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# **AWAKENING**

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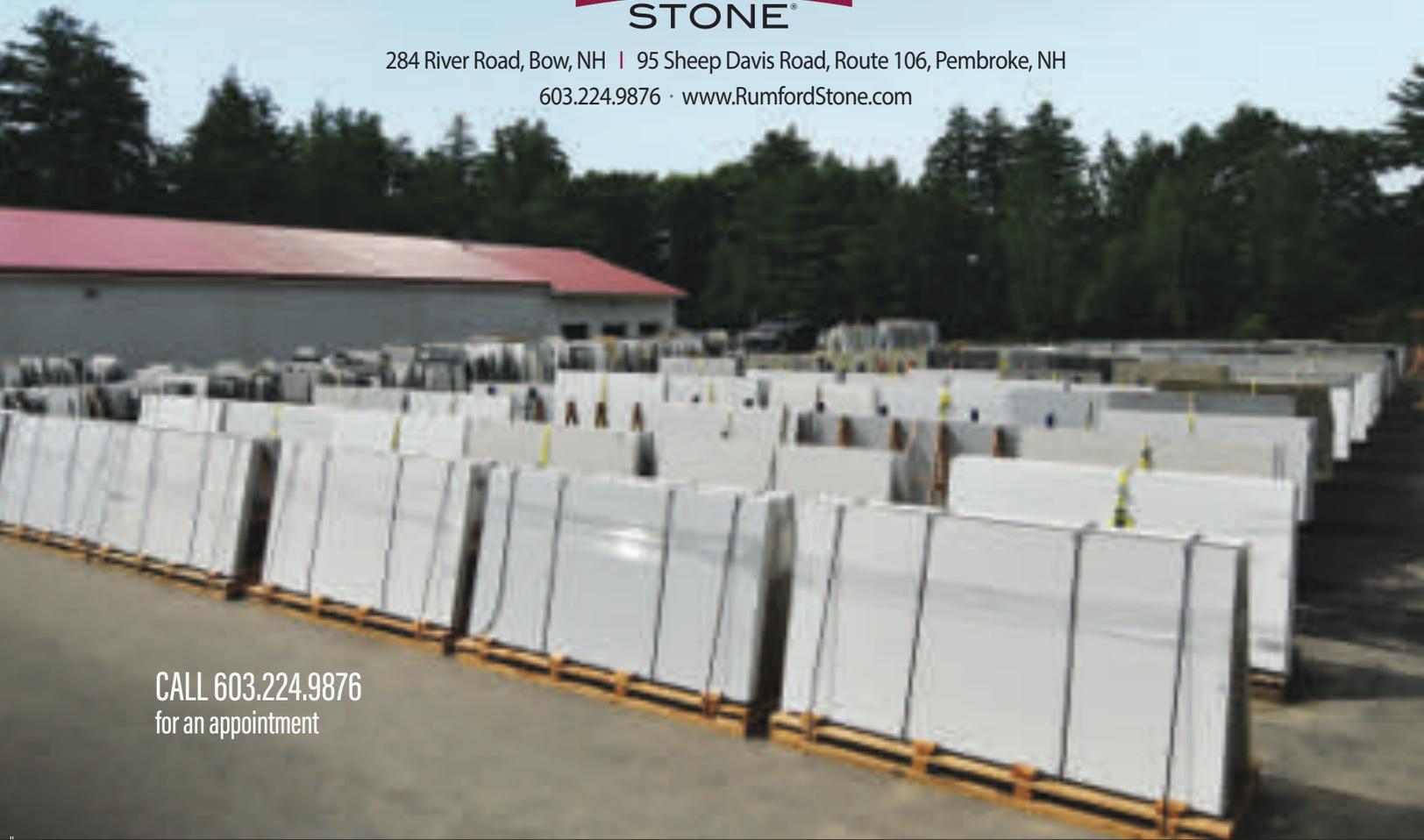
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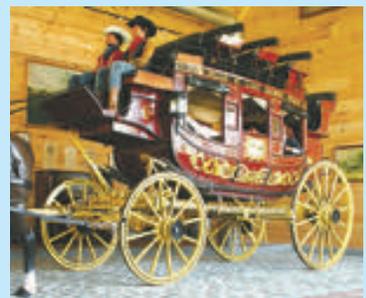
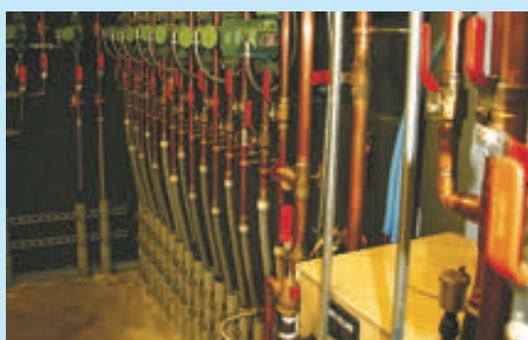
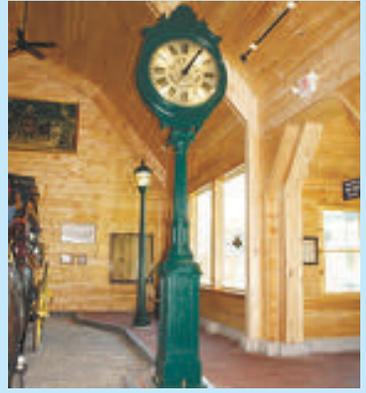
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**Top: Master gardener, Megan Hanna, stands in front of her snow covered garden in Tilton.**

Photo by Melissa Curran



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Monitor file

## A curmudgeon's guide to spring

I love New Hampshire winters, I swear. That may be a bit strong, but I do like them, really.

Oh, fine. I tolerate November through March. I scrape by, from one frozen windshield to the next, waiting patiently for the calls of spring. Not so much because I'm enthralled by the sounds of the Grey Catbird, but because I'll no longer have to listen for the dull roar of a city snowplow.

I apologize if I've rained on your frosty winter parade. But I don't think I'm alone in loving the arrival of spring first and foremost because it's not winter. Leave the budding of trees and the feel of fresh earth to the poets. For me, the arrival of spring means lugging the patio furniture out of the shed. It means cleaning last year's grime from this year's grill. And, it'll mean I can finally pull the plastic sheeting from the exterior walls of my screen porch now that my wife's prized wicker furniture is no longer under the constant threat of snow drifts.

With the manual labor aside, I'll be able to go ahead with the true meaning of spring, at least from my perspective. I'll now have the sidewalks and the breakdown lanes back for my morning runs. I'll be able to go downtown and enjoy a beer – while seated at an outdoor table. And while I'm there, truth be told, I will enjoy the sound of the birds and the view of the greening trees.

Until, that is, I'm sent to pick up 25 bags of mulch for the two weeks of planting that's landed on my to-do list.

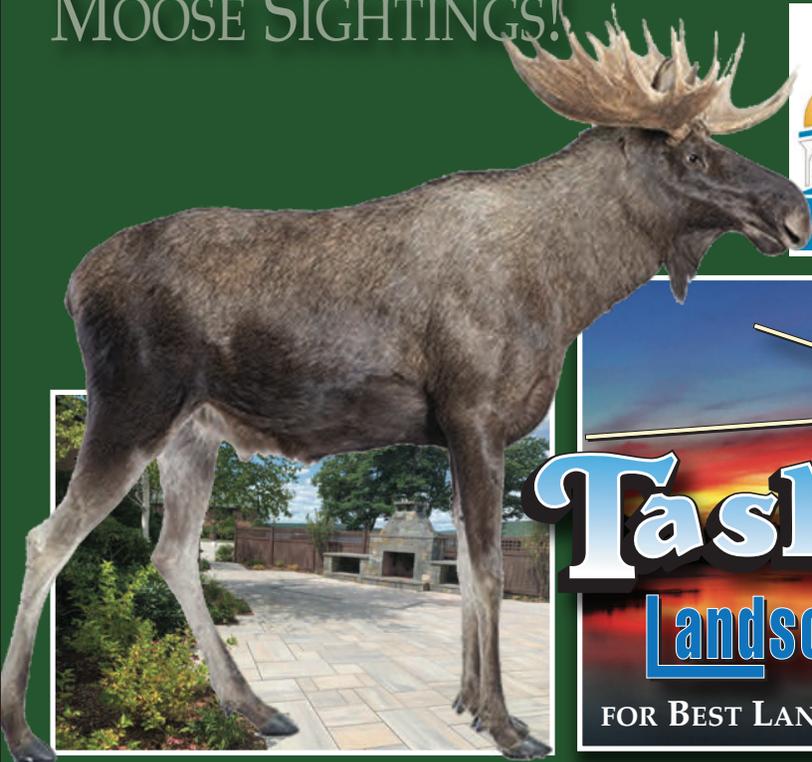
How long until summer?

**Steve Leone**  
Publisher

*Publisher's note: (Hey, wait a minute – that's me). Despite the writer's apparent dismissal of spring, there really are a lot of great things to do and see in the months ahead. The following pages are filled with ideas. Go explore, and be safe. Until next time.)*

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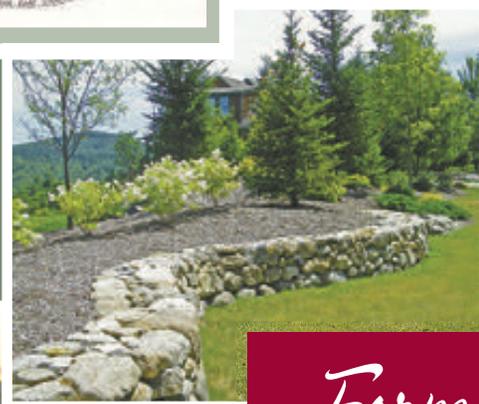
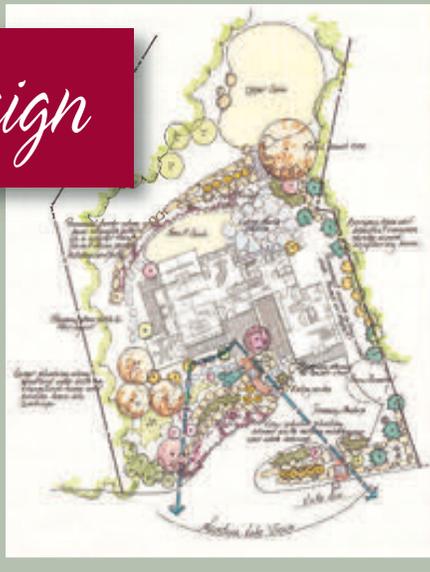
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## READER CONTEST



Joe and Shelley Speer

### TAKE A RIDE! WIN A WATCH!

There was a time when the best way around Concord was a ride in a Concord Coach. This issue we continue a reader contest: Find the four wheels of a Concord Coach hidden within four different ads in this magazine. All winning submissions received by May 15 will be entered into a random drawing for a New Hampshire Watch Company wristwatch, up to \$400 retail value, supplied by Speer's Fine Jewelry.



#### There are two ways to enter:

- Write down the page numbers of the ads in which the wheels appear on a sheet of paper with your name, address, phone number and email and mail to: Advertising Sales Manager, Around Concord, P.O. Box 1177, Concord, NH 03302-1177; or
- Go to the online form at [aroundconcord.com/coach](http://aroundconcord.com/coach) and submit the page numbers of the ads along with your name, address, phone number and email.

Limit one entry per household. The winner's name will appear in the fall issue. Good luck!

*Employees of Newspapers of New England and their families are not eligible to enter.*



Joe and Shelley Speer of Speer's Fine Jewelry congratulate Sharon Gunsher of Concord on winning a \$400 New Hampshire Watch Company watch as part of the Take A Ride! promotion in the fall issue of *Around Concord* magazine. The Concord Coach wheel was embedded in ads in the winter edition on pages 26, 33, 60 and 63.

**The contest continues this issue.**



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## QA

Longtime Realtor  
**Steve DeStefano**  
on a wild market,  
what's driving it and  
what may be ahead

Courtesy  
**This three-bedroom house on Erin Drive in Bow had 62 showings in three days and 30 offers before eventually selling for \$441,500.**

Steve DeStefano has been a realtor in Concord since 1985, but he's rarely experienced a real estate market like this one, for both buyers and renters. John Mattes caught up with him to find out how long it might last and what could possibly derail it.

**John Mattes:** You've been doing this for 35 years. Have you ever seen a market this hot?

**Steve DeStefano:** Well, I guess it depends on what you call "hot." It's hot for sellers. It's not so hot for buyers. Unfortunately, you get a listing . . . and I'm not making this up . . . I had one listing in Bow. We had 62 showings in three days.

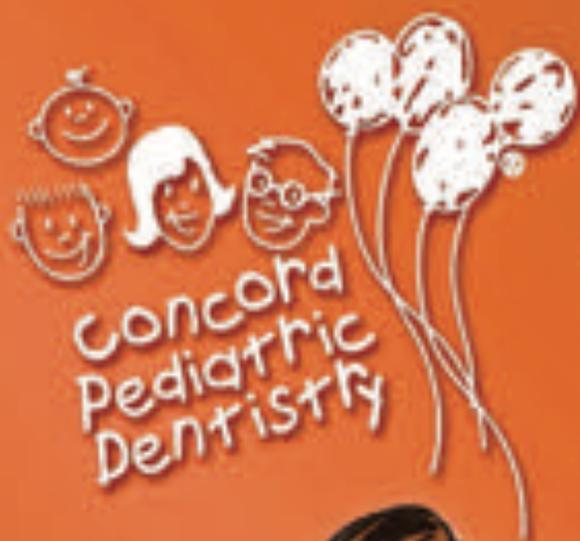
**JM:** Geesh!

**SD:** And we had 30 offers.

**JM:** Holy . . .

**SD:** And that's an anomaly. It's not that much of an anomaly, but it is. So it's very good for the sellers, but you feel bad for





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the buyers. A lot of them are nice kids and they just can't get into houses.

**JM:** So put it in perspective for me. When you think about the demand on the buyers' side, how does it fit in within the last 30 years. Is it among the most difficult markets for them?

**SD:** I think it probably is. I got into the business in '85 and I've never seen inventory this low. I live in Bow and I check the inventory pretty much every morning. This morning, I think there were four houses for sale in Bow that were not under contract.

**JM:** Wow.

**SD:** And one of them was for over a million bucks, so you're not going to have a lot of people looking in that price range. There's just not much available. So if you get a listing, and it's priced relatively close, there's just a boatload of people coming to look. So it's a hot market. If you've got listings and if you've got buyers, you're writing 10, 12 offers for these kids and they're not getting anything.

**JM:** Wow. What's driving it?

**SD:** You know, this is just a guess. I think there's a lot of things. I think a lot of people from Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts have decided they don't want to be in urban areas. They're selling their 2,000-square-foot house for \$500,000 and they're coming up here and finding they can buy a 4,000-square-foot house for \$500,000, and they're coming up and buying them. And I think that's one of the bigger things. And a lot of people can't move. So they want to put their house on the market, but they have to have somewhere to go. They can't find a place to go. Even rentals . . . they can't find a rental. So they say, if we're going to put our house on the market, and these are the key words, it'll be subject to finding suitable housing. And a lot of people can't find suitable housing. So they either don't put it on the market, or they put it on the market for a month or two and, say, "You know what? We're just going to stay." So, I think that it's that, and I'm jumping around here, but I

***"I think a lot of people from Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts have decided they don't want to be in urban areas. They're selling their 2,000-square-foot house for \$500,000 and they're coming up here and finding they can buy a 4,000-square-foot house for \$500,000, and they're coming up and buying them."***

also think it's the people coming from out of state are arriving with pockets full of cash and pushing the prices up. And the poor New Hampshire kids, the normal New Hampshire buyers, are getting bumped . . . because they don't have the cash, or they don't have 30 percent [for a downpayment]. These other folks do, so good for the sellers. But it's an influx of people wanting to get out of the urban areas because they're finding out, hey, I don't need to drive to Boston every day, I don't need to live near a city, because I can work from home.

**JM:** Is that COVID related?

**SD:** Yeah, a lot of it is, yes. And I think it's going to change the commercial market, too, and soon, because a lot of employers are saying, you know, I don't need 10,000 square feet. I can get away with 2,000 or 3,000 square feet or less and have most of my people work from home.

**JM:** Is your business principally private homes?

**SD:** Yes, it's largely residential, probably 90 to 95 percent.

**JM:** Can you project for us from your perspective whether this influx of new people is increasing the population of Concord, or is it a zero-sum game?

**SD:** I think the increase is more up north. I think it may be a little bit here because if it's growth, it's one house growth. But what I'm hearing up north is that people are changing summer cottages into year-round homes, or they're buying a piece of land and building up there. And it's adding to the population. . . . Building is very expensive, and you've really got to want to build [in order to] to

build. That's the only opportunity for a lot of people. But you've got to have a pocket full of money.

**JM:** But you'd think that that's got to be the way to go with inventory so low.

**SD:** Right. But it gets to a point, I was talking to a builder this week and he told me the cost of lumber in the last year has gone up 200 percent.

**JM:** I've heard that, too. And that goes to a side-by-side category . . . The rental availability, or lack thereof. What's driving that?

**SD:** Let's look at Concord, for example. The vacancy rate in Concord has always been very low. And I think now the rental market is more difficult than the sales market because there's just nothing out there. I mean nothing. And the kids that are getting squeezed are the ones living paycheck to paycheck because, as a landlord, you can raise the rent when the lease is up and sometimes these kids can't afford it. And there's just nowhere for them to go.

**JM:** Can you look into your crystal ball and try to figure out how long this is going to last?

**SD:** Well, there's two feelings on this and they're both in different directions. If you talk to a lot of financial people, and talk about the speed of the economy in miles per hour, they say that the economy is running at about 60 mph when it's usually running at about 70. And it's because a lot of the middle class Americans are not back working to their full potential yet because they were laid off. And they're saying that once we get through this, that's gonna really drive the economy up because they've been

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spending at about 40 or 50 percent of what they normally do. So they're saying that this is going to go on for another couple of years. The other side is concerned that prices have gone up so fast, I mean I lived through the '90s, but what are we up to? Is it \$320- or \$330,000 as the average sale price of a house in New Hampshire? That's a huge increase. I think we're up 15 percent in the past year. It's going to get to a point where, just like 2000, or 2008 and 2009, or 1989-90, it gets to a point where it has to pause. And then it's a question of how long the pause is. In the late '80s and early '90s, it was a short pause because it went down so quickly. But the one in 2000, it was seven years. It went down for seven years until it finally hit rock bottom, and then it surged back to higher than where it was in '05 or '06. I don't know if that answered your question.

**JM:** That's as good as most people can surmise at this point. What's going to make a difference on the positive side? For instance, is infrastructure going to be able to keep up with more and more people coming to the state?

**SD:** I think it's going to have to, at least on the federal government side. I think that they're thinking that through, because there's a lot of stuff that's been put on hold. Going back 20 years, people would live in Franklin or Northfield or Tilton and drive to Boston. And it was because it was the cheapest way to go. Then as the economy shrunk, people moved closer to the city. I think [infrastructure] will help because the white-collar workers are going to be working from home. They're not going to be driving to Boston each day. They may go to Boston or Nashua one day a week and work from home three days a week. I think that infrastructure is going to help, but I don't see it being a driving force.

**JM:** Do you see the immediate Concord area growing in the next 10 years?

**SD:** I'm a Concord native, and I

***"I'm a Concord native, and I think the cool thing about Concord is we don't go up as much, and we don't go down as much. Ours is a very stable market."***

think the cool thing about Concord is we don't go up as much, and we don't go down as much. Ours is a very stable market. And I think Concord's going to grow but it'll grow as it always has. Twenty years ago [the population] was 30,000. What are we now? 40,000? It'll be like that. It won't be like Londonderry, or Derry, or Bedford, where the growth has been huge. I think it will grow, but it will be more stable, and that's because of the state workers. It's a stable market.

**JM:** Do you think the rental market, the pricing, will continue to go up?

**SD:** I think what's going to end up happening, and again this is just Steve talking, I think some of the commercial space is going to become apartments. It's going to happen in Concord, if you have just so much commercial rental space, how much is it going to cost to refit it, to turn it into a two- or three-bedroom apartment? And I think that's going to help. And I think some of the towns, and I know it's a tough word, but workforce housing. They've got to find people or get the tax incentives for people to build affordable housing. Look at the Hanovers and Portmouths. The blue-collar workers can't afford to live in those towns. They just can't. If you go up to Dartmouth-Hitchcock and you talk to people, "Where do you live?" "Well, I live in Vermont, about 40 or 50 minutes from here." "Well, why's that?" "I can't afford to live in Hanover or Lebanon." I was in the Legislature for 14 years. They've got to find a way to not make workforce housing a bad name.

**JM:** Give me some perspective on that. Is this the highest you've ever seen rental valuations and the lowest inventory?

**SD:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Absolutely. There's always been inventory, but

there's virtually none. I've owned rental properties since 1983. This is definitely the highest [prices], but everything else is higher, too. But it is high.

**JM:** What might burst the bubble?

**SD:** Well, interest rates. If something happens with interest rates. There was an article in one of your competitors six or eight months ago, and don't hold me to these numbers, they compared two years ago, the average sale price was \$270,000 and the interest rate was 5 percent. Now, the average sale price is \$320,000 and the interest rate is 2.5 percent. And the mortgage payment was almost identical. It was \$1,401 versus \$1,402, or something like that. Almost identical. But the thing is, now you've got a \$60- or \$80,000 bigger mortgage, so if the interest rate goes up, or something doesn't go your way and you need to refinance, it's going to be a real problem. The federal government has tried to keep the interest rates as low as possible, and as long as that continues we'll be OK. But if they let their foot off that a little, and inflation creeps in, it's going to have a real effect on the values.

**JM:** So you've been doing this for 35 years. How much longer are you going to do it?

**SD:** That's a good question (laughing). I'm surprised I've made it this far to be honest with you (laughing). I don't know. I'm a very Type-A person. I want to remain busy, although I'm busier than I want to be right now because I sell and list and run a business. I have two offices, one in Concord and one in Epsom. I'm going to be 65 next month, so that day's probably coming. I don't know when, but it's probably not too far down the road. I think I'll always be involved though. I'm just not one to sit around. ♦

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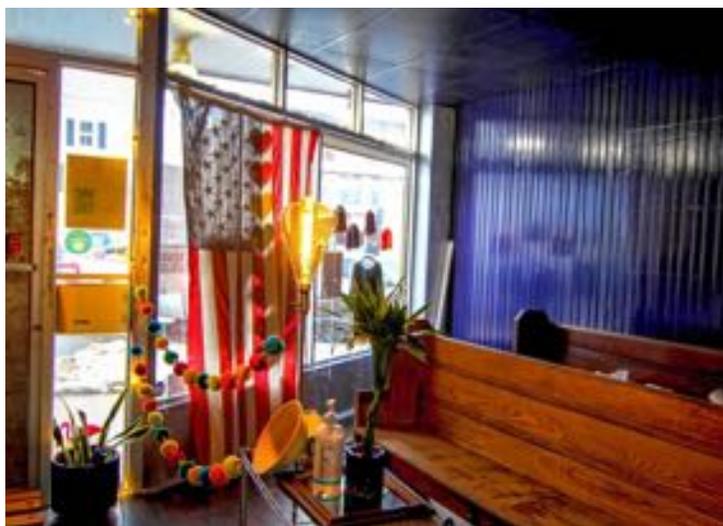
TRY IT



Melissa Curran photos

Miriam Kovacs, owner of The Broken Spoon in Franklin, has brought her spin on noodles and bao to New Hampshire.

# Fusing food dreams into reality



The front entrance inside the Broken Spoon.

## Broken Spoon opens for fusion-style takeout in Franklin amid pandemic

By SHAWN LATULIPPE

While most of us were hunkered down at home, Miriam Kovacs decided to take a leap of faith and open her dream business, the Broken Spoon in Franklin. The restaurant was born from Kovacs' Hungarian, Jewish and Sri Lankan roots, which have inspired all of the flavors on the menu, with categories like "Chilled Noodz," "Steamed Buns (Bao)" and "Skewers."

"Opening a restaurant is always difficult," according to Kovacs, who just had to "pull the trigger" despite the economic uncertainty during the pandemic. "If I had opened in February of last year, I'd say this would have been a lot scarier. I just kind of figure it's something I've



Melissa Curran

**The Broken Spoon on Central Street in downtown Franklin started after the pandemic.**

been working for. And it's always a chance, it's always a gamble so I'm just gonna jump right in."

Kovacs credits her landlord, Jason Grevior, for being instrumental in getting started. His family owns Grevior Furniture in downtown Franklin and he owns the building that houses Broken Spoon.

"He was pivotal in my ability (to) turn my dreams into reality. I had looked at other locations and the pricing was more 'future of Franklin' pricing, versus recognizing a young experienced entrepreneur and giving me a space with affordable rent. He not only provided me with an opportunity but he also put Franklin first by providing fair rent," Kovacs said.

***"I had looked at other locations and the pricing was more 'future of Franklin' pricing, versus recognizing a young experienced entrepreneur and giving me a space with affordable rent."***

**MIRIAM KOVACS**

Kovacs said she believes that she wouldn't have been able to open her restaurant as quickly if she had to open with a dine-in experience. Much of the restaurant is complete, but she still needs tables, a dishwasher and utensils. "When you don't have deep pockets, it's very time consuming," Kovacs said, "So, on that hand COVID has been a little bit of a blessing. And I think also people are tired of the

same thing because we've been in quarantine for 11 months now. So even just having something new and taking a drive to it I think is a little bit of a blessing as well. I wish I could give everyone a dine-in experience but I guess that kind of just makes it more exciting when that time comes. In the meantime, it has been pretty fun just meeting customers and talking on the phone with them for a couple minutes



Melissa Curran

**“Pink Taco,” a steamed bun, known as “bao,” is made with wild-caught shrimp, shredded cabbage, pickled carrots, and a ginger carrot dressing.**

while taking their order. It’s been nice.”

The idea of opening a restaurant had been on Kovacs’ mind for years. She started working on her goal of opening a restaurant five years ago when she lived in New Jersey. When she moved to New Hampshire she started looking for places to open her restaurant, then COVID-19 hit. When Grevior’s place became available, she jumped at the opportunity.

She really fell in love with noodle bowls when she lived in Philadelphia. When she worked long, grueling hours for little pay as a line cook at Italian restaurant Osteria, she found her love of noodle bowls from living in South Philadelphia next to the Vietnamese area.

After that she moved back to New Jersey, but they didn’t really have any noodle places where she lived in As-

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bury Park. Kovacs said it was a trendy area so noodles would have fit right in, but without investors it was difficult to build a business from the ground up.

“But that’s where I started,” she said. “I started doing noodle pop ups and working with breweries and doing dinners and things like that. And then I met my husband and ended up moving to New Hampshire, which is good because I really like the community here.”

She said she feels the community in New Hampshire is much more supportive than Asbury Park was and a little less competitive.

Kovacs grew up with a lot of fusion food. Her father is from Hungary, and her mother is from Sri Lanka. She also has three siblings. “So I kind of grew up with fusion food because my mom had to learn so much to feed all of us,” Kovacs explained. “I would go to my aunt’s house and get to eat, you know, what she was cooking. We’re a very food-centric family. So, you know, Sri Lankan cuisine is very unique. My uncle says it’s like a cross between Thai and Malaysian.”

Kovacs’ favorite item on her menu is the “Boca Bun,” a steamed bun made with pork belly, sesame slaw, sliced apple and something she likes to call “sassy mayo,” which is her take on spicy mayo. The Boca Bun is her favorite because it’s named after her dog that passed away. But it’s also her favorite because of the flavors.

In all of her cooking, she puts an emphasis on making healthy broth and tries to source all of her food as locally and humanely as possible, while also maintaining lower prices. She used to work at cancer treatment centers and tried to show patients the healing properties of broth. Kovacs said she aims to support other small businesses around her while pro-



Melissa Curran  
**Above: Miriam Kovacs roasting pork bones from Double J Farm in Sanbornton in the kitchen of Broken Spoon.**

**Right: The “Boca Bun” made with pork belly, sesame slaw, sliced apples, and sassy mayo.**

viding healthier food to her customers.

“I do believe that what we eat is basically at the root of a lot of our issues in society,” Kovacs said, “I wouldn’t categorize myself as health food so much as food for sustained living.”

As far as healthy food goes, Kovacs said “it’s tough when every meal has like a large wad of noodles in it.” But everything is available to be Keto-diet friendly. She has rice noodles available and tries to use high quality noodles overall. She also uses chicken thighs, marinated with coconut and turmeric so everything has more herbs and

spices on it.

She is working on including lettuce wrap options for those who are gluten free or want to eat something a bit more balanced. She said for some diners, a ramen bowl that includes bao can be too much food. So adding an option to swap out the bao for a lettuce wrap would allow “the best of both worlds.”

The inspiration for the name of her restaurant was a mix of her upbringing and her time in culinary school at the Culinary Institute of America. Growing up, she had male cousins who would misbehave and her aunts would play-



fully smack them with a wooden spoon. They used the same spoons to put all of their love and heart into what they were cooking for dinner. When Kovacs went to culinary school she had a mentor who didn't allow the students to use rubber spatulas. Kovacs explained that the teacher "insisted everyone use the wooden spoons. It's an organic material and it transmits energy, versus a synthetic, manmade plastic spatula. So, kind of those two experiences clicked and with a giant bowl, like a hearty bowl of noodles, I just thought the broken spoon was fitting, you know, trying to lift it. It's just hardiness."

Kovacs described her up and down relationship with food as a child. While in kindergarten, a teacher told her parents that she needed to lose 5 pounds. This started a messy relationship with food and her body image. She has always loved food, and now



Melissa Curran

**Top:** Kovacs coats pork bones in oil to prepare them for roasting in the restaurant kitchen. **Above:** The lineup of steamed buns, "bao" at Broken Spoon in Franklin. **From left:** the "Boca Bun," inspired and named after Miriam's former Boston Terrier, Boca. It is made with pork belly, a sesame slaw, sliced apples, and a sassy mayo; the middle bao is the "J Boogie," inspired and named after Miriam Kovacs's step-son, Jesse. It is completed with chicken satay, ginger-strawberry jam, cilantro aioli, and fresh basil; the bao on the right is the "Pink Taco," made with wild caught shrimp, shredded cabbage, pickled carrots, and a ginger-carrot dressing.

**“Sri Lankan cuisine is ... like a cross between Thai and Malaysian.”**

**MIRIAM KOVACS**

she wants to provide people with good food that will help foster healthy relationships with what they put in their bodies. “I like to make everything that I have as healthy as possible with flavor that doesn’t come from fat or oil. You know, it’s like a rich culinary experience without all of that heaviness, so you can enjoy it and not feel terrible,” Kovacs said.

Some of the places that she sources her food from includes Double Jay Farm and Krebs Farm, both in Sanbornton; Sunflower Natural Foods in Laco-  
nia, Dole & Bailey in Woburn, Mass., and she is working on starting an account with PT Farm, a beef and hog farm in North Haverhill. She sources from these places partly because they are local to the New England area, but she is also mindful that they are all reasonably priced. That allows her to keep prices low for her customers.

Growing up, her family had a ski house in Southern Vermont, so New England was no stranger to her. She lived in Southern Vermont after culinary school and worked at The Inn at Sawmill Farm. She said “it was nice coming up to New Hampshire. It’s just nice to be around legitimate agriculture and closer to the land.”

When she lived in New Jersey, she felt disappointed with seeing tourists come and trash the beaches every weekend. She feels that people in New Hampshire tend to respect the land more.

Her dream for the future is to grow her business and expand and create a bit of a chain, where the menu would be the same in different locations but chefs could create their own specials. She explained that the culinary industry can be brutal.

“It’s hard. It hurts. You work long hours,. You don’t get paid much. It be-



Melissa Curran

**Miriam Kovacs and her rescue dog, Wanda, in The Broken Spoon in Franklin.**

comes very uninspiring. So I wanted to build this down the line as a restaurant for chefs.” The chefs would run the kitchen and have a standardized routine, but they could also run specials. Kovacs continued, “So there’s

still the creative aspect and everything else is kind of already taken care of for them.” She also wants to make sure her workers will have health insurance and an emotionally and mentally safe environment to work in. ♦

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# It's all *downhill*

Winter's about over. So what to do with your gear? Concord's **Jared Mostue** brings new life to old ski equipment.

Story, Page 26



Left: Jared Mostue poses with a chair he crafted out of recycled skis at his home in Concord.

Above: Mostue works on a lamp he made from recycled skis at his workshop.

Melissa Curran photos

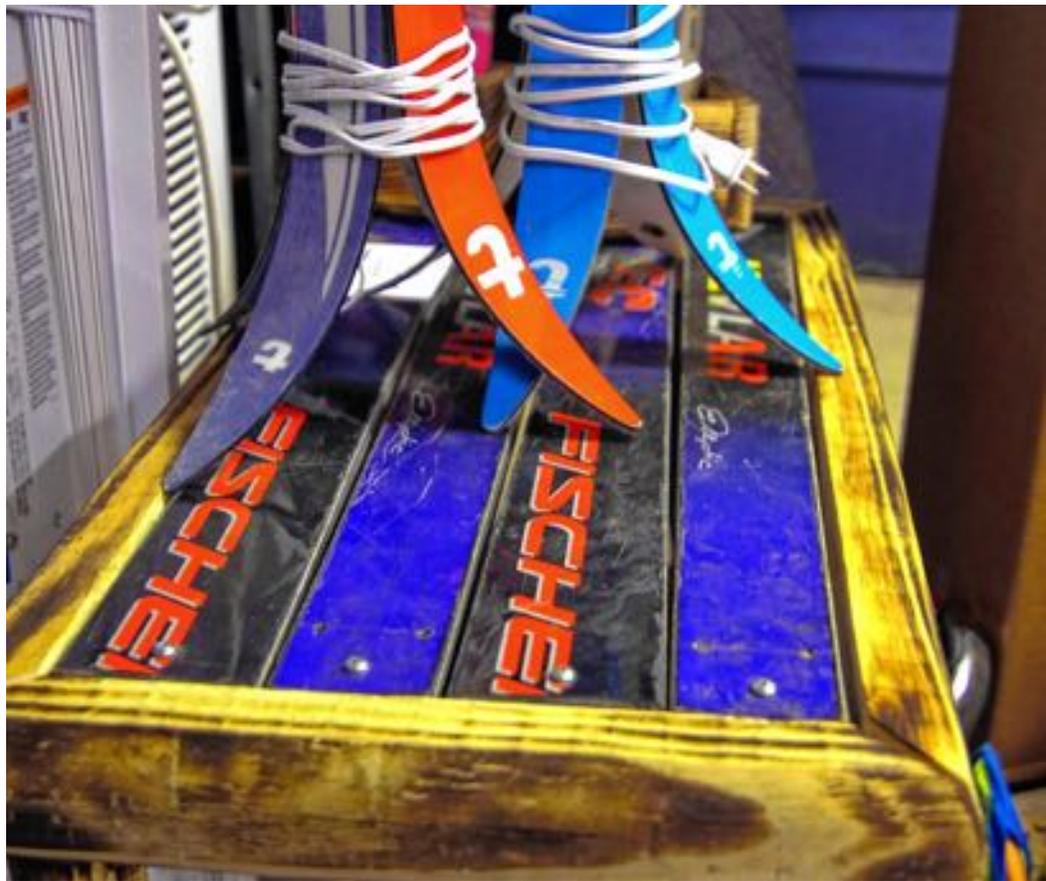
**By SHAWN LATULIPPE**

Where one person sees an old pair of trashy skis ready for the dump pile, Jared Mostue sees business potential.

Those old K2s that are too-skiiny in today's world of shaped skis, or those Rossingnols that are too beat up to ever hit the slopes again are Mostue's building blocks for utilitarian furniture and home decor, like lamps, chairs and even bottle openers.

Mostue has been a skier and ski racer all of his life. He decided to combine his love of skiing with his skills in the workshop, to create Ski Kraft, a business that finds a new purpose for old items, a transformation known as upcycling.

Mostue said it was all "a trial by fire really" when he started tinkering with old winter equipment as the building blocks for new goods. What once started as a hobby has turned into a growing business in the Concord area.



**Recycled ski parts can be put to good use.**

Melissa Curran

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“One of the things that kind of got me into that was in high school I actually started with some woodwork-ing stuff and that was kind of fun and then I saw somebody making Adiron-dack chairs out of old skis – like that is the coolest thing ever,” Mostue ex- plained. After he got married, his aunt got him and his wife a set of up-cy- cled ski chairs for their new home. That’s when he first thought maybe he could up-cycle skis too.

His business typically gets the most business around Christmas time when people are looking for gifts. He sells some of the smaller goods online through Etsy, and most of the larger pieces are sold locally.

Mostue originally worked in mar- keting, but after being let go from his job when the company started to have financial trouble, he began to reassess what he wanted to do with his life. It was then that he decided to become a personal trainer and make his up-cy- cling ski business a reality. He has al- ways had a passion for fitness and athletics, specifically skiing. He runs his business out the garage of his Concord home.

He makes a wide variety of items from up-cycled skis, including wine racks, chairs, coffee tables and coat racks that use old binding as clips – basically anything he thinks can be made or improved upon by using skis. This past year, he started making table lamps out of cross country skis.

He said most of his customers also have a passion for skiing and some give him their old skis to make into something new. He also has some people who want things made with older, more vintage skis, while others want newer up-cycled skis. The bottle openers he makes, which come with a

**When he was too young to ski on a real mountain, his parents put him in plastic skis and pushed him around their backyard.**

wooden box at the bottom to catch the detached cap, have been his biggest seller.

Skiing runs in the family, Mostue said.

“I blame my grandfather, really, for everything,” Mostue explained. “He grew up skiing out in Minnesota and, of course, then got my dad into it when he was young. My father was on ski patrol for years and years. And so it’s just been a family thing we always have done. Obviously we got intro- duced very early and I just loved the speed of it, the adrenaline of it.”

Mostue and his father share a birthday, so when he was growing up they would go up to Loon or one of the other mountains up north and make a weekend of it. Mostue said those are “some of the best memories I have going out.”

His family always went on ski trips, sometimes out west too. When he was too young to ski on a real moun- tain, his parents put him in plastic

skis and pushed him around their backyard. Mostue said he grew up ski- ing at Pats Peak and his racing career started at Santa Fe Ski Team, when he went through the program there.

For college, Mostue went to Alfred University in New York, where he skied during all four years and made it to Nationals three out of the four years.

“I had a great time,” Mostue said. “I was able to have some amazing expe- riences skiing different mountains out west for the Nationals, so it was lots and lots of fun.” In competitions, his best discipline was giant slalom, al- though he said he loved slalom as well.

Mostue hasn’t quite hung his ski racing boots up yet either. He still does club racing as much as he can. “I love racing. It’s fun. I always have done it, and until I can’t ski anymore, I’ll continue to do it.”

He said as soon as both of his sons could walk he started teaching them



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Melissa Curran

**Jared Mostue holds up his 2002 National Ski Racing Championships photo in his Concord workshop.**

to ski. His oldest son is 6 now and his youngest is 5.

“They love it, too,” Mostue said. “Like, they bug me every time, every day, like ‘hey can we go skiing?’”

Many of the skis he uses for his up-cycles are usually given to him. But he also collects them from the discard pile from shops at local ski resorts.

When the ski season is over and done with, it means that any trade ins or lost and found skis are thrown in the trash. He makes the rounds and collects anything that’s leftover.

He said sometimes people will give their old skis to ski shops, but they aren’t always able to be used or resold. Some of the older skis are from the late ’70s, ’80s and even early ’90s, which means they’re not always in great shape. Mostue also goes to the dump to find skis and if they are in halfway decent shape he’ll bring them home to be reborn into something new.

Growing up, sustainability and recycling were really engrained into him. Preventing more skis from ending up in landfills and up-cycling is very important to him, he said.

“I think it’s important thing to do to keep things out of dumps, out of landfills,” he said. “And really, they’re not good. Not biodegradable. They’re made of plastic, wood, metal. Eventually they’ll break down like some of the wood cores, but there’s plastic and it’s all built around that so that’s never going to get there. So I feel like I’m kind of helping in some very, very



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small way keeping a lot of non-biodegradable material out of landfills. As much as I can, anyways.”

Often he’ll go and find skis just like the ones he and his family used to use and it brings back memories.

“I feel like I’m saving them,” he said. “It’s kind of a history thing too.”

He said it’s all about not throwing something away that is deemed useless by others.

“I have skis that are 10 years old. I don’t ski them,” he said. “I’m actually going to be turning them into a chair. They’re beat up, they’re beyond their useful life. And so why not do something kind of fun with it and repurpose and give that little bit of nostalgia to some people.”

For this past Christmas, Mostue said he built a set of chairs for a man who found him on Facebook, where

he posts videos and photos of his creations. The man’s father in law had knee surgery and was going to have to sit out the entire ski season, and he hadn’t missed a winter skiing in 60-plus years. He was depressed about it and they decided they wanted to do something really special for him this year. Mostue came up with a chair design that wasn’t super low slung like traditional Adirondack chairs so it would be easier for the man to sit down and get up despite his injury. The chair turned out great, but Mostue used up a lot of his ski supply. Mostue tends use older, straight skis because they’re classic and a lot easier to work with.

“A lot of times some of the newer ones, the shapes just don’t really lend themselves to building things,” he said.

The creations aren’t 100% skis either. He uses different types of wood for contrast and support. But rather than attach a gleaming piece of fresh cut wood on an old ski, he spends time making the whole piece look more vintage by distressing the grain.

“One of the things I do with wood, it’s kind of my signature style,” he said. “I have a propane torch and I torch all the wood, so it really darkens the grains.”

The most important value that Mostue tries to instill into his sons is the passion he has for being outdoors.

“If my kids love skiing and they want to ski race. Awesome. Fantastic. That’s been my life. They want to follow in my footsteps, great,” he said. “I just want them to find something they love to do and just have a passion for that thing and just continue it. And then have fun. That’s a big thing for me. If I’m going to do something I’m going to do something that’s gonna be fun. Why I ended up leaving corporate life and office work was that I wasn’t having fun anymore.”

To contact Mostue, call him at (603) 496-9661 or email him at skikraft22@gmail.com. To see some of his creations, go to Facebook.com/skikraft. ♦

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## COVER STORY

Advice from a long-time gardener: First-time planters should start their plans small and focus on the enjoyment

**Story, Page 34**



# *Blooming* gardeners

Joyce Kimball's flower garden  
welcomes visitors to her home.  
Courtesy





As with all living things, plants have essential needs that must be met **in order for them to grow and flourish**: Sun, water and soil and different types of plants have their own specific needs within these categories.

**By JOYCE KIMBALL**

Longer days are here and spring is due to arrive this month. Are you thinking about perhaps starting a garden of your own this year? If you are, then you are among many others who have decided to try their hand at gardening as of late.

Start with a “small” garden. This applies to both vegetable and flower gardens. You can always expand your garden whenever you are ready to do so. The Chinese have a saying, “Praise large gardens, plant small ones.”

Let’s concentrate on creating your first flower garden. A flower garden can be grown in either sun or shade,

depending on the plants you choose to grow. A sun garden requires 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight whereas a part sun/part-shade garden only needs 4 to 6, preferably morning sun. Decide where you will place your garden.

Ideally your garden spot should be visible from a window or two in your home or be situated where you will pass by it regularly in order to get the most enjoyment from it. And be sure to have your garden somewhat close to a water source, like your garden hose. Carrying water is not fun.

Measure the area you are considering – a 10 x 10 foot square or a rectan-

gle of similar square footage would be a good size to start with.

Your first step will be to remove all the grass and weeds in the area you have chosen to plant your new flower garden. Next, you will need to work the soil with a garden fork or hoe or have it roto-tilled to loosen up the soil and prepare it for planting.

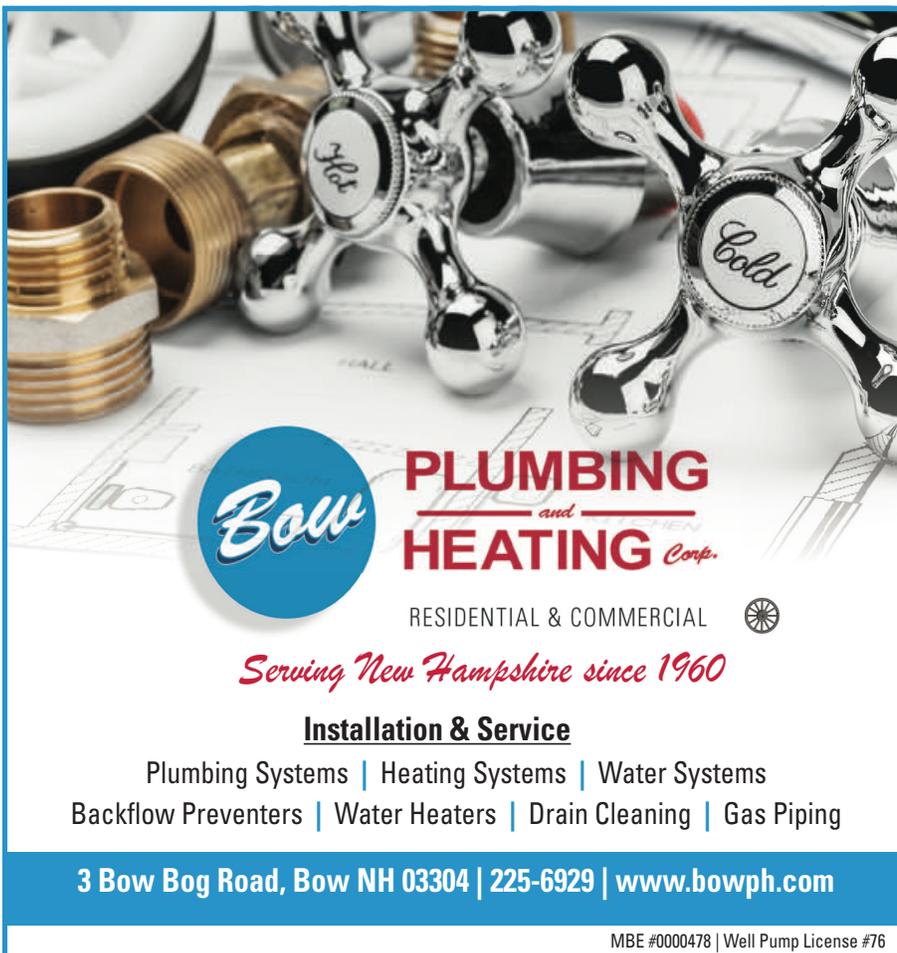
After your ground is cleared, you can start thing about plants.

Sketch the garden out on a piece of paper, somewhat to scale and start planning. Remember to select taller plants for the back of your garden with your intended plantings gradually decreasing in height toward the front of the garden. Also consider each plant’s sun requirement so that you have plants with similar sun needs growing happily together.

As with all living things, plants have essential needs that must be met in order for them to grow and flourish: Sun, water and soil and different types of plants have their own specific needs within these categories.

For example, some plants can tolerate more sun than others and some plants prefer more moisture in their soil. It is not really that difficult to assemble a lovely variety of flowering plants to enjoy. Just be sure to read the labels when you shop for your new plantings or to consult the employees of the garden center you choose to frequent and go from there.

Soil is the starting point of every garden because this is where your plant’s roots will live. The roots anchor the plant and take up the water and nutrients from the soil that the plant needs to thrive. The roots must have room enough to grow therefore the soil needs to be workable so that the roots can, well “root.”



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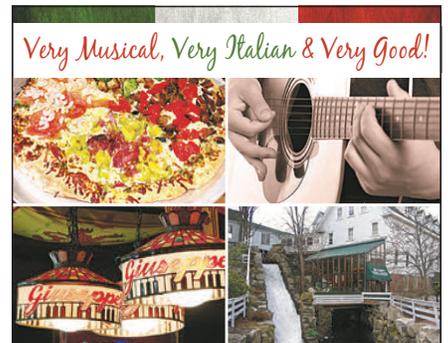
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Courtesy  
**Joyce Kimball in her garden.**



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You will need to determine what type of soil you have for your new garden? Sandy, loamy, or clay? Pick up a handful of moist soil and rub it between the palms of your hands. If your soil is clay, it will become a sticky ball; if it is loamy it will crumble easily and if it is sandy, it will run quickly through your fingers.

Clay soil does not drain well and roots may have a difficult time penetrating the soil to establish themselves.

Sandy soil not only lets water through too quickly, but it allows added nutrients to leech off before they can do their job.

Loam is the best type of soil to have and if you don't already have it, you can "make it" by adding compost to your existing soil. This can be purchased from your local garden center.

Regardless, it is a good idea to add compost to your soil initially and then annually as compost is made up of decomposed plant material and it re-

leases nutrients into the soil throughout the growing season.

Getting your soil tested is always a good idea, although it is more important when you are planting a vegetable garden or growing fruit.

Garden centers usually carry soil testing kits which are adequate but if you really want to know what your soil may need to reward you with a productive garden, contact the UNH Cooperative Extension Service to request a form.

Just follow the directions and send in the completed form, a check for \$20 and a soil sample to the lab at UNH. In return, you will receive detailed information about what your soil may be lacking and advice on what you need to do to improve it.

The Extension Service's "Education Center and Info Line" is a great reference source to contact with any of your gardening questions. This public service is staffed by professionals and trained volunteers (Master Garden-

ers) who will provide you with practical solutions to your questions or concerns.

Now for the flowers. There are two types of plantings to consider when you are planning out a flower garden: annuals and perennials.

Annuals, as their name implies, flourish for just one year's growing season, but they are in constant flower with proper "deadheading" and good care. Annuals are not "hardy" or frost resistant, therefore need to be replanted year to year.

Perennials on the other hand, come back the next year, however their bloom time is shorter, usually 4-6 weeks. Perennials die back in the fall and re-emerge in the spring/summer. They generally multiply over time, giving you additional plants to enjoy in that garden or to divide in the fall and place elsewhere — perhaps with a fellow gardener for their garden. Perennials are more expensive than annuals however they are an excellent investment.

Start slow and don't overplant your garden, keeping in mind that the smallish plants you will first put in the ground will grow bigger.

Your initial plantings make look a bit sparse initially, however they will fill in throughout the growing season and before you know it, in the case of perennials, you will be wanting to thin them out.

Of course, you can always grow your own plants from seed, but this requires a lot of patience as it is time consuming and can be tedious. And some types of flowers are much easier to grow from seed than others; however, if you do decide to grow any flowers from seed and they do well as

***Start slow and don't overplant your garden, keeping in mind that the smallish plants you will first put in the ground will grow bigger.***

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seedlings and mature into the flowers pictured on the seed packet they came in, this is indeed gratifying and well worth the TLC you expended.

Basic tips for growing from seeds include:

1) Pick the right place and the right plants for your garden's location and label them;

2) Be good to your soil and feed it with either liquid or granular fertilizer designated for flower gardens (just follow the manufacturer's directions or consult your garden center);

3) Don't plant too soon in the spring — around Memorial Day is usually a good time to avoid a killing frost;

4) Water well. Most plants need an average of 1 to 2 inches of water a week (more when it is really hot) and it is best to water heavily at one time rather than sporadically. This method forces the plant roots further down into the soil to seek moisture rather than risking exposure to heat and dryness nearer the top;

5) Weed regularly. Weeds compete with your plants for moisture and nutrients. Don't let them get the upper hand by allowing them produce seeds and spread! Use a hoe if there is room to work it or a hand tool or just your fingers to dig up those rascals before they take over. Mulching with an organic matter is a good way to smother the weeds and it gives your garden a nice appearance as well;

6) Document your garden year. Take photos. And maybe start a journal, noting what you planted, when they bloomed, etc. Note what plants you would plant again, or more of and what plants you would not for whatever reason.

Gardening is challenging, rewarding, sometimes mystifying and definitely uplifting. It is good exercise, it gets you outdoors and it provides you with beauty that you created!

*(Joyce Kimball is a certified UNH Cooperative Extension Master Gardener and member of the Bow Garden Club.)*

## If you grow

Here are just a few examples plantings requiring different amounts of sun and shade.

### ■ **Annuals:** (Full sun)

Ageratum, Cleome, Coreopsis, Cosmos, Geranium, Marigold, Petunia, Salvia, Shasta Daisy, Sunflower, Yarrow, Zinnia.

### ■ **Perennials:** (Full sun)

Aster, Bee Balm, Clematis, Coneflower, Daylily, Hollyhock, Peony, Phlox, Roses, etc.

### ■ **Annuals:** (Part sun)

Bacopa, Begonia, Impatiens, Larkspur, Lobelia, Viola.

### ■ **Perennials:** (Part sun):

Anemone, Astilbe, Balloon Flower, Baptisia, Bleeding Heart, Columbine, Coral Bell.

■ **gardener** n. "One who works in or takes care of a garden for pleasure or profit"

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# *Growing* the right fit

Professionals  
share their tips  
for getting the  
most out of  
your vegetable  
garden

**Story, Page 40**

**Megan Hanna holds a chicken in front  
of her chicken coop in Tilton.**

Melissa Curran



By **JULIA STINNEFORD**

As unbelievable as it may seem in a New England climate, spring is on the horizon. Vegetable gardening is something both amateurs and experts put their minds to this time of year, but some first-time gardeners may feel daunted by the prospect of planting and maintaining a garden. To help, here is some expert advice on how to take care of a vegetable garden this year.

## Getting started

One of the first hurdles is deciding what to plant. For that, Nancy Towle, a designer with Black Forest Nursery, recommends that people “grow their favorites.”

Gardeners should “grow the ones that they really like for vegetables,” Towle said. The other important factor, said Towle, is researching whatever you plant. “Read up on tomato plants if you’re growing them,” she said. “The more knowledge people have, the better.”

Megan Hanna, a master gardener with the UNH Cooperative Extension, recommended “either plants that go in early and come out fast, or things that are high production crops” like tomatoes, squash, or beans. That way, she said, people get more value for their garden space.

Nate Bernitz, who also works with the UNH Cooperative Extension as Hillsborough County Office Co-Administrator and Home Horticulture Outreach Program Manager, said



Sandra Hickey / UNH Extension

### Butternut squash seedlings beginning to sprout.

what you plant depends on many factors, like when you want to plant and what your garden space might look like.

So when should people start planting? Bernitz said that the timing depends on the plant in question – some plants take longer to germinate or do so under cooler or warmer conditions. “My big tip is to use some sort of chart or planting calendar,” he said, noting that the UNH Extension has one available online, specifically made for New Hampshire gardens, and that seed companies often have them on the backs of seed packets.

Another contributing factor to the problem of when to plant comes from the tenacity of winters in this state,

said Towle. “A lot of people plant their vegetables early and lose them from a frost,” she said. A good way to be on top of this issue, she said, is to monitor the weather. “Always be aware of what your temperatures are,” she said. A common goalpost for planting is Memorial Day.

## Planting

Once you decide what you want to plant and when to plant it, the next factors to consider are where to plant and how to construct your garden.

The “where” of garden planning is vital, according to Bernitz, because any plant that produces fruit, like cucumbers and tomatoes, will need full sun. “There’s very little in terms of veggies that you can grow in shade,” he said.

Hanna said that in the past, she has run into difficulty when she planted a garden in a sunny spot, only to find that once surrounding trees sprouted leaves, the area became shaded. “Be careful in the spring when you’re planning,” she said. “Look at the height of the trees, and think about when those trees leaf out, will there be shade?”

Then, once you determine a good spot for the garden, the next step is creating the space. Hanna recom-

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Melissa Curran

### Geese at Megan Hanna's home in Tilton.

mended starting small: "A four-by-eight is a good size," she said, adding that you can fit a good amount of plants in a space that size. "At four feet wide, you can reach from both sides, and it's just manageable," she said.

Another option, according to Towle, is to use "huge pots" for your plants. This eliminates certain issues like bending down to the plants' level and cuts back on some of the need for weeding, since weeds "aren't getting in from the grass," Towle said. Additionally, as the placement of the sun shifts in the summer, "all you have to do is pick up your container and move it to a sunnier spot."

Another consideration is deciding whether to use fencing. When you set up a garden, Bernitz said, "you're creating a buffet" for local wildlife who like to snack on vegetables, like deer and woodchucks. "It goes a long way to put fencing around your garden," he said.

Finally, the most important preparation step is making sure the soil is

healthy.

"Something we'd love to get the word out about is only using the nutrients you actually need," Bernitz said. "A lot of people's soil is really out of wack." The best way to know nutrient content, he said, is to test the soil, which the UNH Extension will do for a small fee.

Hanna recommended testing the soil as well.

"New Hampshire soils tend to be slightly acidic, and if you're putting in a garden bed you're probably not going to have enough organic material there," she said.

Her recommendation was to always send soil from a new bed in for testing. The test will tell you the soil's pH, nutrient levels, and organic matter levels with specific recommenda-

tions for input to the garden to bring the soil to optimal levels.

Once you know your soil's health, preserving it is important.

"One of the main principles of soil health is always keeping soil covered," Bernitz said, cautioning against having bare soil with nothing planted in it.

"You always want some sort of mulch covering your soil," Bernitz said. This mulch could be traditional bark mulch, but it could also be "pretty much anything." Bernitz personally uses grass clippings and shredded leaves, and straw is also popular. This has many benefits, the most important being soil moisture. Mulch will keep moisture in, Bernitz said, and will also protect soil from getting washed away in heavy rain.

### Maintaining your garden

Keeping your garden healthy throughout the season can be difficult, especially with pest control. If you come out and see damage on your vegetables, "before you react, reach for the spray bottle of some pesticide, it's really helpful to figure out what's causing the damage," Bernitz said. This means identifying the culprit of the damage before working to treat the issue, because if you know what it is, Bernitz said, you can more easily solve the problem. One good way to do this is to call the UNH Extension or do your own research.

To combat pests, Hanna recommended planting "a diversity of plants

**"One of the main principles of soil health is always keeping soil covered."**

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because that confuses pests.” For example, she said, basil attracts a bug that kills tomato worms. “It’s not to be underestimated, the power of having plants that will attract bugs that will actually kill the ones that are consuming your vegetables.” Having flowers nearby will also help, attracting other insects that will outcompete some pests.

Another issue to be on the look out for is fungal infections. “Vegetables are actually very touchy with that,” Towle said, something that she said not many people know. Towle strongly recommended using fungicide, but an organic one, to ensure the health of the vegetables and cross-pollinators. She said to spray before and after rain, and on damp, overcast days to combat airborne moisture.

Finally, the biggest hassle for many gardeners: weeding. “The biggest thing with veggie gardening is just keeping on top of it,” Bernitz said. “There’s always going to be some weeds,” he said, but if you make it



Sandra Hickey / UNH Extension

### Seedlings sprouting in a windowsill.

part of your routine, you can make it easier. “Gardens need daily attention,” Bernitz said, and setting aside some time every day to look over your plants and weed will go a long way.

Towle agreed with this, and said, “If it’s your first year, don’t over do it.” She said to be aware of how much time you have to spend on the garden: “How much time do you

have each day or during the week for vegetables?”

### Bumper crop? What next?

If your garden does well, you may end up with a bumper crop of a vegetable and have no idea what to do with it. “That’s such a good problem to have,” Bernitz said. “We totally have a culture here of putting stuff out on the side of the road or exchanging with neighbors,” he added, a good option for excess vegetables.

You can also donate to a food pantry or something similar, Hanna said. And a third option, according to Hanna, is preserving the vegetables in some way, such as freezing them. She herself still has vegetables in her freezer from last season.

Canning is a similar alternative, but if you intend to do that, Bernitz strongly recommended doing research or taking a class, because canning can be dangerous if done incorrectly.

And if your vegetable garden doesn’t do very well, don’t give up. “The thing about gardening is, even if you don’t have great success one year, just keep reading up and try again,” Towle said. “Don’t be discouraged...it’s always healthier to grow your own vegetables.”

If you have any questions about gardening, call the UNH Cooperative Extension at 1-877-EXT-GROW (398-4769). ♦

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Melissa Curran

Master gardener Megan Hanna stands in front of her snow-covered garden in Tilton in February.



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Jared Reynolds, President of Making Matters NH, sits outside of the makerspace in Penacook.

Melissa Curran

# Space for *creativity*

## Penacook spot offers mix of arts and business

By **JULIA STINNEFORD**

Last February, Making Matters NH opened its doors in Concord, aiming to be a makerspace “for the community, by the community,” according to its president Jared Reynolds.

The coronavirus pandemic set them back somewhat; barely a month after opening, the makerspace had to shut down events until the beginning of June. Despite that, Reynolds said, the makerspace is going strong and they are more eager than ever to welcome new makers to the space.

The makerspace provides community access to

expensive equipment for personal professional DIY projects. Additionally, Reynolds said, the goal is to provide a collaborative environment for like-minded people to interact and hone their skills.

“Each makerspace is a little different,” Reynolds said, adding that this one “is a bit mixed” between arts and business. The space hosts events for small businesses and has an entrepreneurship focus while also catering to the Concord art scene.

It also allows local businesses and artists to rent office and work space within the makerspace, in an effort to provide affordable places to do work.

Reynolds said the makerspace currently has eight artists and small businesses working out of the space, with room for more.

People don't have to be local artists or business-owners to take advantage of the space, though, with memberships open to everybody. "Anyone can become a member of the space," Reynolds said, and people "of all experience levels" are welcome.

"When you become a member, you join a community, so people are open to mentor or teach," Reynolds said. "It's a whole range of people" in the space, he said, and "the goal is to make it inclusive and welcoming regardless of their background or experience."

If becoming a member is too daunting at first, however, there are other options, Reynolds said. The makerspace offers a variety of classes, which are open to anybody, member or non-member. They encompass topics from jewelry-making to woodworking to a 3D-printing beginner's course that started recently.

"We're always trying to find ways to make them more accessible," Reynolds said, including methods like offering scholarships for the classes. The makerspace is "always willing to work with people on how to make the space accessible and ensure the community can use it."

The most important objective is to "try to introduce new people to making so they can try making their own projects," Reynolds said.

A good first making experience, according to Reynolds, would be a beginner's woodworking class, specifically one where the objective is to construct a box.

Reynolds said this is a good starter project because the result is not only small but requires "all of the different types of cuts," so first-time makers get experience with many different pieces of equipment.

"It's a doable project for someone to take on, learn those skills and decide if they want to take on a bigger project," said Reynolds.



A 3-D printed pig at Making Matters NH in Penacook.

Melissa Curran

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**The maker space at Making Matters NH in Penacook is back open with mask requirements and social distancing rules.**

Melissa Curran

Another way to get involved in the makerspace as a beginner is to simply explore the space through an open house. While these events had to be put on pause for some time due to the pandemic, they're back now, with mask requirements and social distancing rules in place. Reynolds said that people can come, "see what we have to offer, ask questions," and "see some of our equipment in action."

According to Reynolds, the idea of creating a makerspace in Concord started circulating in early 2018, when he and other members of the Making Matters NH team

"started talking about getting a makerspace started in Concord, and looking at what that would involve, how we could fund it, what the community would want in a space."

Reynolds himself became interested in the makerspace due to his past experience with similar community-based efforts, working in community health in rural Alaska and as a volunteer for the Peace Corps in Morocco. Reynolds said that through these experiences he saw the "vital role of citizen participation" in "creating successful communities," which is what Making Matters NH strives to bring to Con-

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Melissa Curran

Making Matters NH has set up shop inside the former Beede Electrical building in Penacook.



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**Left: Making Matters NH President Jared Reynolds sits on a couch in the lounge. Right: The Making Matters NH logo.**

cord.

Reynolds said that he and a group of interested community members had a number of meetings about getting the makerspace up and running. It took months of concerted volunteer effort, but eventually, the group received funding and found a place for the makerspace to call home.

“It became more real and concrete when we were actually able to find that physical space,” Reynolds said.

The funding came from a few different avenues, including from the United States Department of Agriculture and the Capital Regional Development Council. Some of that funding made it possible for Making Matters UNH to find its permanent physical space, but a lot of it went and continues to go toward the makerspace’s tools.

“The tough part is finding funding to buy equipment,” Reynolds said, although the makerspace is still receiving funding for various new projects and procurement of new equipment. “We’re definitely still looking for funding,” Reynolds added, funding that will go toward buying things like a long-arm quilting machine, which Reynolds said was “unaffordable” for people to buy on their own. Another round of USDA funding is currently slated to go toward a new classroom, conference room, and space for fine art.

The Making Matters NH makerspace is “low-barrier,” Reynolds said. “if you’ve never been in a woodshop or touched a piece of equip-

***“It became more real and concrete when we were actually able to find that physical space.”***

**JARED REYNOLDS**



ment, we want those individuals to come and try it out.”

The makerspace has open houses on every second and fourth Monday

of the month from 6-8 p.m. for interested individuals. For more information, visit their website or email [info@makingmattersnh.org](mailto:info@makingmattersnh.org). ♦

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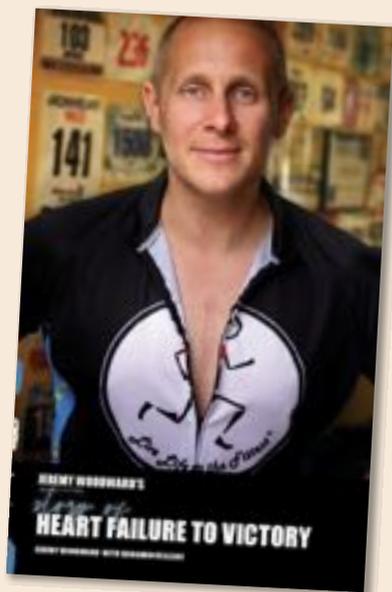
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BOOK EXCERPT

# FAR PAST HIS LIMITS

Facing a serious medical hardship, Jeremy Woodward found a goal that would test his perseverance



Excerpt  
starts  
on Page 52

“Jeremy Woodward’s Story of Heart Failure to Victory” was written with Benjamin Veilleux

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Monitor file

Ten years after his surgery, Jeremy Woodward, of Concord, got a clean bill of health during a visit to Elliot Hospital in Manchester. He was there to get medical clearance to compete in an Ironman Triathlon. The following chapter tells the story of his time at Tufts Medical Center 10 years earlier, when his quest to race in triathlons developed.

## Facing surgery, making a promise

*The following excerpt is from “Jeremy Woodward’s Story of Heart Failure to Victory,” a book recently released by the Concord native and fitness trainer. This chapter picks up in 2007 at Tufts Medical Center in Boston as Jeremy, then 25, prepares for open-heart surgery. It was there that he made a commitment that would come to shape his recovery and redefine his purpose.*

**By JEREMY WOODWARD**

“Jeremy, I don’t think you’re fully processing this right now, so let me put it bluntly. If you leave this hospital, I strongly believe that you will not make it back in alive.”

After hearing those fateful words, I thought I’d be rushed into surgery. I was completely wrong. The doctors moved quickly to get me situated, but it was in a hospital room, not an operating room. While I was happy to be receiving treatment, I felt a slight sense of disdain at seeing the inside of a hospital room again. I was hoping that I wouldn’t have to stay there for observation for a week, like I had for my initial tissue valve surgery. Well, my hopes came true: I didn’t end up staying a week.

I ended up staying for much longer.

The doctors predicted that the surgery preparations would take



Courtesy photos

**Clockwise from top left, Jeremy Woodward, right, with his brother, Jamie Woodward; Jeremy high-fives his father, Chuck Woodward; Jeremy, with his wife, Brook Woodward, and his daughter Elliana; Jeremy competes in an Ironman.**

two to four weeks. I was not happy about this at all, but I didn't have much time to dwell on it. I hadn't been in my room for five minutes before I received a dose of sedatives. I had just enough time to think, 'Man, I hope these drugs kick in soon' before I blacked out.

I woke up in a fog. It took a few seconds to remember where I was. I struggled to sit up. The first thing I noticed was that I had dozens of wires, patches and tubes hooked up to me. I looked like the inside of a computer. Looking to either side of my bed showed that there were many more machines surrounding me than I expected. Some beeped in time with my heart, others occasionally flickered with lights, and others just sat there serving an unknown purpose.

Even though I had slept for a long time (it looked to be morning outside) I felt as if I had only taken a cat nap. I was sore. I didn't feel any better than when I had been admitted, but I also didn't feel any worse. I took that as a good sign. I shifted myself back down in the bed and closed my eyes.

***I woke up in a fog. It took a few seconds to remember where I was. I struggled to sit up. The first thing I noticed was that I had dozens of wires, patches and tubes hooked up to me. I looked like the inside of a computer.***

I slept almost the entire second day away. I woke up to a nurse taking readings and measurements from the machines. I mumbled a greeting to her, and she smiled in return.

“Good afternoon! How are you feeling?” I sat up in bed, and to my surprise, I felt a lot less sore.

“Wow, I’m already feeling better!” I exclaimed. I felt around my legs and stomach and noticed that there was a notable decline in fluid. It wasn’t a drastic change, but it was certainly a great start. A smile formed on my face for the first time in a long while. I turned and saw Brook sitting next to me, beaming in joy at the quick turnaround.

“Are you hungry?” the nurse asked. Again, to my pleasant surprise, I had a decent appetite.

“Yeah, I’d say so. Is it dinner time?”

“It’s your call, late lunch or early dinner. Here, look at our menu and see what you think,” the nurse suggested as she handed me a laminated sheet of paper. One side listed the breakfast and lunch options while the other side displayed the dinner and snack choices. I scanned through the lunch options and liked what I saw, but nothing stuck out as a good option at the time. I flipped the menu over and browsed the selection of dinner choices. My gaze settled on ‘hospital chicken stir fry’. Reading the description made me salivate. I gave the rest of the items a once-over, but none sounded as good as the stir fry.



Monitor file

**Tedy Bruschi and Jeremy Woodward (left) look over the city of Concord at a charity event to raise money for the marathon runners of Tedy’s Team, of which Woodward was a member. Tedy’s Team was founded by Bruschi to raise awareness of strokes and stroke prevention.**

“Could I have the hospital chicken stir fry, please?”

“Absolutely. In the meantime, if you could take these along with some water, that would be great.” She handed me a paper cup with several pills in it and a matching cup filled with water. I took both, tossing the

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pills back and chasing them with the water as the nurse walked out of the room, menu in hand. As she left, I turned to look at Brook. She smiled and took my hand.

“So you’re feeling better?” she asked tentatively, squeezing my hand. I nodded my head in response, describing how I could feel that the fluid had already gone down a little bit. “The doctors have discussed surgery options with me, and I think that a mechanical valve implant is the smart decision,” said my wife. She went on to explain the process, benefits and specifics involved. A mechanical valve would function more efficiently than a tissue valve would. Also, a mechanical valve would last almost three times as long as a tissue valve before requiring surgical maintenance. To further cement the decision, I wasn’t keen on undergoing another tissue valve replacement with the experience I had just gone through, and an entire heart transplant seemed so cumbersome and intensive. After discussing logistics and other details, I agreed with Brook on a valve replacement. A mechanical valve would need more minute upkeep in the form of daily Coumadin intake to keep the valve clean, but the thirty-year comparison versus a tissue valve’s life expectancy of ten to fifteen was what really helped make the decision for me.

Just as we finished discussing the surgery, the nurse returned to the room with a plate piled high with steaming food. My eyes fixated on the food that was fast approaching. It turned out that I was hungrier than I thought. The first bite of the stir fry tasted amazing. I almost let out a cry of joy at how good it was. After cleaning the plate Brook and I talked for another hour. She then kissed me goodbye and left for home, as she had to work the next morning.

Over the next week, I ordered the same meal for dinner every night. After several days, the nurse didn’t even bother to bring in the menu for dinner. My only complaint in terms of food and drink was that I was very limited with my liquid intake. I was only allowed to have a small amount of liquid per day due to the built-up fluid in my legs and stomach. In addition, I was on a high dose of diuretics for the first ten days. Due to these diuretics, I was going to the bathroom an insane amount. I felt like my body was going to dry out like a sponge. Luckily, the only things that dried out were the concentrations of fluid in my legs and stomachs. Every day they looked and felt smaller than the previous day.

Unfortunately, I couldn’t just get up out of my



**Jeremy and Brook Woodward, above, and Jeremy and his daughter, Bryn.**

Courtesy photos

***“The doctors have discussed surgery options with me, and I think that a mechanical valve implant is the smart decision,” said my wife, Brook. She went on to explain the process, benefits and specifics involved.***

bed and go to the bathroom whenever I felt like it. I had to inform a hospital staff member that I needed 'a release.' They would then get a small, rounded tray and place it underneath me. Once I was all set, they took it away. This process repeated too many times to count each day. When I first started the diuretics, I felt like I was going to be peeing out gallons at a time. As the days passed and my fluid buildup shrank, so did my frequency of bathroom breaks. The diuretics were intense and lasted for ten days. I passed more fluid in those ten days than in a normal month, and was not upset when I was weaned off.

During this preparation time, Brook was my guardian angel. She was especially nurturing and caring through all of the tests. At least five days a week, she would take a bus from New Hampshire down to South Station in Boston and walk to Tufts from there. I could not have asked for a more supportive partner in this time.

I had lost a substantial amount of fluid from the diuretics, almost thirty pounds! "It looks like the hundreds of bathroom breaks have paid off," I joked to Brook one day. After the diuretics came pique lines. These are small lines that enter one's body through the neck and deliver antibiotics directly to the heart. I had these lines for five days after the diuretics. These were meant to ensure that my heart was healthy enough for surgery and as strong as possible. I was scheduled to have my surgery on August 3rd. On the 2nd, I received news that the head surgeon did not have access to his normal crew of supporting doctors and nurses, and the surgery was postponed for five days. I was completely okay with this; when it came to cutting open my body, taking things out and putting new things in, I wanted the person doing all of this to be as comfortable as possible. I amused my wife and several nurses with these comments.

Heck, if the surgeon wanted me to be dressed like a clown for the surgery, I wouldn't have asked questions if it meant he was more comfortable.

During the days leading up to the surgery, I was left to my own devices: no diuretics or pique lines. It

***"The day before surgery I was daydreaming, thinking that I wanted to do something ground-breaking after recovery. Something that most people would think was impossible to do. I was browsing through a magazine to pass the time ... There was a collage of images of an athlete running, biking and swimming. 'Oh wow, he's a triathlete,' I thought to myself.***

felt good to not have to worry about taking large doses of medicine or to be undergoing intense treatment. The day after the pique lines I woke up to a surprise: I had a roommate. I welcomed him to the hospital and we immediately started sharing stories. He introduced himself and told me he was a Boston firefighter. He explained that he had suffered a heart attack when fighting a large house fire. He was older than me, but still young. I didn't ask his age, but guessed that he was somewhere in his mid-thirties. He showed Brook and I pictures he had of his kids, two beautiful little girls. This amazing man was great at both providing conversations and excellent moral support. He talked about his job and the amazing stories that went along with it, and I talked about my racing background and how I hoped that would translate into a business someday. On the day before my surgery, he was cleared and discharged. We wished each other luck and embraced. I felt a tear building as I said goodbye.

Even though I will probably never cross paths with that man again, I will never forget him for as long as I live.

The day before surgery I was daydreaming, thinking that I wanted to do something ground-breaking after recovery. Something that most people would think was impossible to do.

I was browsing through a magazine to pass the time while Brook was making her way to the hospital from the train station. It was a sports magazine, the only one that could hold my attention out of the entire pile of magazines next to my bed. As I turned the page from an article on a football star, I came upon the centerfold spread of that issue. There was a collage of images of an athlete running, biking and swimming. 'Oh wow, he's a triathlete,' I thought to myself.

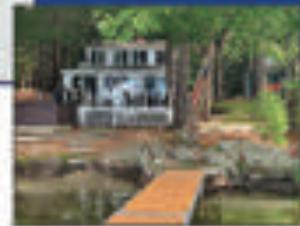
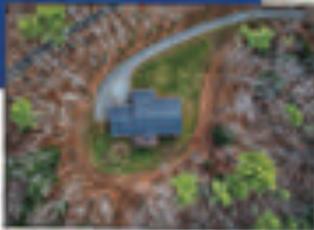
I read the short column stuffed onto the side of the page and learned that this athlete was a regular Ironman participant. The article went on to explain that the Ironman races are widely considered the most grueling and demanding single-day races. This guy regularly raced a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a full marathon, 26.2 miles. These numbers blew my mind; I think my jaw actually dropped when I



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read this. Any one of those three events is grueling and takes so much effort. Doing all three of them back-to-back, that was intense. I found myself inspired and motivated. I decided that if I could do (almost) a short triathlon with next to no time to prepare, I could certainly work my way to an Ironman race.

I had just finished reading the article for the third time when Brook walked in. I handed her the magazine and asked her to read the article. She did, and was just as impressed as I was.

“Makes even the triathlon you competed in seem small, huh?”

“Yeah! Which is why after I’m recovered I’m going to train as much as I need to and do an Ironman race,” I threw out matter-of-factly.

Brook stared at me as if I had grown a second head. She shifted in her chair, straightened up and cleared her throat. “Jeremy, I think before you go into surgery for your heart, you should call the doctor in and have him check the condition of your brain. An Ironman race? The race finishes with a marathon. Finishes with a marathon. That’s after over a hundred miles on the bike and a massive swim. These racers must eat nails and grits for breakfast. That is insanity, you’re nuts. Your goal should be to get out of the hospital. Anything that uses a marathon for one third of the entire race is ridiculous.” I pointed out my slight success with the triathlon on short notice, but Brook stood her ground that an Ironman was a stretch.

“Just you watch. I’ll ask the doctor when he comes in, and he’ll tell you that I’ll be able to do it!” My wife sighed and dropped the topic for the time being. When the doctor walked into the room several minutes later, I immediately called him over. “So doc, I want to do an Ironman race after I recover from surgery.” I handed him the magazine article and asked him his opinion. He closed the magazine, set it back on the table and looked at me.

“Jeremy, I think you should get bet-

***When the doctor walked into the room several minutes later, I immediately called him over. “So doc, I want to do an Ironman race after I recover from surgery.” I handed him the magazine article and asked him his opinion. He closed the magazine, set it back on the table and looked at me. “Jeremy, I think you should get better first and dream later.”***

ter first and dream later.” That statement hurt. Brook gave me a knowing but sympathetic gaze accompanied by a faint smile. “Speaking of that, do you mind telling me what you normally do for physical activity?” I explained about my martial arts classes, my job as a fitness coach and my own personal training. After I was done and the doctor had taken in all of the information, he gave me some news that I was not all too happy to hear.

“To be completely honest with you, I think you should seriously consider shelving at least your martial arts training. After this surgery, you will be on blood thinner medication for the rest of your life. Based on what you just described, the risks of serious injury or complications you would be running by continuing martial arts seems dangerous. Even the other physical activity seems aggressive for your position.”

I set my jaw and nodded in silence. He could tell I was not pleased, and apologized. He left Brook and me alone in the room. I knew that openly defying the doctor to his face would have gotten me nowhere and only created unneeded tension. However, I also knew that voluntarily stopping martial arts was just as likely as voluntarily stopping breathing. Taking it slightly easier with the hard, heavy striking and sparring was an obvious move, but stopping was not an option. And as for the Ironman race, I had made a goal and made up my mind. I wanted to prove to my wife and the doctor that their scoffing and nay-saying was for naught.

That night Brook wished me luck,

as I would be heading into surgery the following morning. She left early so that I could get plenty of rest. Just as with the endocarditis, I would be up in the wee hours of the morning and into surgery before most people are up for work. I closed my eyes that night knowing that the next day would bring about a totally different way of life for me.

On August 8th, two and a half weeks after being admitted to Tufts for heart failure, I was prepared for open-heart surgery, as was the team of miracle workers that would be making the surgery happen. The early morning preparations went off without a hitch. As I was pushed through the halls, I caught glimpses of the morning sky. It wasn’t much to look at: grey overcast clouds shrouded the horizon. The sun was trying to shine through, but the clouds refused to give way.

My heart was beating in anticipation as the large double doors to the operating room came into view. I had been preparing for this day for the past two weeks, and was determined to get through this. I looked at this as simply another challenge to overcome, another opponent to spar, another hill to climb. The lead surgeon had his team assembled and was ready to go the minute I was wheeled into the operating room. After shifting their tools around, I was given a sedative and asked to count to ten. I had only gotten to ‘two’ from my endocarditis, and I was determined to top that performance. I pushed through and barely mustered a weak ‘four’ before slipping into unconsciousness. ♦

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POETRY



Melted ice cream from Granite State Candy Shoppe in Concord.

## Best friends forever

Good friends once told us  
“When you move,  
It’s over.”

Like watching ice cream melt  
When you carry it  
Too far.

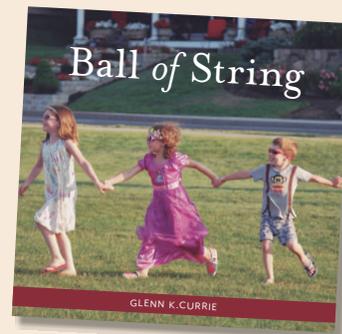
I thought it harsh.  
But they faded away,  
Leaving empty cones.

Friendships are different now.  
Digital hugs  
With alligator arms.

Everyone is a BFF.  
“Forever” becoming  
A game of numbers.

I have 203 of them,  
Who live in a crowded pool,  
An inch deep.

Eating ice cream together  
Was better.  
I liked the mess.



By Glenn Currie  
in “Ball of String,”  
published in 2019  
by Snap Screen  
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Courtesy 'Crosscurrents of Change'

A farmer uses fertilizer on a field just outside of Concord in 1948.

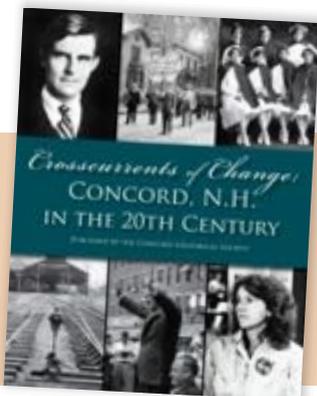
## A fresh look at our roots

Concord has never been known as a large center for fruit and vegetable farming, but these crops have always been an important part of the agricultural economy. Farmers usually located orchards on the hillside, where

the air moves freely and warm air pockets protect the fruit from frost in the higher elevations. Vegetables were usually grown near rivers, streams and ponds for ease of irrigation.

In the early 1900s, many families tended to individual vegetable gardens, so there wasn't a commercial demand for local produce. People ate fresh vegetables in summer, and in

winter ate stored crops such as potatoes, squash, onions, carrots, beets, cabbage, turnips and whatever they'd canned. Everyone looked forward to dandelion greens, parsnips and asparagus in the spring. During World War I, local food committees concerned about the supply of food, encouraged local gardens and the distribution of food to needy families. Busi-



### Learn More

#### 'Crosscurrents of Change' Concord, N.H. in the 20th Century'

This 400-plus page hardcover edition introduces you to the people who helped shape a city, and it takes you through tragedy and triumph with some of the defining moments in Concord history. To purchase a copy or to learn more, visit [concordhistoricalsociety.org/store](http://concordhistoricalsociety.org/store).



Courtesy of 'Crosscurrents of Change'

**The old Blood farm on Mountain Road in Concord in the mid-twentieth century.**

nesses were urged to participate in the “City Gardens” project. Many were skeptical, but Arthur Davis, the county agricultural agent, and Ernest Hardy, garden supervisor for From New Hampshire College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (it became the University of New Hampshire in 1924) offered guidance and the gardens turned out to be a great success.

Clerks and carriers of the Concord Post Office raised one of the best

fields of potatoes grown in Merrimack County. Although these employees didn’t know much about gardening, they followed Davis and Hardy’s instructions at their garden ploy on George Cilley’s farm on Iron Works Road. They proudly held a demonstration meeting on July 18, 1917, when the field was in full blossom. The Page Belting Company raised 12 acres of potatoes, six acres of corn and two acres of beans, and

experts compared the crops favorably to anything in the county. The men who worked in the Boston & Maine shops gardened on Hall Street. The Pleasant View Home had 70 gardens. The Concord Water Works Department raised five acres of potatoes in West Concord. Most of the ground plowed and harrowed by the city was planted and any land not claimed was used by the Food Production Committee under Hardy’s direction.

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NE-349738

## THE SCENE



Photos by Geoff Forester

Amen Hulumyfar receives a bag of clothes and a book from teacher Vicki Kerkel, dressed as "Pete the Cat," as he leaves the Head Start school with his mother in January.

# A winter to remember



The competition remained fierce as ever in the local sports scene. Here, Merrimack Valley forward Livie Lacasse keeps her eye on the ball, even while on the floor, as she tries to defend a pass by Pembroke Academy center Haley LeBlanc.



Concord Hospital nurse Dawn Chapman of Weare was among those who earned a free trip to the Super Bowl.



Gene Rudolph, who lives in Concord by himself, turned 100 in January.



Elizabeth Woodhull, 3, attempts to make snow angels in the packed down snow at her grandparents home on Fisherville Road in Concord.



George Gregorio waves to cars on a bench in front of his home at Old Turnpike Road and Airport Road in Concord. He's been doing it for years.



Charlie Niebling and his wife, Mabel, of Boscawen, were named the 2021 Tree Farmers of the Year.

Cheers owner Todd Roy puts up lights in one of the four igloos he and his wife and co-owner, Wendy, erected for diners so they can eat outdoors on the restaurant patio.





Monitor file

Thousands of runners and walkers took part in the annual Rock 'N Race 5K in downtown Concord in May 2018.

## Rock on, race on

Perhaps no community event punctuates the arrival of spring like the Rock 'N Race, a walk/run through Concord that pulls together the best of all worlds – health, fundraising, music and food. Last year's May race was postponed, and that announcement at the time served as a reminder that the coronavirus and its many restrictions would be with us for some time. Organizers kept it alive, though, introducing a virtual component that allowed runners to participate on their own, while still connecting with the greater mission of helping support Concord Hospital's Payson Center for Cancer Care. This year, the plan is to include both a live race and a virtual event. The Rock 'N Race will return to Concord on Saturday, May 22, and the entire month of May will be devoted to virtual participation. As always, keep your eyes and ears peeled for updates and changes. Visit [runsignup.com/Race/NH/Concord/RockNRace](https://runsignup.com/Race/NH/Concord/RockNRace) to register and to get the latest information.

## Contribute >>

Welcome to 'A Thousand Words,' a quarterly feature that ends the magazine with an iconic photo. Share your image with us, and we may be able to use it in a coming issue. Only high-resolution photos are accepted, and despite the intent of the feature, we will need to accompany your image with a few words. So please send your photo and a brief description to [editor@aroundconcord.com](mailto:editor@aroundconcord.com).

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