on Saturday, Feb. 10, at 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$10 to \$15, plus fees.

MARLEY COMEDY

Bob Marley has toured the world, appeared on the *Tonight* show with Jay Leno and *Late Night* with Conan O'Brien, won the SiriusXM Super Bowl of Comedy and even made the *Guinness Book of World Records*. However, New England is always near to his heart. He returns to the Flying Monkey (39 Main St., Plymouth, 536-2551, flyingmonkeynh.com) on Thursday, Feb. 8, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$39.50 plus fees.

COMEDY THIS WEEK AND BEYOND

- **Bob Marley Flying Monkey** in Plymouth (flyingmonkeynh.com), Thursday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m.
- **Laugh Attic Strange Brew** in Manchester (strangebrew-tavern.net) Thursday, Feb. 8, at 8:30 p.m.
- **Al Park Rex** in Manchester (palacetheatre.org), Friday, Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m.
- **Cory Gee** Chunky's Manchester (chunkys.com), Friday, Feb. 9, and Saturday, Feb. 10, 8:30 p.m.
- **Frank Santorelli** Headliners in Manchester (headlinersnh.com), Saturday, Feb. 10, 8:30 p.m.
- **Brad Mastrangelo** Chunky's Nashua (chunkys.com), Saturday, Feb. 10, 8:30 p.m.
- **Laugh Attic Strange Brew** in Manchester (strangebrew-tavern.net) Thursday, Feb. 15, at 8:30 p.m.
- **Wolves of Glendale** Press Room in Portsmouth (press-roomnh.com), Friday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m.
- **Philip Anthony** Chunky's Manchester (chunkys.com), Friday, Feb. 16, 8:30 p.m.
- **The Calamari Sisters** Rex in Manchester (palacetheatre.org), Saturday, Feb. 17, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.



Cory Gee

- **R-Rated Hypnotist Frank Santos Jr.** Palace in Manchester (palacetheatre.org), Saturday, Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m.
- **Kathy Griffin** Music Hall, (themusicball.org) Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 p.m.

Weekly Dish

Continued from page 26

according to a Facebook post.

Order chocolate-covered strawberries from **Buckley's** in Merrimack or Hollis by Monday, Feb. 12, for a Valentine's Day pickup. A half-pound is \$18, a full pound is \$36.

• **The Farm Bar & Grille** in Manchester (farmbargrille.com) will have a Valentine Trivia Night at 8 p.m. with food and drink specials to go with *Heathers* rom-com related trivia.

• Check out the menu of specials at **Firefly** in Manchester (fireflynh.com), which includes a red velvet cheesecake and the strawberry chocolate old-fashioned. The specials will be offered along with the regular menu.

• **Frederick's Bakery** in both Amherst and Bedford (pastry.net) has offerings including single-serving desserts like cookies and cupcakes, full-size cakes, chocolates and chocolate-covered strawberries and a Valentine's cookie decorating kit.

• **Giorgio's** (giorgios.com) has a special on its website for Sunday, Feb. 11 (game day) — reasonable people can argue over which is the bigger holiday. On Feb. 14, Manchester and Milford Giorgio's are open from 4 to 9 p.m. and Merrimack is open from noon to 8 p.m., according to the website, where you can make reservations.

• **Granite State Candy Shoppe** in Manchester and Concord (granitestatecandyshoppe.com) has a variety of Valentine's offerings including chocolate-dipped strawberries; red foil wrapped heart-shaped and lip-shaped chocolates; heart boxes with chocolates, and more.

• **The Grazing Room** at Colby Hill Inn in Henniker (colbyhillinn.com) will have seatings 4 to 8 p.m.; see the evening's menu on the website.

• **The Hills Restaurant** at Hampshire Hills Athletic Club in Milford (hampshirehills.com) will have its Valentine Specials menu available Tuesday, Feb. 13, through

Saturday, Feb. 17.

• **LaBelle Winery** (labellewinery.com) has multiple Valentine's- and chocolate-themed events at its Derry and Amherst locations. Events that, as of Feb. 5, had openings include a Valentine's Day dinner with ballroom dancing in Derry on Saturday, Feb. 10; a Sinatra in Love dinner with performer Rich DiMare and the Iron Poster Trio in Amherst on Wednesday, Feb. 14, and Cooking with Wine & Chocolate classes in Amherst (Feb. 15) and Derry (Feb. 21).

• **Murphy's** in Manchester posted a drinks menu that includes items such as Chocolate Craze (vanilla vodka, chocolate liqueur and Baileys with a chocolate drizzle) and Cotton Candy Kiss (Champagne with a cotton candy base). Murphy's Taproom & Carriage House in Bedford has a Valentine's Day prix fixe menu for \$60 per person as well as a romantic dining package for \$40 per couple; see murphystaproom.com/holiday.

• **Pearls Candy and Nuts** in Windham (pearlscandynh.com) has a variety of themed offerings including red foil wrapped chocolate hearts.

• **Van Otis Chocolates** in Manchester and Wolfeboro (vanotis.com) has a variety of Valentine's treats including chocolate-dipped bottles, special boxed chocolates, gift boxes, chocolate-dipped strawberries and more.

• Maybe you can't go to Europe for Valentine's Day but you can get candies and chocolates that come from Europe at **Viking House** in Concord (vikinghouse.com), which is open from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

• **Vine Thirty Two** in Bedford (vinethirtytwo.com) is offering a "Partners in Wine" special Wednesday, Feb. 14, through Friday, Feb. 16 — \$100 includes two \$25 wine cards, a five-item charcuterie board and a dessert to share. 🍷

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- 2019 Dodge Ram 1500 1C6SRFHT6K6N669936
- 2003 Honda Civic 1HGEM22033L052598
- 2006 Honda Civic 1HGFAI6546L032873
- 2008 Hyundai Santa Fe 5NMSG73D08H182385
- 2005 Ford E350 1FDWE35P55HA27072

Vehicles will be sold at Public Auction Feb. 9, 2024 at 10:00 AM at 26 Mason St., Nashua NH. We reserve the right to refuse/cancel any sale at any time for any reason.

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NITE MUSIC & EVENTS

Trivia

Events

- **80s Music 21+ trivia night** Thursday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m. at Chunky's in Manchester (707 Huse Road in Manchester; chunkys.com).
- **Love Actually 21+ trivia night** Thursday, Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m. at Chunky's in Manchester (707 Huse Road in Manchester; chunkys.com).

Weekly

- **Thursday** trivia with Game Time Trivia at Mitchell BBQ (50 N. Main St., Rochester, 332-2537, mitchellhillbbq.com) at 6 p.m.
- **Thursday** trivia at Reed's North (2 E. Main St. in Warner, 456-2143, reednorth.com) from 6 to 8 p.m.
- **Thursday** trivia at Station 101 (193 Union Sq., Milford, 249-5416) at 6:30 p.m.
- **Thursday** music trivia at Day of

the Dead Taqueria (454 Charles Bancroft Hwy. in Litchfield, 377-7664) at 6:30 p.m.

- **Thursday** trivia with Game Time Trivia at Hart's Turkey Farm (223 Daniel Webster Hwy., Meredith, 279-6212, hartsturkeyfarm.com) from 7 to 9:30 p.m.
- **Thursday** Opinionation by Sporce trivia at Uno Pizzeria & Grill (15 Fort Eddy Road in Concord; 226-8667) at 7 p.m.
- **Thursday** trivia at Hop Knot (1000 Elm St., Manchester, 232-3731, hopknotnh.com) at 7 p.m.
- **Thursday** trivia at Shooters Sports Pub (6 Columbus Ave., Exeter, 772-3856) at 7:15 p.m.
- **Thursday** trivia at Liquid Therapy (14 Court St., Nashua, 402-9391) at 7:30 p.m.
- **Thursday** trivia at Game Changer Sports Bar (4 Orchard View Dr., Londonderry; 216-1396, gamechangersportsbar.com) from 8 to 10 p.m.



Love Actually

- **Thursday** trivia at Strange Brew (88 Market St., Manchester, 666-4292) at 8 p.m.
- **First Thursday of every month** trivia at Fody's (9 Clinton St., Nashua; fodystavern.com) at 8 p.m.
- **First and third Thursday of every month** trivia at To Share Brewing (720 Union St., Manchester, tosharebrewing.com) at 6:30 p.m.
- **Friday** trivia at Biergarten Anheuser-Busch (221 Daniel Webster Hwy., Merrimack) from 6 to 8 p.m.
- **Sunday** trivia at Mountain Base Brewery (553 Mast Road, No.

- 111, Goffstown, 315-8382) at 4 p.m.
- **Monday** Pub Quiz at Shaskeen (909 Elm St., Manchester, 625-0246, shaskeenirishpub.com) at 7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday** trivia at Able Ebenezer Brewing (31 Columbia Circle, Merrimack, 844-223-2253) at 6 p.m.
- **Tuesday** trivia at Sea Dog Brewing (5 Water St., Exeter, 793-5116) at 6 p.m.
- **Tuesday** trivia at Second Brook Bar & Grill (1100 Hooksett Road, Hooksett, secondbrook.com) at 7 p.m.
- **Tuesday** trivia at Fody's (187 Rockingham Road, Derry, 404-6946, fodystavern.com) at 7 p.m.
- **Tuesday** trivia at Lynn's 102 Tavern (76 Derry Road, Hudson, 943-7832, lynns102.com), at 7 p.m.
- **Tuesday** trivia at Gibb's Garage Bar (3612 Lafayette Road, Portsmouth, gibbsgaragebar.com) from

- 8 to 10 p.m.
- **Tuesday Geeks Who Drink** trivia at Peddler's Daughter (48 Main St., Nashua, 821-7535, thepeddlersdaughter.com), from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m.
- **Wednesday** trivia at Community Oven (845 Lafayette Road, Hampton, 601-6311, thecommunityoven.com) at 6 p.m.
- **Wednesday** Brews & Qs trivia, 21+, at Feathered Friend (231 S. Main St., Concord, 715-2347, featheredfriendbrewing.com) at 6 p.m.
- **Wednesday** trivia at Spyglass Brewing Co. (306 Innovative Way, Nashua, 546-2965, spyglassbrewing.com) at 6 p.m.
- **Wednesday** trivia at Topwater Brewing (748 Calef Hwy., Barrington, 664-5444) at 6 p.m.
- **Wednesday** trivia at Popovers (11 Brickyard Sq., Epping, 734-4724, popoversonthesquare.com) from 6:30 to 8 p.m.
- **Wednesday** The Greatest Triv-

- ia in the World at Revolution Taproom and Grill (61 N. Main St., Rochester, 244-3042, revolutiontaproomandgrill.com/upcoming-events) at 6:30 p.m.
- **Wednesday** trivia at Don Ramon (6 Whitney St., Merrimack, 420-8468) from 7 to 9 p.m.
- **Wednesday Kings Trivia** at KC's Rib Shack (837 Second St., Manchester, 627-7427, ribshack.net), sponsored by Mi Campo, in Manchester 7 to 9 p.m..
- **Wednesday** trivia at Millyard Brewery (125 E. Otterson St., Nashua; 722-0104, millyardbrewery.com) at 7 p.m.
- **Wednesday** trivia at City Hall Pub (8 Hanover St.; Manchester, 232-3751, snhhg.com) at 7 p.m.
- **Wednesday World Tavern Trivia** at Fody's Tavern (9 Clinton St. in Nashua, fodystavern.com, 577-9015) at 8 p.m.
- **Wednesday** trivia at Park Theatre (19 Main St., Jaffrey; 532-9300, theparktheatre.org) at 8 p.m.

Concerts

Venues

Angel City Music Hall

179 Elm St. in Manchester, 931-3654, angelcitymusic hall.com

Bank of NH Stage in Concord

16 S. Main St., Concord, 225-1111, banknhstage.com

Capitol Center for the Arts

Chubb Theatre, 44 S. Main St., Concord, 225-1111, ccanh.com

Cisco Brewers

35 Corporate Dr., Portsmouth, ciscobrewersportsmouth.com

Colonial Theatre

609 Main St., Laconia, 800-657-8774, coloniallaconia.com

Concord City Auditorium

2 Prince St., Concord, theaudi.org

The Flying Goose

40 Andover Road, New London, 526-6899, flyinggoose.com

The Flying Monkey

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

Franklin Opera House

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

Fulchino Vineyard

187 Pine Hill Road, Hollis, 438-5984, fulchinovineyard.com

Great Waters

54 N. Main St., Wolfeboro, 569-7710, greatwaters.org

Jewel Music Venue

61 Canal St., Manchester, 819-9336, jewelmusicvenue.com

Jimmy's Jazz and Blues Club

135 Congress St., Portsmouth, 888-603-JAZZ, jimmysoncongress.com

LaBelle Winery

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

LaBelle Winery Derry

14 Route 111, Derry, 672-9898, labellewinery.com

Lakeport Opera House

781 Union Ave., Laconia, 519-7506, lakeportopera.com

The Majestic Theatre

880 Page St., Manchester, 669-7469, majestictheatre.net

The Music Hall

28 Chestnut St., Portsmouth, 436-2400, themusic hall.org

The Music Hall Lounge

131 Congress St., Portsmouth, 436-2400, themusic hall.org

Nashua Center for the Arts

201 Main St., Nashua, 800-657-8774, nashuacenterforthearts.com

The Orchard Chapel

143 Exeter Road, Hampton Falls, 244-0202, thewordbarn.com

Palace Theatre

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

Park Theatre

19 Main St., Jaffrey, 532-9300, theparktheatre.org

Pasta Loft

241 Union Square, Milford, pasta loft.com/live-music

Press Room

77 Daniel St., Portsmouth, 431-5186, pressroomnh.com

Rex Theatre

23 Amherst St., Manchester, 668-5588, palacetheatre.org

Rochester Opera House

31 Wakefield St., Rochester, 335-1992, rochesteroperahouse.com

The Spotlight Room

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

SNHU Arena

555 Elm St., Manchester, 644-5000, snhuarena.com

Stone Church

5 Granite St., Newmarket, 659-7700, stonechurchrocks.com

The Strand

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

3S Artspace

319 Vaughan St., Portsmouth, 766-3330, 3sarts.org

Tupelo Music Hall

10 A St., Derry, 437-5100, tupelomusic hall.com

The Word Barn

66 Newfields Road, Exeter, 244-0202, thewordbarn.com

Shows

- **Crys Matthews** Thursday, Feb. 8, 7 p.m., Word Barn
- **Mark Erelli** Thursday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m., Flying Goose
- **Caroline Cotter** Thursday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m., Music Hall Lounge
- **Live from Laurel Canyon** Thursday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m.,

Jimmy's

- **Arty Raines Francoeur** Friday, Feb. 9, 4 p.m., Cisco Brewers
- **Leathal Winter Tour with Gibby Stites, Fury, Dr. Gigglez, Knowledge & Mischief with DJ Spinright, Dobo, Mr. Goodbarz, Payn, Trikkdout, Messy the Man, Kazkit the Monsta with Misty Rain** Friday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m., Jewel
- **Ayla Brown & Matt Bellamy** Friday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m., Park Theatre
- **Mallett Brothers Band** Friday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m., Word Barn
- **Genitorum** Friday, Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m., Bank of NH Stage
- **Louis Hayes Quartet** Friday, Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m., Jimmy's
- **Lotus Land** Friday, Feb. 9, and Saturday, Feb. 10, 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Foy Vance** Friday, Feb. 9, 8 p.m., Music Hall
- **Booty Vortex** Friday, Feb. 9, 8 p.m., LaBelle Winery Derry
- **The Dreadnaughts/Mickey Rickshaw** Friday, Feb. 9, 8 p.m., Stone Church
- **Bonus Cat** Saturday, Feb. 10, noon, Cisco Brewers
- **Jordan TW Trio** Saturday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m., Word Barn
- **Liz & Dan Faiella** Saturday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m., Franklin Public Library
- **Marcus Rezak's Guitar-Head Band** Saturday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m., Flying Monkey
- **Soggy Po'Boys** Saturday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m., Rex
- **Big Head Todd & the Monsters** Saturday, Feb. 10, 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Sarah Blacker Band** Saturday, Feb. 10, 8 p.m., Music Hall Lounge
- **The Coalboilers** Sunday, Feb. 11, noon, Cisco Brewers

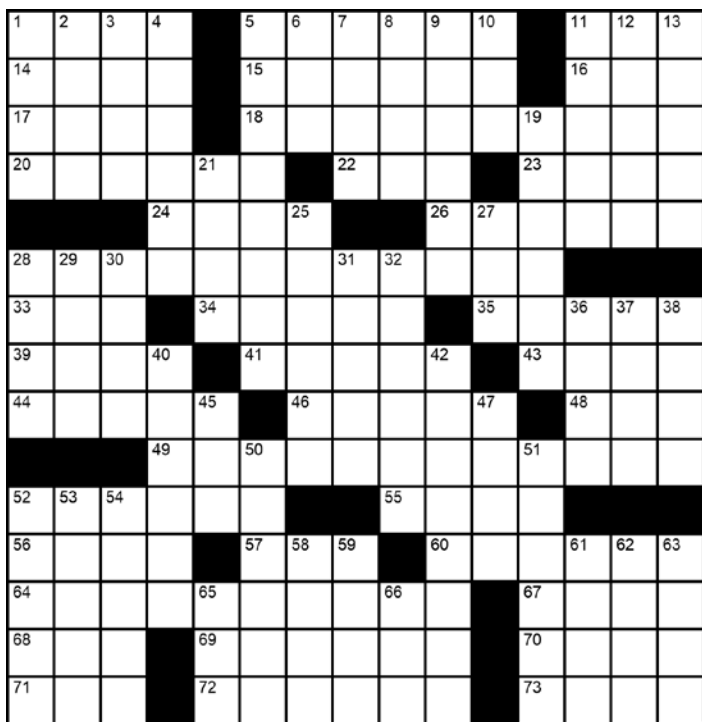


Genitorum. Photo by Dylan Ladds

- **Big Head Todd & the Monsters** Tuesday, Feb. 13, 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Rich DiMare in Sinatra In Love** Wednesday, Feb. 14, 6:30 p.m., LaBelle Amherst
- **Glenn Phillips & Shawn Mullins** Wednesday, Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m., Tupelo
- **John 5 and the Creatures** Wednesday, Feb. 14, 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **The Chamber Music of Robert Honstein** Thursday, Feb. 15, 7 p.m., Music Hall Lounge
- **Croce Plays Croce** Thursday, Feb. 15, 7 p.m., Chubb Theatre
- **Katie Henry Band** Thursday, Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m., Jimmy's
- **New England Winter Blues Festival** Thursday, Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m., Rex
- **Shades of Buble** (Michael Buble tribute) Friday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., Palace
- **Dueling Pianos** Friday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., Rex
- **Mandy Barnett Sings Patsy Cline** Friday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., Jimmy's
- **Valentine's Dueling Pianos** Friday, Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m., Rex
- **Trapt/Hollow Virtue** Friday, Feb. 16, 8 p.m., Angel City
- **The Rock Dwellers** Friday, Feb. 16, 8 p.m., 3S Artspace

- **Juanito Pascual Trio** Friday, Feb. 16, 8 p.m., Music Hall Lounge
- **Glenn Hughes** Friday, Feb. 16, 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Truffle** Saturday, Feb. 17, noon, Cisco Brewers
- **Ari Hest** Saturday, Feb. 17, 4 p.m., Cisco Brewers
- **Paul Hodes and the Blue Buddha Band** Saturday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m., 3S Artspace
- **Chief Adajah** Saturday, Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m., Jimmy's
- **Paul Nelson Band** Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 p.m., Stone Church
- **Blues Brothers: The Next Generation** Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 p.m., Tupelo
- **Cowboy Junkies** Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 p.m., Colonial Laconia
- **Griffin House** Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 p.m., Music Hall Lounge
- **Paul Nelson Band** Saturday, Feb. 17, 8 p.m., Stone Church
- **Ari Hest** Sunday, Feb. 18, noon, Cisco Brewers
- **Oshima Brothers** Sunday, Feb. 18, 7 p.m., Press Room
- **Matt Pond PA/Alexa Rose** Sunday, Feb. 18, 7 p.m., Word Barn
- **Gulf Coast Records Revue** Sunday, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m., Jimmy's
- **Cat Power** Sunday, Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m., Music Hall
- **The Blue Note Quintet** Tuesday, Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m., Music Hall
- **The Wildmans** Wednesday, Feb. 21, 8 p.m., Press Room
- **Trombone Shorty & Orleans Avenue** Thursday, Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m., Music Hall
- **No Static** (Steely Dan tribute) Thursday, Feb. 22, 7 p.m., and Friday, Feb. 23, 7:30 p.m., Jimmy's

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71. Griddle sound
 72. "You're still wrong"
 73. Give a bad review to
- Down**
1. Poker variety
 2. "See ya"
 3. Warriors star Thompson
 5. Puts the Vs in the Bs, maybe
 6. Formic acid maker
 7. Singer Burl
 8. Operatic icon
 9. "Be that as it may ..."
 10. "... neither the time ___ the place"
 11. Construction vehicle
 12. Exuded slowly
 13. Puts in the fridge
 19. Crease undoer
 21. Throw off
 25. Cherry red
 27. Initials for conservationists (and not wrestlers anymore)
 28. Basketball infraction
 29. Rajah's spouse
 30. "___ be a cold day in hell ..."
 31. "Agreed"
 32. Anger
 36. Circular cracker
 37. All-encompassing phrase
 38. Name on jeans labels
 40. Exxon ___ (ship in 1989 headlines)
 42. Id's opposite, to Freud

45. 1955 merger with the AFL
 47. Lemon, for one
 50. Like bad sleeping spells
 51. Baggage tie-ons
 52. Big numbers for a meteorologist
 53. Fragrant root used in perfumes
 54. Sticks around
58. Have-___ (those in need)
 59. Alkaline ___ (punk band)
 61. Worshipped figurine
 62. "The Lion King" heroine
 63. Letters on a radio switch
 65. Ending with proto
 66. Anderson Cooper's network
- © 2024 Matt Jones

Across

1. Wall St. buys, for short
 5. Type of name or voyage
 11. Disney dwarf
 14. After-bath powder
 15. Live (as opposed to "test tube")
 16. "Tic-Tac-Dough" winning line
 17. The most charitable U.S. state four years in a row, per a WalletHub analysis
 18. "Mr. Buscemi, meet this Muppet rat" introduction?
 20. Respite from the nine-to-five
 22. Marino or Pedro preceder
 23. Fishing equipment
 24. Flock-related
 26. Fencing weapons
 28. Municipality that's been cooked in a well-oiled pan?
 33. Grainy milk source
 34. Hauntingly strange
 35. Undomesticated
 39. College basketball's Runnin' Rebels
 41. Campground units
 43. Passage marker?
 44. Bath salt scent
 46. Brewpub option
 48. "Mazel ___!"
 49. The further biography of a family in a 1985 Anjelica Huston crime comedy?
 52. First words of a search for a tutorial, maybe
 55. Provide meals for
 56. "Dies ___" (Latin requiem)
 57. Atlanta-based cable network

60. Light-sensing eye part
 64. Army led by the "30 Rock" character who's friends with Dot Com?
 67. West of "Batman"
 68. Battleship call
 69. Pleasure trip
 70. Sport for Ludvig Åberg and Jordan Zunic

WORD★Roundup™

by David L. Hoyt & Jeff Knurek

Find and Circle...

- Five months □□□□
 Three eight-letter mammals □□
 Skull Island beast: ___ ___ □
 Two six-letter relatives □□
 Two South American countries □□

Last Week's Answers: FRIZZ BUZZ FIZZ JAZZ FUZZ / BEIGE GREEN MAUVE WHITE / ELECTRON NEUTRON PROTON / KNIFE FORK / INCH YARD

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J M O T H E R R K O N G
 L U R R L M E R P E R U
 I J N I V B N E P H E W
 R Z H E M A R C H R C L
 P C T E C H I P M U N K
 A R C A A R D V A R K M
 Q E V J H E D G E H O G
 D K I N G O C T O B E R

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EASY

1	12X		5+
2÷		4	
10+	4X		3-

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CHALLENGING

20X			4-	2	10+
5	3+	144X			
6X					5
	1-		1-		5-
	3	10+	1-		
2-				2÷	

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RULES

1 Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 through 4 (easy) or 1 through 6 (challenging) without repeating.

2 The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes, called cages, must combine using the given operation (in any order) to produce the target numbers in the top-left corners.

3 Freebies: Fill in single-box cages with the number in the top-left corner.

PREVIOUS ANSWERS

3-	4	1	2	3
3+	1	2	3	4
2÷	2	3	4	1
3	3	4	1	2

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It puzzles good, don't it?

Across

1. Mosh pit dance
5. Bob Dylan ‘ ___ I Fell In Love With You’
8. Boyz II Men misspell ‘In The Still Of The ___’
12. Be-Bop-A-___
13. St Louis ‘‘Champagne’ rockers
14. Joe Cocker ‘You Can Leave Your ___’
15. Black Dahlia Murder song about the top?
16. Wonder Stuff did ‘The Size Of ___’ for bovines
17. Sidekick at rock en español show
18. Not experts

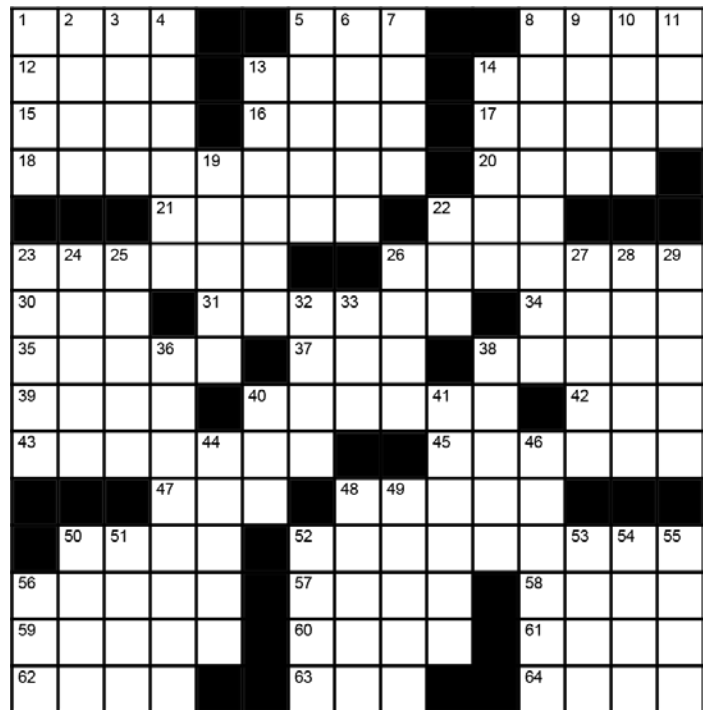
20. German neoclassical/blues guitarist Roth
21. Like Led Zep’s ‘Mountain Hop’
22. ___ Jam Records
23. Audioslave ‘I’ll wait for you there like ___’
26. Go back on drugs
30. Lauryn Hill ‘ ___ Wop (That Thing)’
31. Rick Springfield’s friend on smash hit
34. Journey keyman Jonathan
35. OMD ‘ ___ Gay’
37. Debbie Harry ‘‘French kissing in the ___’
38. ‘Beast Of Burden’ Midler

39. Bootsy Collins pals Deee-___
40. GnR ‘Live And ___’
42. Half of Finn Brothers
43. Sarah McLachlan ‘Fumbling Towards ___’
45. Like gravelly quality of concert pic
47. Slipknot turntablist Wilson
48. What Stones may need to get on stage
50. Aka, glitter rock
52. CSN&Y ‘‘Glad that you ___, when did you finalize your last trade?’’
56. Britian’s Got Talent star Susan
57. Elvis ‘Got ___ O’ Livin’ To Do!’
58. ‘ ___ up around 7, get outta bed around 9’
59. ‘Storytelling’ ___ & Sebastian
60. Chelsea singer October
61. Like German balloons to Nena
62. Bluesman Robert
63. Approving vote word for new manager
64. Irish ethereal queen

Down

1. Southern hard rockers Raging ___
2. ‘The Show Goes On’ Fiasco ___
3. AC/DC’s ‘Shake ___’ will wiggle this limb
4. UK’s ‘Going Missing’ band ___ Park
5. Musical term for silence
6. Blues Traveler’s shade of white ‘Tusk’
7. They come with highs
8. ‘00 Lifehouse album ‘No ___’
9. GnR ‘‘Cause I know you’d never cut ___ my game, oh no’’
10. ‘‘You don’t have ___ home but you can’t stay here’’
11. Famous U2 producer and former Roxy Music member
13. Peter Cetera’s not blind on ‘Even A Fool ___’
14. Part of ‘All For You’ band, w/ Sister
19. Vanilla Ice did ‘ ___ Rap’ for TMNT II: The Secret Of The Ooze
22. Elton John pal Kiki
23. Grammy-winning ‘Hometown Glory’

- Brit
24. ‘09 Kiss album ‘ ___ Boom’
25. ‘Do The Reggay’ ___ & The Maytals
26. GnR ‘ ___ N’ The Bedouins’
27. Sing/songer Scialfa
28. Band asks player up to jam or do this
29. ‘Doomsday Machine’ Arch ___
32. System Of A Down ‘Toxicity’ hit ‘Chop ___’
33. Meat Puppets label
36. ‘00 Sammy Hagar single ‘ ___ Drive’ is for this girl
38. Prince sang of a ‘Raspberry’ one
40. The Labrinth, Sia and Diplo supergroup
41. Lillian Axe song that gets set aflame?
44. Til Tuesday’s Mann
46. Badly Drawn Boy ‘Wider Than ___’
48. Doris of The Shirelles
49. ‘04 Skeleton Witch ‘ ___ With The Shadows’
50. Frequent show fan
51. ‘05 Oasis ‘Don’t Believe The Truth’ single
52. Air ‘Alpha Beta ___’
53. Might be seen with ‘‘a rose’’
54. Offspring ‘ ___ You’
55. Famous jazz/soul James
56. Provider where lots of UK bands played live



R&R answer from pg 36 of 2/1



Jonesin’ answer from pg 35 of 2/1



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Todd’s new book Rock and Roll Crosswords Vol. 1 is available now on Amazon.

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 45.

King Classic Sudoku

Puzzle A

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

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Difficulty: ★

King Classic Sudoku

Puzzle B

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

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Difficulty: ★★★

King Classic Sudoku

Puzzle C

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

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Difficulty: ★★★★★

SIGNS OF LIFE

All quotes are from *Then Again, Maybe I Won't*, by Judy Blume, born Feb. 12, 1938.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 – Feb. 18) *I knew we were having roast beef for dinner and that Grandma baked me a birthday cake. But nobody asked me what I wanted. Treat yourself.*

Pisces (Feb. 19 – March 20) *Who said March is supposed to come in like a lion and go out like a lamb? That's a lot of bull. All it's done this March is rain. March does what March does.*

Aries (March 21 – April 19) *Then she said I wasn't progressing as fast as she had hoped I would. And I said that was because I wasn't musically inclined and I really didn't want piano lessons in the first place. Not wrong.*

Taurus (April 20 – May 20) *Then I aimed and threw the ball, nice and easy, the way Ted said to do it when you're under pressure. Practice.*

Gemini (May 21 – June 20) *We all finished the school year in Jersey City but it wasn't the same for me. Because when the guys talked about Jefferson Junior I knew I wouldn't be there. I didn't tell them we might be moving or about my father's new job. I pretended everything was just fine. Talk about it.*

Cancer (June 21 – July 22) *One thing I don't like about the cafeteria is the cashiers. They're all ninth graders. You can tell by the way they look and by the way they ignore the seventh graders. Ugh.*

Leo (July 23 – Aug. 22) *My mother kept telling Grandma what a wonderful kitchen it is ... so modern! And how easy it will be for her to cook now. My grandmother kept shaking her head. So modern.*

Virgo (Aug. 23 – Sept. 22) *My mother put me through the third degree.*

Questions — questions — questions. She's driving me nuts! It's OK to have questions.

Libra (Sept. 23 – Oct. 22) *When you have somebody your age living next door either you wind up great buddies or you don't talk at all. I'm still not sure how it's going to turn out with us. Time will tell.*

Scorpio (Oct. 23 – Nov. 21) *Along with the new car Pop brought home a regulation basketball net and professional basketball. He put up the basket on the garage and said I should keep in practice because he expects great things from me. As a basketball player or what? I wondered. Or what.*

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 – Dec. 21) *During the first week of school I found out why Joel brings his lunch instead of buying it. He likes some strange sandwiches. Don't we all.*

Capricorn (Dec. 22 – Jan. 19) *Then my mother told me that the reason I haven't made any friends in four whole days of looking around is because in Rosemont practically all the kids go away to camp in the summer. And now it makes sense! 🍷*

7 LITTLE WORDS

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

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 novelist John (7)	_____
2 novelist Danielle (5)	_____
3 novelist Ken (7)	_____
4 novelist Debbie (8)	_____
5 novelist David (8)	_____
6 novelist Paulo (6)	_____
7 novelist James (9)	_____

ETT	LHO	MAC	RS	EEL
FO	OM	DA	BAL	COE
SH	ST	CCI	GRI	TTE
ON	AM	BER	LL	PA

Last Week's Answers: PADDINGTON 2. CHELSEA 3. TOOTING 4. GREENWICH 5. BELMONT 6. WIMBLEDON 7. HARROW

Sudoku Answers from pg 36 of 2/1

Puzzle A

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

Difficulty: ★ 1/15

Puzzle B

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

Difficulty: ★★★ 1/18

Puzzle C

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

Difficulty: ★★★★★ 1/20

Legal Notice

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NH CIRCUIT COURT**

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TTY/TDD Relay: (800) 735-2964
<https://www.courts.nh.gov>

**CITATION BY PUBLICATION -
Surrender of Parental Rights**
Case Number: 317-2023-SU-00544

To Corey Vigue, now or formerly of Concord, NH in Merrimack Country and state of New Hampshire.

Pursuant to NH RSA 170-B'5(c) and 170-B6(l) you are hereby notified that you have been named the alleged father of baby boy, born on December 13 2023 in Concord New Hampshire.

If you intend to claim paternity of this child you must complete, sign and return a Notice of Intent to Claim Paternity to the 6th Circuit Probate Division Concord within 30 days of this notice.

Your failure to file said notice within the timeframe will result in a forfeiture of all your parental rights regarding this child and said child may be placed for adoption without your consent and without further notice to you.

The petitioner is ordered to serve this citation by publishing the same once each week for two successive weeks in a newspaper of statewide circulation in New Hampshire, the last publication to be one week at least before March 19, 2024.

January 19, 2024

/s/ Sharon A. Richardson
Clerk of Court
State of New Hampshire
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No Longer Weird

It's that time of year again, and the Homeward Bound Pet Adoption Center in South Jersey is stepping up in a feline sort of way. NBC4-TV reported on Jan. 26 that as part of a Valentine's Day promotion, in return for a \$50 donation, the shelter will name a feral cat after your ex, then spay or neuter it before releasing it back into the wild. Sporting the motto "Because some things shouldn't breed," the program is aimed at reducing the feral cat population and satisfying disgruntled former lovers, who are asked to supply only a first name or nickname. Love is in the air! *NBC4, Jan.*

It's Come to This

Looking for a cuddle in this season of love? Pop on over to Tokyo and the Mipig Cafe, where you can snuggle up with a petite porcine pal. The Associated Press reported that customers pay \$15 for 30 minutes with the micro pigs, who are clean and odor-free. "Each pig is unique. Each one has his or her own personality," said Shiho Kitagawa, an executive at Mipig. People enjoy the interaction so much that they often don't bother with getting a drink. But Sachiko Azuma, head

of an animal cruelty organization, isn't a fan. "The animals have become tools for a money-making business," she said. *AP, Jan. 29*

Wait, What?

A dried 285-year-old lemon fetched \$1,780 at auction in Shropshire, England, United Press International reported on Jan. 31. The lemon was discovered in a 19th-century cabinet that was being prepared for auction. But here's the weird part: It was inscribed: "Given by Mr. P. La Franchini Nov. 4, 1739, to Miss E. Baxter." The cabinet sold for \$40. *UPI, Jan. 31*

Bright Ideas

• In Stevenage, England, police detained a man running with a small refrigerator strapped to his back, the BBC reported on Jan. 29. "One police officer wound down his window and said, 'You understand we've got to stop you. Is that a fridge on your back?'" the runner said. As it turns out, Daniel Fairbrother wasn't stealing the appliance but training for the London Marathon. Fairbrother told the officers he has named the fridge Tallulah after the bobsled in "Cool Runnings." He hopes to

raise 10,000 pounds for Diabetes UK in honor of his friend Sam, who has Type 1 diabetes. A police spokesperson said they "wish Daniel all the best with training for the marathon." *BBC, Jan. 29*

• HOP Shop convenience stores in northern Kentucky have discovered a way to draw customers into the bathrooms (or maybe just to distract from the conditions within), WDKY-TV reported. The stores have installed a button on the wall that says "Do Not Push This Button." When it's inevitably pushed, users experience a disco party: regular lights off, mirror balls with colored spotlights on, and accompanying disco music such as "I've Had the Time of My Life." Ann Gilbert, manager of human resources for Valor Oil, which owns HOP Shops, said they were trying to "figure out something that would make us a destination," and now six stores feature the disco bathrooms. Boogie down! *WDKY, Jan. 25*

Overachievers

Graffiti artists have tagged more than 25 stories of an abandoned Los Angeles skyscraper, KTLA-TV reported on Feb. 1. Renovations on Oceanwide Plaza stalled in 2019, and the building has been sitting empty. Daron Burgundy, a street photog-

rapher, said he had noticed taggers for the previous three nights. "I could see people up on the balcony," he said, adding that he heard people were coming from out of state for the chance to tag the building. "It's been wild to watch. It's not so luxury around here anymore." LAPD has made two arrests and is working with district officials to secure the building. *KTLA, Feb. 1*

It's a Mystery

Should you be near Edmonton, Canada, in the coming days, keep an eye peeled for a missing 12-foot-tall, 500-pound taxidermy polar bear. The BBC reported that the bear, standing on its back legs, was stolen from Lily Lake Resort sometime during the extreme January cold. The resort usually has 24-hour patrols, but they were canceled that night because of the temperatures. Wanda Rowe, who works at the resort, said the thieves would have had to cut cables that secured the bear and drag it out to a waiting vehicle. "It 100% had to be planned," she said. *BBC, Jan. 31*

Sources according to uexpress.com. From the editors at Andrews McMeel Syndication. See uexpress.com/contact

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