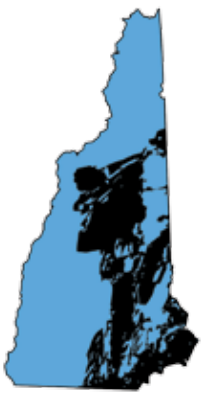




P. 12 Guide to voting in New Hampshire's 2022 elections

P. 21 Brain-stimulating activities



Granite Senior Journal

August, September & October 2022

A Quarterly Dedicated to Senior Issues and Living

A SONG IN THEIR HEARTS



Louise and Bernie Watson in front of the side entrance to their Jaffrey home. Photo by Jeff Rapsis.

The late-in-life romance of Bernie and Louise

They met on the QE2, but vintage music brought them together

By Jeff Rapsis
Associate Publisher

It's a breathlessly hot summer afternoon, but we're doing this outdoors. Sugar cookies and cranberry juice al fresco await.

And so we take our places. The setting: weathered benches outside the rambling Jaffrey home shared by Bernie and Louise Watson.

I'm here to get the Bernie and Louise story, which I've heard about and still can't quite believe.

It goes like this: Two people late in life, and from completely different worlds, find true love when they meet by chance on the Queen Elizabeth 2. You know — the ocean liner? They then proceed to live happily ever after.

If you rest, you rust

Larry Flint is on the move at the Senior Games

By Rob Levey

"If you rest, you rust" is not just a slogan, but a way of life for 76-year-old Larry Flint, who has been involved in the New Hampshire Senior Games in various capacities since 1988.

"You don't have to overdo anything — everything in moderation," he said. "You just keep moving because movement keeps you going and healthy. Quality of life and movement is the key. ... We all don't live forever."

For Flint, this last sentiment does not exist as a theoretical construct, but a fact of life he learned 31 years ago on June 1, when he had a liver transplant. That day, he recounted, changed his entire philosophy of life.

"Most of my adult life was in and out of hospitals — I was sick," he said.

Initially given just seven to nine years to live after his transplant, Flint noted he is now in his 32nd year. His intention during these years has been to live a healthy lifestyle every day.

"I was given the gift of life, which is why I give back all the time," he said. "It controls my philosophy."

This philosophy reinforced his involvement in the New Hampshire Senior Games (NHSG), which was founded 35 years ago. NHSG's mission is "to promote healthy sports compe-

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hippopress.com
email: graniteseniorjournal@gmail.com

EDITORIAL

Executive Editor
Amy Diaz, adiaz@hippopress.com
Managing Editor
Angie Sykeny
graniteseniorjournal@gmail.com
Editorial Design
Jennifer Gingras
hippolayout@gmail.com
Copy Editor
Lisa Parsons, lparsons@hippopress.com

BUSINESS

Publisher
Jody Reese, Ext. 121
jreese@hippopress.com
Associate Publisher
Dan Szczesny
Associate Publisher
Jeff Rapsis, Ext. 123
jrapsis@hippopress.com
Production
Tristan Collins, Jennifer Gingras
Circulation Manager
Doug Ladd, Ext. 135
dladd@hippopress.com
Advertising Manager
Charlene Nichols, Ext. 126
cnichols@hippopress.com
Account Executives
Alyse Savage, 603-493-2026
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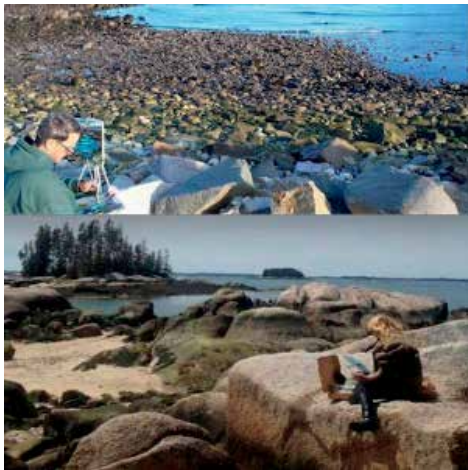
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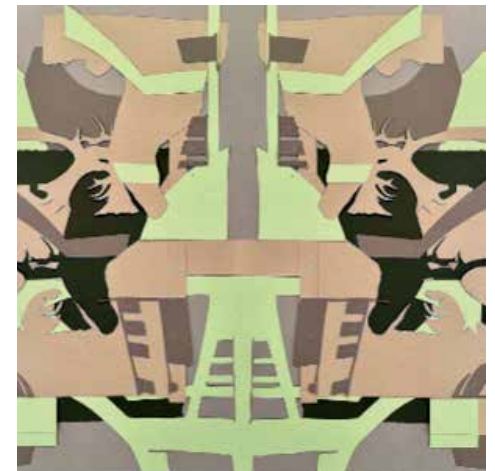
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Not only that, but they now sing about it — in public! The pair are known locally for their renditions of the classic tunes of a bygone era: the songs of Cole Porter, the Gershwins, Rodgers & Hart and the like.

They dress to match the classy material. Bernie, an Englishman, always wears a tuxedo. Louise, originally from California, always wears a long flowing gown. Together, they evoke a more glamorous age.

“We call them our working clothes,” Louise says.

Both versatile musicians, they take turns at the piano, often singing to the audience and each other. More often than not, the songs are about what the French call l’amour. In between songs, they talk openly about their love, often gazing into each other’s eyes.

Can this be real? Or is it just another show biz angle? That’s what I wanted to find out.

Well, I’m pleased to report that Bernie and Louise are indeed exactly what they claim to be. Just for starters, during our visit, they often spontaneously hold hands.

What else do you need to know?

I first encountered the Watsons several years ago at a Valentine’s Day fundraiser for Jaffrey’s Park Theatre. Bernie and Louise were the featured attraction, singing about love and recounting their story for all to hear.

At the time, they were regulars at venues around the Monadnock Region: at the Woodbound Inn, the Monadnock Inn and often at care facilities and anywhere people appreciated the older songs.

Now, with the pandemic winding down, they’re back in front of the public, holding down a regular Saturday night gig in the lobby of the now-reopened Park Theatre, and ready for other opportunities.

A recent bout of surgery for Bernie, followed by a brief hospital stay for Louise, hasn’t slowed them down. In fact, on visits to the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, they made regular use of the facility’s two pianos.

They remain healthy and vigorous: Each does daily exercises while accompanying each other on the 1910 Steinway grand piano that



Louise and Bernie Watson pose outside their Jaffrey home. Photo by Jeff Rapsis.

once belonged to Louise’s aunt in California.

Their age? It’s not polite to ask. But let’s just say they both have childhood memories going as far back as the World War II era. And that’s fitting, for the music they both love harks back to that period, and before — the era of the Great American Songbook, with a few British tunes for good measure.

It was a British ditty that brought them together: “Hold My Hand,” composed by British songwriter Noel Gay as the title tune for a 1931 London stage production.

Bernie was working as the piano player in the Golden Lion, the famous English pub on board the Queen Elizabeth 2, the last of the great Cunard liners built specifically for the trans-Atlantic passenger business. Louise was on the ship, traveling from New York to Southampton, embarking on an extended trip to Ireland

with her daughter. Before the ship left New York Harbor, they found each other when Louise began singing the words to the obscure tune that Bernie was playing.

*Hold my hand
No matter what the weather
Just you hold my hand
We’ll walk through life together
For you’ll find in me
that kind of friend
Who will see you through
till the end*

Bernie, impressed, leaned over and whispered to the enchanting stranger: “We’re the only two people on this ship that know that song,” he recalled.

They hit it off, especially when Bernie found out that Louise was an accomplished pianist herself. On her

own during that first voyage together, she would play the piano in the QE2’s Yacht Club. Bernie discovered her at the keyboard, and so, in his off hours, he would sneak in just to hear her play.

“It was music that brought us together,” Louise said, offering more cranberry juice from a ceramic jug.

And the talk then turns to everything that the QE2 and the other great passenger liners represented: the order and grace of a bygone era.

“They weren’t cruise ships,” says Louise.

The daughter of a military officer, she knows something about the value of discipline.

“There was a formality about a voyage on the great liners,” she recalls. “The dress code helped. It brought out the best in people.”

Bernie and Louise are both utter romantics. Music is the language they have in common, but there’s more to

it than that. Any conversation with them tends to go in the direction of savoring the beauties and joys that life offers.

As we discuss topics ranging from how they don't watch television to the fall of the British Empire, I slowly prompt them to talk more about themselves.

Prior to meeting, their paths were anything but similar. Louise grew up in the post-World War II era, mainly in the San Francisco Bay area, although the family lived in some far-flung locales depending on her father's military assignments.

One memorable spot was Japan in the early 1950s, which made quite an impression.

"The Japanese were so polite, so dignified," she says. "I've loved the country ever since."

A final family move was away from California and out to the East Coast, prompted by her father's assignment to Fort Detrick in Frederick, Maryland.

Louise remained in the East, pursuing a career in education and guidance counseling. She married and had a

family, eventually settling in the New York City area.

It was a summer program for students at Camp Glen Brook in Marlborough, New Hampshire, that first brought her to the Monadnock region in the 1970s.

Tiring of New York City, Louise and her family relocated to the area in 1982, buying the house in Jaffrey and setting down roots. (One of her sons still works at Camp Glen Brook today.)

In time, Louise became a widow not once, but twice.

It was following the loss of her second husband that she decided to travel with her daughter to visit Ireland via the Queen Elizabeth 2.

Bernie's story? He grew up in the north of England, in Sunderland, near the city of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The post-war era was a grim time to be young in Britain. Music, which Bernie had a natural talent for, was a way to brighten things up.

With a natural ear for music, Bernie joined bands that played pop hits of the day, including songs by Jerry Lee Lewis and other U.S. artists of

“I ask him several times a day, ‘How do you do that?’ And his honest, humble answer is ‘I don’t know.’”

— Louise Watson

the time.

“One song that totally floored me was Phil Spector’s ‘Be My Baby,’” he recalls.

But as time passed, Bernie found himself looking back to popular songs and musicians from the 1940s and earlier: Fats Domino, Fats Waller and many others.

“I just listened to it all and picked it up,” he says.

He eventually got back to the music of the 1920s, which he feels is “more complicated” and thus more interesting to play.

Louise maintains that Bernie’s ability at the piano is a sublime gift.

“I ask him several times a day, ‘How do you do that?’” she says. “And his honest, humble answer is ‘I don’t know.’”

Although both play the piano with easy grace and sing with confidence, neither is a traditionally trained musician. Amazingly, they both claim to not be able to read music. Bernie is self-taught and plays entirely by ear, while Louise says she gets along by following a melodic line and filling in chords.

“I’ve never come across a lady who could do that,” says Bernie, a sense of wonder in his voice.

CONTINUED ON PG 6 ▶



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◀ ROMANCE CONTINUED FROM PG 5

Back to Bernie's story: Through a local agency, he began getting bookings to play piano outside his home base.

His first tour abroad was a three-month stint in Norway, where he played Tromso, Oslo and Bergen, home to famous 19th-century Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg.

"I went to see Grieg, but he wasn't in," Bernie jokes.

From Norway, it was on to Denmark, and eventually to every nation in Europe, with France the only exception.

He played on ships, too — at first, mostly ferries. One notable gig was from York, England, to Stavanger, Norway, playing cocktail tunes in the midst of a full-blown North Sea gale.

His big break came in 2003 after sending an audition tape to an agent in London. Bernie was then offered a job playing piano on the Queen Elizabeth 2, sailing from Southampton to New York City.

He took the job, and it was on that first crossing that he crossed paths

"I had no idea it was going to lead to marriage," she says. "But little by little, he wore me down."

And after a long and winding courtship, marriage did happen — at Louise's home in Jaffrey, with its spectacular view of Mount Monadnock. They've lived together ever since.

When asked what year they were married, the couple demurs. Instead, they recall the songs they chose to play for each other: Louise sang "The Very Thought of You," a 1934 song by Ray Noble, while Bernie's choice was the Cole Porter classic "Night at Day."

Beyond that, a discussion ensues about the futility of measuring a relationship by time — especially one that began later in life for both.

"We tell people for every year we've been together, it counts as three," Louise says.

Bernie nods.

"I know people will probably think we're cuckoo," Louise continues, "but that's how we've chosen to view the time."

However it's measured, the time is

"We tell people for every year we've been together, it counts as three. ... That's how we've chosen to view the time."

— Louise Watson

with Louise, during the ship's turnaround in New York City.

The pair recognized a special connection right from the start, sharing a meal of fish and chips and mushy peas in Southampton after the ship docked. But all good things take time.

For several years, the two kept in touch. Bernie even overcame his aversion to what he calls "email rubbish" to communicate with Louise electronically.

"You kept writing, and I kept writing back," he says.

Only occasionally could they be together, often when Louise was traveling by ship. But they "always had music," she recalls.

well spent. A recent evening found them at home, both enjoying the simple beauty of the sun setting in the west, with the summit of Mount Monadnock looming over all. Nothing more. Just a sunset, and the freedom to enjoy it together completely and unreservedly, with no other obligations.

In the end, it's music that brought them together, and which keeps them inseparable. In that sense, they're neither young nor old.

But even for two confessed "hopeless romantics," Bernie and Louise offer today's young people some surprisingly practical advice. It's this: Take time in your busy lives to learn

“ Learning songs, and learning to play them, may open the door to another pathway and something wonderful. ”

— Louise Watson

to play an instrument.

“I want young people not to give up on making their own music instead of just pushing a button,” Louise says. “Learning songs, and learning to play them, may open the door to another pathway and something wonderful.”

And that’s the Bernie and Louise story — which, by the way, continues to unfold.

Among recent projects, the couple has composed a new song specifically for Jaffrey’s 250th birthday in 2023. Bernie created the music, and Louise did the words. They describe it as “New England country,” with Bernie observing that “it’s got a rattling good piano part.”


So, the Bernie and Louise story — it’s real. And I’m a believer.

With our conversation concluded, Louise breaks up a few uneaten cookies and places them on the miniature picnic table that they say chipmunks actually sit at to devour treats. And I believe that, too, because there they go again, holding hands while walking back to the house.

Jeff Rapsis is Associate Publisher and co-owner of HippoPress LLC, which publishes the Granite Senior Journal. He is executive director of the Aviation Museum of New Hampshire and moonlights as a silent film accompanist.



Louise Watson breaks up a cookie for the chipmunk picnic table outside their Jaffrey home. Photo by Jeff Rapsis.



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Larry Flint at the New Hampshire Senior Games. Courtesy photo.

◀ SENIOR GAMES CONTINUED FROM PG 1
 titution and social interactions for active, older adults in New Hampshire and across the Northeast.”

Flint began his time with NHSG 34 years ago. Citing his involvement in five of the sports in this year’s games, which take place throughout this summer at various locations, Flint serves as either a representative of the NHSG Board or sports coordinator.

He is also a participant as both a shuffleboard player and race walker.

“Before my wife passed away, she was my shuffle partner,” he said. “She was 10 years older than me and passed away from cancer four years ago.”

Noting his wife refused to go for a colonoscopy before her diagnosis, Flint said she opted for quality of life over length.

“She didn’t want chemotherapy or radiation,” he said. “She got nine months of quality of life.”

For Flint, the lesson from his wife’s passing is palpable.

“We never know what’s going to happen,” he said. “Colon and rectal cancer are curable. All you have to do is get tested. It’s an easy test.”

Today, Flint’s shuffleboard partner is his daughter, a partnership for which he

expressed appreciation. Noting she had never previously played shuffleboard, Flint said he has taught her the basics.

“When you’re older, you play down,” he said. “I get to play in her 50-to-54 age group, and there are fewer shuffleboard players in that age group.”

In regard to his racewalking, Flint has experienced great success as he has competed in six National Championships.

“I do well in New Hampshire in my age group, and it keeps me healthy,” he explained. “You can measure your health by how fast you can walk.”

At 55 years old, Flint said, he could walk at approximately 10-plus-minutes per mile, whereas he now clocks in at about 12-plus-minutes per mile. His focus is not on beating others, but on bettering himself.

“I am not a superior athlete, but I like to compete and compare myself to my own times,” he said. “It’s like having a carrot in front of me — it’s a gauge I can use year to year to maintain and measure my health.”

For him, though, his concern is not just about his own health, but that of all persons in his general age bracket. Noting he is a baby boomer born in 1946, Flint said he has long been aware that

his generation would “explode onto the scene” when they retired.

“We are healthier than our grandparents and living longer than our forefathers,” he stated.

The data point that New Hampshire is the oldest state in the nation, sandwiched between Maine and Vermont, is not lost on

community as much as possible. I’m just trying to get people to live a longer life by getting out and exercising and eating right.”

His concern for others has also led to him currently running for the House of Representatives in Sullivan County. His efforts have also yielded accolades,

“ We are healthier than our grandparents and living longer than our forefathers. ”

— Larry Flint

him, either. This recognition has led to his involvement in a number of healthy aging and wellness-related initiatives, including service on the Board of the Senior Center in Newport, his town of residence.

“I serve on the New Hampshire State Alliance for Healthy Aging and other programs across the state,” he added. “I call myself a community activist that promotes healthy aging. ... Because of my transplant, I like to give back to the

one of which includes selection as 2018 winner of the 2018 Joseph D. Vaughn Award for Sullivan County. The award is presented each year to individuals or couples aged 60-plus who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, or achievement as volunteers, on behalf of older citizens in the Granite State.

Christopher Dugan, NHSG marketing and public relations coordinator,

CONTINUED ON PG 10▶

Your most valuable asset is your time

By Mike Panico, CFP®
and CEO of Arcadia Financial

Honesty is the best policy. Learn to walk before you run. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Strike when the iron is hot. These little everyday proverbs remind us of life's more profound truths.

Some hit harder than others. I learned it was a habit of Roman sundial makers to inscribe their work. While marking the time, you would have also been greeted with a subtle reminder: *serius est quam cogitas*. It means "It's later than you think."

People worry a lot. They worry about the stock market, inflation, the state of the economy, gas prices and more. The common denominator? They're worried about their money. I don't blame them. The world is a crazy place right now. But your most valuable asset isn't money or the value of your home; it's time. None of us know how much of it we have left. And we can never purchase any more of it.

I stumbled upon a bit of information that stopped me in my tracks. It goes like this: By the time you're 18 years old you've already spent 95 percent of the time that you will ever spend with the people you care about most. Think about it. For years, you saw your parents every day. Then you moved out and forever saw them



just for birthdays and holidays. Same goes for childhood friends. You used to be with them all day in school and on weekends. Now you're lucky if you see them once or twice a year.

How many more times will you see your parents? What about those friends? How often do you break plans at the last minute? You say, "I'm not feeling well today," or "Let's do it some other time; I'm just so busy right now."

My eldest son is 10 years old. If we get eight summer weekends every year, that means I've got 64 weekends left before he goes off to college to pursue his own life. That's it; just 64 weekends. That kind of information, put in its proper perspective, can't help but change you. Do you think I started making bigger summer plans for the family once I figured this

out? Do you think I'll make sure we put the smartphones away? You better believe it!

Do we worry about the right things? Probably not, at least not often enough. Unfortunately, we parrot what we see in the news. And the media perennially has us worried about the next election, the fluctuation of markets, wars, shortages, crime, etc. But these concerns are cyclical, natural and never going away. If our time is limited, shouldn't we be more concerned with how we're spending it as opposed to worrying about the things beyond our control?

My gift to you today is perspective. Once you have it, there's no going back. Money is not the best measure of wealth. Don't we all know a lot of people with lots of money who are miserable? Here's some scientific research support-

ing that observation. Back in 1938, Harvard researchers began tracking the health of 268 sophomores hoping to discover commonalities amongst the health and long-lived as they aged. The Harvard Study of Adult Development is believed to be the longest study of its kind, according to *The Harvard Gazette*.

Only 19 of the original subjects are still alive (one was President John F. Kennedy), but the study expanded with time to include offspring and other volunteers. What did they find? More than money, fame or anything else, it was the strength of close relationships that kept people the happiest throughout their lives. They found that people's satisfaction with those relationships was a better predictor of physical health than cholesterol levels! As a corollary, they found loners lived much shorter lives. Robert Waldinger, director of the study, found that "loneliness kills. It's as powerful as smoking or alcoholism." Asked to draw the biggest lesson from the study, Waldinger added, "It's easy to get isolated, to get caught up in work and not remembering. So, I try to pay more attention to my relationships than I used to."

My advice? Make some plans. See some family. Go on an adventure and bring a buddy. To spend time worrying is often to be wasting it. It's later than you think.



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◀ SENIOR GAMES CONTINUED FROM PG 8

referred to Flint as “a critical volunteer leader” of the New Hampshire Senior Games and through his many roles across the state.

“Larry is an enduring advocate and tireless champion of fitness for older adults,” Dugan said.

For right now, though, Flint said he is focused on this year’s New Hampshire Senior Games, which include 20 sports and events that began in late June and will extend through mid-September, mostly on weekends. The games include racewalking, archery, badminton, shuffleboard, basketball, disc golf, track and field, tennis and more.

“We are the only organization in New Hampshire that qualifies people for the National Senior Games, too,” added Flint, who said these games, however, are inclusive regardless of age.

“I just finished archery with 36 archers in Dunbarton of the Pioneer archery club as a favor,” he said. “We allow younger people in the games — we have 17- and 22-year-olds, and our oldest member is in his 80s.”

This emphasis on inclusion reflects his philosophy, which is one of accommodation.

“If you can accommodate an athlete to participate, you do all you can to increase the participation,” he said.

paid executive director.

In reflecting on his involvement with NHSG, Flint acknowledged there have been many changes.

“Back in 1987, we were [called] the Granite State Senior Olympics,” he said. “With trade rights, though, we changed our name — there is a lot of history behind it.”

There has also been tremendous growth.

“In the ’90s we had about 150 participants, and now we have over 800,” he said.

He thinks the New Hampshire Senior Games incorporate many of his core beliefs.

“They address a need for the future, which covers three things: nutrition, exercise, and socialization, all of which affect the longevity of life,” he said. “If you do all three, you have a healthy lifestyle, and that is what we try to promote at the games.”

Flint said he has seen the results of healthy lifestyles at the New Hampshire Senior Games and National Championships over the years. He cited meeting a competitor at the National Games in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1999 as one example.

“He was 99 but didn’t look a day over 70,” he said. “His secret, though, was a little red wine every day.”

This same participant, continued Flint, lost in horseshoes to a 97-year-old, but

“ *People compliment their competitors but say, ‘I will get you next time.’ There is a lot of good sportsmanship at the games.* ”

— Larry Flint

As for how he became initially involved in the games, Flint said he received a call from Dartmouth College, which was host of the second annual event.

“They asked if I could run the meet for them, and that’s how I got hooked,” he said. “I have been involved and on the board since then.”

During his time on the board, he has occupied every possible role and served as chair twice. In the 1990s he was a non-

that didn’t do anything to discourage him.

“He said, ‘That’s OK. In two years, I will be 101 and will get my gold medal back,’” Flint recounted. “He congratulated the winner but was also looking ahead to the future to compete and get back on top. I see that a lot where people compliment their competitors but say, ‘I will get you next time.’ There is a lot of good sportsmanship at the games.”

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In looking to the future of the games, Flint expressed optimism that society will continue to adjust how it frames aging.

“A lot of people still do not know about the New Hampshire Senior Games and efforts to keep people healthy as they get older,” he said. “We need to celebrate age more. Try calling us ‘older adults.’ That term has a better connotation to it and changes the whole mindset when you use it.”

When Flint is not working on behalf of the New Hampshire Senior Games, advocating for other older adults or training for the Games, he is apt to be involved in, or following, the lives of his family.

He has five grandchildren ranging from age 12 to age 27; his youngest granddaughter is a senior in high school.

“She is a superb athlete and long-distance runner,” he said.

In looking to the future in general, Flint expressed optimism, which both informs and results from his life experiences, many of which others might describe as challenging or difficult.

Sick as a child with a rare disease

called primary sclerosing cholangitis, which gradually causes liver damage, he said he eventually had to have his colon removed due to ulcerative colitis.

“Primary sclerosing cholangitis and ulcerative colitis go together,” said Flint, a veteran who also contracted hepatitis while serving in the Air Force in the Philippines.

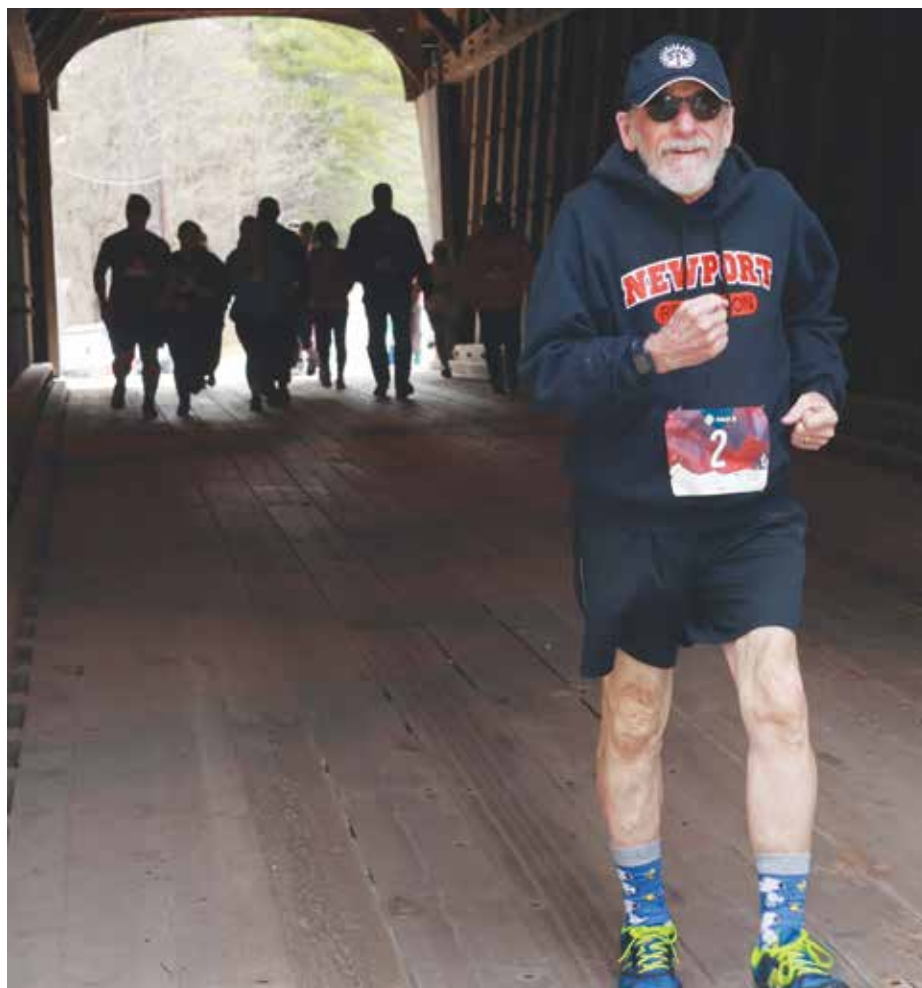
Despite these various ailments, he has never considered himself ‘sick.’ Rather, he characterized his life as one in which he has had to deal with problems.

“I don’t have anxiety or mental stress about it,” he explained. “I just fix it and move on, and that has probably helped me in life.”

For Flint, life is about solving one problem and going on to the next one.

“I don’t dwell on what could be or couldn’t be,” he said. “I have had a great life and call myself an anomaly. I wouldn’t change anything along the line.”

To learn more about the New Hampshire Senior Games, visit nhseniorgames.org.



Larry Flint in action finishing the Newport Sunshine 5K on May 7, 2022, one week before his 76th birthday. Courtesy photo.



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How to vote in New Hampshire's 2022 elections

By Pamela Dube,
AARP NH Director of
Communications

If you qualify, call your city or town clerk and ask for a registration form to be mailed to you. Include a copy of your driver's license or other valid form of ID. You will need a witness to sign your absentee-voter registration affidavit. Check with your city or town clerk for local deadlines.

• **In person:** Fill out a voter registration form at your city or town clerk's office. You'll need to show various forms of ID proving your name, age, citizenship status and where you live, such as a driver's license and U.S. passport. A full list of acceptable IDs is available on the Secretary of State's website. You can also register to vote at your polling place on Election Day, but registration deadlines before the election vary by community and will be somewhere between six and 13 days before Election Day. Check with your city or town clerk for local deadlines.

• **Online:** New Hampshire offers online voter registration only if blindness or another disability prevents you from filling out a form by hand. Call your city or town clerk to request an electronic absentee form and for info about deadlines.

Does my party affiliation matter when I vote in the primaries?

Yes. You can only vote in the primary of the party with which you are registered. If you're an undeclared voter, you can choose to vote in the Democratic or Republican primary, but not both. After the election you'll remain a registered member of that party unless you fill out a request to return to undeclared status, which you can do before leaving your polling place. May 31 was the last day to change your party affiliation before

the primary. After the primary, you can update your voter info or change your party up to and on Nov. 8, Election Day.

How can I get an absentee ballot? Are there important deadlines?

You can vote absentee only for approved reasons, such as a disability or work commitment. Absentee-ballot requests must be received by 5 p.m. on Sept. 12 for the primary and by 5 p.m. on Nov. 7 for the general election, but you're encouraged to apply for an absentee ballot as soon as you know you'll need it.

• **By mail:** Print out an application from the Secretary of State's website, then complete and mail it to your city or town clerk's office. You can also call your city or town clerk and ask that an application be mailed to you.



Are you ready? New Hampshire's primary elections will be held Tuesday, Sept. 13, and will determine the candidates who appear on our general election (Nov. 8) ballot for governor, U.S. House and Senate and state legislature. AARP New Hampshire is here to share what you need to do to vote in the 2022 Granite State elections. At the end of this article, you will find a list of helpful websites.

What's new this year?

Changes could be coming to how you vote in the 2022 elections, with lawmakers considering legislation that could affect the absentee voting process, among other proposals. Redistricting has redrawn the boundaries of certain state legislative and U.S. congressional districts, which may impact which candidates appear on your ballot.

Here's some essential info:

• **Absentee voting:** Absentee ballots are available to people who can't vote in person because of a disability, work, caregiving commitment or other approved reason.

• **Early in-person voting:** New Hampshire does not offer formal early in-person voting, but if you qualify for an absentee ballot, you can cast one early at your city or town clerk's office.

• **In-person voting on Election Day:** The state's primary election is Tuesday, Sept. 13; the general election is Tuesday, Nov. 8. All polling sites are open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., but some locations may offer extended hours.

How do I register to vote?

• **By mail:** Registration by mail is available if you have an approved reason for not doing so in person, such as a religious observance or disability.

• **In person:** Go to your city or town clerk's office to apply for a ballot or print out an application from the Secretary of State's website and bring it with you.

• **Online:** Only voters who are unable to fill out a printed form due to a disability, such as blindness, may request an accessible absentee ballot online. If you qualify, you may receive and mark the ballot electronically and may return it to your city or town clerk by mail, in person or by using a delivery agent. Contact your city or town clerk for more info.

Once you receive and complete your ballot, place it in the inner envelope and sign the affidavit on the outside. If you have a disability and received assistance, the person who helped you must sign an acknowledgment that appears on the absentee-ballot application and on the affidavit. Seal the inner envelope before placing it in the outer mailing envelope. If you're including absentee-voter registration forms and proof that you qualify, place those documents in the outer envelope before you seal it.

How can I return my absentee ballot?

• **By mail:** Send your ballot to your city or town clerk. Postage is not provided, so you'll need to add your own. It must be received by 5 p.m. on Election Day.

• **In person:** Hand-deliver your ballot to your city or town clerk by 5 p.m. on Sept. 12 to vote in the primary and by 5 p.m. on Nov. 7 to vote in the general election. On Election Day, absentee ballots will be accepted only by mail or from a delivery agent, such as an immediate family member, until 5 p.m. Your delivery agent may be asked to show ID and fill out paperwork to deliver your ballot. Track your absentee ballot through the state's voter info portal.

Can I vote in person before Election Day?

If you qualify for an absentee ballot, you can cast an in-person absentee ballot at your city or town clerk's office. The deadline is 5 p.m. on Sept. 12 to vote in the primary and 5 p.m. on Nov. 7 to vote in the general election.

When is Election Day? When are polls open?

The primary election is Tuesday, Sept. 13, and the general election is Tuesday, Nov. 8. Polls are open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., but extended hours vary by location. Check your polling place or contact your city or town clerk's office for exact hours. You may cast a ballot as long as you were in line before polls closed.

Do I need identification to vote?

You'll need an acceptable form of photo ID, like a driver's license or U.S. passport, to vote on Election Day. The Secretary of State's website has a list of acceptable forms of ID. If you don't have it with you, you can sign an affidavit, have your photo taken and proceed to vote.

What races are on the ballot?

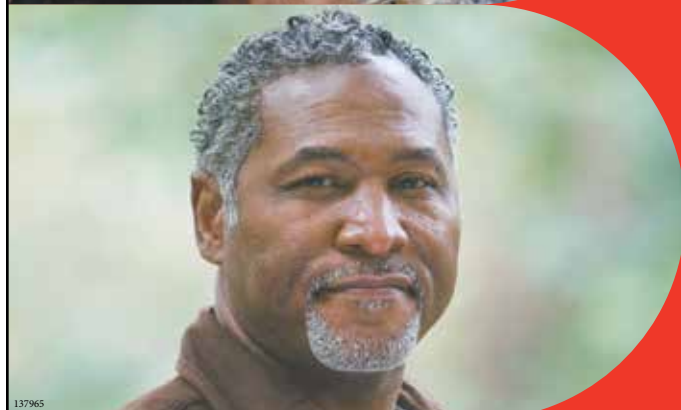
- Governor
- U.S. Senate: the seat currently held by Democratic Sen. Maggie Hassan
- U.S. House: both seats
- State Senate: all 24 seats
- State House: all 400 seats
- State Executive Council: five seats

Websites with important resources mentioned in this column:

- For the Secretary of State's website, visit sos.nh.gov, where you'll find a list of acceptable IDs for voter registration.
- For information about your city or town clerk, polling locations or voter information portal, visit app.sos.nh.gov/viphome.
- For information about how to request an absentee ballot, downloadable absentee ballot applications and a list of approved reasons for requesting an absentee ballot in New Hampshire, visit sos.nh.gov/elections/voters/absentee-ballots.
- For a Spanish version of all of the information mentioned above, visit aarp.org/nhyvota.
- For regular updates on everything mentioned in this column, visit aarp.org/nhvotes.

Editor's note: This guide was updated on June 1. Visit aarp.org/nhvotes for the most current updates about how to vote in New Hampshire.

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Know the when, where, and how. Then vote.

Voting is your most important right. It gives you the power to decide what our future looks like. But you have to be in the know to vote. Election laws and voting places can change. That's why AARP New Hampshire has collected all the most up-to-date election information to make sure that the voices of voters 50-plus are heard in the New Hampshire primary on September 13 and the general election on November 8. Make sure you know how to register to vote, where to vote in person, what the rules are for absentee or early voting, and all the key voting deadlines. Get the latest voting information for New Hampshire at aarp.org/NHvotes



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Thursday, Sept. 29
Rindge Meeting House

Monday, Oct. 3
Nashua Senior Center

Tuesday, Oct. 4
White Birch Community Center, Henniker
Registration: 603-428-3077

Thursday, Oct. 13
William B. Cashin Senior Center, Manchester

Tuesday, Oct. 18
Keene Public Library

Thursday, Oct. 20
Town and Country Inn and Resort, Gorham

Wednesday, Nov. 2
Grappone Conference Center, Concord

For times, locations or to register, see beasleyferber.com or call 1-800-370-5010

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Living happily ever active

By Rick Holder

Owner and CEO of Hampshire Hills Athletic Club

"Wendy, did you enjoy playing sports in school growing up?"

"Not so much" was her terse answer.

You see, Wendy Mace has quite the musical side to her. She did in school and still does to this day. Wendy is an accomplished vocalist and guitarist, playing gigs in a local band. So, how did a gal loving music and theater, but eschewing sports, wind up as a personal trainer?

Actually, Wendy was quite physically active growing up in Milford, New Hampshire, running around Prospect Hill, sledding down it in the winter and sliding down its grassy slope on cardboard in the summers. She loved pickup baseball, riding bikes everywhere, walking to school and all the usual things active kids would do. But school sports? Again, "Not so much!"

Band, chorus, music and drama, being class president and studies took up much of her time. Putting in plenty of hours working in her dad's restaurant took up most of the rest of her time. All that was about to change, though, when, in 1982, intrigued about fitness, Wendy joined East West Gym in Milford. It had free weights and a Nautilus line that really caught her fancy. Soon, she was doing circuit workouts and pumping some iron and had never felt better. Something about all that really clicked for her.

She remained dedicated to her fitness regime and, in 1986, she saw an ad for work at Hampshire Hills Athletic Club. She jumped at it. But Wendy's path to the fitness department was circuitous; she was first hired to work at the front desk, a job with myriad details to learn, yet details she quickly mastered. Making the management aware of her many talents, she served in many capacities, from graphic artist to food and beverage manager. But all the while, her passion for teaching in the fitness department was blossoming.

Under the tutelage of Tracy Parks, Wendy began teaching group exercise classes in addition to all her other duties. With diligent study, she learned to teach many of the top-rated group



Wendy Mace. Courtesy photo

exercise classes from back then and since then. Still now, at the age of 65, she is capable and passionate to teach most of the really demanding classes.

Currently, Wendy specializes in personal training.

"Of all the opportunities I've had to teach in the field of fitness and health, I've truly found the most satisfaction in helping individuals through personal training," she said. "I get to know them and their needs thoroughly so I can plan with great specificity for each session. My greatest hope is that the sessions I spend in personal training with my clients will result in their attainment of great health for both body and mind."

Still passionate about her music, Wendy Mace is another great example of what it means to be "living happily ever active."

Have questions, comments or want additional information. Please email [Mckinley Shordone at mcurro@hampshirehills.com](mailto:mckinley.shordone@hampshirehills.com) or call 673-7123.

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Learning new skills

Giving up your day job for the life of a retiree doesn't mean you have to give up learning new things.

In fact, it frees up a whole lot of time to do just that. Learning new skills can help improve your physical and mental health and keep you living independently longer. Plus, it can be really fun. Here are some ways to keep sharp, even in your senior years.

Leisure classes

Do you live near a university or college of any kind, including a community college? It might offer leisure classes for adults over a certain age. The University of West Florida in Pensacola, for instance, offers a range of programs for people over 55 for a flat fee of \$40 annually, plus a small fee per class. These classes include playing musical instruments, bonsai classes, cheese tours, touring local landmarks and more.

Other universities will offer lifelong learning institutes funded by the Bernard Osher Foundation. These classes, often called OLLI, offer a stress-free learning environment with no homework and no

tests. There are 124 university-affiliated OLLI programs around the country, and each course offered has low fees. Some of the courses offered at one program at Louisiana State University include basic hatha yoga, line dancing, the six queens of Henry VIII, Italian wines, and financial literacy classes.

Parks and recreation

City parks and recreation departments are another great place to look for senior classes, especially those that get you moving. Many places offer free or low-cost exercise classes and programs just for seniors that work on things like improving balance and relaxing. St. Louis County, Missouri, offers Wii bowling for just \$2 per person, and free walking at local community centers.

Councils on aging

Your local Council on Aging may also offer classes that would let you learn a new skill or pick up a new hobby. The Pima Council on Aging in



SilverSneakers

Arizona, for example, offers healthy living programs for improving balance, living with diabetes and fitness courses. The Missoula, Montana, Aging Services is offering virtual classes from the AARP so that seniors can connect from the safety of their own homes and virtual caregiver support groups.

SilverSneakers is a fitness and wellness program that's free to seniors over 65 on certain Medicare plans. It's designed to get people fit at more than 15,000 fitness locations and also includes health and wellness discounts. There are also online classes so you can work out in the comfort of your own home.

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Dealing with grief



As we age, one thing we have to deal with is losing the people around us.

Friends and family tend to die more frequently, leading to feelings of grief and loneliness that can, at times, be overwhelming even for the strongest among us. Seniors may also be mourning other things, like the loss of mobility, of health or of a beloved family home.

Research shows that grief and the ensuing loneliness impact elderly people differently, Psychology Today says. Stress in older people can decrease the functioning of the immune system. Grief and loneliness are also connected to heart disease, stroke, depression, anxiety, fearfulness and a higher chance of developing Alzheimer's disease, the magazine reports.

Furthermore, loss after loss, as frequently happens in older people's lives, can lead to bereavement overload, Dr. Patrick Arbore said at a conference sponsored by the American Society on Aging. He said that it's critical that seniors move forward with their grief, rather than getting stuck in it and becoming depressed.

"Grief is an emotional pain that needs to be acknowledged and experienced," Arbore said.

That can come through simply talking about it. Open a conversation with someone who is grieving and listen to their memories of friends and family members, or even of places past. Help acknowledge their loss and let them experience their grief at their own pace.

These conversations may bring up the sadness they feel, but will also let them remember and hold on to some of the happiest memories they have. Don't make it about you; instead, remember that you're there as a friend to support them. And remember that just like grief requires good communication, it also, at times, needs space for people to process. Try to be on the lookout for when people need time to themselves to work out their feelings.

Here are some things you can do to help people work through their grief:

- Help out with daily stressors, such as cleaning, making meals or running errands.
- Make a scrapbook of photos of their lost loved ones.
- Check on people enough so that you're sure that they're safe, but don't smother them with additional love and pity. That may make them feel worse.

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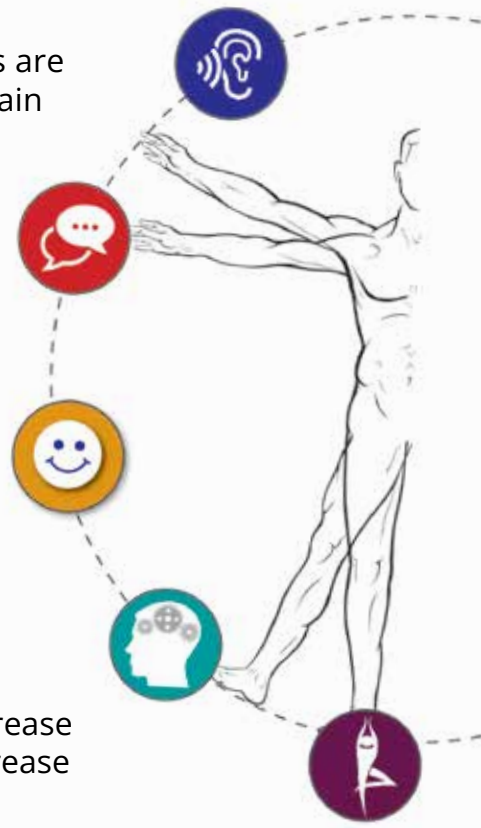
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Leading through the exceptional life of Carolyn Jenkins

By Yasamin Safarzadeh
Program Director at Kimball Jenkins

It is always the most frightful incident to begin a story, an article, a stand up comedy routine; do I introduce myself? Should I jump right in? Do I begin at the end and end with the beginning?

My name is Yasamin Safarzadeh, and I have the honor of upholding, with the amazing team at Kimball Jenkins, the last wishes of Carolyn Jenkins. The last heir to six generations who lived on the property that now houses this vibrant cultural center, Carolyn was an only child and theater artist who directed plays, did costume design, wrote original works and ultimately entrusted her family estate for the advancement of education and encouragement of the arts. Her gift has fostered 40 years of pro-

gramming, and I am now fortunate to serve as the programming director. I work with a group of brilliant individuals who have come together to create a culture of inspired art practices, historic preservation and a passion for celebrating diversity.

Through my time here, I have both fostered and taken part in various remarkable moments which have elevated my grasp of community and innovation within arts education. Every day on our grounds holds infinite potential and possibility. This summer, for example, outside of welcoming nearly 500 youth to the campus for eight weeks of themed art camps, we have launched a teen internship program. The 14 youth are working with accomplished artist Richard Haynes to create a mural and learn professional development and business skills in the process. We are

also proud to be able to go off-campus and share arts education and workshops with the intention of creating safe spaces for partner organizations, which include Project Story, the Crisis Center of Central New Hampshire and Juneteenth Manchester.

In the next few months, we are hosting our Summer Session II adult art education classes and will ramp up for a full slate of Fall classes. Our classes can be accessed by visiting our website, kimballjenkins.com. Offerings include watercolor, oil and acrylic painting, drawing, ceramics, printmaking and photography. In addition to classes, we will host a myriad of shows, symposiums, historic lectures and gallery openings. To name a few items of interest, starting on Aug. 1, one could take a wheel throwing class with Ahmad Gazelle, a brilliant artist who travels around the Middle



Carolyn Jenkins

East and Northern Africa learning traditional methods of pottery and bringing those insights back to the States for us to benefit from. Another



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Galleries: Furniture Masters Annual Exhibition in collaboration with Kimball Jenkins September 5- October 14, Public Reception October 14, 2022



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Historic view of the Kimball Jenkins Estate. Courtesy photo.

avenue of exploration is with the fabulous Marcus Greene, who will teach gestural drawing, an integral course for beginners to learn how to translate what they see in the world into forms on the page. For those who love one-of-a-kind accidents, Mike Howat offers a weekend class to celebrate the unpredictability of monotype printing. In September, the amazing Kelly Stuart will offer adult movement and dance classes and is very adept with uplifting diverse body types in order to achieve a shared love of movement. In October, we will host a murder mystery, adorned with staged burlesque performances, fortune tellers and the Scarlet Fiddler.

Kimball Jenkins hosts free workshops every other month for seniors to come on campus and engage with the current exhibition. We share snacks, paint, collage and learn to be comfortable with looking at and making art. The Concord Historic Society hosts a monthly series covering different topics on Concord's history, and we are a homebase to the New Hampshire Society of Photographic Artists (NHSPA). We even have a traditional darkroom and photo printing services available to members.

We are truly grateful to be the current stewards of this amazing campus with five historic buildings ranging from 1790-1882 and three acres of greenspace in downtown Concord. The entirety of our neighborhood on North Main Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Committing to the highest standards of historic preservation is part of our

organizational mission, and one that we work toward daily. Kimball Jenkins is home to four "State Champion Trees," the largest of their species in the county and state. You can join us and visit multiple public gardens, which are being re-invigorated and reinvented by a small group of UNH Master Gardeners.

I cannot conceivably summarize all the amazing avenues of self exploration and artistic education one can indulge in on our historic grounds. You would have to experience it yourself to believe it. Follow Kimball Jenkins on Instagram or Facebook to watch the magic unfold. Shoot us a message, and let's start a conversation. What do you want to see in your community in regards to the arts, and how can we achieve this vision together? Visit our website, kimball-jenkins.com; call 225-3932; or email connect@kimballjenkins.com to learn more about our classes and programming. We hope to see you on campus!

Yasamin is a native Angelino and Iranian American with an MFA and BFA in multimedia art representation and is currently working on her MBA. Yasamin has taught in inner city programs throughout Los Angeles and Manchester. She has developed art programs and uplifting events for underserved populations for almost a decade out of Los Angeles, Manchester and now Concord.

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Seniors and suicide



Nearly a quarter of people over the age of 55 experience some kind of mental health concern, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says, with the most common conditions being anxiety, severe cognitive impairment and mood disorders.

The risk of suicide

Just like with any age group, mental health issues in seniors can lead to suicide. While older adults make up just 12 percent of the population, they account for 18 percent of suicides in the U.S. And they tend to be more successful.

One in four seniors who attempt suicide will succeed, compared to 1 in 200 youths, and even if they fail it can be tougher for older people to recover.

Warning signs

A suicidal person may not just announce their intent to take their own life. But there are red flags that someone is thinking about harming themselves, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) says. They include:

- Loss of interest in activities.
- Giving away items or changing their will.
- Avoiding social activities.
- Neglecting self-care, medical regimens and grooming.
- Exhibiting a preoccupation with death.
- A lack of concern for personal safety.

Support steps

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline says there are five steps you can take to help someone who is thinking about suicide.

1. Ask: Be direct. Ask them if they are thinking about suicide and ask what you can do to help them. Listen carefully to their answers and be sure to acknowledge their pain. Help them stay focused on the reasons why they should want to live.

2. If you're able, be physically present for the person to ease feelings of isolation. You can also use phone or video calls, and work on a way to get others to visit or call more often. Be sure not to make promises that you're unable to keep.

3. Keep them safe. Find out if they've already made an attempt and find out their plans and timeline. In general, NCOA says, the more detailed the plan is, the higher the suicide risk. Call (800) 273-8255 if someone needs immediate intervention.

4. Establish support systems that seniors can rely on now and in other times of crisis. Connect them with a mental health counselor (you can use the local Council on Aging or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to find one).

5. Check in often, even after the initial crisis has passed. Even if it's just a text or a card, it shows that you care. And that may mean the difference between life and death.

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Brain-stimulating activities for your senior are important

By Debra Desrosiers
CSA, CADC



Introduce him to a fun phone or tablet app. Borrow books from the library. Look for online courses that your senior may be interested in taking. Companion care may be quite beneficial in this situation, as a professional caregiver will be pleased to chat with him about a new interest and assist him in furthering his education in any way possible.

Maintain your social life

According to the NIA, considerable research has shown a relationship between social engagement and health. Seniors with a robust social support network had lower levels of cognitive decline than those without firm friends and a family support system. Seniors who are socially engaged regularly have a 70 percent lower chance of cognitive loss.

The same research discovered that having a variety of assisted home care social activities provided the best chance of preventing cognitive impairment. Even though your senior enjoys your visits, you should aim to organize a more extensive range of social events rather than depending on your visits. If your loved one is in good enough health, visiting friends or a senior facility might be a fantastic way for them to stay active.

Hiring a professional caregiver to offer companion care is an excellent alternative if your elderly parent is less mobile. The caregiver will have prior expertise with the elderly and can assist your loved one with remaining stimulated. When a Visiting Angel caregiver visits, they will also help your loved one around the home with housework that has become too much for them.

Being sociable may provide other health advantages in addition to cognitive ones. Interleukin-6, linked to Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, arthritis, heart disease, and cancer, is lower among the socially engaged elderly.

For more information please contact Debra Desrosiers, Director of Visiting Angels, at 603-483-8999 or visitingangels.com/auburn.

You've heard the phrase "use it or lose it," and when applied to the brain of an aging senior, the advice becomes vital. Not only does the risk of dementia, cognitive impairment and stroke rise with age, but loneliness and isolation in seniors may induce damaging physical changes to the brain.

Still, cognitive decline is not unavoidable. With the assisted home care and the assistance from a Visiting Angels professional caregiver, these strategies might engage your loved one's brain and help keep it active for a more extended period.

How seniors can maintain their mental sharpness

Although your loved one's brain is not a muscle, it may be helpful to conceive of it as such. The more it flexes, the better it will be conditioned. Reading, crossword puzzles, sudoku and playing games are excellent ways to keep your loved one's mind busy.

Some assisted home care activities may be superior to others. Some of the top brain training exercises are:

- **Difficult** — Experiment with new things or make current ones more difficult.

- **Complicated** — These activities include a variety of mental processes, such as problem solving and creativity.

- **Involve practice** — If your loved one needs to perform a task many times, memory function is being utilized and developed.

- **Creative** — Creative endeavors may also be beneficial. Painting or playing an instrument is a mentally demanding pastime. It's possible that even listening to music has advantages. Participating in creative assisted home care activities has been demonstrated in studies to alleviate loneliness and depression, boost skills and have cognitive benefits.

The physical state of your loved one may dictate the kind of feasible activities. A trained caregiver may assist

the elderly in exercising their minds and bodies. In addition to helping the house, caregivers may pay visits to your senior to give company and service with activities that your loved one likes. Many activities that might stimulate your senior cognitively, such as playing board games or cards, need the involvement of another person. For seniors who are less able to interact outside of the house, a professional caregiver could help organize these and other activities.

Choose a healthy lifestyle

According to Harvard experts, overall fitness benefits both the body and the mind, so keeping your senior active may help reduce memory loss and cognitive decline. More blood flows to the brain; therefore, modest exercise may be quite beneficial. Recognize your loved one's limits. Falls may be fatal. Consequently, it's best to walk with you or with a professional caregiver trained in fall prevention.

Continue to learn

Any mental stimulation is helpful to your loved one, but studies suggest that learning new things is the most beneficial. According to Harvard Medical, your brain may still expand as you age and learn. Perhaps more challenging,

jobs may help your loved one's brain compensate for the deterioration often associated with old age. According to the American Society for Aging, lifelong learning may even help prevent dementia.

The possibilities for things to study are nearly limitless. What does your loved one like to do? A history lover might spend hours reading Wikipedia pages online. Seniors may not have had the same opportunity to study an instrument as younger people had but learning to play a new instrument may be exciting and enjoyable. Learning a new language would be challenging, fascinating, and even lead to new travel opportunities. Studies also suggest that information obtained later in life tends to stick with seniors for years, so your senior may learn a new skill that he may appreciate for years to come.

There should be lots of opportunities for active seniors. Check to see if any local senior centers offer lessons. Participation in lifelong learning may also aid in socializing, which is another crucial aspect of mental health. If your loved one takes courses at a senior facility, she may be meeting new people. Your senior family member may also be interested in classes at your local library.

Being housebound will not limit your senior's ability to activate the brain.

Replacing knees and giving hope

By Kathleen A. Hogan, MD
Total Joint Specialist

Living with knee arthritis can be challenging.

In the United States, treatments for arthritis such as injections, physical therapy and surgery are readily available. But imagine living in a country where these treatments are not affordable or available to you; a country where you had to walk everywhere and there was no disability insurance; a country where there was no option to have a joint replacement.

In many parts of the world, access to treatments for arthritis is limited to those who have cash to pay for it. Those who have the financial resources often leave the country for their medical procedures to go where surgeons have more expertise and training.

I am part of a group of female orthopedic surgeons (WOGO — Women’s

Orthopedic Global Outreach) who travel to medically underserved countries to improve the lives of people through joint replacement.

By improving mobility, we improve quality of life. We also believe it is important to teach doctors in those communities, to be role models for young women and to give back to the communities we visit.

Our group has performed free knee replacements in Guatemala, Tanzania, Nepal, Cuba and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In July, we will return to Guatemala, where we plan to perform over 50 knee replacements in four days.

In the U.S. there are many options for medical insurance. However, in many other countries, if you do not have cash to pay up front, you will not receive treatment, even in a dire medical emergency.

These countries are poor. Guatemala is the poorest country in the

Americas. Fifty-nine percent of people — 70 percent of them indigenous — live below the poverty line, and 23 percent — 40 percent indigenous — live in severe poverty. Expensive medical procedures such as joint replacement are just not something that most people can afford.

Our team of volunteers includes surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, scrub techs and physical therapists. We bring all of our supplies including the joint implants, all of which are donated.

The first day of the trip we have a clinic where all our potential patients are seen and examined in the morning. We discuss the cases at lunch and decide who will have surgery.

Surgeries start that afternoon. In the next four days, we will perform over 50 knee replacements.

The next few days are spent taking care of the patients, teaching the local surgeons and providing follow-up

care to patients who have had surgery in the past.

We also distribute shoes to our patients and local children, literally putting shoes on their feet.

These trips are exhausting, but rewarding. Patients are so grateful. Many have been suffering with severe knee arthritis for years.

When the world shut down during the pandemic, our mission trips were canceled as well. Many people who had hoped to have their knees replaced had no idea when or if it would ever happen.

It is so exciting to be traveling to Guatemala to help restore mobility and change the lives of so many people.

Kathleen A. Hogan, MD is a Total Joint Specialist at New Hampshire Orthopaedic Center. For additional information of orthopedic care, go to nhoc.com or call 883-0091.



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Kathleen A. Hogan, MD is a fellowship-trained orthopaedic surgeon. She is board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. Her specialties include hip and knee replacement and robotic surgery.

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Robert Wezwick and Margit Eder-Wezwick

BED AND BREAKFAST OWNERS

Robert Wezwick and Margit Eder-Wezwick are the owners of Ash Street Inn, a bed and breakfast in Manchester. Rob also works as the chef, while Margit handles the innkeeping.

Q: *Explain your job and what it entails.*

As the chef, Robert is responsible for keeping the kitchen stocked for the cooked-to-order breakfasts, which are prepared from scratch. Being a real bed and breakfast, we take the breakfast part as seriously as the bed part. Margit keeps the inn running — everything from cleaning to decorating — and she's the one greeting guests and making sure everything is in order.

How long have you had this job?

We bought the Ash Street Inn over seven years ago as a running operation. Robert has been cooking professionally for more than 20 years.

What led you to this career field and your current job?

Margit grew up in Germany, where her family owned and operated a Gasthaus — guest house — but decided to go to university instead to study natural sciences. She came to New England to do her post-doctoral research at Boston University and ended up staying. Rob has a technical background and went to culinary school in Dallas, Texas, when the tech bubble burst in the early 2000s and started a second career. We always thought about owning a bed and breakfast and finally found the one meant for us when we saw the Ash Street Inn.

What kind of education or training did you need?

A formal education isn't needed, but hospitality and customer service experience is certainly a plus. If you're also serving cooked-to-order breakfast and baked snacks, either a love of cooking or a culinary background is required.

What is your typical at-work uniform or attire?

During breakfast, Rob wears chef attire, and Margit dresses business casual.

How has your job changed over the course of the pandemic?

We were always cleaning our rooms and the inn very thoroughly. This led to an easy transition once Covid hit with more stringent cleaning and disinfecting requirements. During the pandemic, we also participated online in a lot of workshops and seminars to keep up with the latest information and suggestions for how to handle the new travel situation.

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

You need to be prepared for anything and be ready to reinvent yourself if needed.

What do you wish other people knew about your job?

It is wonderful to meet all the interesting folks from around the world and to learn their own stories. However, there is more to being an innkeeper than the entertaining part; you have to be a chef, a housekeeper, a handyman, a concierge, a marketing person, a business manager and the occasional shoulder to cry on.

What was the first job you ever had?

Rob's first job was a paper route, then his family deli in Queens, New York. Margit's, of course, was being a waitress in the family-owned Gasthaus.

What's the best piece of work-related advice you've ever received?

Run a business the way you would like to see it run. For us, that means setting the inn up the way we like to travel.

— Angie Sykeny



Top: Robert Wezwick and Margit Eder-Wezwick. Bottom: Ash Street Inn. Courtesy photo.

Five favorites

Favorite book: Margit loves anything from Michael Crichton. Rob loves *The Stand* by Stephen King.

Favorite movie: Robert loves *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Margit loves anything *Star Trek*.

Favorite music: Billy Joel, Bob Dylan and, more locally, Paul Nelson.

Favorite food: Margit won't ever say no to sushi. Rob loves Southwestern cooking and eating.

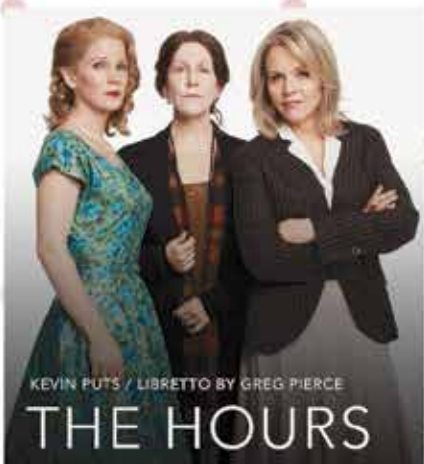
Favorite thing about NH: We love the fact that it has so many different things to do and how Manchester is so centrally located.

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Mahjong, knitting, dominoes and book clubs

YMCA members stay active and stay connected

Have you played mahjong? If not, players at the Nashua YMCA are eager to introduce you to the game.

Each Tuesday at 1 p.m., Thursday at 8:30 a.m. and Friday at 1 p.m., seats at tables in the lobby of the Nashua branch (24 Stadium Drive) are filled with active older adults having a lot of laughs playing mahjong.

What is mahjong? Mahjong is a tile-based game that was developed in the 19th century in China and has spread throughout the world since the early 20th century. It is commonly played by four players (with some two- or three-player variations found in parts of China, Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia — and Nashua!).

Bryna Kamin, an active Y member and volunteer of the year, introduced the game to the Y about seven years ago.

"I was swimming one day with Sandy [another member] and we were talking," he said. "I play mahjong, and I asked her to play. She didn't know the game. I was happy to teach her. We started with a table in the lobby. People walked by and watched. We taught those who didn't know how to play. We quickly got up to four tables of players."

Active player and Y member Gloria Levesque shares that the Y folks play the Hong Kong version, which is a different way of scoring the game.

"If you can play rummy, you can play mahjong!" she said.

New players are welcome. Never played before? This is an inviting group and members are happy to share their love of the game and teach others to play. Some days they have as many as 20 people playing (five tables of games going on at once.).

"We've been together five or six years," Levesque said.

She plays three times a week.

"I was exercising upstairs at the Y. One of the women on the bike next to me invited me to play. I'd never played before and she assured me it was easy and fun! She said watch and learn to play. I did, and now I'm hooked," she said.

Her Y friends nicknamed her "the mahjong queen" and presented her with a tiara with pearls. During the height of the pandemic, the Y players, now fast friends, moved their games to their homes.

"We were wearing masks and playing on screened porches. At Christmas time we

had a holiday buffet and played mahjong," Levesque said.

She shared that some of the players exercise first, then head to the lobby for their games. They are a close group. If someone is going to be late or not feeling well, they text each other. If there are too many people to play in a game, they sit out and rotate new players in after two games.

"Each game goes quickly, so they don't have to wait long," she said. "We are very social and talk a lot. Sometimes we talk more than we play."

"We are close, like sisters," she continued. "We text each other a lot. Some days we meet at the Y at 11:30 and pick a location for lunch before the 1 o'clock game starts."

They celebrate birthdays at the Y with birthday cakes or cupcakes. (Although Levesque said her friends are like sisters, there are also men who play.)

"Bryna plans a lot of activities for us," Levesque said.

Besides mahjong, Kamin rallies the seniors to enjoy cribbage and other card games, board games, dominoes, knitting, crocheting and a monthly book club. They have also enjoyed pot luck lunches, salad bars, soup days, holiday parties and bingo. Kamin also spearheads a book sale twice a year in the lobby, with proceeds benefiting the YMCA's annual campaign. Kamin recently planned a Friendship Lunch.

"We love getting together," she said. "We bring our own lunches and sit at one big table. We talked about where we are from."

She said this will be a regular event at the Nashua Y. Details can be found in "The Scoop," a newsletter that Kamin puts out every two months with details on upcoming activities.

"We all need to stay active and keep our minds busy. Our time together provides stimulation and keeps your hand in the game, so to speak, the game of life," she said.

She is also planning on a knitting or crocheting project where members will each make a 3" x 3" square, which will be sewn together to make a quilt. Her plans are to raffle off the quilt at the Y.

Want to learn more? Stop by the Y and get a tour. No appointment is necessary.

For more information about the YMCA of Greater Nashua, call 882-2011 or visit nymymca.org.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Looking to get involved in your community? Here are some area organizations looking for volunteers. Get your group included by sending all the details (including what your group does, what projects or events you are seeking volunteers for and how people should get in contact) to news@hippopress.com.

• **American Red Cross New Hampshire Chapter** (the Northern New England Regional Headquarters is at 2 Maitland St. in Concord; redcross.org/nne, 225-6697) report that their most needed volunteer positions are the shelter support teams (volunteers who help residents during large-scale disasters), disaster health services teams (for volunteers who are licensed health care providers) and disaster action teams (for smaller disasters, such as home fires), according to an April press release. The Red Cross is also seeking blood donor ambassadors who check blood donors in to appointments, answer questions and give out snacks, the press release said. The Red Cross also needs transportation specialists who deliver blood to hospitals from Red Cross facilities, the release said. The Red Cross provides training for volunteers, the release said. See redcross.org/volunteertoday.

• **Aviation Museum of NH** (27 Navigator Road in Londonderry; nhahs.org, 669-4280) is seeking volunteer mentors to help students at the Manchester School

of Technology build a working, flying airplane, “a Van’s Aircraft RV-12iS two-seat light sport aircraft, a popular kit-based ‘home-built’ mode,” according to a press release. “Volunteer mentors aren’t required to have professional aviation or mechanical backgrounds, but should be familiar with basic shop tools and procedures. Training will be provided on more specialized equipment and processes. Weekday availability is key, as the plane-build project takes place during school hours. Also, all volunteers must undergo school district background checks,” the release said. Contact Leah Dearborn at ldearborn@nhahs.org or 669-4877.

• **Beaver Brook Association** (117 Ridge Road in Hollis; beaverbrook.org, 465-7787) has a variety of volunteer opportunities including building and installing nesting boxes on the Nesting Box Trail, building Little Lending Libraries for Maple Hill Farm, gardening, working with supplies, working at outdoor events, helping with trail maintenance, painting buildings and other facilities, and more, according to the website. Go online to fill out an application, where you can indicate interests and availability, or contact the office Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

• **Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire** (222 Court St. in Portsmouth; 570-8469, blackheritagetraillnh.org) offers volunteer

opportunities on specific projects or areas of expertise and with public interaction positions (such as event greeter and trail guide), according to the website, where you can submit a form describing your interests.

• **Black Ice Pond Hockey** (blackicepondhockey.com, info@blackicepondhockey.com) helps out in advance of and during the annual three-day outdoor hockey tournament in Concord (usually in the January-February time frame). See the website to fill out the volunteer application to help with work in merchandise, sales, player check-in, shoveling, ice maintenance, scoring, setup and more.

• **Canterbury Shaker Village** (288 Shaker Road in Canterbury; shakers.org, 783-9511) seeks volunteers to help out in the garden, give tours, offer administrative assistance, help with special events and more, according to the website. Go online to fill out an application or reach out to 783-9511, ext. 202, or jlessard@shakers.org, the website said.

• **Capitol Center for the Arts** (Chubb Theatre at 44 S. Main St. in Concord, Bank of NH Stage at 16 S. Main St. in Concord; ccanh.com) uses volunteers at events for “patron comfort and safety, before, after and during a performance” according to the website. Sign up online, where you can specify your volunteering interests and times of availability.

• **The CareGivers NH** (700 E. Industrial Park Drive in Manchester; caregiversnh.org, 622-4948), a program of Catholic Charities, offers transportation, help with grocery shopping and getting food, visits and reassurance calls to elderly and disabled people in the greater Manchester and Nashua areas, according to the website. Volunteers are needed to provide transportation and deliver food as well as to help with administrative work and in the warehouse, the website said. Go online to download the volunteer application and to see detailed frequently asked questions.

• **CASA of New Hampshire** (casanh.org), “a nonprofit that trains volunteers to advocate for children who have experienced abuse and neglect,” holds virtual information sessions when staff members and an active volunteer will provide information and answer questions, according to a press release (see the schedule at CASA’s website). Volunteer advocates participate in a 40-hour training course and are then supported by a peer coordinator and program manager, according to the website, where you can apply and find information on CASA fundraising events.

• **Educational Farm at Joppa Hill** (174 Joppa Hill Road in Bedford; theeducationalfarm.org, 472-4724) has a variety of animal-specific volunteer opportunities (“chicken caretaker” and “duck docent” for example) as well as positions related to gardening and farm maintenance (“Marvelous Mucker”), fundraising and more; see the website for the listings, which include the specific person to contact for each position and a rundown of the responsibilities.

• **The Franco-American Centre** (100 Saint Anselm Drive, Sullivan Arena, in Manchester; 641-7114, facnh.com), which promotes French language, culture and heritage, seeks volunteers for work including marketing and communications, social media and grant research/writing, according to the website. Some French language skills are helpful but not required, the website said.

GOING PLACES

Ready Rides is a volunteer-run, curb-to-curb transportation service, providing free rides to medical, dental, therapy and other health-related appointments for people over the age of 55 and people with disabilities living in the communities of Barrington, Durham, Madbury, Newfields, Lee, Newmarket, Northwood, Strafford and Nottingham. Most of Ready Ride’s volunteers are seniors themselves, and more volunteers are needed to expand the service to additional towns. Volunteer drivers use their own cars, driving door to door to pick up riders, and are reimbursed for gas at 50 cents per mile. For more information, visit readyrides.org, email info@readyrides.org or call 244-8719.



• **International Institute of New England** (iine.org, 647-1500), whose mission “is to create opportunities for refugees and immigrants to succeed through resettlement, education, career advancement and pathways to citizenship,” according to the website, offers volunteer opportunities including help with Afghan refugee and evacuee resettlement, English for speakers of other languages support, youth mentoring and career mentoring. Go online to fill out the volunteer form.

• **Intown Concord** (intownconcord.org, 226-2150) has volunteer opportunities including working within the Intown organization and helping with special events. Go online or contact info@IntownConcord.org.

• **Jetpack Comics** (37 N. Main St. in Rochester; jetpackcomics.com, 330-9636) has volunteer opportunities for Free Comic Book Day, the annual celebration of comic books usually held the first Saturday in May, which Jetpack organizes in Rochester as a multi-location event. (Perks to volun-

teers who help out all day include all the special comics released that year, a patch, food and more, according to the website). Jetpack has other volunteer opportunities throughout the year as well; contact jetpackcomics@gmail.com.

• **John Hay Estate at The Fells** (456 Route 103A in Newbury; thefells.org, 763-4789) offers volunteer opportunities including working at the Gatehouse office, helping the education department with historical and art exhibits, working at the shop or the main house, maintaining the facilities, gardening and working on special events, according to the website, where you can find a detailed description of some of the gardening and other work. Call the Fells, ext. 3, to speak with member services.

• **Lowell Summer Music Series** (lowellsummermusic.org) is seeking volunteers to work for the series director doing ticketing, admissions, customer service and audience relations, usually from 5 to 10 p.m. (during shows), according to an April email.

Go online to fill out a volunteer form.

• **Manchester Historic Association** (Millyard Museum is at 200 Bedford St. in Manchester, Research Center is at 129 Amherst St.; manchesterhistoric.org, 622-7531) offers volunteer opportunities including working at the front desk and gift shop at the Millyard Museum and helping with programs, tours and events, according to the website, where you can download a volunteer application. Call or email history@manchesterhistoric.org with questions.

• **McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center** (2 Institute Drive in Concord; starhop.com, 271-7827) has opportunities for volunteer positions including school group educator, docent, helping with events, exhibit maintenance, grounds maintenance (including gardening) and more, according to the website, where you can also find volunteer perks. Contact kthompson@starhop.com for information.

• **Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum** (18 Highlawn Road in Warner; indianmuseum.org, 456-2600) has volunteer opportunities including giving tours, organizing events, and doing office work and grounds work, according to the website. Contact volunteer@indianmuseum.org.

• **NAMI NH** (naminh.org, 800-242-6264) has volunteer opportunities related to advocacy, support groups and family-to-family programs as well as work on events, such as the NAMI Walks NH 5K, according to the website, where you can find applications and more details for specific programs (including the specific program’s contact). Or reach out to volunteer@naminh.org or 225-5359, ext. 322.

• **New Hampshire Film Festival** (nhfilmfestival.com), which will be held Oct. 13 through Oct. 16 in 2022, is taking volunteer applications. “All volunteers will receive tickets to screenings, an NHFF T-shirt, and the staff’s undying gratitude!” — so says the festival’s website. Volunteer opportunities include positions working on the prep as well as the execution of the event. Fill out the application, where you can indicate your desired level of volunteering, or contact team@nhfilm-

festival.com with questions.

• **New Hampshire Food Bank** (700 East Industrial Drive in Manchester; nhfoodbank.org, 669-9725) has group and individual volunteer opportunities, which include working at mobile food pantries, working at the food bank’s garden April through November, working at the Saturday morning food drops at JFK Coliseum in Manchester and working at the food bank facility, according to the website, where you can sign up to volunteer and see a calendar of when and where help is needed. Or contact 669-9725, ext. 1131, or email volunteercoordinator@nhfoodbank.org.

• **NH Audubon** (nhaudubon.org) has several volunteer positions posted on its website, including volunteer gardeners at the Pollinator Garden at the McLane Center in Concord (send an email to ddeluca@nhaudubon.org); a New Hampshire Bird Records office assistant in the Concord office (send an email to rsuomala@nhaudubon.org); a Backyard Winter Bird Survey project assistant (contact rsuomala@nhaudubon.org); an eBird data assistant (send an email to rsuomala@nhaudubon.org); wildlife volunteer field surveys; the grant program research assistant and a publication assistant, according to the website.

• **NH Boat Museum** (399 Center St. in Wolfeboro Falls; nhbm.org, 569-4554) offers volunteer opportunities including working at special events and fundraisers (including the Alton Bay Boat Show), office work, working with the exhibits, helping with educational programs, building and grounds care and maintenance and more. Sign up online, where you can select your areas of interest, or contact programs@nhbm.org.

• **NH PBS** (nhpbs.org) has several volunteer opportunities including auction volunteer, creative services volunteer, membership department, and NHPBS Kids Writers Contest and Our Hometown Program Development manager, according to the website. Go online to fill out a volunteer form that includes designating your availability and special skills and interests.

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• **N.H. Preservation Alliance** (7 Eagle Square in Concord; nhpreservation.org, 224-2281) needs volunteers on an occasional basis to help produce educational events and to help with public programs such as tours, barn heritage celebrations or on-site preservation trades demonstrations, according to an email from the group's executive director. Contact admin@nhpreservation.org to indicate what you'd like to help with and whether you are comfortable in both indoor and outdoor settings, the email said.

• **NH State Parks** (nhstateparks.org) has volunteer groups that hold volunteer work days throughout the year, according to the volunteer program director at the state's Department of Natural Cultural Resources' Division of Parks and Recreation. Find groups that work on specific parks at nhstateparks.org/about-us/support/volunteer (such as the Derry Trail Riders who work on Bear Brook State Park or the Surf Rider Foundation, which works on Hampton Beach State Park). Or send an email to volunteer@dncr.nh.gov.

• **The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire** (nofanh.org) seeks volunteers with planning their annual Winter Conference, assisting with spring bulk order pickup, and committee and board membership, according to the website. Go online to fill out a volunteer form or contact program coordinator Laura Angers at info@nofanh.org.

• **Park Theatre** (19 Main St. in Jaffrey; theparktheatre.org, 532-9300) has volunteer opportunities for ushers as well as work in concessions, parking, office work, fundraising, marketing, stage production and more, according to the website, where you can fill out an online application where you can indicate your interests and availability. Call or email info@theparktheatre.org with questions.

• **Pope Memorial SPCA of Concord-Merrimack County** (94 Silk Farm Road in Concord; popememorialsPCA.org, 856-8756) holds regular volunteer orientations (pre-registration is required) with volunteer opportunities including small animal care and

socialization, dog enrichment, dog park assistance and workroom assistance, according to the website. Go online to submit a volunteer application or to ask questions of the volunteer coordinator.

• **Special Olympics New Hampshire** (sonh.org) volunteers can serve as coaches, trainers, event organizers, fundraisers, managers and unified partners who play alongside some athletes, according to the website. Volunteers can work at an event or with a team, the website said. For more information contact specialolympics@sonh.org or call 624-1250.

• **United Way of Greater Nashua** (unit-edwaynashua.org, 882-4011) is seeking volunteers for its Pop Up Pantries; specifically it is looking for someone to help distribute food on Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at River Pines Mobile Home Park in Nashua, according to an April press release. The United Way also has volunteer opportunities related to one-day events or fundraisers, work on committees within the organization (such as on finance or marketing) and in groups such as the Stay United group,

a 50+ volunteerism group, according to the organization's website. The organization also helped to put together a website, volunteergreaternashua.org, featuring volunteer opportunities from other area nonprofits.

• **Young Inventors' Program** (unh.edu/leitzel-center/young-inventors-program) uses volunteers to support its annual Northern New England Invention Convention event (held this year in March), according to program director Tina White, whom you can contact at Tina.White@unh.edu (or see unh.edu/leitzel-center/young-inventors-program/connect/volunteer). The program is a partner of the University of New Hampshire and UNH Extension, where there are more opportunities for volunteers interested in STEM youth programming, she said. See extension.unh.edu/educators/4-h-stem-docents for information on the 4-H STEM Docent program, which builds and trains volunteers to help with educating New Hampshire K-12 youth in science, technology, engineering and mathematics projects, White said in an email. Contact Megan.Glenn@unh.edu for more information on that program.

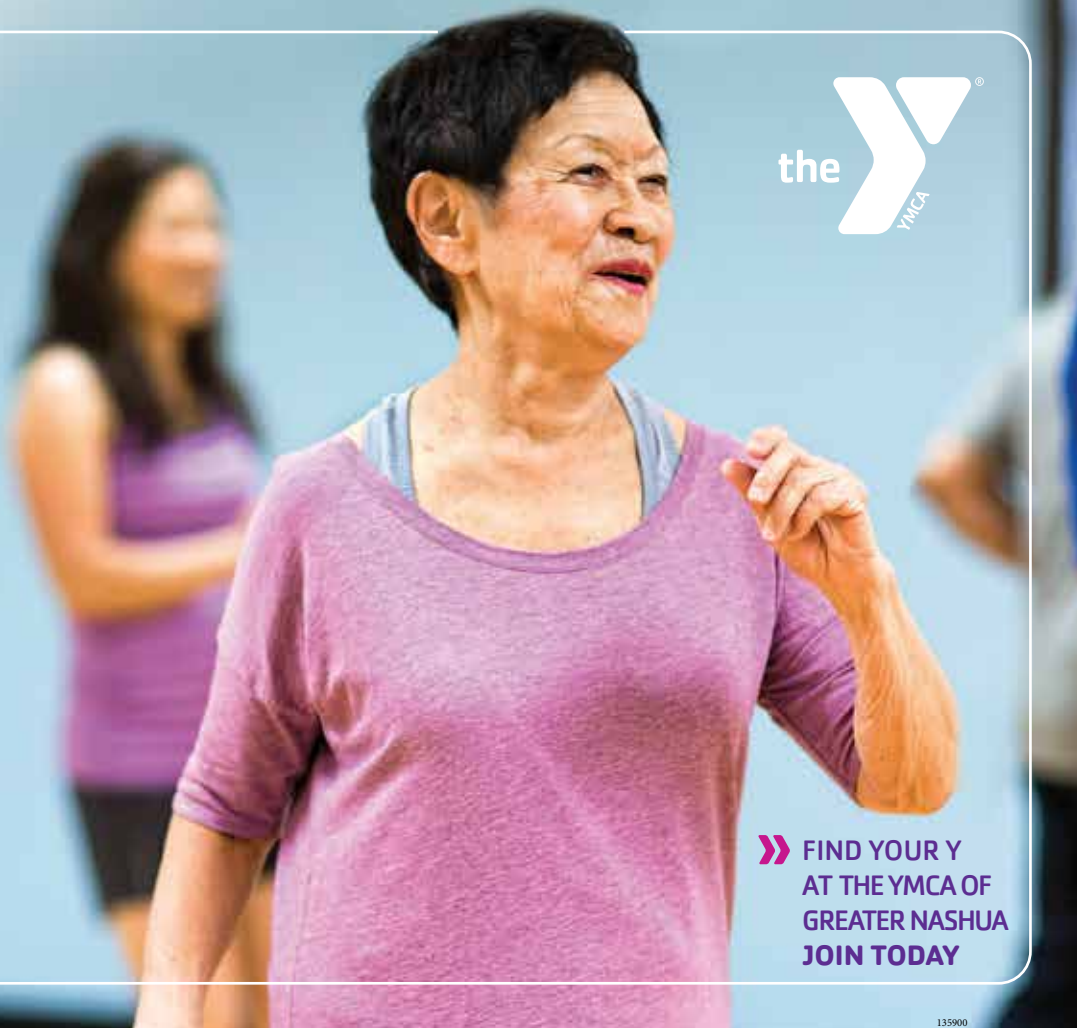
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