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Ladysmith Black Mambazo To Perform At The Colonial Theatre In April



The male choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo will give a performance at The Colonial Theatre.

The South African male choral group Ladysmith Black Mambazo is scheduled to perform at The Colonial Theatre at 95 Main Street in Keene on Thursday, April 2nd at 7 p.m.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo sings in the local vocal styles of isicathamiya and mbube. They became known internationally after singing with Paul Simon on his 1986 album *Graceland*. They have since won multiple awards, including five Grammy Awards – the fifth of which they dedicated to the late former South African President Nelson Mandela.

Formed by Joseph Shabalala in 1960, Ladysmith Black Mambazo became one of South Africa’s most prolific musical groups. Their releases received gold and platinum disc honours in both South Africa and abroad. The group became a mobile academy of South African cultural heritage through their African indigenous isicathamiya music.

For more details or tickets, call 603-352-2033 or visit www.thecolonial.org.

Window Designs By John Putting The Finishing Touches On Your Home



John Hawley of Window Designs by John double-checks the operations of the window treatment he installed.

By Lori Catozzi Cook

Window treatments do more than upgrade your home’s decor; they also protect your home’s interior from excessive sunlight while increasing privacy and energy efficiency.

“It’s a shame when the sun bleaches a leather sofa or an Oriental rug, or even artwork on the wall,” says John Hawley of Window Designs by John. “My shades help to eliminate the sun’s harmful rays while giving a beautiful look.”

Hawley opened Window Designs by John in 2025 after many years in the industry. “I fell into working with window treatments a number of years ago when a friend bought a store in Milford. It turns out that I have a knack for it!” he says, with a smile.

Having this natural and intuitive talent for the window treatment industry has paid off for Hawley, as customers are only too happy to sing his praises for the quality of his products, expertise, and detail-oriented work. Window Designs by John can also work with any budget.

“John professionally assisted me from start to finish with the top treatments for my new living room, dining room, and kitchen,” says customer Diane Hart. “They turned out great. Choosing the fabric was the most fun. I am very impressed with the attention to detail, including the exact installation process.”

WINDOWS, page 8

Finding Our Footing When The World Feels Unsteady

By Deb Paul

Some weeks the world just feels a little off-balance. The news is loud, the pace is fast, and it’s easy to feel like everything is shifting under our feet. Then something small and local reminds you that not everything is wobbling – right here at home, people are still showing up, still caring, still doing the work that keeps a community steady.

I started the weekend at a meet-and-greet where I had the chance to talk with most of the candidates

running for office – people genuinely hoping to make a difference. Then it was off to Musquash Day, where residents were out enjoying the trails, the fresh air, and each other. Later, I stopped by the American Legion Hudson Post 48 Valentine’s Day Dance: great food, amazing people, and a room full of neighbors simply happy to be together.

It’s everywhere you look in our towns, even in the dead of winter, if you pay attention.

UNSTEADY, page 6

Celebrating Independent Businesses That Support Neighbors, Neighborhoods, And Planet



Earthcraft Design, LLC in Alstead is one example of a Monadnock Region business that supports our neighbors, neighborhoods, and planet. In this photo, owner Marty Castriotta captures the bounty of locally grown Seaberry, a perennial crop with nutrient-dense berries that taste like orange, mango, and pineapple.

(Photo by Marty Castriotta)

Locally owned businesses, especially ones working towards a more environmentally sustainable and socially just economy, help us keep “the green” in our communities. The Local Crowd Monadnock invites you to celebrate these businesses during Choose Indie Sustainable Month in March. We’re teaming up with partners across North America to spotlight independent, locally-owned businesses that support our neighbors, neighborhoods, and planet. Please follow along at tlcmonadnock.com/sustainable.

Here are just a few examples of Monadnock Region businesses and organizations that inspire us.

Earthcraft Design

Owner Marty Castriotta shared the launch of Earthcraft Design, LLC – the design and installation arm of Village Roots Permaculture in Alstead. Permaculture uses ecological principles to design and regenerate healthy, productive landscapes, and communities.

LOCAL, page 12

Keene Chamber Orchestra Performs Spring Concert: Global Tapestries

Sunday, March 1st At Trinity Lutheran Church

On Sunday, March 1st, Keene Chamber Orchestra will perform its Spring Concert, Global Tapestries, at Trinity Lutheran Church at 100 Maple Avenue in Keene, with a pre-concert lecture at 2 p.m. and the concert at 3 p.m. Free admission, though donations are welcome at the door.

Keene Chamber Orchestra is a community ensemble providing the region with opportunities for musicians and audiences alike through performing engaging musical works. The Keene

Chamber Orchestra is equally committed to music education through instrumental instruction, music appreciation, scholarship, outreach chamber music, and solo concerts.

Global Tapestries features works by Emilie Mayer, Max Bruch, Alejandro Garcia Caturla, and Dmitri Shostakovich, and features local Keene High School student, Gaetana Martin, on violin.

For more details, visit www.keene-chamber-orchestra.org.

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New Yoga Teacher Joins Aloha In Keene

Jessica Haskell has joined The Aloha community. She moved to Walpole recently and after visiting the local yoga centers, landed with Aloha.

Haskell is a yoga teacher, yin-certified practitioner, and sound healing facilitator who specializes in slow, intentional flows emphasizing mobility and embodied awareness, while also offering powerful, alignment-based classes. Her teaching blends spiritual presence with a clinical understanding of movement, allowing for thoughtful care when working with injuries and supporting nervous system regulation and whole-body resilience.

On Tuesday morning she offers Slow Flow & Mobility, steady, mindful class focused on warming the body through mobility work, gentle strength, and fluid movement. Classes begin with joint preparation and gradual warm-ups, then move into accessible, flowing sequences designed to support stability, range of motion, and ease. The emphasis is on how the body moves, creating a practice that feels supportive, grounding, and energizing without being rushed.

On Thursdays she offers Slow Flow to Yin, a nourishing practice that blends gentle movement



Jessica Haskell with her crystal bowls

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and deep rest. It will begin with slow, mindful flow to release tension and prepare the body, then transition into prolonged, supported Yin postures designed to gently deepen stretch in the fascia and connective tissues. This practice supports nervous system regulation and encourages deep relaxation, making it ideal for unwinding, softening, and resetting.

Haskell will offer a Spring Yin Lounge on March 22nd from 1:30-3:30 with her first workshop. The afternoon features yin yoga, soothing sound healing, gentle somatic movement, and an herbal tea tasting.

African American Read In Saturday

An African American Read In will be held in the Cohen Hall at Keene Public Library on Winter Street on Saturday, February 28th from noon to 2 p.m.

Staff will lead this free all-ages storytime with poetry, picture books, and selections of longer works. Participants are encouraged to bring their own favorites by black authors to read aloud.

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Discovering Greenland Is Presentation In Keene

A presentation, Discovering Greenland, by Greg Smith and the Greenland Advocate will be held in the Ruth Huntress Auditorium at Keene Public Library on Winter Street on Tuesday, March 3rd from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

People in general are unfamiliar with Greenland, the land, its people, history, culture, and its relationship with Denmark and the rest of the world. This presentation is intended in large part to acquaint the audience with all these aspects of the island country of Greenland.

Registration is required. Call 603-352-0157 or visit www.KeenePublicLibrary.org to sign up.

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Monadnock Community Hospital Hosts Free Seminar On Care Options At Home And In The Community

Monadnock Community Hospital is inviting community members to attend Care At Home: Understanding Home Healthcare, Hospice & Community Services on Wednesday, March 25th at 5:30 p.m. in the Bond Wellness Center Conference Room.

This free educational seminar will help older adults, caregivers, and adult children supporting parents understand care options early, before decisions need to be made during a health crisis. Many people are surprised to learn how early these services can be helpful and how much support is available long before a health crisis occurs.

The session will cover care options that support independence and peace of mind, including visiting nurse services, home health care, caregiver and family support, community-based programs, and when hospice or palliative care may be helpful. Attendees will also learn how HCS collaborates closely

with Monadnock Community Hospital and how services are coordinated across home, outpatient, and hospital care.

"This seminar is about helping people feel informed and prepared," said Katie Hart, HCS Director of Operations. "Understanding care options ahead of time allows individuals and families to make confident decisions that align with their values and needs."

The seminar is designed for older adults planning ahead, caregivers managing ongoing responsibilities, and adult children supporting aging parents who want clear, practical information about care options close to home. There will be time for questions and the opportunity to connect directly with local care experts.

Registration is required. To reserve a seat, visit CareAtHome2026.EventBrite.com.

Gathering Waters Welcomes New Member To Board Of Trustees



Katie Schwerin

Gathering Waters Charter School has announced the appointment of Katie Schwerin to its Board of Trustees. A longtime advocate for Waldorf education, Schwerin brings more than 30 years of experience in education, leadership, and organizational development, along with deep ties to the Monadnock region.

Schwerin recently retired as Chief Missions Officer at W.S. Badger Co., following a distinguished tenure that

included 14 years as Chief Operations Officer. Earlier in her career, she served as a class teacher at Monadnock Waldorf School and later as faculty chair, college chair, and board member, contributing significantly to the school's governance and strategic direction.

She has also served with the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America as a board member and leadership facilitator, and co-founded Project Home, a Keene-based organization addressing community housing needs.

"Gathering Waters fills a need in our community as a school that serves students from grades K-12 through an integrated approach to education with a strong foundation in math, science, and the arts," said Schwerin. "As a grandparent, I see firsthand the success of this program and am grateful to have it available here in Keene."

Gathering Waters looks forward to the insight, leadership, and community perspective Schwerin brings as the school continues to strengthen its K-12 programs and deepen its roots to the greater Keene community.

Aging, Disability, And Endless Paperwork: There Is Help In Keene

For many New Hampshire families, the most overwhelming part of aging, disability, or a sudden change in health isn't the diagnosis itself – it's figuring out where to start. Phone calls lead to referrals, referrals lead to more applications, and answers feel scattered or impossible to find. Too often, families are left feeling like they're failing, when in reality, they're navigating a system that was never designed to be simple.

That's where the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), formerly ServiceLink, comes in. Housed at NH

Care Collaborative at 105 Castle Street in Keene, the Monadnock ADRC is a free program that works alongside older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, and families to help them understand their options and create a plan that feels manageable.

Rooted in compassion, professionalism, and deep knowledge of New Hampshire's systems, the ADRC at NH Care Collaborative offers local, people-centered guidance without judgment. For more details, call 603-357-1922.

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PET OF THE WEEK

from THE MONADNOCK HUMANE SOCIETY

Mabel

Mabel is a one-year-old, 85-pound mixed breed with a big personality. She's a busy girl who thrives with plenty of daily exercise, enrichment, and a predictable routine to help her feel her best. After a fun, active day, she's more than happy to turn into a total snuggle bug and soak up all the affection she can get.



Mabel can be a little unsure when first meeting strangers – especially taller men – but this has been well managed in her care and she warms up with patient, positive introductions. She does well with kids, keeping in mind that she's large and sometimes doesn't realize her own size. She has lived with cats before and may chase them, so management or a cat-savvy home would be important. Her history with other dogs is mixed, and she may be happiest as the only dog where she can soak up all the attention. Mabel is looking for an active, loving home that's ready to give her the structure, exercise, and cuddles she deserves.

The Adoption Center is located at 101 West Swanzev Road, outside of Keene on Route 10 South. It's open Thursday through Sunday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Learn more at www.monadnockhumanesociety.org.

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It Can't Happen Here – Again At Keene Library

The Hourglass Readers In collaboration with Writers For Democratic Action will present *It Can't Happen Here – Again*, a call to resist the rise of fascism. The event will be held at The Keene Public Library, Ruth Huntress Auditorium, on Saturday, February 28th at 1 p.m. Admission is free and the public is invited. A talkback will be held after the performance, with light refreshments served. There will be only one performance.

It Can't Happen Here, a 1936 stage adaptation of Sinclair Lewis's novel of the same name. Over a hundred productions of this free, easily mounted script have been performed in many different venues over the past year.

This production is directed by Catherine Behrens and will feature six actors – Wendy Almeida, Mary Armstrong, Michael Auerbach, Damien Licata, Dan Patterson, and Kenzie Wood. Taryn Fisher will lead the talkback after the performance.

The script, written by Wesley Savick, James Carroll and Rachel DeWoskin for Writers for Democratic Action is a nod

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The Resilient But Ever-Changing Forests Of Mt. Monadnock

Mt. Monadnock, with its forested slopes and bare rock summit, seems like it is never going to change. Antioch faculty Dr. Peter Palmiotto has been studying these forests for over two decades, and he can tell you otherwise. "The only thing constant on the mountain is change – through geologic, seasonal, and daily time scales."

Monadnock's trees prevent climate change, as they take in more planet-warming carbon dioxide than they release. But will these trees, and the animals they support, be able to adapt to human-caused climate change?



Monadnock formed from sediments left in an ancient ocean, pushed up and metamorphosed into a hard mass of schists and quartzites – very little granite! Monadnock is the Abenaki term for the mountain that stands alone, having withstood the force of glacial ice that wore down lesser hills.

After the glacier melted, lichens grew on the mountain's bare rock, soil slowly formed, and tundra of sedges and grasses were established. Gradually trees took over. One thousand years ago, the forest we know today was established with spruce/fir conifer forest at the top.

Cores taken from Thoreau's bog on the mountain revealed charcoal 7420 years old; so fire was common when temperatures were 0.4-1.3 degrees F warmer than today. Then temperatures started to cool, until the industrial era began, when burning fossil fuels created planet-warming pollution.

The bald summit we see today is the result of fires set not by nature, but by farmers, to create sheep pastures. The fires burned through the shallow layers of soil atop the mountain, exposing the bare rock. Dr. Palmiotto dispelled the local legend about locals setting a fire to drive out the last wolf, noting that the fires happened long after wolves were gone from the area.

In 2007, Palmiotto and his crew of Antioch students established 130 permanent study plots at different elevations around the mountain. They described the distinct zones of plants you encounter when hiking up: hemlock-beech-oak-pine forest, then sugar

maple-beech-yellow birch, then a mix of northern hardwoods, red spruce, and balsam fir. Even higher, it's just spruce and fir, stunted by the harsh conditions at the summit, and other unique plants on rocky ridges. Finally, the top is all rock, covered in lichens and sprouting cute crevice plants. These plants grow very slowly; try not to step on them.

The natural communities of Mt. Monadnock have changed over millennia – a slow natural change. Human-caused changes are happening much faster.

We know that climate change is making our region wetter and warmer. We are seeing more temperature extremes – heat, drought, rain on snow, ice storms. The 2008 ice storm turned Monadnock into a crystal palace of ice, making the tree branches 30 times heavier. Palmiotto's study showed that over 50 percent of the trees on the east side of the mountain were damaged, and some of the plots showed 58 percent of the canopy damaged. But, 10 years later, the trees had grown back. Mostly the forest was pretty resilient to the ice storms.

With climate change, southern New Hampshire will have a climate like North Carolina by 2070. Forest scientists predict that the northern species, like balsam fir, striped maple, and gray birch, are likely to disappear. Red oak, sugar and red maple, and hickories will increase, along with poplars and white pine. These predictions do not consider wildfire, tree diseases, or insects, which are also expected to increase with climate change.

Longer droughts and more wildfires are likely. New England forests used to be considered "asbestos forests" – they never burned. However, ice storms, hurricanes, and microbursts can leave a lot of dead branches; add in droughts equals fuel for a bad fire. If the spruce fir forests of Quebec can burn, our forests could also succumb to blazes.

As the trees change, the wildlife will also move or adapt: snowshoe hare, Bicknell's thrush, and lynx may not call New Hampshire home anymore.

Dr. Palmiotto concluded, "Oak-hickory forest is the future for Monadnock, spruce-fir may be a thing of the past. I am confident that because the forests are complex and resilient, they will persist, continuing to take in carbon and release oxygen for many years to come."

Catherine Owen Koning is a Professor of Environmental Science at Franklin Pierce University, where she co-coordinates the Institute for Climate Action. She is also a member of the Monadnock Sustainability Hub's Board of Directors and chairs the Keene Clean Energy Team.

Keene Family YMCA Expands Ninja Training Program



Mountain Ninja Team members Grayson O'Hara (right) and Lillian Gauthier (left) navigating obstacles on the Y's ninja rig while teammates and Coach Kevin Vanderwoude look on.

Ninja Training at the Keene Family YMCA is an obstacle course-based program designed to build strength, confidence, and agility for children of all ages.

"Our Ninja Program now includes more options for both those who are new to the sport and those looking to advance their skills," says Sarah Vickery,

director of Youth Enrichment & Programs at the Keene Family YMCA at 200 Summit Road.

Ninja 101 is a four-week experience that's great for beginners, or anyone who enjoys the challenge of Ninja but isn't interested in competing.

The new Ninja Training class is an eight-week program that offers a faster-paced, more progressive experience for those who want to really hone their skills.

In order to join the more advanced Ninja Training class, students must have previously completed Ninja 101. This ensures all participants are familiar with the obstacles and how to move safely through the course.

"Ninja Training is the pathway to our competitive team, the Mountain Ninjas," continues Vickery. "But no one is required to progress to that level. We have students who just take Ninja 101 over and over again, and they never get bored."

The Ninja Program is open to anyone ages six and older. While it is most popular with school-age kids, teens and adults can also join in and experience the thrill of conquering the obstacles. It's also a great option for homeschoolers or those who are looking for fun and engaging activities for their children.

For more details, visit www.keeneymca.org/ninja.

Local Farm Is 2025 NH Farm Future Fund Recipient

Since 2020, the NH Farm Future Fund has distributed \$432,000 to 22 farms in partnership with eight New Hampshire land trusts conserving 2402 acres in seven counties.

One local farm that is a recipient of the 2025 NH Farm Future Fund is Hillside Springs Farm in Westmoreland. The Hillside Springs Farm project will protect 53 acres in Westmoreland through the purchase of a conservation easement by the Monadnock Conservancy.

Hillside Springs Farm is a working vegetable farm with prime agricultural soils, agricultural soils of statewide importance, as well as grassland and forestland habitat. The technical assistance funds will likely be used to cover the farmer's legal fees associated with the project and to address financial, tax, estate, and succession related planning.

For more details, visit www.cheshireconservation.org/nhfff.

Power Station Coffeehouse Ministry Held In Swanzey

The Power Station Coffeehouse ministry will be held at Whitcomb Hall at 17 Main Street in Swanzey on Friday, February 27th at 6 p.m. with Open Mic and Worship Music by Jerry and RaeAnn Pinault at

7 p.m. Prayers and testimonies are encouraged during the evening.

Participants are encouraged to bring a snack or beverage to share.

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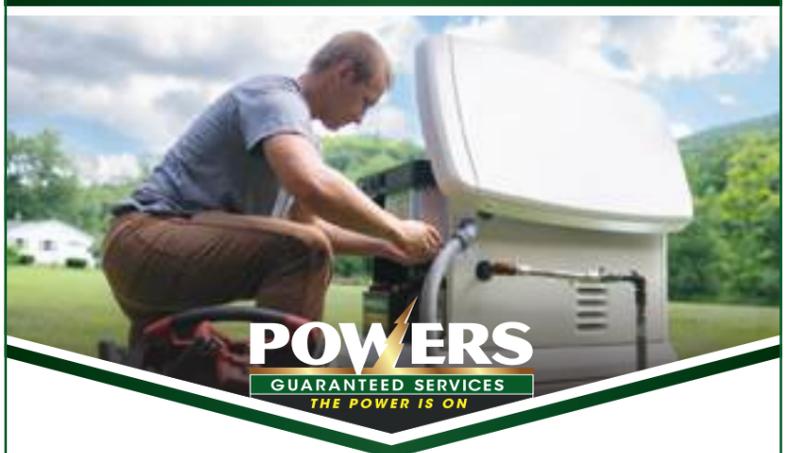


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MYSTERY PHOTO

from THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHESHIRE COUNTY

The first person to answer the question correctly at 9:30 a.m. or after on Friday will receive a \$25 gift certificate to Tempesta's Restaurant on Winchester Street in Keene. Call The Monadnock Shopper News, West Street in Keene, at 603-352-5296. You may win only one contest every three months. Only one call per person per week. No walk-ins, please.

(Prepared by the Historical Society of Cheshire County)



This Keene store operated in the 1980s and 1990s. What was its name?

The winner of last week's Mystery Photo contest was Janet Grayson of Keene. The small photo booth shop, shown at left, was on West Street in Keene.



Lissa Schneckenburger Trio Concert At Nelson Town Hall

On Friday, February 27th, the Lissa Schneckenburger Trio Concert will be held at Nelson Town Hall at 7:30 p.m.

The trio includes Schneckenburger on fiddle and vocals, Rachel Aucoin on piano, and Samuel Foucher

on accordion for a night of traditional fiddling, folk songs, and more. Admission is \$25/\$20 (in advance).

For more details or advanced tickets, visit www.monadnockfolk.org.

Finding Our Footing When The World Feels Unsteady

UNSTEADY, Continued from page 1

People gathering. People getting involved. People caring enough to show up.

It makes me happy to see that there are still folks who believe their voice matters. Residents show up to debate budgets, zoning, and school issues. Volunteers raise their hands to serve. Neighbors talk things through – sometimes with passion, sometimes with frustration, but always with the understanding that this is how a community works.

That kind of steady, everyday participation doesn't make the news, but it's what keeps a town healthy.

We forget sometimes that the strength of this country has never rested on one leader or one moment. It rests on millions of small decisions made by people who care enough to stay involved. It rests on the fact that we can disagree without walking away. It rests on the idea that the work of keeping a town

running – the budgets, the planning, the voting, the conversations – is shared work. And honestly, that's something worth noticing.

So, this week, instead of getting pulled into everything that feels uncertain, take a moment to appreciate what's still solid under our feet. We still get to vote. We still get to speak up. We still get to gather in public and hash things out. We still get to shape the place we live in. Those rights aren't small. They're the quiet proof that our system still works – not perfectly, not without bumps, but well enough to keep us moving forward.

As we move through the rest of winter and toward another busy election season, remember that our strength doesn't come from perfection, it comes from participation. It comes from resilience. It comes from people who care enough to show up, even when the world feels a little shaky. That's something we can hold onto.

Things To Do In The Monadnock Region

EVENTS, Continued from page 16

Saturday, Feb. 28

MISCELLANEOUS

"Peterborough Presents: Exploring the Benefits of Qigong, Tai Chi & Sound Immersion" Program 2-3pm. Peterborough Town Library, 2 Concord St., Peterborough. Second free info session. 603-924-8040. www.PeterboroughTownLibrary.org.

African American Read In 12-2pm. The Keene Public Library, Cohen Hall, 60 Winter St., Keene. Celebrate 100 Years of Black History Commemorations with the African American Read-In. Join to share food, readings, and recommendations. Participants are encouraged to bring their own favorites by Black authors to read aloud. Free. Amy Kraemer: 603-352-0157. akraemer@keenenh.gov.

Sunday, Mar. 1

ARTS, MUSIC & THEATER

Keene Chamber Orchestra: Global Tapestries 3pm. Trinity Lutheran Church, 100 Maple Ave, Keene. Lecture with Maestro Eric Thomas at 2 followed by concert at 3. Free admission. Donations welcome. www.keene-chamber-orchestra.org.

Monday, Mar. 2

ARTS, MUSIC & THEATER

Keene State College Concert Choir, Chamber Singers with Eastern Michigan University Choir 7-9pm. Redfern Arts Center, Alumni Recital Hall, Keene State College. \$15/\$10 seniors & youth/free for KSC students. 603-358-2168.

Tuesday, Mar. 3

ARTS, MUSIC & THEATER

Cheshiremen Chorus: Weekly Meeting & Singing 6:30pm. United Church of Christ-Keene, 23 Central Square. All men welcome. Use Vernon St. entrance. Meets every Tuesday. 877-312-7467. www.cheshiremen.org.

LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

Stewards of Historic Religious Properties in the Monadnock Region 11:30am-1pm. Historical Society of Cheshire County, 246 Main St., Keene. New Hampshire Preservation Alliance will host a lunch-and-learn workshop for stewards of historic religious buildings in the Monadnock Region. Register at www.nhpreservation.org/events-calendar.

MISCELLANEOUS

Discovering Greenland 6-7:30pm. Keene Public Library, Ruth Huntress Auditorium, 60 Winter St., Keene. People in general are unfamiliar with Greenland, the land, its people, history, culture and its relationship with Denmark and the rest of the world. This presentation is intended in large part to acquaint the audience with all these aspects of the island country of Greenland. Registration required. Amy Kraemer: 603-352-0157. akraemer@keenenh.gov.

Thursday, Mar. 5

LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

Medicare Made Easy: Free Monthly "New to Medicare" Workshop 1-3pm. NH Care Collaborative, 105 Castle Street, Keene. The workshop is available both in person and virtually. Registration is required. Call 603-357-1922 or 866-634-9412. www.servicelink.nh.gov.

Winter Pastimes For Gardeners

We have been enduring quite a bit of snow lately and now the weather has become brutally cold. I don't know about anyone else, but I'm not venturing out anytime soon. Here are a few ideas to help pass the time in an inviting way, and I hope you agree. I believe one or two of these may be of interest to some of you.

Many people enjoy writing journals, and maintaining a garden journal is one of the best ways of keeping tabs on how your gardens have done each season. By taking note of which vegetables tasted the best, what flowers had the most fragrant blooms, the insect pests that gave you headaches, or container combinations that really made an impression. Write down everything you can think of, positive or negative, about your garden so you can refer to it as you prepare your garden for another planting season.

Woods and Gardens

with Rose Kowaliw



Also, by adding photographs of your garden periodically, you can monitor the progress throughout the year by keeping them in a photo album. Scan the plant tags and empty seed packets to create a record of what's growing in your garden and you won't have to physically save a mixed pile of tags and packets. This journal can also reflect how you felt during and after planting the seeds or plants, and what methods worked best.

As you are planning out your garden and thinking about what to add next year, focus on native plants. Not only are native plants adapted to regional weather patterns which makes them easier to grow, nearly all native plants attract wildlife to the garden. By planting native plants you're helping support the local food web. If you want to know what to plant in your local area, look for plant recommendations through the National Wildlife Federation Native Plant Finder.

Since it's too cold to garden outdoors in February, perhaps designing a garden under glass would

interest you, as in a terrarium. You can create a miniature jungle! Look for clear glass containers that have a lid or stopper that will help maintain a humid atmosphere around your plants. For plants such as succulents that prefer a drier climate, select a large open-mouthed container. Then look for plants that remain compact. Good choices for a moist environment in a terrarium could be Ivy, Lemon Button Fern, Baby Tears, or Creeping Fig. For an open container garden try cactus, succulents, Hens-and-chicks, a Jade plant, Hoya, or Bromeliad. Before you add soil in a terrarium, spread a layer of aquarium gravel over the bottom of it. This will facilitate drainage if you over-water. Then, place a layer of window screen over the gravel to help prevent the soil from washing down. You can find a variety of ways to make a lush terrarium in books or magazines on the subject or even online.

We enjoy feeding birds in winter with our bird feeders and scattering seeds on the ground under our huge bush in the backyard. By late winter many natural food sources for local birds will begin to thin out. It's important to keep your bird feeders fully stocked until spring, once you decide to feed them in winter. Offer a variety of foods to attract the widest selection of bird species. Black oil sunflower seeds draw cardinals, blue jay, juncos, and a host of other species. Beef suet is great for woodpeckers, mockingbirds, and nuthatches. There are large bags of mixed birdseed available in the area for purchase, too. You can include a diverse selection of feeders to accommodate the feeding habits of different bird species. We enjoy watching all the different birds that come to our feeders and how well they all seem to get along.

This is also a good time to check up on your houseplants, as many of them need a refresh. Dry indoor air, lack of attention over the holidays, and less sunlight can take their toll. I notice my plants need watering more frequently because of the indoor heat in the winter months. Give your houseplants a spa treatment by moving them to a bathroom for a day or two where you can spritz them with water and provide extra humidity. When you move them back to their regular spot, make sure they are getting the proper amount of sunlight. Fertilize your plants with a houseplant fertilizer if you haven't been doing this. It is a good idea to evaluate plants that have grown and consider repotting them. Perhaps these suggestions for pastimes may help winter pass more quickly.

Rose Kowaliw has enjoyed gardening for over 40 years and also has a variety of houseplants, including a few she's had for over 20 years.

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LETTERS

Appreciation For "The Lantern Of Grief" Article

To The Editor:
I was captivated with Ms. Nadine Laughlin's definition of emotional grief of loss with "Healing Perspectives" article – The Lantern of Grief – published in *The Monadnock Shopper News*. I found the article most soothing and supportive and thank Nadine Laughlin of Healing Perspectives and *The Monadnock Shopper News* for providing its support and presentation for its readers.

Respectfully submitted,
**Terence C. Mark
Keene, NH**

Operation Santa Helped Over 80 Children

To The Editor:
Operation Santa, a project of the Rindge Woman's Club (RWC), is reporting another very successful year! The program itself is nearing its 40th anniversary and continues to serve our community. Gifts were provided to over 80 children from 32 families to ensure a happy holiday.

It is a very generous community that makes all this possible! All who took tags from the "giving trees" at Walmart, Verizon, and Ingalls Memorial town library provided the core of the program. Countless people of good cheer returned beautiful gifts of toys and clothing. Franklin Pierce University (FPU) continued its community outreach by providing each child with books in their area of interest, plus funds to cover any additional ones. University Librarian Paul Jenkins coordinated that effort.

Pumpkin Organization of Rindge made sure that all children who needed warm coats and boots were provided for. There were generous donations from community organizations as well. We are proud to thank the Jaffrey/Rindge Rotary, RAMS, Jaffrey/Rindge Lions, and the Rindge Chamber of Commerce. FPU's accounting department kindly adopted a family. TD Bank employees donated a generous gift card.

In addition, there were monetary gifts from Eleanor Martin, Marjorie Margolis, Marilyn Walker, Charles Branch, Robert Alden, Janice Fiandaca, Kathy and Jim McEchern, and others who wish to remain anonymous. The many "elves" of the RWC were invaluable. It takes a village and we thank each and every person and organization that helped.

Sincerely, Marilyn Griska
Operation Santa Chair & Coordinator

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	Close	Week's Change		Close	Week's Change
Honeywell (Allied Signal)	243.97	2.59	Danaher Corp. (Kollmorgen)	209.50	(3.08)
Becton Dickinson (C.R. Bard)	185.39	9.50	Merck (Hubbard Farms)	122.26	0.85
Toronto Dominion Bank (TD Bank)	96.99	1.67	Deluxe (NEBS)	27.23	1.02
PC Connection	62.11	(1.71)	Teleflex (Jaffrey)	115.45	11.70
Bank Of America (Fleet)	53.06	0.51	Timken (MPB Corp.)	108.16	0.32
Corning Inc.	139.51	6.05	M&T Bank Corp. (People's United)	232.52	3.81
Ametek, Inc. (Precitech)	233.51	3.75	Dover Corp. (Markem)	233.31	1.68

PRECIOUS METALS	Close	Week's Change	COMMODITIES	Close	Week's Change
Silver (\$ per ounce)	84.28	7.10	Wheat (cents per bushel)	581.75	33.00
Gold (\$ per ounce)	5,116.20	63.60	Corn (cents per bushel)	440.00	(1.75)
Platinum (\$ per ounce)	2,162.65	100.38	Soybeans (cents per bushel)	1,153.75	4.00
			Cattle (cents per pound)	241.73	1.33
			Crude (\$ per barrel)	66.39	3.56

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Federal Reserve Leadership Transition

Other than the historic volatility in gold and silver prices, the biggest news for markets in January may have been the nomination of Kevin Warsh as the next Federal Reserve (Fed) Chair. We anticipate a Warsh-led Fed will be able to steer the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) toward two rate cuts later this year, with help from easing inflation pressure. Remember, the Chair just gets one vote on the 12-member FOMC, so the health of the labor market and the path of inflation will be critical.



Warsh's track record of flexibility on interest rate policy, his credibility with Fed officials, and prior advocacy for central bank independence should help ease concerns about the President's influence. However, his preference for a smaller Fed balance sheet, now over \$6.6 trillion, and his emphasis on fiscal responsibility could complicate the Treasury's efforts to refinance government debt at lower rates. This dynamic will be important to watch because the U.S. government's fiscal situation is not on a sustainable path.

One of the reasons Warsh is likely to push for lower rates, despite still-elevated inflation, is productivity gains from AI can help the economy grow faster with less inflation. Recent data shows U.S. non-farm business productivity rose 4.9% in the third quarter of 2025, strong enough to counter inflationary pressures even amid solid economic growth. Technology and more efficient processes enable firms to produce more with fewer hours worked, a key reason

economic growth will likely help push stocks higher. AI investment is also helping drive a strong fourth quarter earnings season. S&P 500 companies are on track to deliver a fifth consecutive quarter of double-digit earnings growth. While this is driven mostly by the tech sector's 30% earnings increase, keep in mind industrials are tracking toward 25% earnings growth. Several leading companies have cited tangible benefits of AI during earnings season, including Bank of America, Meta, and Costco. Strong earnings can help solidify the floor under stock prices, while cooling inflation and stable interest rates can help raise the ceiling by supporting higher valuations.

Looking ahead, the backdrop for stocks remains favorable. Massive AI investment is driving gains in productivity and earnings. Consumers will get tax refunds associated with the One Big Beautiful Bill Act starting this month. Positive stock market performance in January often bodes well for annual returns, though past performance does not guarantee future results. And increased participation in this bull market is encouraging – the average stock has outperformed the S&P 500 Index over the past three months.

AI scrutiny, deficit spending, and geopolitics remain key risks. New Fed Chairs are often tested by markets, and midterm election years tend to be more volatile. Don't let any volatility that may come along shake your confidence. It will not shake mine. I believe volatility creates opportunity. Stay invested and diversified. Please contact Josh for a free confidential consultation at 603-352-0222.

No Strategy assures success or protects against loss. Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC

Joshua I. Houle, CFP® is Founder and Wealth Manager of Houle Wealth Management at 143 West Street in Keene. He can be reached at 603-352-0222/ josh.houle@lpl.com.

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Help! I Lost My File!

It's common to misplace or even accidentally destroy documents or pictures that are important to us. Here are a few steps to follow before you panic. First, if you can't remember where you put a file, use the Search function on your computer. Type in as much of the file name as you can remember.

If that doesn't work, some programs will keep a record of the last thing you made. Open the program and select Open File; it should direct you to the last place you saved something. Second, if you deleted a file but haven't emptied your Recycle Bin or Trash, just go pull that file back out – it will be no worse for wear. But what if you deleted it and it's well and truly gone? Contact your friendly neighborhood tech



service and see what kind of help they can give you. Until next time, be well, be kind, and be curious.
Gregory Pratt is the head bench technician of TheStiltskin Computer Services, located at 1 Elm Street in Keene. If you have a question for him, email help@thestiltskin.com.

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Window Designs By John – Putting The Finishing Touches On Your Home

WINDOWS, Continued from page 1

"I purchased my blinds through John," says another customer, Stephanie Labanowski. "He has an absolutely amazing selection and colors, fabulous service, and is responsive. Very supportive of my needs and requests, and desires to complete the vision I had designed through my current home refurbishment. It was a timely delivery and easy install."

"Window fashions have come into their own as a primary element of home design," says Hawley. "They need to be both functional as well as fashionable. We match the feel of the room but also provide light control, privacy, and comfort."

"Window treatments can go a long way toward boosting your home's energy efficiency, keeping you comfortable," he continues. "That's because, compared to insulated walls and ceilings, windows easily allow more heat to escape from a room in winter and more heat to enter a room in summer. I have a number of options that can help keep the cold out in the winter and the heat out in the summer. With our cellular shades, we can help you save on your heating bills and add a touch of style to your home."

"After recently moving to the area, I wanted to find some shade treatments for my home," says Jim Raney. "I had Hunter Douglas shades in the past, and they really held up well. John was very helpful and showed me lots of options. It was a very low-pressure experience. He was very patient with my questions and friendly and informative with his answers. I was able to take some samples home before I made a final selection, and John came out to measure before the order was finalized. Given my prior experience with Hunter Douglas, my expectations were high, but the end result absolutely exceeded them. I could not be happier."

"Do you have a sunroom that's an oven in the summer and a cooler in the winter? We have a shade for that," Hawley says. "Got a specialty-shaped window? We've got a shade for that."

At Window Designs by John, this pro is dedicated to helping people with all of their window treatment needs – shades, blinds, curtains, valances, and shutters. And all of his window treatments are custom-made to order. "I don't deal in bargain basement products. Everything I do is custom; no off the rack."

"Whether you're looking for some style and color, or energy efficiency, we've got you covered. We are your local Hunter Douglas dealer, with the best guarantee in the industry."

The Hunter Douglas brand is known for its caliber of product. They are also known for the development of the track glide system for European-style windows and doors. Hunter Douglas carries a lifetime warranty, and Window Designs by John guarantees the fit.

Hawley will inspire people with drapery panels that expertly match their style – transforming homes from boring to beautiful! Whether needing a custom window treatment; room darkening shades for media rooms, man caves, or for day sleepers; or window treatments that are synced with sunrise and sunset automation, Window Designs by John is just a phone call away.

"Prepare for the brighter days ahead with our exquisite collection of window shades. From elegant draperies to modern blinds, we have the perfect window treatments to elevate your space," Hawley concludes.

For more details or to set up an in-home consultation, call 603-499-0011, email wdbyjohn@gmail.com, or visit www.windowtreatmentbyjohn.com.

TOWN OF SWANZEY POLICE DEPARTMENT

ATTENTION SWANZEY RESIDENTS:

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WHEN: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH AT 2PM
WHERE: WHITCOMB HALL, 17 MAIN STREET - SWANZEY, NH

This will be a moderated event, and each declared candidate running for office has been invited. Please visit the Swanzeay Preservation Society website:
<http://swanzeyps.wixsite.com>
for updates on the candidates attending the forum and for more details.

There will be forum questions developed by the Preservation Society and the Governance Committee as well as a Q&A for all who attend.

Light refreshments will be available.

Read the MSN online: www.shoppernews.com

Managing Late Winter Burnout

As we come to the end of February, you may have started to notice some signs of winter burnout that your family is experiencing. People in your home may seem more irritable, tired, and unmotivated. The sparkle of the holidays is long gone and spring feels like it will never arrive. The weather has been cold and snowy and leave us feeling like huddling in our homes under piles of blankets.

– just more sighs, less attentiveness, and mild irritability.

To combat this general sense of overwhelm, you may find it helpful to simplify. Plan for simpler meals – get a rotisserie chicken at the grocery store and use the leftovers to make a soup for a second meal. Don't overtax yourself. Sometimes it's okay to do the bare minimum and then take a rest. Rest is necessary to get through the burnout, so don't treat it as a reward for getting everything done. Think of rest as a necessary part of coping during these darker times.

Both adults and children tend to experience poorer sleep quality in winter. This may be due to circadian misalignment, inconsistent schedules, and increased screen use during darker evenings. The accumulated sleep debt goes beyond feeling tired. With less consistent sleep, kids and parents may experience reduced emotional regulation, stress tolerance, and problem-solving capacity.

Acknowledge what is happening. Let your family know that you understand that everyone is a bit burned out with the colder, darker winter season. It can be helpful to recognize that this is a common reaction to the winter months and that with the change from winter to spring, everyone's mood is likely to improve. It gives everyone a sense that their experience is normal and provides hope for the coming improvements.

Early winter has more special events and novelties to help boost everyone's mood, but as the season proceeds, there are fewer activities to break up the monotony.

To make it easier to get through these

weeks of winter, make plans that everyone can begin looking forward to doing. It doesn't have to be anything super formal or expensive. It can be simple experiences such as watching movies together on Friday nights or having pancakes for breakfast on Sunday morning. Even simple rituals can improve everyone's moods. When the weather starts to warm, take a family walk before the sun sets. Even small opportunities to get some fresh air can reap big benefits.

Have a little grace for one another. When experiencing late-winter burnout, patience tends to be low. Make it a point to practice kindness and gentleness with one another. Assume people have positive intentions when their answers seem a little curt. Be quick to offer apologies if you find yourself losing your temper. Try to let little things go when possible.

Prioritize self-care. Actively plan things that bring you and your family joy. Don't worry about not getting everything checked off on your to-do list first. In fact, add some self-care activities to your list. This will help you prioritize things that promote joy while also making you feel like you have accomplished a planned task from your list.

Sheri Lapointe is a licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor with a Master's Degree from Antioch New England University. She works as a behavioral health clinician for the Granite State Children's Alliance. She also has many years of experience teaching in local schools. Send comments to her at The Monadnock Shopper News, P.O. Box 487, Keene, NH 03431.



At this time of year, many families report feeling unusually drained, irritable, and unmotivated. This is to be expected. According to research, late-winter burnout is a reaction to cumulative stress. One factor is light deprivation. The shorter daylight hours disrupt the natural rhythms that regulate our sleep, mood, and attention. We often experience more fatigue, lower mood, and more attention disruptions. Even people who don't meet the criteria for seasonal affective disorder experience these symptoms to some degree. Kids are likely to experience some behavioral challenges and less focus with academics in the late winter months.

Signs of late winter burnout may be subtle, with kids having more meltdowns over little things, teens seeming more checked out than usual, and parents feeling overwhelmed by tasks that are usually completed with ease. It may not be dramatic

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MONDAY, MARCH 2ND – FRIDAY, MARCH 6TH FROM 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

If your child attends preschool, please complete the forms that they provided, bring them with you to registration, or drop them off any day prior to registration at any one of the following schools: Franklin, Fuller, Symonds or Wheelock. If you did not receive forms, please contact one of the elementary schools. You may also download the forms at: <https://www.keeneschoolsnh.org/kinder-registration/> It is important that you register your child at this time.

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Joshua Atia, son of Christine Aguilar & Isidro Aguilar, Keene, 11
- February 26, 2026**
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*Age child will be on this birthday.

Storytime For Toddlers, Preschoolers In Richmond Wednesdays In March

The Richmond Public Library will host Storytime on Wednesday, March 4th at 10 a.m. The program includes stories, songs, and an easy craft designed for toddlers and preschoolers. Storytime is held every Wednesday during the month of March. For more details, contact Richmond Public Library at 603-239-6164.

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Self Care

Between the news unfolding and the multiple posts from so-called experts about how this time, right now, is such a pivotal moment astrologically/cyclically/etc., it is easy to feel like a whirlwind is blowing us around. We are just a brittle and fragile leaf floating to who knows where, or what.

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed. Do you? I ponder what I can do when so much of this whirlwind (most of it, in fact) is (seemingly) far beyond my power to direct and change? I ask myself (as I know so many are these days) what am I being called to do. How can I best contribute at this pivotal moment in humanity?

I try to remind myself that maybe some of the most important work we can do is take care of ourselves. Our own inner landscapes and, also, our corporeal

containers. Our bodies that are intrinsically linked to our mind, heart, and soul.

Healing Perspectives

with Skye Stephenson



That we should strive to stay strong, balanced, and rooted no matter what is swirling around us. This is not an easy task, for sure. At least for me, in this present moment. Perhaps you are feeling the same.

And so, with this intention in mind, I share with you two simple ways to practice self-care that you can do on your own, at home. Just you and yourself.

#1: Warm sesame oil massage. In Ayurvedic medicine, the vata (wind) dosha is what most often gets knocked out of balance when we are exposed to too much activity, disturbing news, and or cold winds as in this very long and bitter winter. It is a dry and brittle dosha.

One way to help bring ourselves more into balance when this happens is to get some (preferably organic) sesame oil. Warm about one quarter to one third cup in the microwave or stove to a warm but not burning hot temperature. Bring the container with the warm oil into the bathroom. (I do this in the bathtub.)

Take off your clothes and step into the tub. And begin to massage the warm oil onto your skin: body part by body part. (I start with my feet and move upwards, although others may prefer to start with the head and move down.) Massage the oil gently, with appreciation for each body part. On your face, massage the oil across your forehead, over your shut eyes, around your throat, and along the back and outer parts of your ears.

Massage the oil into your hair. Especially the crown area at the very top of your head. Once you have massaged the oil into every place on the exterior of your body, wrap yourself in a towel or bathrobe and let the oil absorb into your body for about 15 minutes. (You can wrap your hair in a warm/damp towel if you want to for some extra penetration of the oil into your scalp.)

Then, take a warm shower or bath, letting the oil seep into the pores of your skin. Do not use soap. You can shampoo your hair. (I usually do, but do not use conditioner afterwards since the oil serves this purpose.)

When you have finished and are dried off and dressed, check in with yourself. How do you feel?

I did this on the morning of February 17th; that was a new moon day and also the first day of the Chinese Fire Horse year. I was pleasantly surprised at what a positive difference this oil massage made in my mood and spirits.

#2: Gin on the crown of your head. A spiritual guide in the Ifá tradition taught me a simple technique to clear the crown of your head (called the Ori in Ifá) of any heavy energies. The Ori is considered the most important part of the human body in Ifá for

the entrance of spiritual energies. He suggested I periodically apply a handful of gin to my Ori. That gin (and only gin) has the power (due to the juniper and other plants distilled in the alcohol) to clear and purify our Ori.

Whether you try either of these simple self-care practices, or have your own favorites, I hope you make time for self-care this month. This is not a luxury. It is a necessity, now more than ever.

Skye Stephenson enjoys writing and researching about sacred stones and place. She lives in Keene; <https://skystephenson.com>.

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One entry per person per month, please. Don't

forget to choose one of the businesses on the Celebrate Local pages as your preferred \$50 gift certificate! Deadline is Friday, March 13th.

Last month's winner was Virginia Clark who chose a \$50 gift certificate to New England Fabrics.

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LOCAL, Continued from page 1

Earthcraft specializes in edible landscapes, ecological restoration, agroforestry services, water solutions, and farm infrastructure. They cultivate food security in our region by increasing the production of perennial crops, regional food aggregation, and processing. Visit Earthcraft's work in Keene, such as the outdoor edible cafe at Brewbakers, featuring gardens, water-catchment features, benches, planters, and an arbor made from local hemlock and white cedar. (Brewbakers' kitchen regularly uses the fresh herbs

and vegetables from their outdoor cafe.) While partially dismantled for the winter, the space will be back up by May 1st. Also, visit the growing forest garden at the Hundred Nights Shelter. This year, Earthcraft will work with the Monadnock Food Co-op in Keene and the Frost Free Library in Marlborough on projects. Stay tuned at villageroots.org.

What comes next for Earthcraft? "We are in transition," Marty shared. "But the goal is the same: to keep painting the picture of what change looks like and to help people see what is possible. The work is about connection – between people, systems, and generations. If we can keep that alive, the land will keep feeding us."

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Electrify Monadnock Fund
 The Monadnock Sustainability Hub will soon launch the Electrify Monadnock Fund, a new, home-grown rebate program that empowers low- to moderate-income Monadnock Region residents to make their homes cleaner, more efficient, and more resilient by supporting the transition away from fossil fuels. The fund helps make home electrification accessible to everyone. Qualified homeowners can receive up to \$7000 in rebates for home energy-efficiency projects, including the installation of solar panels, heat pumps, and electric appliances, as well as weatherization, electrical panel upgrades, and electric vehicle upgrades. Sign up for updates at monadnocksustainabilityhub.org/electrifymonadnockfund.

"The Hub is excited to officially launch our Electrify Monadnock Fund, a privately funded rebate program – with over \$400,000 in donations so far – to help our neighbors make a wide range of clean energy upgrades," said Program Manager Rachel Ranelli. "This program is here to make the process of electrifying your home within reach."

More Than a Grocery Store
 Over 5000 community members own Monadnock Food Co-op in Keene – truly a locally-owned business. While everyone can shop at Monadnock Food Co-op, member-owners receive benefits including quarterly discounts, patronage refunds, and the ability to vote for the board of directors: monadnockfood.coop.

Each year, the co-op measures the store's fossil fuel use, waste-reduction efforts, community contributions, and more. Some highlights from last year: the co-op supported 334 local farmers and producers with \$8.7 million in local sales. Their solar panels generated over 58,000 kWh of energy, and their EV chargers powered the equivalent of 244,000 miles driven by an average gas-powered passenger vehicle. They composted 68,687 gallons of waste and gave 8,682 gallons to local farmers for animal feed.

"Our co-op was formed by and is owned by our amazing community, who are dedicated to strengthening our local systems and supporting one another," said General Manager Michael Faber. "We are so grateful for our member-owners, staff, and community partners for fostering sustainability at the heart of everything we do."

Farm Future Fund
 Created in 1945, the Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD) promotes the conservation and responsible use of our natural and agricultural resources through technical, financial, and educational assistance:

cheshireconservation.org. Most recently, they received funding to expand their Farm Future Fund that works directly with New Hampshire farms and land trusts to conserve more acres of active farmland and support farmers with technical assistance.

They also partner closely with the New Hampshire Food Bank on the Cheshire County Conservation District Granite State Market Match (GSMM). This program allows SNAP/EBT users to double the value of their benefits when shopping at participating farmers' markets, CSAs, and farm stands in New Hampshire. Since 2011, the program provided \$294,679.26 to Cheshire County farms. GSMM increases access to affordable, local food for SNAP participants while

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LOCAL, Continued from page 12

delivering economic benefits to participating vendors, farmers, and host communities.

“Working for an organization that prioritizes understanding the intricacies of the natural world with economic and modern realities has been extremely informative and inspiring,” said Nina Branwen, communications and community engagement coordinator. “As we adapt to the ever-changing realities of the world and conservation efforts, we plan to continue strengthening our relationships with our community and the land that sustains us all through our educational programming and grants, with a continued focus on soil, water, wildlife, and farm viability.”

Conserving the Land

The Monadnock Conservancy works to protect the Monadnock Region’s working farms, forests, wetlands, and natural spaces. In the past six months, the organization has conserved roughly 200 acres in Westmoreland, Antrim, and West Swanzey, bringing the total to over 24,000 acres conserved since 1989.

The conservancy also offers ways for you to engage with land conservation and the land more generally. In the spring and fall, they offer a walking group called the Cheshire Walkers for seniors or anyone who prefers a slower pace and plenty of socializing. The conservancy recently hired Kate Witte as community engagement manager to deepen the local community’s connection to conserved land through impactful, educational workshops and events: monadnockconservancy.org.

“The Monadnock Region remains resilient thanks to the individuals and communities who care to protect the landscapes that offer us all so much,” shared Amanda Littleton, executive director. “This foresight to prioritize conservation will ensure farmland continues to provide bounty, our water sources remain clean and plentiful, and our infrastructure is protected by intact wetlands and floodplains. We are committed to conserving the most vital resources that provide wildlife habitat as well as recreational landscapes that enrich our lives. We plan to continue to increase the pace of these conservation efforts to ensure future

generations have the opportunity to share in the same love for the land.”

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Something To Be Grapefruit For...

Yes, that's right – the wrong word and maybe even a dangling participle! And it's all the fault of some AI generated corrections that have invaded my computer, uninvited! Well, begone ye nuisances, and let me make my own mistakes, to be corrected by a proofie as needed! Forgive the odd lead-in to this week's recipe column, born only of a frustration that has now been addressed by a suggestion of gratefulness.

I realized recently that many people are still grateful for recipes that make use of canned soups. Starting with the food shortages in the 1940s when homemakers were taught to be thrifty and not waste food, casseroles became a way to turn leftovers into something delicious and nutritious. A variety of simple casserole recipes began to appear on Campbell's soup can labels and by the 1970s recipes also appeared in cooking magazines and cookbooks. Here's a few examples of those old-time classic casseroles that still remain in my file box. For those who avoid cooking with canned soups but might wish to try one of the recipes, you can replace the soup with your own homemade version, a cream sauce, whole sour cream, or cream cheese.

Origins may have been lost, but the dishes go on... So may you be grateful for a happy kitchen, whatever the food dishes you wish to create.

- 1 can sliced water chestnuts
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon curry powder, or to taste
- 2 cans solid white meat tuna

Mix all ingredients together in a casserole, reserving 1/2 can of onions. Bake, covered, for 30 minutes in 350-degree oven. Uncover; sprinkle reserved onions on top and cook 10 minutes more.

Cooking Corner

with Nancy Adams



Chicken Chesapeake

Often appearing as an elegant and unusual buffet dish during the 1970s, versions of this recipe were popular in Junior League cookbooks during that period. Some recipes feature crabmeat instead of oysters, if that sounds more to your liking. If so, use about one half cup of water in the sauce instead of the oyster liquid.

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. wild and long-grained rice, cooked
- 8 oz. smoked ham, thinly sliced
- 1 pint oysters, and their liquid reserved
- 3 whole chicken breasts, split, boned and skinned
- 3 slices bacon, uncooked and halved
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup medium cream
- 1/4 cup sherry
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1/4 teaspoon dried tarragon
- salt and pepper to taste
- Parmesan cheese and paprika for topping

Put cooked wild rice in the bottom of a shallow baking dish. Cover with a layer of ham. Place oysters (reserve liquid for later) on ham and cover with chicken breasts. Top each chicken breast with a slice of bacon. Blend all remaining ingredients, except cheese and paprika, and including the reserved oyster liquid. Pour the sauce over the chicken. Sprinkle the top with Parmesan and paprika. Cover and bake at 300 degrees for one hour. Uncover and continue to bake until the chicken is cooked through and bacon has crisped. Makes six servings.

Nancy Adams is a native of Peterborough and resides in Hancock. Nancy welcomes suggestions – send them to: Nancy P. Adams, 22 Birch Road, Hancock, NH 03449.

Farm Share Program Provides Vegetable Shares To Limited-Income Residents

The Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD) is offering its Monadnock Farm Share Program again this year. Six Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) produce farms in the Monadnock Region have come together to ensure that farm fresh CSA vegetable shares are available and affordable for all interested community members in 2026.

The Farm Share Program provides limited-income residents with the opportunity to support a local CSA farmer and receive reliable high-quality produce on a regular basis. CSA Share prices are discounted. Through the program, participating families and individuals receive a discounted weekly vegetable share.

Farmers raise funds to cover 15 percent of the program costs and 50 percent of program costs is provided by the The Center for Population Health at Cheshire Medical Center through the Healthy Monadnock Alliance. The customer is responsible to pay 35 percent of the total share cost.

This program is available to Monadnock Region residents who live at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty income limit, or have other reasons for needing assistance in participating in a farm share program.

Applications will be selected on a first come, first serve basis and funding is limited. The CCCD will accept applications until Tuesday, March 10th or until available shares have been awarded. Visit www.cheshireconservation.org/farmshare or for assistance, call 603-904-3011.

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Beef & Mushroom Casserole

This aged-yellow recipe from my file box came from a friend in the late 60s. I still make and serve this easy slow-cooked dish to family and friends, along with garlic bread and a salad. Makes six to eight servings.

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. lean stew beef or round steak, cut in 1-inch cubes
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 1 package onion soup mix
- 3/4 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 cup red wine

Place beef cubes in a five-quart oven-proof casserole dish. Season with salt and pepper as desired and pour mushroom soup over beef. Sprinkle overall with the dry onion soup. Bake, covered, at 225 degrees for two and a half hours. Stir and bake another one hour. Blend in the mushrooms and wine; bake one-half hour more. Serve, or refrigerate one day to be reheated for the next evening.

Yum-Yum

An odd name for a casserole but perhaps a nod to chow mein noodles, one of the ingredients, and its quite yummy taste. Makes four servings, but easily increased.

Ingredients:

- 1 or 2 tablespoons butter or oil
- 1 cup coarsely chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup chopped green or red pepper
- 1 lb. ground beef or pork
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 can cream of mushroom or celery soup, diluted with 1/2 can water
- 3 oz. can chow mein noodles

In a skillet, brown onion, celery and green pepper in some butter or oil until pale golden; set aside. In same skillet, brown meat in a bit more butter or oil to a good crisp brown. Season lightly with salt and pepper and put in a casserole dish; add onion and celery mixture. Rinse out skillet with a bit of water to get out all the juices and add to casserole dish. Pour over and add the soup and remaining water; stir to combine. Cover and bake in 350-degree oven for 45 minutes. Remove cover, spread noodles on top and allow to heat through, uncovered for five or 10 minutes.

Tuna Casserole

A classic retro casserole, but without any noodles. Try this recipe from the Hancock Woman's Club cookbook, *A Taste of Hancock*, for a change of pace. If you're someone who likes to pick off the fried onions on the timeless holiday green bean casserole, you'll love this recipe that has two cans of French fried onion rings mixed in, with some on top. Makes four to six servings.

Ingredients:

- 2 small cans French's fried onions
- 2 cups frozen green beans



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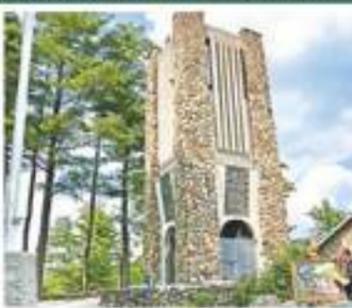
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MISCELLANEOUS

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Walk-in Wednesdays 1-3pm. Family Resource Center at HCS, 312 Marlboro Street, Keene. Confidential, free of charge discussion of services that are available. From Healthy Starts to Hospice care. 603-352-2253. www.HCSservices.org.

Home Healthcare Hospice & Community Services: Walk-in Wednesdays 1-3pm. HCS Peterborough, 454 Old Street Road Medical Arts Building, Suite 208. Confidential, free of charge discussion of services that are available. 603-352-2253. www.HCSservices.org.

Thursday, Feb. 26

MISCELLANEOUS

Cheshire Village at Home Event: “Overcoming The Winter Blues” 1pm. Keene Senior Center, 312 Marlboro St., Keene. Richard Nicoletti, J.D., Jungian psychoanalyst. Register at 603-903-9680.

Friday, Feb. 27

ARTS, MUSIC & THEATER

The Power Station Coffeehouse Ministry 6pm. Whitcomb Hall, 17 Main St., West Swanzey. Intimate coffeehouse setting, where people gather to share about Jesus Christ over a cup of coffee. Worship music by Jerry and RaeAnn Pinault at 7:00 PM. Prayers and Testimonies are encouraged during the evening. Please consider bring a snack or beverage to share with others Tom Travers: 603-381-9077. tds_55@yahoo.com.

Friday Night Classics Film: Uncle Buck 7-8:40pm. The Colonial Theatre, 95 Main St., Keene. Stars: John Candy, Macaulay Culkin, & Jean Louise Kelly. 603-352-2033. www.thecolonial.org.

Lissa Schneckenburger Trio Concert 7:30pm. Nelson Town Hall, 7 Nelson Common Rd #5325, Nelson. A night of traditional fiddling, folk songs, and more. Admission is \$25/\$20 (in advance). www.monadnockfolk.org/---lissa-schneckenburger-trio-nelson-town-hall-february-27-2026/.

Saturday, Feb. 28

ARTS, MUSIC & THEATER

Sheryl Faye Productions – Abigail Adams: In Celebration of America’s 250th Anniversary 1pm. Cathedral of the Pines, 10 Hale Rd., Rindge. This performance is approximately 45 minutes of history, celebration, and heartfelt laughter delivered by Sheryl Faye. 603-899-3300.

Piano Concert 3-4pm. Crossway Church, 28 Arch St., Keene. Featuring original compositions by Mark Lanen. Free.

FAIRS & SALES

The Sustainability Project’s Seed Celebration & Fair 8:30am-4:30pm. Gilsum Steam Academy, 640 NH-10, Gilsum. info@emersonbrookforest.org. www.emersonbrookforest.org/seed-celebration.

FAMILY FUN

Saturday Storytimes: Aimee LaRue 10:30am. Peterborough Town Library, 2 Concord St., Peterborough. Head of Youth Services, LaRue will share stories, sing songs and more – all ages are welcome. Stories will be on the shorter side with movement and songs in between to help keep younger listeners engaged throughout. Free. 603-924-8040. www.PeterboroughTownLibrary.org.

MISCELLANEOUS

It Can’t Happen Here - Again 1pm. Keene Public Library, Ruth Huntress Auditorium, 60 Winter St., Keene. The Hourglass Readers will present a reading of It Can’t Happen Here – Again, a call to resist the rise of fascism. A talkback will be held after the performance, with light refreshments served. One performance. Free. 603-352-2699.

Swanzey New Hampshire Meet the Candidates 2-5pm. Whitcomb Hall, 17 Main St., West Swanzey. Non-partisan, meet the candidates event. Local candidates for town offices and committees will field relevant issues and questions from the committee as well as the audience. Get to know the people on the ballot on March 10th.

MARCO POLO GARDEN

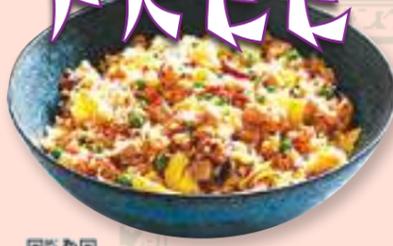
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