

A woman with long blonde hair is seated in a lush green field, playing a cello. She is wearing a teal dress and a yellow and blue patterned shawl. The background features rolling green hills, dense trees, and distant mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Around CONCORD

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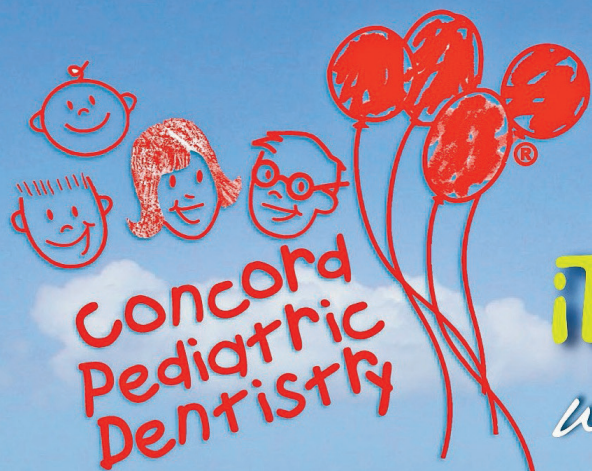
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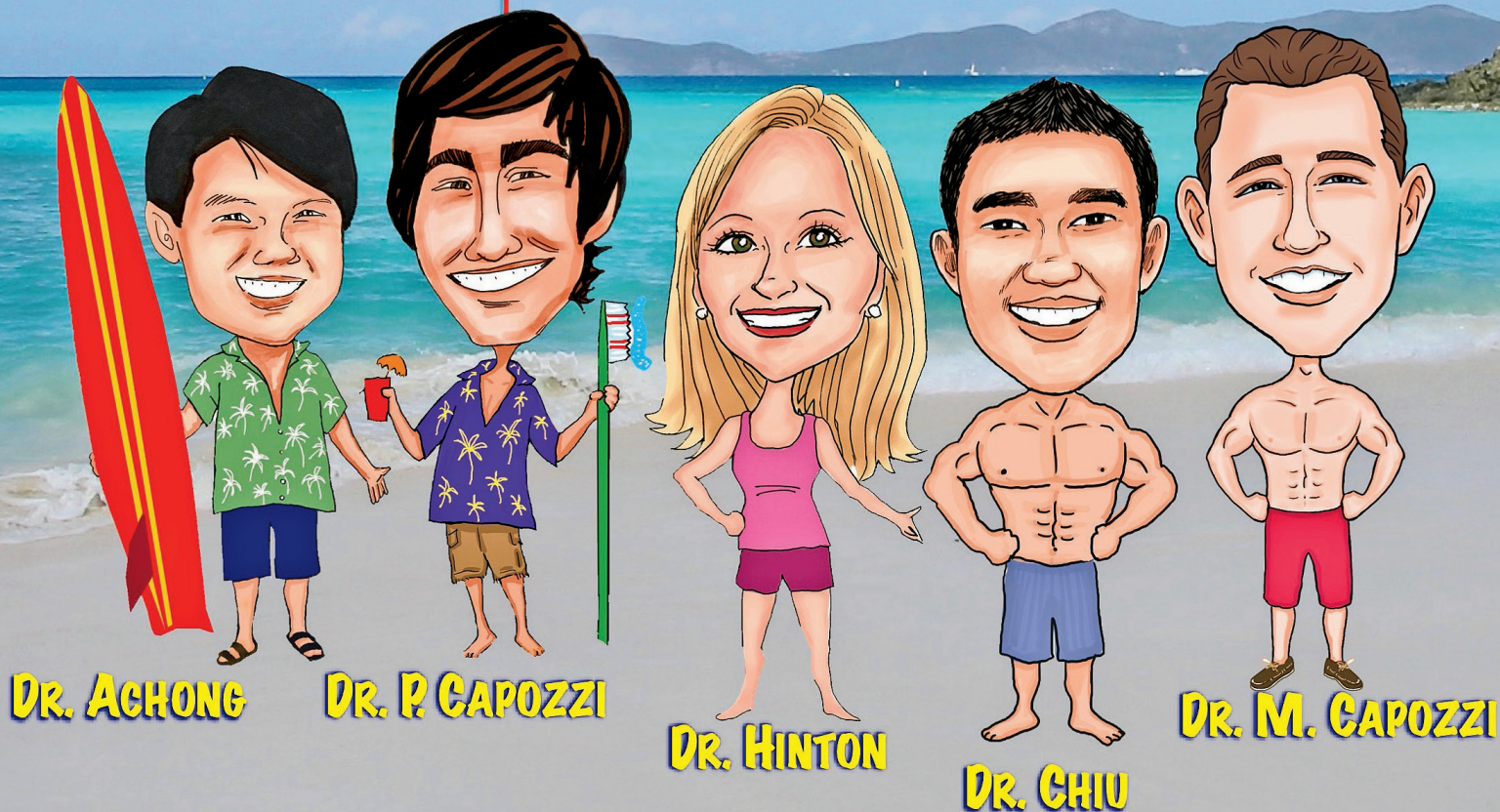
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What we love about summer

In a blink of an eye, everything suddenly costs more than it did a few months ago. Gas, food, cars, even grass seed.

It's likely many of us will be staying closer to home this summer to save precious money.

The good news is that summer is a great time to slow down and take the time to enjoy the things we love and explore new places.

This issue of *Around Concord* centers on the themes of music and the outdoors. We introduce readers to the little-known Avaloch Farm Music Institute, a retreat that gives performing musicians from around the country a quiet and inspirational New England atmosphere to work on music away from the bustle of a big city and the demands of touring life.

In fact, 110 musicians will be staying at the retreat this summer, which many past attendees refer to as a "slice of heaven."

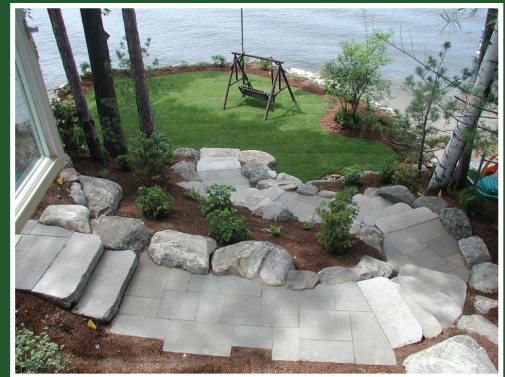
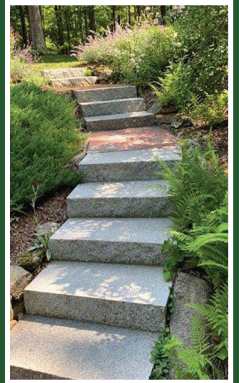
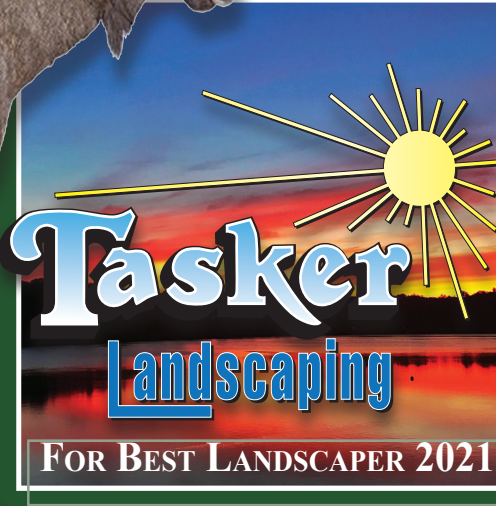
While the institute is not open to the public, a major music event will be coming to Concord on June 25 as part of Market Days. Sal Prizio, the new director of the Capitol Center for the Arts, booked the pop band Vertical Horizons to play downtown for free. The band is known for its big hit "Everything you Want." If you don't immediately recognize it, you will once you play it in your headphones. Once you hear it, you'll have a hard time getting it out of your head.

For those staying at home still working on turning their yards into a little piece of paradise after the pandemic, consider putting in an order of trees and flowers from the NH State Forest Nursery. It will beautify your view and help out nature too – two things that summer is all about.

Jonathan Van Fleet
Editor

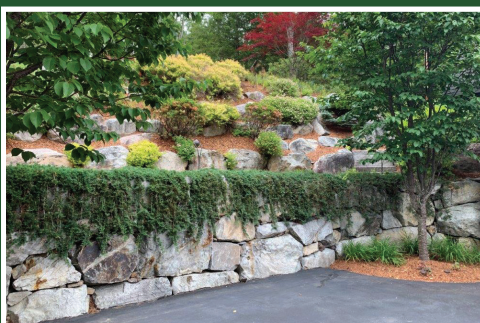
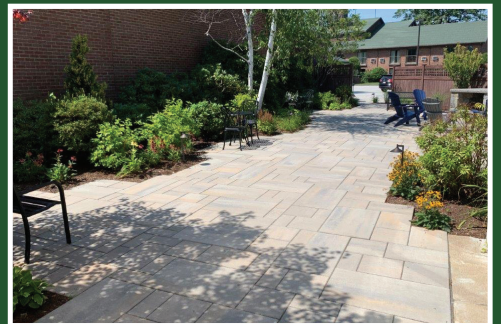
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THE TIP LIST

Fast faves

A Pennsylvania native, **Dr. Jeffrey Fetter**, chief medical officer at NH Hospital, has become quite the Granite State transplant. He's been an internist/psychiatrist at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, worked at Concord Hospital, the state prison system and Riverbend. In his free time, Fetter plays fiddle, mandolin, and limberjack for The Wholly Rollers, an old-time gospel string band. You can catch their next concert at the Canterbury Shaker Village on July 10. Fetter lives in Concord with his wife Erin (a school nurse at Rundlett Middle School) and their two kids. Here are some of his favorite places to go and things to do around Concord.



A cold one

Arnie's Place opening for the season is what makes spring real. Vintage cars, barbeque pork, Nazy's favorite, what's not to love?

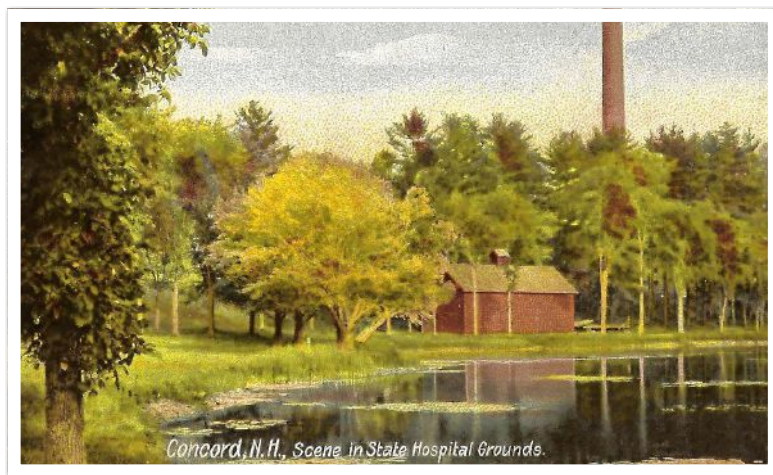


A place to shop and play

Anyone who has gone to the summer farmer's market with kids knows that tree in front of the State House, the climbing tree, which is perfectly sized for toddlers on up to climb while the adults enjoy coffee and donuts. You can visit the **Concord Farmers' Market** on Capitol Street on Saturday mornings from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

Always in the spirit

I lived in Concord for 12 years before I even knew about the **Christmas Parade**, and boy was I amazed when I experienced the breadth of our community on display during this parade. I have had the opportunity to march in it with my son's Cub Scout pack for several years now, and I will tell you that there's really no experience like seeing how kids react to seeing hundreds of people smiling, waving and cheering them on as they scatter candy far and wide.



Outdoor favorites

Winant Park's forested trails are easy enough for kids, but hilly enough to work up a sweat if you pick up the pace. Only five minutes from downtown, and the hilltop views are a good payoff.

I trained and worked at **NH Hospital** much of my professional life. I have fond memories of quiet summer weekends on call, waiting for the next page or grabbing a lunch with my wife and young daughter, on a chair swing by the duck pond nestled in the remnants of the old orchard.

Off the shelf

Whether your goal while reading is to be educated and explore or to be relaxed and entertained, there are new releases from New Hampshire authors sure to fit the bill. So find yourself a comfy chair and settle into a warm spot in the sun, or a quiet patch of shade, because for many of us, summer is the best time to turn the page.

Compiled by Sarah Pearson (Book description submitted by authors or publishers.)



Before Evil

By Brandon K. Gauthier

Adolf Hitler. Joseph Stalin. Benito Mussolini. Mao Zedong. Kim Il Sung. Vladimir Lenin. These cruel dictators wrote their names on the pages of history in the blood of countless innocent victims. Yet they themselves were once young people searching for their place in the world, dealing with challenges many of us face

— parental authority, education, romance, loss — and doing so in ways that might be uncomfortably familiar.

Historian Brandon K. Gauthier of Concord has created a fascinating work — epic yet intimate, well-researched but immensely readable, clear-eyed and empathetic — looking at the lives of these six dictators, with a focus on their youths.



We watch Lenin's older brother executed at the hands of the Tsar's police — an event that helped radicalize this over-achieving high-schooler. We observe Stalin grappling with the death of his young, beautiful wife. We see Hitler's mother mourning the loss of three young children — and determined that her first son to survive infancy would find his place in the world.

The purpose isn't to excuse or simply explain these horrible men, but rather to treat them with the empathy they themselves too often lacked. We may prefer to hold such lives at arm's length so as to demonize them at will, but this book reminds us that these monstrous rulers were also human beings — and perhaps more relatable than we'd like.

A Stranger in Papa Ben's Cabin

By Michelle Tangen

When someone close to them vanishes, Arlington Maine Detectives Corey Banks and Sean McDonald travel to Vermont to investigate the disappearance. For both men, for two very different reasons, this case is personal.

Though Corey was initially hesitant to work with Sean, *A Stranger in Papa Ben's Cabin* sees a

friendship further develop between the two detectives as they work to solve this unusual case. Featuring a secondary character from Tangen's first book, *A Stranger on Ghost Beach*, this story also touches on the issues of homophobia, drinking and driving, and the main character's depression spurred by a sudden tragic loss years earlier.

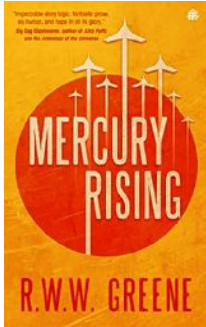
Tangen lives in Rochester and worked as a nursing assistant for 45 years.



Mercury Rising

By R.W.W. Greene

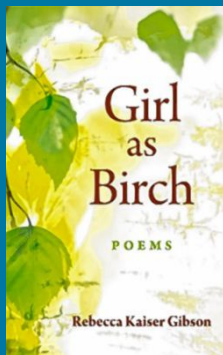
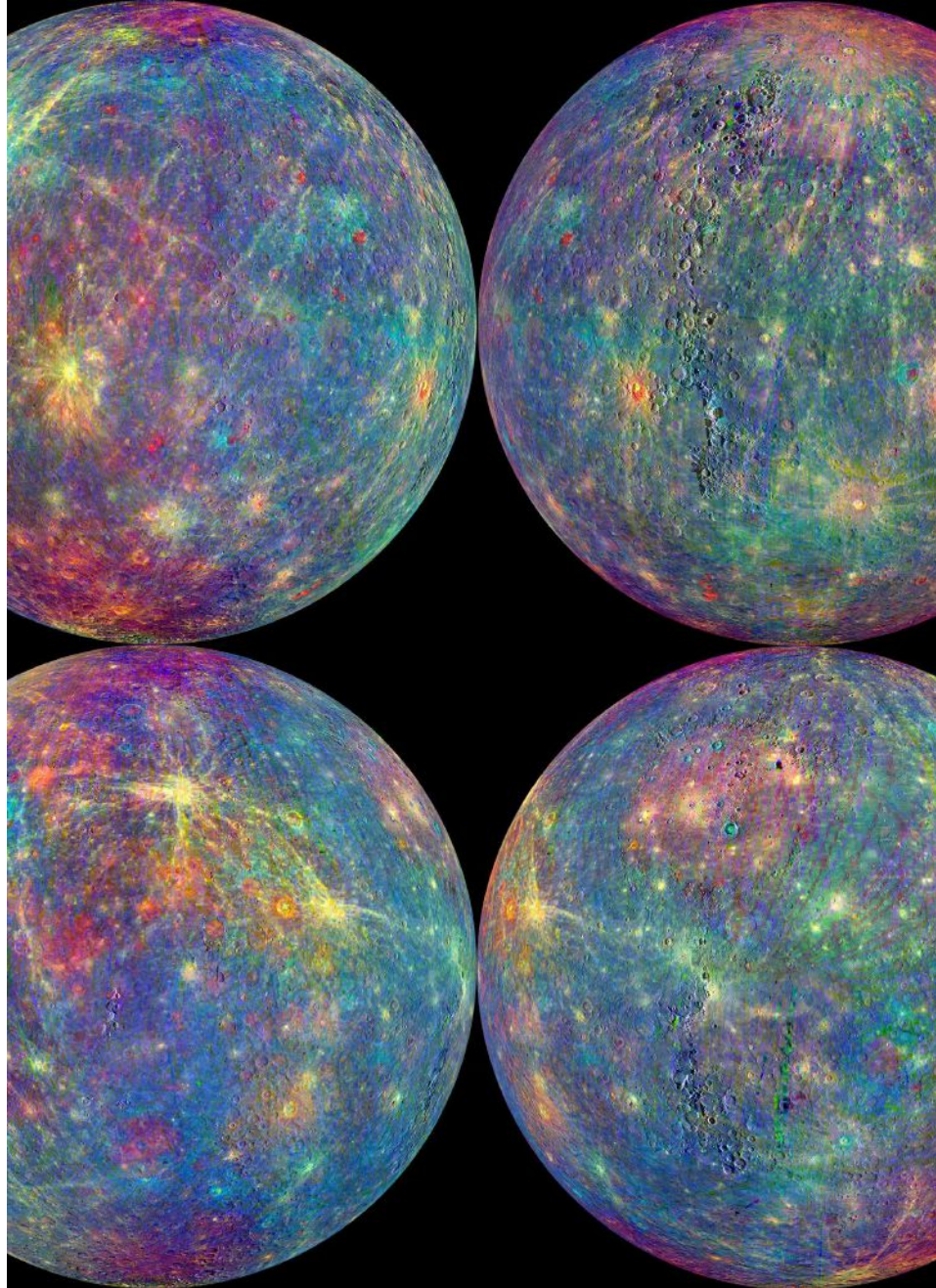
The year is 1975 – Robert Oppenheimer has invented the Atomic Engine, the first human has walked on the moon, and Jet Carson and the Eagle Seven have sacrificed their lives to stop alien invaders. Brooklyn,



however, just wants to keep his head down, pay his mother's rent, earn a little scratch of his own, and maybe get laid sometime. Simple pleasures! But life is about to get really complicated when a killer with a baseball bat and a mysterious box of 8-

track tapes sets him up for murder.

So, his choices are limited – rot away in prison or sign up to defend the planet from those who dropped a meteorite on Cleveland. Brooklyn crosses his fingers and picks the Earth Orbital Forces, believing that after a few years in the trenches – assuming he survives – he can get his life back. Unfortunately, the universe has other plans. Brooklyn is launched into a quest to save humanity, find his true family, and grow as a person – while simultaneously coping with high-stakes space battles, mystery science experiments and the realization that the true enemies perhaps aren't the tentacled monsters on the recruitment poster... Or are they?



Girl as Birch

By Rebecca Kaiser Gibson

In *Girl as Birch*, Rebecca Kaiser Gibson of Marlborough mimics the flexible (adaptable? too pliant? healthily, if secretly, resilient, then, finally, aligned) motion of a birch in strong wind, as it relates to the options seemingly available to her, growing up as a girl. The poems imitate in form the experiences they evoke. The leitmotifs of red, birches, mirrors, walls enclosing gardens, labyrinths as metaphors for constraint, recur throughout the book. Without being a manifesto, *Girl as Birch* explores female gender roles with both pliant and uprising

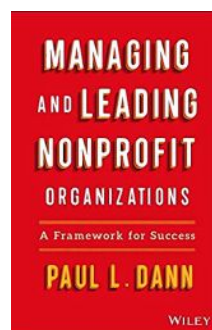
imagery and action. Restriction and rebellion, silence and speech, appearance and artifice, passion and repression, the past and being present, buffet and embolden the speaker of these poems. The elastic and varied syntax, pace, music, and the use of rhetoric and wit express deft self-examination. The book moves from serial impressionistic poems of early childhood to discrete lyric poems of memory and experience and on to a sense of emotional, social, spiritual evolution, not resolution.

Gibson teaches poetry at Tufts University. She is also the author of the full-length collection *Opinel*.

Managing and Leading Nonprofit Organizations

By Paul L. Dann

Long-time Hopkinton resident Paul Dann recently published *Managing and Leading Nonprofit Organizations: A Framework For*



Success. Dann draws on over 30 years of developing and advancing nonprofits to provide practical strategies that support success in creat-

ing and maintaining a positive organizational culture.

Filled with practical, applicable strategies for successfully leading nonprofit organizations, the book is a one-stop resource for nonprofit board members, managers, founders, employees, and other leaders seeking to take their nonprofit to the next level. It reveals the power of thoughtfully articulated leadership practice at the individual, team, and organizational level. It allows the reader to develop and refine their ability to lead others in the nonprofit and public context, using practical strategies, universally applicable examples, and useful leadership tools. It perfectly balances simple and straightforward techniques that can be immediately applied to any organizational environment with more complex and nuanced material for more experienced practitioners.

Dann is executive director of NFI North, a nonprofit mental health and human services agency providing care to children, youth, families, and adults throughout New Hampshire and Maine. He is a faculty member in the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire.



In Her Boots

By KJ Dell'Antonia

Rhett Gallagher's adventurous life is imploding. Just as she turns the big 4-0, her long-term relationship collapses and her gran's death draws her back to the family farm. The only silver lining is that Rhett's inspirational book, *The Modern Pioneer Girl's Guide to Life* — written under a pseudonym — has become a wild success, so much so that when her big publicity moment comes, self-doubting Rhett panics and persuades her best friend, Jasmine, to step into the limelight in her stead.

But their prank turns into something more when the controlling mother Rhett hasn't seen in two

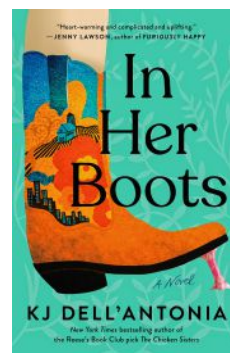
decades announces her intent to sell the farm Rhett loves and expected to make her own. To save her inheri-

tance — and her identity — Rhett must concoct a scheme that will protect her home and finally prove to her mother, and to herself, that she can stand on her own two feet.

Dell'Antonia is the former editor of *Motherlode* and current contributor to *The New York Times*, as well as the author of *How*

to Be a Happier Parent and the instant New York Times bestseller and Reese's Book Club Pick, *The Chicken Sisters*.

She lives in Lyme, but retains fondness for her childhood in Texas and Kansas.



A Sprinkling of Stardust over the Outhouse

By Paul Brogan

A Sprinkling of Stardust Over the Outhouse is the long-awaited follow-up to Paul Brogan's highly successful first book, *Was That a Name I Dropped?* released in 2011.

Paul came out as gay when he was 10, in the early 1960s and faced a number of obstacles for doing so. He approached them, without losing sight of who he was, eventually winning over even the naysayers who urged him to be someone other than himself.

A Sprinkling of Starlight is a true story that is rich in detail as it tells Paul's story with humor and heart as well as harsh and sometimes shockingly brutal reality.



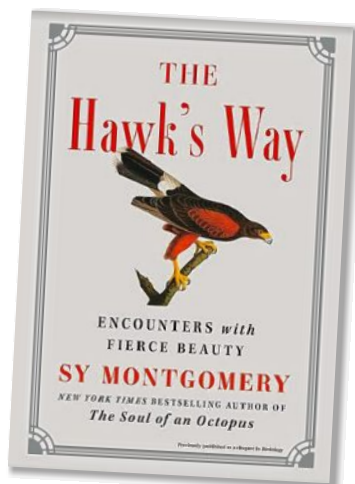
Banner the falcon was among those Nancy Cowan adored. She introduced Sy Montgomery to one of her other hawks.

Monitor file

A love takes flight

From Sy Montgomery, the *New York Times* bestselling author of “The Soul of an Octopus” comes “The Hawk’s Way: Encounters with Fierce Beauty.” When the Hancock author went to spend a day at falconer Nancy Cowan’s Deering farm, home to a dozen magnificent birds of prey, it was the start of a deep love affair. Nancy allowed her to work with Jazz, a feisty, four-year-old, female Harris’s hawk with a wingspan of more than four feet. From the moment Jazz swept down from a tree and landed on Sy’s leather gloved fist, Sy fell under the hawk’s magnetic spell.

Over the next few years, Sy spent more time with these magnificent creatures, getting to know their extraordinary abilities and instincts. They are deeply emotional animals, quick to show anger and frustration, and can hold a grudge for years. But they are also loyal and intensely aware of their surroundings. In this account, Sy reveals the wondrous world of hawks and what they can teach us about nature, life and love. The following is an excerpt from “The Hawk’s Way.”



By SY MONTGOMERY

My introduction to falconry is a bloody one.

On a cool, gray mid-October day, master falconer Nancy Cowan, a petite, blue-eyed blonde in her late fifties, hands me the most beautiful bird in the world: a four-year-old female Harris’s hawk (named after ornithologist Edward Harris) named Jazz. A deep, coppery brown, with

reddish shoulders and a white tail tip, Jazz stands more than twenty inches tall, weighs thirty ounces, and her outstretched wings span nearly four feet. Her profile is regal and knowing. Harris’s hawks are big, but their appetites are bigger. In their native cactus deserts in the Southwest, they hunt moorhens as big as ducks and jackrabbits that can weigh more than twice as much as they do.

Nancy has offered me a choice: of the dozen or so birds of prey she and her falconer husband keep on their rural New Hampshire property, I could work with Jazz or Emma, the lanner falcon. Emma is also beautiful. With a slate back and wings, creamy belly, and chest-nut crown, her kind is the species pictured in Egyptian hieroglyphics. But Emma is smaller than Jazz by a third. And, Nancy explains, Emma has been raised by humans. At the mature age of sixteen or seventeen years old, Emma is exceptionally docile and calm.

Jazz is not. Nancy had warned me: Jazz is “feisty,” sometimes uncooperative, and “doesn’t like hats.” (How Jazz expresses displeasure is left unspoken — but looking at her curved obsidian talons and sharp black beak, I am glad that despite the cold I have come bareheaded.)

But I am not afraid. It’s her wildness I want from the moment I set eyes on her.

Stepping from Nancy’s falconry glove to the one loaned to me, Jazz’s huge yellow feet grip my left hand with shocking strength. It is wise to be sheathed in leather. Otherwise, simply by perching, her talons would rip the skin of my hand and wrist and could easily pierce me to the bone. I am impressed by Jazz’s feet, but am awestruck by her huge mahogany eyes. They look past my face, past my soul, as impassive and hungry as fire. Her eyes seem to be devouring the world.

I know I don’t matter to her at all. Yet to me, she is everything. Why do I love her so immediately? I love that she is big; I love that she is fierce; and I love, too, that she might be unpredictable. She is the essence of hawk, a bird so unlike anyone I have ever known. And here she is on my arm.

I pretend that claiming Jazz isn’t greedy. That leaves the smaller, calmer bird, Emma, for my friend Selinda. It didn’t take much to persuade Selinda to accompany me; she loves animals as well as a good adven-



Tianne Strombeck

Sy Montgomery wears a leather glove to protect against the sharp talons that could easily pierce her to the bone.

ture (her first job out of college was working as a geologist in Alaska). But attending the half-day introductory course at Nancy’s New Hampshire School of Falconry was my idea, and I reckon if one of us might get hurt today, it should be me. Our instructor chooses to work with Banshee, a teenage peregrine falcon. The bird of prey recently reintroduced to cities to help control pigeon and starling populations, peregrines dive through the

sky after their prey at a heart-stopping two hundred miles an hour. Her head is capped in black, her back and wings a deep, shiny blue, like the skin on a blue shark. Five inches shorter than my big Jazz, she seems tiny, precise, a knight-errant clad not in chain mail but feathers.

We start walking down Nancy’s gravel driveway, amazed that these majestic predatory birds sit sedately on our fists.

Then Banshee bites Nancy in the face.

The attack comes without warning. It's a hell of a bite. Later Nancy explains to us that being bitten by a peregrine feels like being punctured by a staple gun. A notch in the bird's curved bill, an adaptation for crunching the vertebrae of its prey, makes the bite particularly messy and painful.

Blood gushes from the wound. What will Jazz and Emma do? I worry they might attack at the sight of blood, as my chickens do, but they ignore it.

Selinda and I, however, gasp in distress. "Don't worry about it," says Nancy. "Banshee's a teenager. She's just being a brat." Though I periodically dab at the wound with a tissue, the blood flows down our instructor's cheek and drips off her chin for half an hour.

Nancy is used to this. And so apparently are the neighbors. Drivers slow their cars and wave genially. Only Selinda and I seem to think anything of the sight of three women walking down a country road with birds of prey perched inches from their faces, one of them dripping blood onto the road. Nancy and her falconer husband, Jim, have lived here for twelve years.

Everyone knows about their birds.

Only one vehicle stops. The driver greets Nancy (without a word about her wound) with the news "I've got something for you." He reaches into the back seat and pulls out a dead woodcock — a medium-size, sandpiper-like bird of New England's fields and meadows — and hands her the corpse through the window. Food for the hawks, I assume. But later, I learn this would be her dinner. Clearly, I have entered a strange new world. Selinda and I — vegetarians who mourn roadkills and weep over books in which animals are hurt — are taking this course because of our love of birds. We never thought that, less than thirty minutes into the course, we'd be facing violence,



Geoff Forester file

Nancy Cowan and a lanner falcon in 2020.

blood, and death. But what shocks me more is this: though I'm sorry that Nancy has been bitten and I'm distressed that the woodcock has been killed, somehow, in the presence of these birds, blood and death are not repulsive. I feel myself being drawn to a mind wholly unlike my own.

*This excerpt is from "The Hawk's Way" by Sy Montgomery. An earlier version of this material appeared as a chapter in Sy Montgomery's book *Birdology* (2010). "Birds are Fierce" from *Birdology*, 2010 by Sy Montgomery. Reprinted by permission of Atria Books, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.*

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TRY IT



Lace 'em up

Whether it's your first time or you're training to set a new personal best, here's a sampling of the many races this summer

By MATT PARKER

Runners on your mark, get set – go.

This summer brings about plenty of options for area runners – whether seasoned or a first-timer – to seek out different road races, 5ks, milers and other various races.

While this isn't a fully inclusive list, it does contain many races in or near the capital area for people to lace up their best pair of running shoes and go out to win all the glory. Most of the races also are for good causes with registration fees going toward charitable donations.

If you're thinking about hitting a race this summer, check these out.

Brewery Chase Relay, June 18, Manchester

Registration: \$110-\$330; Range from two-six person relay teams during the latest registration date.



Event: The race spans almost 27 miles, but it's broken into a relay with teams of up to six people able to run between NH breweries. From start to finish, you'll hit Backyard Brewery and Kitchen, Long Blue Cat Brewing, Pipe Dream Brewing, Kelsen Brewing, 603 Brewery, Rockingham Brewing and finish at Backyard Brewery and Kitchen.

Cause: Registration money goes toward a donation to the New England Heart and Vascular Institute.

Bill Luti 5 Miler, July 16, Concord

Registration: \$20 through July 13

(online); \$30 from July 14-16 (cash or check only)

Event: Toted as one of the most historic foot races in all of New England, the 55th edition of the Bill Luti 5 Miler is a challenge for runners of all skill sets. Luti, a former coach at Concord High, started the race back in 1968 and it quickly became a popular event for those throughout the New England region.

Canterbury Woodchuck Classic 5k, July 30, Canterbury

Registration: \$20 by noon July 29; \$30 in person on July 30

Event: The seventh leg of the Capital Area Race Series, this 5k race/walk takes place at Canterbury Elementary and features a route beneficial to runners new and experienced. The race will also offer a virtual run in accommodation of the ongoing pandemic.

Cause: Registration fees and other proceeds go toward the Canterbury Fund.

5k Race to the Ledges, Aug. 13, Concord

Registration: \$20 through August 11; \$25 August 12-13

Event: The 11th annual 5k that takes place around Concord Hospital looks to have its best year yet. The course is a mix of trails and streets which create a dynamic running surface around the West end of the capital city. Race to the Ledges, sponsored by Granite Ledges of Concord, also hosts a 5k for kids 6 and under.

Cause: Proceeds from the race go toward the Aging Well Alliance Fund. The fund is used to support older adult programs based out of Concord Hospital.

Rotary Trails to Ales, Aug. 18, Bedford

Registration: \$15-30

Event: A fun race held by the Rotary Club in Bedford, this 5k provides runners the opportunity to work up a good sweat and cool down with various beers and burgers at the finish line.

Angels 5k Road Race and Fitness Walk, Aug. 20, Concord

Registration: \$25

Event: The eighth and final event in the Capital Area Race Series, the Angels is held at Merrimack Valley High School in remembrance of loved ones that have passed away.

Cause: Proceeds from the race directly support scholarships that are awarded to Merrimack Valley High seniors through the Loudon Lions Club.

DON'T MISS IT



Jam-packed weekend awaits



By **CASSIDY JENSEN**

As Market Days returns to its regular June timing for the first time since the pandemic began, the annual downtown festival will focus on bringing music to all Concord residents – and appreciating the performers that make that art accessible.

This June, Intown Concord is partnering with the Capital Center for the Arts to bring a big act to the three-day free festival. The alternative rock band Vertical Horizon, best known for their 2000 Billboard hit “Everything You Want,” will be headlining on June 25, becoming the first nationally touring artist to perform at Market Days.

Sal Prizio took over as executive director for Capitol Center for the Arts in December, moving to New Hampshire to take on the job. Prizio wanted to bring a significant concert to Concord for free, and decided it made sense to partner with another organization already hosting one of the

city's most anticipated summer events.

"One of the things I love to do is break down the walls of what presenting to a community means," Prizio said. Those walls can be physical, ideological or financial, but overall Prizio wants the Capitol Center for the Arts to step outside its typical spaces and bring art to everyone in the capital city. Going forward, he also plans to work closely with Concord's Multicultural Festival and present more events in the Heights.

This June's Market Days, which will be Prizio's first, will serve as a chance to demonstrate to Concord and potential partners that the Capitol Center for the Arts can pull off hosting a big public performance for free.

Prizio hopes that Vertical Horizon will delight the Millennial and Gen X parents who came of age when the band was churning out angsty hits, while satisfying their kids with a fun, family-friendly show. The main stage on Main Street will be upgraded for the task, benefiting the local and regional artists playing during the rest of the weekend.

Intown Concord Executive Director Jessica Martin said that between the main stage and stages in Eagle Square and Bicentennial Square, Concord will enjoy 30 hours of free entertainment over the three days of the festival.

Although Vertical Horizon will be paid to perform, other artists volunteer their time to bring music to Market Days. Martin said that Intown Concord will facilitate ways for attendees to donate to the artists on a voluntary basis, either by prominently featuring artists' donation pages or setting up band merchandise tables.

"We're just trying to encourage community members to appreciate these performers and the time that they take out of their schedules to travel, to practice and perform for us," Martin said. "It's free entertainment



A celebration of culture and Concord community

Overcomers Refugee Services is presenting New Hampshire's first Umuganda on June 25 at Keach Park in Concord. Overcomers works to unite all cultures, foster mutual respect and understanding, and build a stronger community for all. Since many of the New Americans in the Concord community are from Rwanda, Overcomers

is putting on Umuganda, an event with deep roots in Rwandan culture.

This participatory event will be open to the public and will feature:

- **Painting a community mural:** The mural will serve as a beautifying gift to the Concord community, as well as a representation of the many new cultures who have made Concord their home.

- **Planting a Pollinator Garden:** The pollinator garden will be a healthy contribution to our environment, and the youth from Project S.T.O.R.Y. will learn a lot as they maintain the garden once it's planted.

- **Pitch in:** There will be plenty of cleanup and beautification efforts to benefit the park and the area.

- **Food and more:** There will be cultural music, ethnic foods and fun activities for all.

PLAN AHEAD

The Concord Multicultural Festival is Sunday, Sept. 18 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Keach Park. The festival is an annual event that celebrates the beauty of diversity in the Capital Region, featuring foods, performances, art, activities, and parade of flags, all presented by local community members.

for the community, but it's not free."

The ultimate goal is to pay artists for their time at future Market Days, Martin said. Although this new push to compensate artists isn't explicitly a response to the pandemic, the litany of events canceled by COVID-19 sparked reflection about the power of live music.

"I think we all just started to realize the true value of performing arts and we want to create more equity within the community among artists," Martin said.

In 2020, the full street festival was canceled. Instead, Intown Concord instead held events spread out throughout the month of June.

Last year, Intown Concord moved Market Days to August to give people

more time to get vaccinated and become comfortable socializing in large groups. Attendees at last year's August Market Days endured pouring rain and blistering heat on various days of the weekend.

Vendors tend to prefer the June scheduling, Martin said, because the weather is milder. Early summer dates also tend to attract bigger crowds, before summer travel and vacations take people out of the city.

Last year's Market Days was Martin's first festival as leader of Intown Concord. She said it went well, and she learned that there's no such thing as too much communication between vendors, city officials and all the others involved with pulling off the festival. ♦

THE SIT-DOWN



Courtesy

QA

The stage is set for live entertainment to retake its place in our lives, and **Sal Prizio** is here to help guide the way

Sal Prizio came to Concord just as winter was settling in. It's a time generally reserved for annual holiday shows and big public gatherings. Instead, he found himself navigating an industry still in the throes of a crisis.

Now, as we head into summer, Prizio can finally see the city's arts scene starting to re-emerge, and as the new executive director of the Capitol Center for the Arts, he has a big role in helping to bring the community back together. Sarah Pearson of *Around Concord* magazine took the opportunity to ask Prizio about his arrival, the summer ahead and his long-range vision for both the Capitol Center for the Arts and the smaller and newer Bank of N.H. Stage.



Around Concord: You arrived to Concord last November and your family shortly thereafter. What were your first impressions of the city?

Sal Prizio: My first impressions have been very positive. I love the combination of small-town vibe with access to many of the amenities you find in larger cities. Additionally, the people here have been so welcoming and friendly. It is great to have your new home feel very much like home!

AC: Can you share a little about what got you interested in pursuing a career in the arts and entertainment industry?

SP: I could go on about this for days, but it is really my love of music and performance. I played in a touring rock band out of NYC for years and I always fed off the energy of an audience. When I decided it was time for a change, I knew I needed to be passionate about what I was doing for a living. Being in a position of providing entertainment to a community is something I never tire of. It gets me out the door each morning with a smile on my face. Simply put, I love

what I do.

AC: Prior to working here, you were programming manager and event producer for the Proctors Theatre Collaborative in Schenectady, New York. How does that work compare to what you're doing here?

SP: At Proctors I was focused on just the one area of programming and producing. This was a great experience, but being an executive director allows me to utilize all the infrastructure and resources for community building, access, and inclusion. There are opportunities to make change for this community that the Capitol Center can play its part in, and I am thrilled to help lead some of those changes.

AC: As executive director of the Capitol Center, what does a typical day look like for you?

SP: There are no typical days. That is one of the aspects of this position

that I really enjoy, but I would say that most days right now consist of building new relationships in the community, addressing concerns, working with the team on innovative approaches to current issues, and projecting positivity!

AC: The Capitol Center for the Arts operates two venues, the larger 1,300-seat Chubb Theatre and Kimball House and the new, more intimate Bank of N.H. Stage in the former Concord Theater. How does the vision for programming differ for those spaces?

SP: That is a great question and one that Sheree Owens (our Programming Director) and I think about on a regular basis. The fact of the matter is that in a community the size of Concord you have to think about the venues serving all your population. Sure, the BNHS will have a focus on the younger up-and-coming bands and artists that make sense in the



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space, but the mission of the organization must be to serve all the community, so we have taken steps to diversify the programming in both spaces. Ideally, we want both venues to be eclectic and inclusive in what we offer to the public. The vision is the same for both spaces. The avenue of achieving that vision differs based on capacity, hard costs etc.

AC: What do you think the Capitol Center was doing well before your arrival that you hope to build on?

SP: The Capitol Center has such a devoted and enthusiastic support system. The citizens of Concord really did band together in a grassroots effort to save the building in a way you just don't see in many other places. CCA has always been a patron-first organization. I want to make sure we foster that support and continue to build upon that through innovation and engagement.

AC: Do you have any projects you're working on that you're particularly excited about?

SP: There are a bunch of projects we have in the works that we'll be debuting soon, but one I am particularly excited about is the culinary artist in residence program we are going to debut at the end of 2022. To make a very long story short, we have two commercial kitchens that are underutilized and could be put to use with a great purpose. We'll be working with members of the New American community to provide access to our spaces and feature new entrepreneurs who have the desire but don't have the means to open their own brick-and-mortar location. They will have access to our kitchens for a set period of time, to set up and run their own restaurant business via the Ghost kitchen model. This will allow them the time and experience they need to build up the following and gain the capital they require to open their own location. The city benefits with new culinary options, and the CCA benefits with great food offerings for our



Courtesy

The Capitol Center has such a devoted and enthusiastic support system. The citizens of Concord really did band together in a grassroots effort to save the building in a way you just don't see in many other places. CCA has always been a patron-first organization. I want to make sure we foster that support and continue to build upon that through innovation and engagement.

patrons. It is a win-win all the way around.

AC: Are there any new directions you're looking to explore?

SP: There are so many new directions I am thrilled to be taking this organization in. If you look at a performing arts center as more of a content provider and community builder, then whole new worlds of possibilities open up. In the coming months, we'll be hosting Interactive Events, E-Sports, Podcasts, and we'll be presenting directly to our community outside our walls with the Market Days concert featuring Vertical Horizon on June 25.

AC: The coronavirus pandemic obviously had a huge impact on arts venues. In particular, the Bank of N.H. Stage had been opened for just a few months before its doors were shut by stay-at-home orders. Now that the pandemic appears to be waning, what do you see as the way forward for

venues?

SP: Just like any other major global event in our history, change is implemented much quicker than in normal times. Performing arts centers must adapt to that change quickly in order to survive. I don't believe we have arrived at a place that we have replaced the live experience, but what we must do is adapt to offering what the next generation of live event-goers are interested in attending. Tools like mobile ordering, cashless purchasing, zoom patron forums, and streaming performances are things we couldn't have possibly implemented just 3 years ago, and yet they are part of the normal process now.

AC: What was it like stepping into a new leadership role amid all the uncertainty the pandemic was hurtling at businesses?

SP: Well, it is certainly is a test of my ability to adapt and multi-task. I arrived in December and by January we had canceled every performance

to start out the year. Despite the uncertainty around us, my goal was to project realistic positivity and keep the team encouraged. Better days were coming and by March we were back to full shows and happy patrons. One day I might look back on this and reflect how intense it was to take on a new role in the midst of a pandemic, but living through it was a challenge I relished.

AC: Do you think there are things venues should consider doing to better prepare for any future disruptions?

SP: Diversification in the way you provide content to your community will be a key to surviving future disruptions. If venues can offer quality content online and manage to keep audiences engaged with or without the pandemic, they will be better positioned for a pandemic, economic downturn, or whatever comes next.

AC: In what ways do you think the pandemic has shifted audience's expectations of entertainment venues?

SP: The adaptation of technology has definitely been expedited during the pandemic. I don't think people would be surprised at all if a venue presented an "at Home" series as part of their offerings now. The idea of a venue having to be a traditional experience has gone out the window.

AC: Have you been seeing different requirements from performers lately or do they seem to be getting back to 'business as usual'?

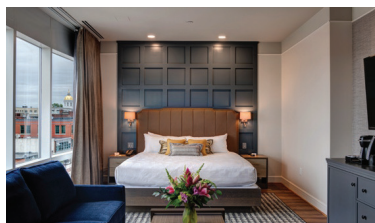
SP: Most performers have gotten back to usual, which does provide a bit of a solid ground in otherwise rocky seas. It gives us some barometer of where we are at when we take the temperature of the general state of things.

AC: Just a few decades ago, Concord was nicknamed "city in coma" - especially when compared to other New Hampshire cities like Portsmouth and Manchester. Many people have worked hard since then to help revitalize both downtown and

the wider arts community. What do you think the city has done well to foster its arts scene? Where do you see room for improvement?

SP: The city has done a fantastic job of rebuilding the infrastructure and look of the city. Main Street was once a two-lane per side road that people just flew down. Now having one lane per side with the brick center completely changes the feel of the street. When you combine that with the investment developers have made to restore buildings downtown, it really gives the city a nice charm.

What I would like to see next is the incorporation of more art into the infrastructure. When visiting cities like Austin, NYC or LA murals and public art is an integral part of what makes the city feel vibrant. There are so many up-and-coming BIPOC artist voices that can be part of the future of this city and to think about what kind of environment we can foster if some of those voices are part of the conversation. That is what I am excited to play a role in. ♦



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BACK

ON TRACK

These high-end **1880s-style rail cars** currently parked in Contoocook can take more than six months to build, but once done they evoke another era

Story, Page 28





Liam Donnelly, 5, of Hopkinton
inspects the caboose on display at
Hopkinton High School on Sunday
as he and sister Ava, 6, tour the
rail cars built by Chi Hofe.

Geoff Forester



Geoff Forester

Ava and Liam Donnelly of Hopkinton inspect the caboose on a rail car built by Chi Hofe.

By DAVID BROOKS

Playing with trains is a near-universal pleasure, but few of us have taken it as far as Chi Hofe.

Behind the barn alongside his Contoocook home sit two gorgeous rail cars – a boxcar and a caboose – that Hofe built aided by plans by Ed Evans, a subcontractor friend. There's the 24-foot Boxcar Pub, with arched ceiling, handsome bar stools and a lovely internal scent from the 3-by-6-inch hemlock beams central to its timber-frame construction. And there's Lucy, a caboose with a queen bed in the cupola and antique train stove down below near the mini-fridge, sink and bathroom, all ready for a very upscale version of the hobo life.

These reproductions, built on road trailers for truck towing, are the heart of a small business that has seen its plans derailed, so to speak, by regula-

tions, the pandemic and supply chain problems. But Roundhouse Workshop is still chugging along as Hofe, like many business owners, pivots and then pivots again.

"At first we were thinking of selling into the commercial market but then tiny houses took off and we targeted that," said Hofe, 46, who lived in Concord when he was younger and graduated from Tilton School in 1994, then returned here 14 years ago to start a carpentry business and raise a family. "But New England is slow at tiny house regulations, and we're still waiting."

Roundhouse Workshop's first reproduction cars drew lots of attention, displaying at fairs and shows when Hofe started taking them around in 2018. They sold a caboose and things were looking up but COVID-19 put an end to that momentum.

Now Hofe is concentrating on the rental mar-



Building the rail cars costs lots of time and money because it follows meticulous standards.

ket, making his two cars available for outdoor weddings, big events, funky overnight stays and anything else you can think of, although he's still open to anybody who wants to spend roughly \$70,000 to buy the boxcar or \$150,000 for the caboose (putting that cupola on top roughly doubled construction expense).

The cost is so high because the cars are built like narrow-gauge railroad cars were built in the 1880s, a verisimilitude that has been the point for Hofe all along. Rather than stick-built construction using 2x4s (or smaller), as is the norm for many tiny houses or RVs, he uses the hemlock beams with mortise-and-tenon joints and other aspects of timber-built homes. The beams allow more room for insulation within the 8 1/2-foot-wide confines of the car, and the insulation itself is sheep's wool, which handles moisture better than alternatives. Along with such things as steel rods to hold the structure together under compression, the result is strong – "it can handle a huge snow load" –

but, surprisingly perhaps, actually uses less wood.


But it's an expensive process and not a speedy one, with a complete car taking Hofe at least six months, assuming he can get the materials right now: "I've been waiting five months for a trailer."

With the cost and amount of time it takes to design and build each car, Hofe knows that this will never be a huge business. He has developed some side products such as timber-frame outbuildings, a branded railroad-style step stool and mobile decks that resemble old-time railroad loading docks. He still does his original construction business on timber-frame buildings even as he dreams of finding land to place a seasonal Airbnb complex of boxcars and cabooses.

But if nothing else, he's living just about everybody's childhood dream. "This is a full-scale model train," he said.

To learn more, check the website: roundhouse-workshop.com. ♦

AVALOCH FARM MUSIC INSTITUTE

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue dress and a yellow and blue patterned shawl, is seated on a wooden chair in a lush green field. She is playing a cello and looking upwards with a serene expression. The background features a dense forest of green trees and rolling hills under a sky with scattered white clouds.

Artistic director Ashley Bathgate plays her cello on the hill above the apple orchard at Avaloch Farm Music Institute in Boscawen in May.

Geoff Forester



Tranquil & transcendent

**Boscawen retreat celebrates 10th anniversary
with season that runs from May 22 to Sept. 17**



Eileen O'Grady

Artistic director Ashley Bathgate practices her cello on the porch at Avaloch Farm Music Institute in Boscawen.

Boscawen retreat offers musicians an atmosphere typically reserved for composers and other forms of art

By EILEEN O'GRADY

On a recent morning in late April, the grounds of Avaloch Farm Music Institute were quiet, the only sounds coming from songbirds in the surrounding sunlit meadows and a cleaning team busy preparing the upstairs rooms of the bright red building for the guests who would soon be arriving. But in just a few short weeks, the buildings and the surrounding grounds would be alive with the sound of violins, pianos, cellos, clarinets and many other instruments, notes drifting out of the practice room windows to reach the ears of cows in the pasture next door.

Avaloch Farm Music Institute, a retreat program for musicians in Boscawen, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year with a season that runs from May 22 to Sept. 17 and will be marked by a celebratory event on the last day featuring food and music. The institute, which some devoted attendees refer to as a “slice of heaven,” gives performing musicians

from around the country a quiet and inspirational New England atmosphere to work on music away from the bustle of a big city and the demands of touring life.

The retreat center was started in 2013 by Alfred Tauber and Deborah Sherr as a way of bringing music to Boscawen and providing the same retreat opportunities for musicians that are more commonly enjoyed by composers and artists in other disciplines.

Avaloch's new artistic director, Ashley Bathgate, took over in December 2021. Bathgate, a cellist, started coming to Avaloch herself as an attendee in 2014 to work on creative projects.

Over the years, Bathgate said, the retreat center has gone from serving about 20 musicians playing mainly classical chamber repertoire to over 100 ensembles representing modern classical, jazz, baroque and electronic genres, to name a few, and is the reason many significant projects in the U.S. mu-



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Eileen O'Grady

Ashley Bathgate has been attending Avaloch since 2014 and become artistic director in 2021.

sic world were possible.

“By season two, the word had really spread and so it had kind of exploded into the music communities with people talking about, like, ‘what a fabulous slice of heaven,’ ” Bathgate said. “It really is. Even as you’re driving up the driveway, I always have this calming feeling. It’s something special about the land, about the people who run it and about the musicians who come here.”

When Bathgate first started attending Avaloch she was living in New York City and found it hard to foster creativity in a small Manhattan apartment.

“Rehearsal spaces and practice spaces in cities are great, but you rent them at a high premium and they’re often a bit sterile of an environment, windowless in many instances, not exactly your ideal creative environment,” Bathgate said. “I found I could never get work done because it was always something. There was noise, or there was a distraction, or I had to

get to a gig or I had to get to the airport.”

The institute is free of charge for attendees and gets its funding from the Laszlo N. Tauber Family Foundation. Each musician is given a furnished bedroom complete with linens in one of the main buildings, meals prepared by a chef at the shared dining hall and access to practice studios outfitted with pianos.

Musicians apply – there is a \$100 application fee – and pitch a proposed project they plan to work on at the retreat center for days or weeks at a time. Applicants are chosen based on their project’s feasibility, its significance and potential impact on the world, and whether attending Avaloch would enable them to create something they wouldn’t otherwise be able to do. The institute typically receives 200 to 300 applications per year, and usually admits 100 to 125 ensembles, who attend for varying lengths of time throughout the season.

As an attendee at Avaloch, Bath-

gate has used her time to plan for albums and practice repertoire. One summer she brought three composers to Avaloch to work with her. Each wrote a solo cello piece to go on her 2019 solo album “Ash.” She’s also spent many days just sitting on the screen porch with a cup of tea, writing grant proposals and planning her next project.

“There’s no substitute for having an environment that allows you to have quiet – externally but also internally – so that you can compose, you can think, you can come up with new projects,” Bathgate said.

Michael Compitello, a performing percussionist who teaches at Arizona State University, attended Avaloch for many years and served as an assistant director before Bathgate came on board. Compitello has fond memories of driving to Boscawen from Kansas or upstate New York where he was living, his Honda Fit packed with percussion instruments including snare drums, a marimba and a vibraphone.

Many attendees take advantage of Avaloch's studio spaces to bring a lot of gear – some musicians roll up with station wagons or U-Hauls packed with speakers, synthesizers, amps and recording equipment to use during their stay.

"A lot of times as performers we feed off each other. You're excited by what other people are doing," Compitello said. "What's great about Avaloch is that you can be surrounded by a group working on medieval music, or a group working on jazz or a group working on something new. And those ideas how you see other people sort of activate their collaboration is really powerful."

Compitello and his bandmate Hannah Collins from the ensemble New Morse Code started Avaloch's new music initiative that brings composers and musicians to the institute together to collaborate. Compitello has used his time as an Avaloch attendee to work on new music with New Morse Code and also a solo snare drum project. He says the social time outside the practice room has been equally meaningful.

"When you're in an ensemble with people and you spend a significant amount of time together, those sort of interstitial moments like the meals, the talking, the developing of relationships outside of performing on your instruments, become essential to the collaborative process," Compitello said. "It becomes essential to the rapport you have onstage."

Outside of rehearsal time, musicians hang out on the porch, go for hikes, enjoy the lake and pick blueberries in the nearby blueberry field. Every Friday during the retreat season, the musicians play small concerts for each other in the recreation room to showcase what they've been working on, although there is no expectation or pressure to perform.

All the musicians who attend the institute are required to do community outreach, bringing about 60 concerts per season to the surrounding Boscawen area. Avaloch musicians

***"There's no substitute
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think, you can come up
with new projects."***

**ASHLEY BATHGATE,
Avaloch artistic director**

have played their music at local nursing homes, hospitals, churches, and at Old Home Day while Boscawen residents munch barbecue nearby.

Avaloch has allowed many significant projects in the United States music world to blossom. The ensemble Sandbox Percussion worked on their album "Seven Pillars" with composer Andy Akiho at Avaloch, a project that was nominated for the 2021 Grammy Awards. Renowned ensembles like the Boston-based chamber orchestra A Far Cry and the Aizuri Quartet have done retreats at Avaloch, as has the baroque string ensemble ACRONYM, the Westerlies, Catalyst Quartet, Formosa Quartet, KAIA String Quartet and many more.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge impact on the lives of performing musicians whose concerts and tours were canceled, and Avaloch was no exception. The Institute closed for

the summer of 2020, and did an on-line concert series called "Made at Avaloch" featuring performances and Zoom interviews with musicians who had attended the institute. In 2021 they returned with a limited, three-month season and vaccination and testing requirements. Bathgate said the joy that the attendees experienced at getting to reunite and play music with other people after a year of isolation had some attendees sobbing with happiness on the porch.

"I think we all had our moments during the pandemic of maybe questioning 'why is it that I do what I do?' and 'will I be able to keep doing it after this ordeal?' " Bathgate said. "And so imagine coming to a place like this when you haven't been in a group, you haven't rehearsed, you haven't performed for an audience in two years. I can tell you that there is a lot of gratitude going around right now, myself as a performer."

Bathgate has big goals for expanding the institute to year-round programming, and to offering similar retreats for writers, visual artists or tourists interested in the fall foliage. She would love to add a concert hall and recording studio.

"I think a place like this where you can come and be completely disconnected is magical," Bathgate said.

The institute's tenth-anniversary celebration is slated for Sept. 17 and will feature dinner and performances from Sandbox Percussion, Merz Trio and Cheng Duo. ♦



Melissa M. Burt
M.S., CCC-A

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A NET GAIN



Geoff Forester

LEFT: New Hampshire Fish Culturist Chad Elliot hands a net full of trout to Fish and Game Conservation officer trainee Austin Vallandares at the Soucook River earlier this month.

ABOVE: Vallandares does the rest by tossing the fish into the river.



By DAVID BROOKS

One of the signs of spring in New Hampshire is the hundreds of thousands of brook trout, brown trout and rainbow trout that get placed into lakes, streams and ponds all over the state.

The fish are raised in six state-owned fish hatcheries until they reach a certain size, usually at two years old, and then trucked to waterways and tossed in – or, in the case of remote ponds, dropped from helicopters – to provide sport for the anglers that buy some 150,000 fishing licenses each year.

New Hampshire maintains an updated list of which waterways have been stocked, at wildlife.state.nh.us/fishing/trout-stocking.html. It plans to use \$55 million in federal relief funds to up-

date the state's hatcheries and build two new ones.

Like many states, New Hampshire has stocked waterways with fish for a century to help lure the fishing audience. Rainbow trout, mostly obtained from federal fish hatcheries, are a separate species that has been bred specifically to grow quickly and provide good sport for anglers.

The practice of stocking has drawn criticism from those concerned that these non-native fish are driving out native trout, which has led to some areas being considered off limits from future fish stocking.

Because they concentrate fish populations, hatcheries generate large amounts of waste that can pollute local waterways, an issue that has plagued the Powder Mill Hatchery in New Durham.





Monitor file

The opening of Steeplegate Mall was a major event in Concord around 1990.

MALL MEMORIES

When Steeplegate Mall opened in 1990, it held the promise of being a center of Concord life for decades to come. As the mall winds down, we asked readers to share their memories. Here's one about how **Kristy and JB Frazier worked at the mall, met at the mall and, eventually, fell in love at the mall.**

By RAY DUCKLER

The guy working at Foot Locker thought he had a noisy neighbor.

It had to be the girl next door, his future wife, working at Claire's Boutique 23 years ago. She had to be the one pounding on

his wall, knocking sneaker displays to the ground.

It only made sense. Kristy Daneault was working that shift when the sneakers fell. The two businesses shared a common wall. This was a no brainer.

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REMEMBER WHEN

Who else could it be?

"He thought we were the ones who were banging on the walls," Kristy said by phone recently. "I told him we have jewelry on pegs on our wall, so I could not be the one who was pounding on the wall. I explained it to him aggressively. Not mean, but I aggressively told him that I wasn't the one doing it."

By that time, however, it hardly mattered what Kristy said. JB Frazier was hooked on her, and the Steeplegate Mall, a big hit in the community through the 1990s, had once again provided a service, beyond selling jewelry and athletic footwear.

In this case, at that moment in 1998, JB liked what he saw. And heard. "Somehow, he was smitten by my sass," Kristy wrote in an email to the *Concord Monitor*,

which publishes this magazine.

Asked how sassy she was, Kristy said in a text, "Enough that I didn't think it would intrigue him enough to come back."

She was wrong. While they worked side-by-side, in two separate businesses, JB flirted with Kristy at the Steeplegate Mall over the next week. Kristy responded. Their first date was five days following that mysterious wall-shaking incident, still, to this day, an unsolved mystery.

"He hung out over the next couple of days," Kristy said. "I had known some of his friends at the mall, but we never laid eyes on each other until that moment. When he asked me out, I figured I'd give it a try."

There was complexity, though. "I was a child of divorce," Kristy

"He hung out over the next couple of days. I had known some of his friends at the mall, but we never laid eyes on each other until that moment. When he asked me out, I figured I'd give it a try."



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REMEMBER WHEN

mentioned, “so I was skeptical and trust was an issue.”

Still, on their first date they went to a place called Chantilly’s – long since closed – on Fort Eddy Road to shoot pool.

“We were just looking for something to do,” Kristy said.

From there, Kristy hit a crossroads in life, the summer after she graduated from Pembroke Academy in 1998: pursue an education, or solidify what she had with JB.

College became her priority. She was going to Rhode Island in the fall, to Johnson and Wales University in Providence.

JB was staying here, in Henniker, working at Foot Locker. “I didn’t make a commitment because I was leaving,” Kristy ex-

plained.

Something, however, changed inside her. She realized that there was no need to settle on one path over the other.

Go to college in Rhode Island, she figured, then finish school here, in the Granite State, at New Hampshire Technical Institute and at what was then called Plymouth State College (It’s now Plymouth State University).

And why not continue seeing JB, too?

So that’s what she did.

“I chose to kick it up a notch,” Kristy said. “I said we should be boyfriend and girlfriend. That was the end of July and we spent the whole month of August together. He came to Rhode Island almost every weekend.”

“I chose to kick it up a notch. I said we should be boyfriend and girlfriend. That was the end of July and we spent the whole month of August together.”

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REMEMBER WHEN

They made the long-distance relationship work. They dated for seven years before marrying in 2005. She's an education and site manager for Head Start in Franklin. He works for Comcast.

Meanwhile, the mall stores they met at went the way of the T-Rex, dead, extinct, whatever you want to call it. The contrast between the 1990s Steeplegate and today's is startling.

Parents liked it. They shopped for stuff they needed while their children, the younger ones, raced down the mall's central wing, flat and long like an airstrip. Or maybe mom or dad joined them for a ride on a soft, motorized elephant.

Teens, or course, felt cool at the mall back then. Actually, pre-

teens did as well. They went to Spencer's, played games in the arcade, ate pizza.

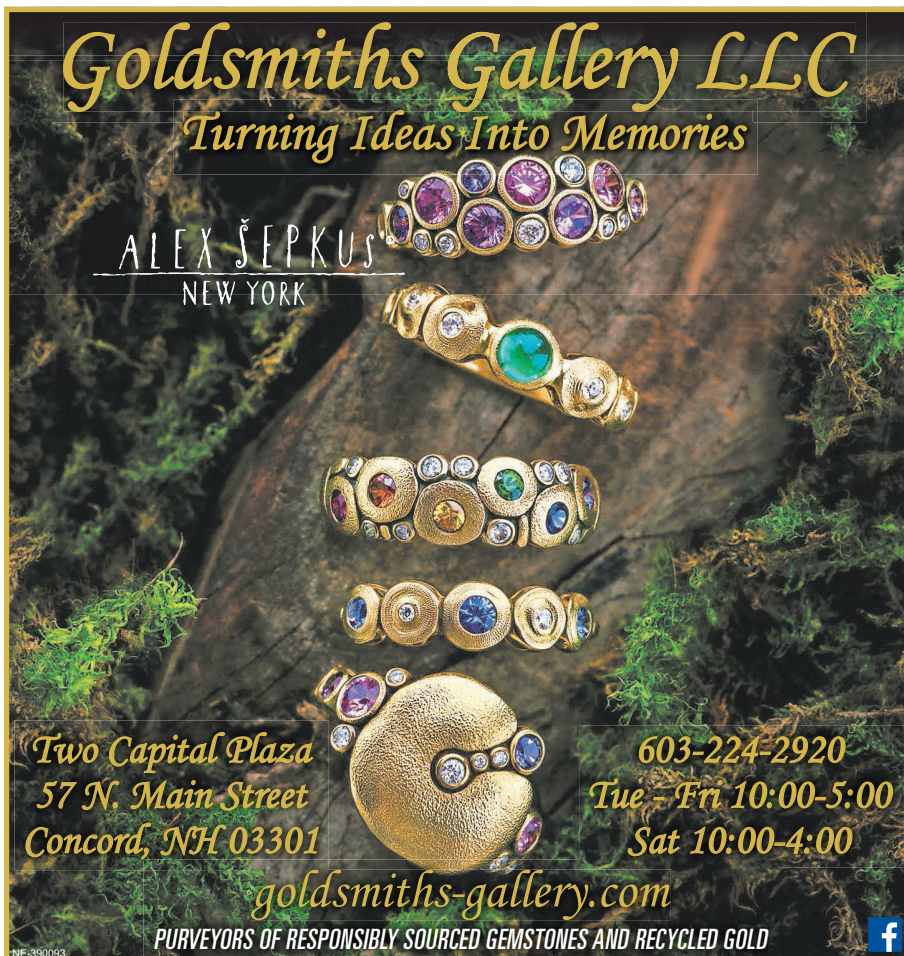
"We grew up going to the mall, and that was what you did," Kristy remembered. "Shop at all the stores, and and it was so full back then. At the time, it was the place to be."

Today, she'd never think of dropping off her two daughters at the Steeplegate Mall. "It's desolate," Kristy said. "There's nothing there."

Her younger daughter recently thought Manchester's mall was busy and exciting. And it was. It was a shopping center, a restaurant, an amusement park and a meeting spot, all rolled into one.

"I told them that (Steeplegate)

"We grew up going to the mall, and that was what you did. Shop at all the stores, and it was so full back then. At the time, it was the place to be."



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REMEMBER WHEN

used to have a food court,” Kristy said. “I told them that we used to have a candy store.

“They were like, ‘really?’ ”

Sure. Have a slice, or an ice cream cone, or some sweet-and-sour chicken. That’s what it was in the day.

And sometimes, while parents and kids immersed themselves in the mall experience, something else, something special, occurred from time to time, when the world wasn’t watching.

Like the wall between a pair of businesses mysteriously shaking. Hard enough to knock sneakers to the ground.

“I decided to follow him after that,” Kristy said, “and that was the best decision I ever made.” ♦



GEOFF FORESTER / Monitor staff

MEET THE MURPHREES: Ramey and Chuck Murphree met at the Steeplegate Mall 24 years ago and now they are a happy family living in the South End of Concord with their two boys, Clayton and Clyde, and their dog Wilson. Read their story at concordmonitor.com.

ADDITIONAL STORIES ON STEEPLGATE

The *Monitor* has written several stories about readers’ memories of the mall since news broke that the owners were shutting down interior operations, at least temporarily. To read additional mall memories, visit concordmonitor.com, click on the search icon in the upper right corner and type in “Steeplegate Mall.”



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N.H. State Forest Nursery
Seeds, above, and Red
Oak seedlings, below.

The need for seeds

The State Forest Nursery has never been busier

By DAVID BROOKS

When spring comes, gardeners itch to get plants into the soil. The same goes for foresters.

Tree lovers are descending on the Concord area every year to pick up their annual allotment of bare-root seedlings from the State Forest Nursery, which began by providing baby pine trees for reforestation in

1911 and now sells everything from spruce and walnut seedlings to native grapevines to a “pollinator package” of flowering plants that sold out the instant it was offered.

“Over the years we have shifted more toward a wildlife focus,” said William Kunelius, nursery manager for the Boscawen facility at 405 Daniel Webster Highway. “There’s



an emphasis on shrubs and mast-producing trees for wildlife habitat, and a lot of Christmas tree seedlings for Christmas-tree farms.” (“Mast” is a term for nuts, berries and other plant items that wildlife eat.)

Ordering from the nursery catalog, which comes out in December, is a family ritual in my house. Our property is sprinkled with trees and bushes purchased over the years and even though half of them die from drought, hungry deer or other problems and many of the firs have become Christmas trees, the state forest nursery has still made a big impact on what we see when we stroll behind the barn.

We’re not alone. The nursery’s offerings have always been popular but lately it has been overwhelmed due to COVID-19 keeping everybody home and thinking about planting, and climate change making everybody more interested in trees.

“This year so far we’ve sold 240,000 seedlings, a new record in value,” said Kunelius, speaking more than two months before seedlings could actually be picked up.

About two-thirds of its customers are homeowners like me. Christmas tree farms make up the bulk of the rest – the reforestation efforts that launched the nursery are mostly a thing of the past. “One of the benefits of the East Coast is that forests regenerate on their own. It’s very different from the West Coast where they still do a lot of reforestation.”

Growing enough bare-root seedlings isn’t easy. (“Bare-root” because they are not potted or sold in soil, to avoid competing with private nurseries.) It begins with getting enough seeds to plant.

Some they buy. The nursery sticks almost entirely to plants that are native to the state, although there is debate about shifting to species from southern New England that might move north due to the climate change, such as shagbark hickory. But most of the seeds that are planted are col-



N.H. State Forest Nursery

Nursery Manager Billy Kunelius inspects drying cones.

lected either from bushes, from orchards of various nut trees that have been planted out behind the nursery buildings or, in the case of evergreens, from cones.

The best collection method is with Norway spruce. “Squirrels go up just before the cones are ripe. They’ll chew it off from the branch, let it fall on the ground, then run around on the ground, pick them all up and put them in a big pile called a cache,” said Kunelius. “We basically go and raid the cache. They get pretty mad.”

Getting seeds out of these cones is a multi-step process involving equipment that would fit into an antique farm display at Shaker Village, including a tumbler that appears to be made of scrap lumber, chicken wire and bungee cords. Not even the most penny-pinching of anti-government groups could fault them for wasting taxpayer dollars on that equipment.

The nursery has three full-time and a half dozen seasonal employees with an operating budget of about \$220,000 plus some money from timber sales. It occupies about 900 acres, most of which are woodlands.

A bushel of cones produces around

3 pounds of seeds, depending on the species. That’s a lot of seeds: There are 30,000 in a pound for balsam firs, for example. After they’re cleaned and sorted they are either planted and put in a greenhouse to start growing, or placed in plastic bags and stored in a walk-in cooler for future use. Seeds last almost indefinitely there:

Kunelius showed one bag dating to 1988, when he was three years old.

Even with all this care, Kunelius said a 40% germination rate is pretty good. The seedlings are planted in the ground to be harvested between one and four years later, depending on the species and customer. Christmas tree farms like bigger seedlings, so it takes four years for their plants to mature, while mine are just a year or two old.

Like anybody growing things, the nursery sometimes struggles against nature. It lost an entire field of trees to root rot that is now affecting the orchard of balsam firs, which will probably have to be removed.

But judging from its popularity, expect this Concord institution to keep churning out seedlings for many years to come. Even if the squirrels get mad about it! ♦

EVENTS



JUNE 11 TO 19

Laconia Motorcycle Week

Weirs Beach, Laconia

laconiamcweek.com



JUNE 17

Blippi the Musical

Blippi The Musical brings the energetic and loveable character Blippi off the screen and onto the stage with world-class production, audience engagement and amazing music. Children across the world have quickly taken to Blippi's charismatic personality and innovative teaching lessons. In the live show they will continue to learn about the world around them while singing and dancing along with this one of a kind show.

Capitol Center for the Arts, Friday at 6 p.m.

ccanh.com



JUNE 15

Devon Allman Project

The Devon Allman Project is a six-piece world-class band that has previously toured almost 20 countries. They will be playing songs of The Allman Brothers and Gregg Allman in their set as well as Devon's fan-favorite originals and surprise covers.

Capitol Center for the Arts, Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
ccanh.com

JUNE 17 TO 26

The Bald Soprano

The Community Players of Concord will present a classic of modern theatre, a clock chimes seventeen times for seemingly no reason at all, the doorbell rings but there are no visitors, and the bald soprano never changes her hairstyle. A hilarious and unique satire on modern life by Eugene Ionesco, known as the father of Theatre of the Absurd, this is a theatre experience in which non-sequiturs fly, people talk to each other at cross purposes getting nowhere, and the concept of time is turned on its head. This thought-provoking tour-de-force of linguistic acrobatics about modern communication or the lack thereof is sure to delight.

Hatbox Theatre, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m.
communityplayersofconcord.org or hatboxnh.com

JUNE 18

Brooks Young Band

Brooks Young & His Band saturate their songs with rock and roll edge and blues feel, going for a direct, emotional and powerful sonic blend. Opening act will feature Valerie Barretto.

Bank of N.H. Stage, Saturday at 8 p.m.
ccanh.com

JUNE 18

The Guess Who

The Guess Who has connected with the masses throughout a exultant hit parade spanning 14 Top 40 hits, including "These Eyes," "Clap For the Wolfman," and "Hand Me Down World."

Capitol Center for the Arts, Saturday at 8 p.m.
ccanh.com

JUNE 24

Jocelyn and Chris

Think rock is dead? Meet Jocelyn and Chris, two analog souls hell-bent on inciting a new rock revival. Jocelyn and Chris and their band have charted four consecutive commercial radio singles in the Billboard AAA Top 40, taken two records to No. 1 on the Relix Jambands Top 30 Album Chart, and appeared nationally on NBC's Today Show. The siblings, both recent graduates of Harvard University, have balanced college with performances coast to coast and recording seven records.

Bank of N.H. Stage, Friday at 8 p.m.
ccanh.com

JUNE 25

Dance Pop Revolution

The Movement Box Dance Studio will showcase its talent.

Capitol Center for the Arts, Saturday at 1 p.m.
ccanh.com

JUNE 26

Menopause, the musical

Menopause is a groundbreaking celebration of women who are on the brink of, in the middle of, or have survived "The Change." Now celebrating 20 years of female empowerment through hilarious musical comedy, the musical has evolved as a "grassroots" movement of women who deal with life adjustments after 40 by embracing each other and the road ahead.

Capitol Center for the Arts, Sunday at 2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.
ccanh.com



JUNE 23

Rodney Carrington's "Let Me In!"

Rodney Carrington is a multi-talented comedian, actor, singer and writer playing sold-out shows around the world as one of the top 10 highest-grossing touring comedians for the past two decades.

Capitol Center for the Arts, Thursday at 8 p.m.
ccanh.com





JUNE 30

Amythyst Kiah

Amythyst Kiah's Rounder Records debut, *Wary + Strange*, marks the glorious combination of two vastly different worlds: the iconoclastic alt-rock that first sparked her musical passion and the roots/old-time music scene where she's found break-out success in recent years, including recognition from Rolling Stone as "one of Americana's great up-and-coming secrets."

Bank of N.H. Stage, Thursday at 8 p.m.

ccanh.com

JULY 1

Comedy Out of the Box

Each month, talented comedians from around the Northeast come to the Capital City to make you think and make you laugh.

Hatbox Theatre, Friday at 7:30 p.m.

hatboxnh.com

JULY 2

Queen City Improv

Queen City Improv is Manchester's finest improv troupe, and they're bringing their act to the Capital City.

Hatbox Theatre, Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

hatboxnh.com

JULY 2

Hot Dog Eating Contest

Sunapee Harbor Dogs will launch its inaugural hot dog eating contest with the first 10 registrants to sign up.

74 Main St.,
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sunapeeharbor-dogs.com



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JULY 7

Lamont Smooth

The second coming of local favorites Lamont Smooth blends funk, blues and psychedelic rock as they explore the improvisational boundaries of their classic originals while embracing a more modern sound, all while feeding off the energy of the audience during their live performances.

Bank of N.H. Stage, Thursday at 8 p.m.
ccanh.com



JULY 7 TO 10

Hillsboro Summer Festival

Live entertainment, midway and rides, 5K road race, car and truck show, parade and fireworks.

Hillsboro Fairgrounds, 29 Preston St., Hillsboro. Thursday, 6 to 10 p.m.; Friday, 5 to 11 p.m.; Saturday, noon to 11 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
hillsborosummerfest.com

JULY 8 AND 9

RENT, school edition

Presented by RB Productions.
Capitol Center for the Arts, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.
rbproductions.org

JULY 13

Discovering Magic

Hatbox Theatre, Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
hatboxnh.com

JULY 15 AND 16

Beauty and the Beast Jr.

Presented by RB Productions.
Capitol Center for the Arts, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.
rbproductions.org

JULY 8 TO 17

Into the Woods

As the result of the curse of a wicked old witch, a baker and his wife are childless. With only three days to undo the curse, they venture into the forest to find the ingredients that will reverse the spell and finally let them start a family: a milk-white cow, hair as yellow as corn, a blood-red cape, and a slipper of gold. During their journey, they meet Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, and Jack, each one on a quest to fulfill a wish. Music by Stephen Sondheim, book by James Lapine, and presented by RGC Theatre.

Hatbox Theatre, Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m.
hatboxnh.com



CONCORD ANTIQUES

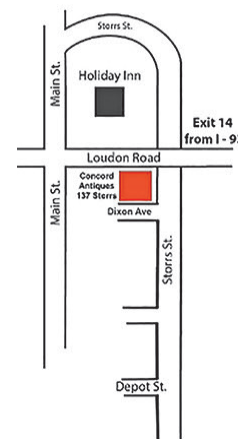
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JULY 16

Winnie the Pooh

Presented by RB Productions.
Bank of N.H. Stage, Saturday at noon
rbproductions.org

JULY 22 TO 31

The Gulf

Relationships can be difficult to maintain. One day you wake up and discover you have drifted apart. Come see our couple navigate the waters of The Gulf.

Hatbox Theatre, Fridays, Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.
hatboxnh.com

JULY 22 AND 23

Matilda Jr.

Presented by RB Productions.
Capitol Center for the Arts, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.
rbproductions.org

JULY 29 AND 30

Legally Blonde Jr.

Presented by RB Productions.
Capitol Center for the Arts, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.
rbproductions.org

JULY 30

Peter Mulvey & Mark Erelli

Bank of N.H. Stage, Saturday at 8 p.m.
ccanh.com

JULY 31 TO AUG. 5

Peter Pan Jr. Summer Camp

This one-week camp for young actors ages 8 to 14 will allow campers to develop musical theatre skills as they rehearse the show "Peter Pan, Jr." all week at the Community Players of Concord Studio and on Friday evening present the show free of charge to family and friends at the Concord City Auditorium.

communityplayersofconcord.org



AUG. 5 TO 7

Suncook Valley Rotary Hot Air Balloon Rally

Drake Field, Pittsfield
suncookvalleyrotary.org



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AUG. 5 TO 14

Bubble Boy

DOT Theater and The Hatbox Theatre are proud to announce a brand new production of Cinco Paul's musical Bubble Boy. Based on the film of the same name starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Bubble Boy tells the story of Jimmy Livingston, a Palmdale teen with an immune deficiency that has confined him to life sequestered alone in a plastic bubble with his mother. That is until Chloe Molinski moves to town.

Hatbox Theatre, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m.
hatboxnh.com

AUG. 5 AND 6

Northeastern Ballet Theatre's Swan Lake

From Boston Ballet's former prima ballerina Edra Toth comes a full length production of this most beloved ballet classic of all time. Featuring special guest artist Yuval Cohen from the Philadelphia Ballet, you don't have to travel to Boston to be moved by amazing talent.

Capitol Center for the Arts, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.
ccanh.com

AUG. 6 AND 7

Belknap County 4-H Fair

Mile Hill Road, Belmont, Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
bcfairnh.org

AUG. 11

Queen City Improv

Hatbox Theatre, Thursday at 7:30 p.m.
hatboxnh.com

AUG. 19 TO 28

Great Atlantic and Pacific Shakespeare Company

Biron can't get past the death of his wife two years earlier – a death he is convinced he caused by having an affair with Rose. He has taken refuge in religion, making regular retreats to a nearby monastery and the dubious ministrations of the enigmatic Brother Rene. Can Rose and Biron work out their differences – or will their bickering mean the end of "The Great A&P"?

Hatbox Theatre, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m.
hatboxnh.com



AUG. 6 TO 14

League of New Hampshire Craftsmen Fair

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Mount Sunapee Resort, Newbury
nhcrafts.org/annual-craftsmens-fair

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New Hampshire Historical Society

Golfers gather on the ninth green in front of the clubhouse at Beaver Meadow Golf Course in 1920.

A not-so-rough past

"In the Fall of 1896, Mabel Hill, Harriet Huntress and Paul Holden could be seen hitting golf balls into the fields opposite the West Concord Cemetery," reads an entry in *The Village of West Concord*. "The

following Spring, with the added help of Adam Holden, they founded Beaver Meadow Golf Course and Club."

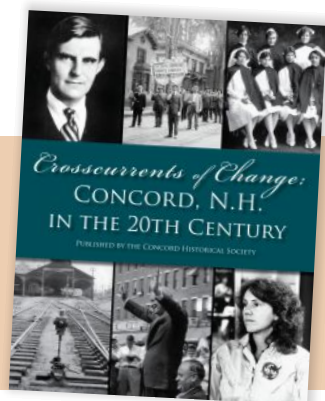
The nine-hole course, the first in the state, was built on land owned by the Sewalls Falls Lock & Canal Co. The city of Concord took over ownership and maintenance in 1930 and the course remained nine holes until it

expanded to 18 in the late 1960s.

Golf, too, spanned the century and Concord continued to play a healthy role in the sport as the 21st century began.

Beaver Meadow, classified as the oldest course in the state, was the hub of the state's competitive golf in the early days of the 20th century.

A Beaver Meadow golfer, H.W.



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Monitor file

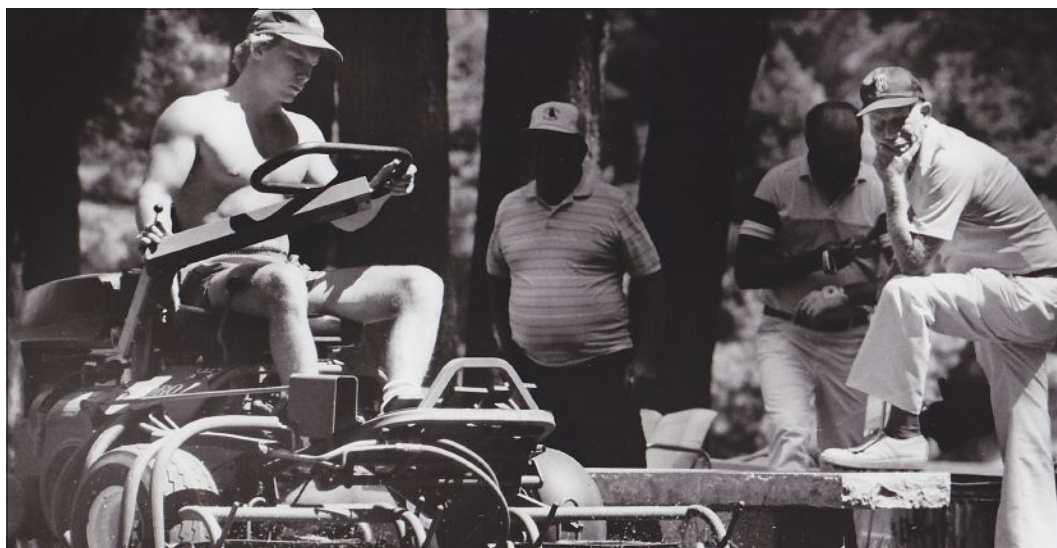
Beaver Meadow expanded to 18 holes in 1969, and by the 1980s and 1990s, it had grown in popularity.

Odlin, won the Rollins Cup for winning the first two years of the state championship, held at the course in 1899 and 1900. In 1901, Nathaniel C. Hobbs, another Beaver Meadow member, won the title on his home course.

Hobbs won again in 1906, when the championship was once again held at Beaver Meadow. It was the last State Amateur at Beaver Meadow for nearly 70 years. New Hampshire golf officials opted to take the event to 18-hole courses.

Beaver Meadow Golf Course – led by golf pros Chet Wheeler and, later, Ed Deshaies through the bulk of the second half of the century – had gone through renovations, and opened as an 18-hole course in 1969.

No longer did golfers set out from near the clubhouse and need to deal with telephone wires as they hit



Monitor file

Arthur Chadwick of Concord, right, and others wait for Steve Amsden to finish mowing so he can tee off in 1986.

across the road on their first shot. No longer did they come back across the street to the eighth green and then play the ninth hole back up the clubhouse that stood near where the tennis courts at Beaver Meadow School were at the end of the 20th century.

The clubhouse was brand new and, with some of the holes rerouted and

closed, Beaver Meadow ended the renovation with 14 new holes.

Before long, the State Am was back.

This excerpt from “Crosscurrents of Change” was written by Allen Lessels and is part of ‘Chapter 7: On the Ball – Heady times for recreation and athletics.’



The daffodil

I wish I could be
as strong as the daffodil.

This herald of spring
never permits winter's

dangerous plan
to scar her heart,

nor does she hold winter
against itself.

She accepts its nature,
while I sulk like

Schopenhauer when
a friend cancels lunch plans.

The daffodil does not
fall out of love
with herself.

I wish I could be
as strong as the daffodil.

By Arwyn Vincent of Concord

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THE SCENE



Geoff Forester photos

One of the two Concord girls' crew boats makes its way down the Merrimack River with the Concord skyline in the background in early April. It was the team's first time on the water for the season.

The season that was



ABOVE: Chichester resident Doug Hall raises an orange card in approval of a warrant article at town meeting in March 12. Towns across the region held their annual voting.

LEFT: NASA Astronaut Richard Arnold talks with Christa McAuliffe students during a visit in April.



Dave Murray and his daughter, Amanda, clown around about who is boss at Murray Farms Greenhouse in Penacook. They were getting ready for a busy season.



ABOVE: This skier had a tough landing at Gunstock, but the ski industry itself had a banner year.



TOP LEFT: Emma Ramsey of Pittsfield waits with Rough and Tough oxen at the demonstration off of Horseshoe Pond in Concord in April.

BOTTOM LEFT: The Concord High boys hockey team brought home yet another Division I state title.



Monitor file

Michael Minnaugh of Concord helps teach his son, Caeleb, how to swim at the Rollins Park pool last June.

Making a summer splash

Hanging around the city pools has been a rite of passage for many of Concord's youth. It's also where many learned their first doggy-paddle many years ago. The city of Concord has seven pools, and in recent years it's been a challenge to find the staffing to keep them open. Like most things, part of the crunch has to do with the pandemic, which severely slowed down lifeguard training. And like many other cities in the state, finding help poolside has been a struggle that preceded COVID. But the city's Parks and Recreation Department is hard at work to make sure this summer pool season is one to remember. Visit concordnh.gov to learn more.

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.

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