

# THE CONCORD INSIDER

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## A YEAR OF HEROES



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**4 - 13** Here's to the heroes  
A look back at those who have gone above and beyond in service to their community.

**find it**

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**CONCORD MONITOR EDITOR** JON VAN FLEET  
(jvanfleet@cmonitor.com)  
**INSIDER NEWS TIPS**  
(news@theconcordinsider.com)  
**ADVERTISING DIRECTOR**  
Steve Pare  
(spare@cmonitor.com, 369-3229)

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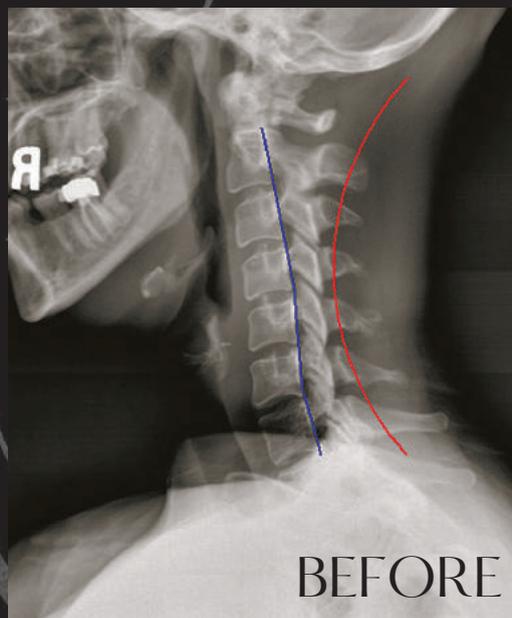
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### ABOUT THE SERIES

Each week in 2022, the 'Monitor' recognized one of our region's many Hometown Heroes. **Follow along at [concordmonitor.com](http://concordmonitor.com) and learn how you can nominate a Hometown Hero.**

# Your nominations. Their stories.

In the following pages, we catch you up on those we profiled

### OUR 2022 COMMUNITY PARTNER

While the challenges continue, so do the good works done by our neighbors, our teachers, our health care providers, our volunteers and so many others. These are their stories. Ledyard National Bank is proud to support the 2022 Hometown Heroes, who were nominated by members of the community and selected by editors of the Monitor.

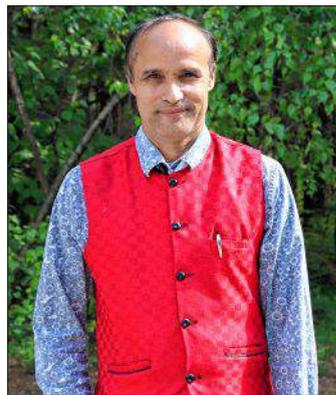


**SUSAN COVERT**  
Hopkinton

In her 33 years in Hopkinton, Covert has actively pursued ways to help her community.

Covert's role in the committee revolved around outreach and organizing. She played a pivotal role in spreading the word about the need for environmental reform, and she's built a following her newsletter.

"That newsletter has become a really important feature of living in this town," Laurie Morrissey said. "And a lot of people really appreciate it. People don't always go to the town calendar to find out what's going on."



**GHANA SHARMA**  
Concord

Sharma has been helping refugee students and families in the Concord area for over a decade. So when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, he was quick to identify the problems the pandemic would pose for new Americans.

An ELL math tutor at Concord High School, Sharma quickly noticed that some new American students took on day jobs to support their family members instead of attending online school. He volunteered extra hours to tutor students at night to help them avoid failing classes.



**CARRIE KEELEY**  
Pembroke

Keeley believes family is who you choose to surround yourself with. So when she got a message that a distant relative was no longer able to care for her nine-month-old baby, Keeley did not hesitate. She picked up her 12-year-old daughter from after-school soccer and they drove through the night to New Jersey to collect the baby and return home to Pembroke, where Keeley was granted guardianship for a year.

"My door is always open," said Keeley. "I didn't think twice about it. Would I do it again? Absolutely."



**DUNC WALSH**  
Concord

Walsh has been running the Concord High boys' hockey program since 1990 and under his watch, he's elevated it from highly-regarded to a juggernaut.

The Crimson Tide have won nine titles with Walsh behind the bench. His 500-plus career wins prove two truths: winning is the standard and hockey brilliance skates throughout Concord.

His legacy goes deeper. He's a mentor, an advisor, and to those who are finished playing under his tutelage, he's a friend that helped shape the lives of former players.



**RACHEL BAKER**  
Canterbury

In an orange-painted corner office of the Elkins Public Library sits the executive director – the person responsible for keeping the wheels of the library turning. Baker has been a presence for 15 years.

Before becoming director, she worked as a children's librarian. Working with kids became her passion, and she was able to form ties with them and their families.

"Rachel nurtured these kids," said Mary Ellen MacCoy, a circulation librarian with Baker for the past six years. "They would actually confide in her."

# HOMETOWN HEROES OF 2022



**FRANK MULLER**  
Concord

For the last 25 years, Muller's irregular schedule was an act of public service. A labor of love. An excuse to, at first, give the opportunity for his then adolescent daughters to experience Nordic skiing, but then it grew into a year-round purpose. Since the mid-'90s, Muller has groomed the grounds at White Farm and Memorial Field for the skiing community in Concord and surrounding areas.



**DENNIS PAVLICEK**  
Newbury

Pavlicek took over as Newbury's town administrator nearly three decades ago on the heels of a high-profile shooting that killed two. His first task was a big one – rebuilding trust in his beloved town. His first days in office were his most pivotal. "The last thing I wanted to do was see that problem again," he said. "I wanted to make sure I hired people that would be great for the town."



**ATHEA BARTON**  
Penacook

For decades, Barton has been trying to ensure that Concord residents can enjoy and learn from the city's storied infrastructure. Her work, spanning from historical preservation advocacy to fundraising and videography, has benefited the community's architecture in a multitude of ways. "She doesn't seek the limelight. But she gets an amazing amount of stuff done," said her colleague Bill Smith.



**ANGELICA WHITNEY**  
Epsom

When Bishop Brady went remote for the pandemic, Whitney knew she wanted to help. She got the idea to use her robotics team's skills and equipment to make and donate personal protective equipment (PPE) after hearing about the nationwide "1 million PPE challenge." As of earlier this year, she had donated over 8,870 pieces of PPE to local hospitals, schools, nursing homes, safety departments.



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# HOMETOWN HEROES OF 2022

## KEARSARGE NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS

Growth is one of the greatest joys in life, and Kearsarge Neighborhood Partners facilitates much of it in the Kearsarge region.

When we wrote about them, they had just provided a car to a local couple, and later that week they volunteered to drive over 300 miles taking people to doctor's appointments.

Since February 2020, when they were established, there have been countless other stories in the more than 15,000 volunteer hours and 215 "neighbors," as they call themselves, helped.

KNP differs from many other charitable organizations in that they never do things that one couldn't do for themselves. That, to the group that now sits at around 250 volunteers, is the key to building sustainable communities.

"Our mission and our vision is to build connections through our principles," said President Steve Alenby.



**JOSH CHARPENTIER**  
Epsom

Charpentier was recognized for his work helping to put out a fire in Manchester. Charpentier and the entire Manchester Fire Engine Co. 11 shared in this recognition.

They saved six people. One person died of smoke inhalation.

One of those he saved was a fellow firefighter, who became engulfed and trapped.

"I was just doing my job," he said, "and I certainly wasn't going to watch my friend burn to death."



**RUTH SPEED**  
Penacook

Ruth Speed digs like an archeologist, and she's been studying Penacook's past for 70 years.

At 78, she's seen a lot, like the change-over from water power to electricity, eight different grocery stores, Barney's Flowers, holiday parades and apple festivals.

She takes her role as the town's historian seriously. Her passion started when she a child. "I was always curious about the things I saw," Speed said.



**BONNIE MORSE**  
Hillsborough

Friends noticed all the volunteer work Morse has done, the groups she's organized and continues to organize.

Morse promotes Hillsborough's history, organizing reenactments of the town's roles in events such as the Civil and Revolutionary Wars.

She helped create the interactive Living History Event (now called History Alive) about 15 years ago. She is an unofficial ambassador for Hillsborough.



**CAROLINE KEANE**  
Concord

An interaction with a young student made Keane, a former paraprofessional at Rundlett, more attuned to the needs of children.

"That made me think, 'Why is this kid using a plastic bag, why are we not doing better, why are we not providing?'" she said. It was at this moment that she first had the idea for the Ready to Learn Fair.

"She's just a problem solver and she just loves the kids," said a former co-worker."

# HOMETOWN HEROES OF 2022



**KIM KENNEY**  
Boscawen

Like many graduates of Merrimack Valley High, Kenney's athletic prowess, featured in three sports during the 1980s, created a connection with the sports-crazed area. Her longtime local coaching career in field hockey has added to her reputation as a loyal conduit to the school's rich sports history. More than wins, though, Kenney is about teaching girls to play field hockey and learning life lessons.



**LINDA WOODWARD**  
Boscawen

For more than four decades, Woodward has cared for New Hampshire babies who need a safe place to stay.

While most septuagenarian grandparents might breathe a sigh of relief that they no longer have to stay up all night with a newborn infant, 71-year-old Woodward has continued to open her Boscawen home to the tiniest foster children.

Since 1979, she has cared for more than 160 kids.



**CHARLENE BAXTER**  
New London

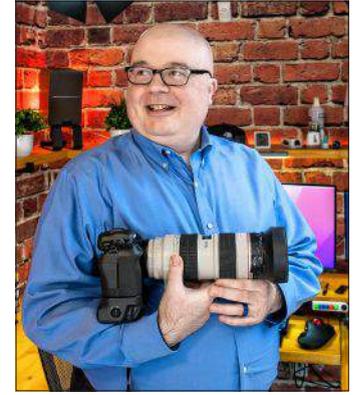
For the past six years, Baxter has accompanied New Hampshire kids through the court system as a fierce advocate for those who have been removed from their families because of abuse or neglect.

Volunteers like Baxter get to know the child or multiple children involved in a case and advise judges on what they believe will best serve the kids, which is not always the same outcome desired by parents.



**MICHELLE LENNON**  
Tilton

Through her work, Lennon consistently saw families in smaller towns surrounding Concord and Laconia, like Tilton and Franklin, falling through the cracks in terms of the care they were receiving; whether it was mental health counseling, parent education or addiction rehabilitation. So she started the Tilton Family Resource Center.



**CHIP GRIFFIN**  
Bow

Griffin has done a lot professionally. He worked on Capitol Hill, founded companies, worked as a COO and a CEO. Despite all that, most know Griffin for his hobby rather than his profession. To Bow, he's not a CEO, he's the photographer at their kids' sports games. At almost every Bow High School game, Griffin can be seen snapping photos available for free online.

**Congratulations to all the Hometown Heroes nominated for your great works!**



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# HOMETOWN HEROES OF 2022

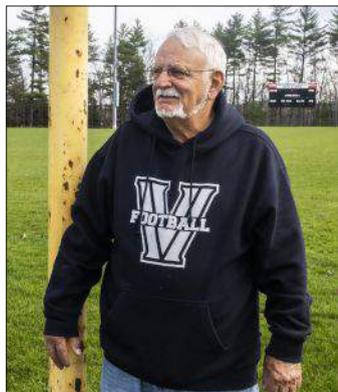
## ZAVYA Warner

Whenever Zavya arrived at a nursing home to provide therapy, the faces of her charges would light up. She dried tears, prompted smiles and offered special solace to whichever patient she could tell was having a particularly bad day.

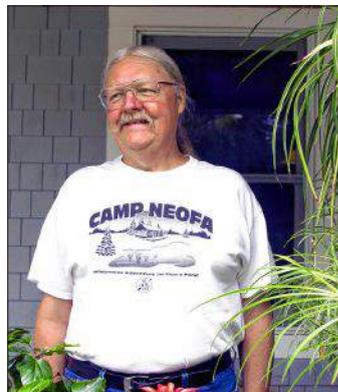
Her techniques were tactile and straightforward. It never took long for patients to open up about their lives. Particularly receptive residents would turn to Zavya's companion Carol and ask: "can I give her a treat?"

Therapy dog Zavya and her human "chauffeur" Carol Zablocki spent nine years visiting nursing homes from Pine Rock Manor in Warner to the Birches in Concord, sometimes volunteering up to three times a week.

Zavya, a Great Pyrenees, retired in April to spend more time on her hobbies – digging, barking and playing in the mud.



**JOE RAYCRAFT**  
Penacook



**DAVID LENT**  
Epsom



**MALINDA RITCHIE WEIR**  
Chichester



**SHEILA MORRIS**  
Concord



**AL CILLEY**  
Concord

Raycraft's resume is long. He was named Merrimack High School's athletic director more than 50 years ago, bringing varsity football to the school. He later served as the Athletic Director for the three high schools in Manchester. There, he forged lifelong connections with the community.

"I remember when the phone would ring, it was always a kid asking, 'Is coach there?'" Sometimes it was a player or a former player who was now coaching," said his daughter Robin Raycraft.

The director of Camp NEOFA (North East Odd Fellows Association) has spent nearly 30 years promoting the annual summer camp and spreading the altruistic ideas that the Odd Fellows have represented for 200 years.

"Dave has been incredibly generous with his time," Kevin McCarthy wrote to the *Monitor*. "He has worked tirelessly to assure that Camp NEOFA in Maine is open for hundreds of underprivileged children and teens every summer."

Ritchie Weir volunteers in her hometown, guides a troop of Girl Scouts, comforts the sick and injured as a nationally registered paramedic and raises two children as a single mother.

She cherishes the community spirit she's discovered since moving to the Granite State, served her country in the Army thousands of miles from home, and leads a pair of Girl Scout troops; which she says is her favorite out-of-home activity.

This year marks Morris's 24th year as a Girl Scout troop leader. Morris says she has led at least two troops at a time, and even as many as three troops at a time for the past 12 years, and she is always quick to jump in and help out if another troop leader needs assistance. She estimates that on a typical week she does about 20 hours of Girl Scout work, and during the "busy season," from November until April – which includes cookie season – she dedicates up to 50 hours a week.

Al Cilley's heart is working at 20 percent capacity, but don't try telling that to the cats he saves, or the people who later adopt them. They see a man with a healthy, strong, compassionate heart. A heart that pumps joy into the lives of the people who have adopted one of the hundreds – thousands? – of the homeless, sometimes feral cats that Cilley has caught. Saving them from the harshness of winter and the never-ending quest for food.

# HOMETOWN HEROES OF 2022



## FRIENDLY KITCHEN Concord

A hot meal is served at The Friendly Kitchen 365 days a year. With a slim staff and dedicated group of volunteers, the local soup kitchen has served either breakfast, lunch or dinner to the Concord community everyday for almost five decades.

“We feed folks without asking questions,” said Valerie Guy, the executive director. “We feed seniors, veterans, some families in the location, lots of families outside of the location, housed people, homeless people.”

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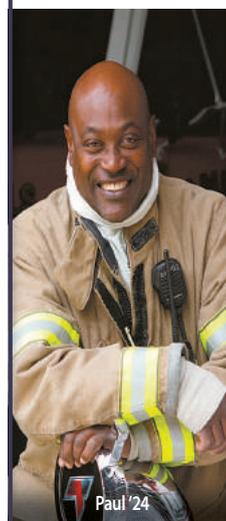
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## HOMETOWN HEROES OF 2022

### SARAH KOUTROUBAS Concord

Koutroubas' son was only a toddler in 2005 when he was first denied the resources he needed for his disability. Her son was diagnosed with Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome, a rare genetic condition that required intensive speech, occupational and physical therapy. A nonprofit that serves people with disabilities told her they could only see her son once a week. She resolved to wait in the lobby of the nonprofit until they agreed to provide the care that medical professionals advised.

After several days of Koutroubas and her crying baby in the lobby, the nonprofit gave in. Impressed with her tenacity, they gave her a job.

That got her started finding her calling to help those with disabilities. She expertly explains complicated topics and rallies the community to advocate for issues important to them. For more than two decades she and her husband, Alex, have made meaningful changes to the lives of Granite Staters with disabilities.



Sarah Koutroubas with her husband, Alex, left, and her son, Colby at his college graduation party in August.



### LORI GARRETT Warner

Garrett, founder and director of Warner Connects food pantry, strives to make everyone who walks in feel welcome; and her team of volunteers believes that no one else can do it as well as she can.

"We meet the clients with compassion and understanding and help sort of guide them through the system," said Garrett.

The pantry serves 13 towns. They have a wood bank, toys for children and coats for the winter.



### JAMES WILLIAMS Gilmanton

He's taken a bullet in his back and shrapnel in his arms and legs, earning a pair of Purple Hearts in Vietnam. He's bought things for complete strangers, like breakfast for fellow veterans, and Legos for a little boy. His daughter, Jennifer Kravitz of Warner, said that her father, "is ALWAYS helping others."

One time, he and Kravitz were eating lunch when 13 members of the National Guard walked in. Williams paid the bill for all 13.



### MELISSA McALLISTER Concord

McAllister has long dedicated herself to raising awareness of breast cancer, joining the Making Strides walk in 2003.

McAllister's commitment to breast cancer awareness strengthened after she lost her sister-in-law, Peggy Thomas a few years ago to the disease. McAllister's team is named 'Mrs. Fine,' in memory of Thomas. "Whenever we asked her how she was, she always said she was fine."



### JANE GORDON Pembroke

Gordon uses the internet and town and state resources to trace family lineages, sometimes dating back to the time of pilgrims and Plymouth Rock. Gordon works tirelessly to help others find their family connections, rarely giving up despite setbacks, and she accepts no money for her service. She pays for any supplies needed.

"I don't give up very easily when I do a family history. It's an obsession."

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# HOMETOWN HEROES OF 2022



**GRETA ERNST**  
Concord

Any Concord resident who called the police between 1981 and last December had a good chance of hearing Ernst's voice.

Ernst, who retired at the end of 2021, spent 40 years as a dispatcher for Concord Police. In a typical shift, she fielded up to 80 calls transferred from 911. She did everything from sending help to a serious crash to helping find a missing person.



**LESLIE VAN BERKUM**  
Deerfield

Van Berkum was drawn to volunteer at an organization that resettles refugees about 10 years ago.

"A lot of the women come as single mothers. Because they were single mothers, they also had incredible challenges coming to this country," van Berkum said. "How hard it is for them to come and leave their homeland to go to a new place."



**PATRICIA TUCKER**  
Tilton

Tucker got a late start to her career in substance use recovery, but with a busy private practice and roles in several community organizations, she's making up for lost time. Thirty years after she enrolled in school at age 49, Tucker is a prominent member of the state's recovery community. "It's not for everybody, but if you like it, then it really is a great place to be."



**NORMANDIE BLAKE**  
Webster

Blake didn't grow up in a small town, but for more than 50 years, she's been an essential part of everything that makes life in Webster special. Blake, better known by her nickname "Dee," became the first woman to sit on the town's select board, founded Webster's first kindergarten and served as a member of the Merrimack Valley School Board for three decades.



**BETH FROST**  
Andover

Whether she's driving a fellow senior to a medical appointment, coordinating the 4th of July float for kids during the annual parade, or simply stopping by a lonely person's home to play cards or piece together a puzzle, Frost continues to dedicate her life to others.

"Just the most wonderful person you ever want to meet," said longtime friend Janice Brennan.



**MIKE MANNING**  
Penacook

Manning didn't realize when he walked into the United Church of Penacook that the community kitchen would become a big part of his routine. "I got to a point in my life where I had some free time and I said 'you know, it's time to give back,'"

Now, in 2022, the kitchen is its own non-profit, separate from the church, and they provide takeout meals. Manning now coordinates and helps cook five of the seven meals per month.



**KRAIG EMERY**  
Northwood

On March 3, 2001, Emery's son Kalahan took a nap and never woke up. That's the way SUDC, an illness that continues to baffle the medical community, operates. Children from one to 17, seemingly healthy, go to bed. Then they pass away. Kalahan was 2½.

Since then, Emery has raised money and brought food to pantries. Always in the name of Kalahan. Kraig led the drive to create the Kalahan Emery Memorial Trail at the Carter Hill Orchard.



**JULE FINLEY**  
Franklin

Averaging nine shows a year for the past 28 years, Finley doesn't have much time to rest while leading theater productions at Franklin High School.

The first time she took a real break from the theater was when the pandemic hit in 2020. It's made her realize that it may be time to finally start slowing down and decluttering some of the costumes; which she jokingly says has her attic on the verge of collapse.



**SARA WAGNER**  
Weare

In 2003, Wagner's 15-year-old daughter and 17-year-old niece went over an ice patch while driving and slid into oncoming traffic. The two were both killed in the crash. Through her pain, Wagner worked to create something new: Angels 5k Run/Fitness Walk. It began as a memorial walk around Merrimack Valley High school, where the girls attended school. "My daughter would be so happy to see what it's become," she said.

# HOMETOWN HEROES OF 2022



**CAROL CONFORTI-ADAMS**  
South Sutton

A car accident helped Conforti-Adams realize the power of the environment to help with recovery. She turned to a neighbor to help develop “Nature’s Way,” a series of programming in her backyard that helps people connect with themselves and nature. This is the most recent of many initiatives she has developed to help people with disabilities.



**BETTY AND MIKE SMITH**  
Northwood

Betty and Mike Smith moved to town 11 years ago. They hand out food during the holidays, cook for others who needed a hand, promote the local library and drive other seniors to their appointments. A friend noted that Mike and Betty perform these volunteer acts of kindness despite their own health woes. Mike has arthritis in his back, a painful experience that he’s learned to live with. Betty had both knees replaced five years ago and a hip four months ago. “It takes a little longer and we have to sit down more often, but it still works,” Betty said.



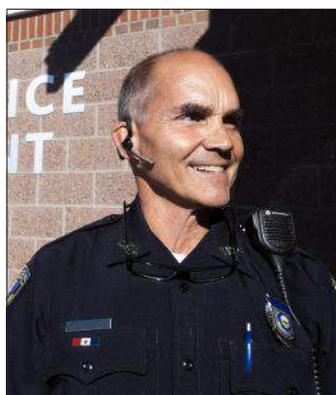
**KATHLEEN LANG**  
Canterbury

After Lang’s only child, Becky, died in a tragic car accident in 2005, friends encouraged her to start a non-profit dedicated to supporting horse owners in times of struggle. Becky was an equestrian, animal lover and aspiring archeologist who was known for her kindness and passion, Lang said. The organization, Becky’s Gift, helps keep her daughter’s legacy alive.



**MARYANN CHEUNG**  
Hillsborough

Cheung had photography in the back of her mind for years, yet only immersed herself in the art two years ago at age 60. Circumstances dictated that it was time to pursue something that she knew she’d love. Covid had hit, and Cheung’s husband contracted the illness and spent five weeks in the hospital. Now, her photos are everywhere in town, and she never charges a dime for the use of any of them.



**RICHARD PAULHUS**  
Franklin / Tilton

Richard Paulhus has earned his reputation for action with Franklin and Tilton police. In February 2021, Paulhus was assisting officers in moving a disabled vehicle off the road when he heard a woman screaming. She thrust her eight-month-old baby girl into his arms, she was choking on a gummy bear. Paulhus was able to save her life during just another day at the office.



**PETER CLARKE**  
Bow

Peter Clarke cites the simplicity of *Taps*, a tune that consists of just 24 notes, and he marvels at the effect those notes have on people, once they exit a trumpet or a bugle. The power of those notes could be heard from the foot of Clarke’s long driveway each night this summer at 6 p.m., from Memorial Day to Labor Day. It was his third season of paying tribute to those who have died in wars.



**CHERYL SWEENEY**  
Hill

Sweeney started the Whole Childcare Center in Tilton in 1987. At the time, there were very few preschool programs for children with special needs and Sweeney decided that she wanted to offer a facility for all children, regardless of their abilities. “I was like, ‘if I’m going to have and promote a childcare center, I wanted to be the best that it can be,’” Sweeney said.



**PAM SMITH**  
Concord

Smith remembers her son’s 6th birthday. She was in a panic at work because she had no money for a cake, let alone a gift. She went to Friends of Forgotten Children in Concord, and left with a toy truck, frosting and cake mix to go home and celebrate. Now Smith is the director of Friends of Forgotten Children where every day she helps people who were in the same shoes she was 30 years ago.

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**CONCORD MONITOR**



## history

**Dec. 29, 1975:** Gov. Meldrim Thomson gives state prison officials until Feb. 1 to increase efficiency and order at the prison in Concord, after a Christmas Day rampage by inmates that resulted in \$250,000 in damage. Thomson says Warden Raymond Helgemoe is "a nice enough fellow" but "wholly inadequate to the tough requirements of state prison administration."

**Dec. 30, 1869:** A Grant Club is organized in Concord. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant is "the people's general, and will be the people's president," the *Monitor* asserts.

**Dec. 30, 1803:** Gov. John T. Gilman signs into a law an act calling for the surveying and mapping of New Hampshire. It will be nearly 13 years before Philip Carrigan's map of the state is published.

**Dec. 31, 1869:** A group of

young men from Concord gathers to greet the New Year. "One raised his glass and pledged upon his honor as a man, that not a single drop of intoxicating liquor should pass his lips in 1870." Impressed, another poured the party's whiskey down the drain. The *Monitor* approved, reporting: "These men have made a good beginning for 1870."

**Jan. 1, 1871:** Birthdate of Dr. Henry L. Stickney, one of the state's leading doctors in his day. "The first automobile owned in the state was owned and operated by him, but after serving an apprenticeship with three, he concluded that he was not earning money fast enough to keep them in repair and finally gave them up entirely and returned to horses, man's best friend," reports the *New Hampshire Patriot*.

**Jan. 1, 1819:** The Phenix Hotel, built by Abel

Hutchins, opens on Main Street in Concord as "a house of entertainment."

**Jan. 1, 1865:** Lewis Downing Sr. retires from Abbot & Downing, his coach and wagon company.

**Jan. 2, 1784:** The Legislature grants Concord official townhood.

**Jan. 2, 1942:** The state encourages women to go to work in factories to replace men who have joined the armed forces. Walter M. May, deputy state education commissioner, says he will throw the state's 13 defense schools open to women at once so that they can learn mechanical skills. To now, women have tried in vain to gain admittance to such classes.

**Jan. 2, 1824:** After a 36-year fight during which Hopkinton vied with Concord to become the seat of a county that was to be called



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Kearsarge, the first Merrimack County courthouse opens on its current site.

**Jan. 2, 1843:** New Hampshire natives Benjamin Brown French and Sarah Josepha Hale visit the White House together for the customary New Year's greeting of the president. They shake hands with John Tyler, mingle with the large crowd, then leave to visit John Quincy Adams and pay him "the compliments of the season."

**Jan. 3, 2001:** TV crews and print reporters from across the region swarm around state Rep. Tom Alciere during his first day at the State House. Alciere, whose internet writings that advocate killing police officers have just become mainstream news, insists, "I am not a nut."

**Jan. 3, 1942:** New Hampshire Prison Warden Charles B. Clarke worries that because of the war, there will be too little steel

for the state's 1943-44 motor vehicle plates. There is plenty of steel for 1942-43 plates; prisoners have already made 35,000 of the 50,000 needed.

**Jan. 3, 1852:** Visiting Concord, Henry Hubbard slips on the icy walkway on his way to the Eagle Hotel. The fall breaks his left arm. Hubbard will sue the town and win a judgment of \$800.

**Jan. 3, 1870:** An aurora borealis appears. At 4 a.m., "the northern portion of the sky was nearly all aflame," a patriotic observer writes. Directly overhead, "Streamers of red, white and blue were seen streaking up from the horizon."

**Jan. 4, 1859:** The Coos Republican of Lancaster prints a list of all town residents who had died the year before – and the cause of death. Of those 29 deaths, more than half were under 30 years old.



## Capitol Center for the Arts

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### Noon year's eve

Ring in the New Year at noon at Concord Public Library on Saturday, Dec. 31, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Recommended for kids birth through elementary, come celebrate with light refreshments and a special toast. If you want, dress up in fancy clothes. Be sure to register at [concordpubliclibrary.net/librarycalendar](http://concordpubliclibrary.net/librarycalendar).



FILE

Concord Public Library's Pam Stauffacher hands out treats to library visitors on Dec. 31, 2018 for its Noon Year's Eve Party.

### Back in a spell

Gibson's Bookstore is pleased to virtually welcome author Lana Harper for the virtual launch of her newest Thistle Grove rom-com, *Back in a Spell*, in conversation with Lana's friend, author Jilly Gagnon on Tuesday, Jan. 3 at 7 p.m.

Events coordinator Elisabeth has been a fierce proponent of Lana's series, handselling *Payback's a Witch* (get in losers, we're going hexing, in a John Tucker Must Die but with magic) and *From Bad to Cursed* (fall in love with

your smug enemy while solving an attempted cursing together) to anyone who stands still long enough. She is incredibly excited to bring Lana in for a discussion of smooching and witchery, for this novel about an awkward first date that leads to an accidental we-woke-up-soul-married-in-Magical-Vegas between one of the most powerful

witches in town and a magical newbie.

### Peace and justice conversation

Join NH Peace Action Executive Director Will Hopkins for a look forward to 2023 during Peace & Justice Conversations: NH Peace Action Update on Monday, Jan. 2 at 7 p.m.

This virtual event will in-



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Dr. Rosato is excited to announce Dr. Jay and Manisha Patel have joined her practice. Practicing north of Concord for over 25 years, Dr. Jay and Manisha Patel have decided to bring their expertise to the capital city! Dr. Jay Patel received a Mastership from the Academy of General Dentistry, joining a small percentage of dentists nationwide to achieve this.

Dr. Manisha Patel achieved fellowship at the world-renowned Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies (LVI), a preeminent post-graduate dental training institute for cosmetic dentistry, complex oral reconstruction and rehabilitation. Dr. Patel also brings advanced training in the treatment of Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMJ/TMD) and is the only dentist in New Hampshire certified in the use of sophisticated computerized instrumentation to diagnose and treat jaw/joint disorders, headaches and myofascial pain.

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clude discussion of legislative and policy priorities for the upcoming year, how to maximize our impact and continue building peace and more. Expect more conversation than lecture as we delve into the tumultuous happenings of 2022, and figure out how to make a difference in 2023.

Register for the event to receive a Zoom link at [actionnetwork.org/events/peace-justice-conversations-nh-peace-action-update?clear\\_id=true](http://actionnetwork.org/events/peace-justice-conversations-nh-peace-action-update?clear_id=true).

## Art with Steve

Join for a wonderful way to chase the winter blues away on Wednesday, Jan. 4 at 1 p.m. at GoodLife (254

North State Street in Concord at the Smokestack Center). Steve will guide you through a step-by-step technique to create a lighthouse on a cliff, so you will go home with a finished masterpiece.

Cost is \$30, all supplies included. Registration is required by calling GoodLife at 603-228-6630.

## Hogmanay Celebration

Don your tartan and join NHSCOT in celebrating Hogmanay on Sunday, Jan. 1, at Labelle Winery in Derry.

Dress in warm layers to enjoy lively activities and spirited competitions both

indoors & out. Dance to the music of Rebel Collective and the Pipes and Drums of NHSCOT. Toast a s'more by the fire, test your skills at Stramash, a popular Scottish strategy board game (we'll teach you how to play), show off your footwork in a Highland Fling or try your hand at street curling or the Haggis Throw. Lots of family-friendly activities planned. The evening will conclude with a "torch"-lit parade led by our chosen Hogmanay Royalty, a toast to Scotland at 7 p.m. (midnight in Scotland) and singing Auld Lang Syne.

Purchase your tickets at [nhscot.org/events/hogmanay](http://nhscot.org/events/hogmanay).



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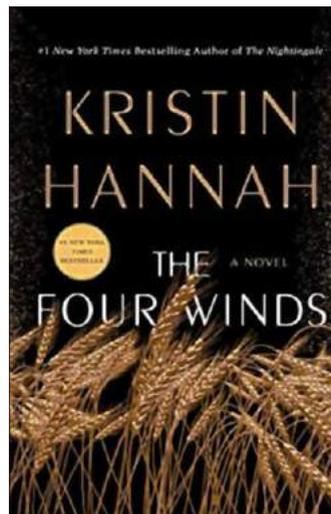
## book of the week

### The Four Winds

By Kristin Hannah  
(454 pages, historical fiction, 2021)

I thought *The Great Alone* would always reign supreme as my favorite Kristin Hannah novel, but *The Four Winds* may have just seized first place for me. Starting in the 1920s and then moving into the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, the book tells the story of Elsa Martinelli, a woman from the Texas Panhandle whose family treats her with cruel contempt and constant reminders that she is “unattractive.”

As an adolescent, she suffered a fever which left her weak; her family still believes she is ill and needs to be limited in her life experiences. She lives a life similar to Cinderella, being cloistered away in the Wolcott family home with only her novels for company. At age 25, Elsa is considered a spinster and her family shames



her as “unmarriageable.” The unkindness she faces from her mother, father, and siblings is infuriating. Elsa really believes she is unworthy of love and prepares herself to live out her existence under the roof of her parents.

However, she meets Rafe Martinelli, a young man from an Italian family, and everything changes from there. Elsa becomes pregnant, and her family quickly

forces her out of their home and into marriage with Rafe.

While Elsa doesn't feel loved by her new husband, she unexpectedly finds the mother and father she always wished for in his parents, Tony and Rose. They live on and manage a large wheat farm, and teach Elsa many new skills to survive in this new way of life. These new skills prove instrumental when the Great Depression hits, and the era of the Dust Bowl begins. The year is 1934, and Elsa and Rafe are now parents to two children, Loreda and Anthony. Rafe, never happy in his marriage or life on the farm, abandons his family and leaves Elsa to fend for herself and the children. Severe drought and unsustainable farming practices transform the land into a wasteland of thin, dry soil, insufferable heat, and highly destructive dust storms.

Desperately trying to keep her family alive, Elsa

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gives in to the pull to head west for the promise of a better life. Faced with the almost certainty of starvation and/or death from constant dust inhalation, she eventually makes the decision to pack up her children and their meager belongings and embark on the quest to California, the same trip so many other Americans in Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, and New Mexico made to escape the ravages of the Dust Bowl.

Despite the promises of abundance and security, life in California is nothing like what Elsa or her children expected. Countless others

are also looking for work, and the wealthy landowners take advantage of the laborers' needs by treating them terribly, paying them next to nothing and manipulating them into what is essentially forced labor. With each passing day, Elsa's tenacity and hope for the future are challenged in unprecedented ways. To find out how Elsa rises above these struggles, pick up a copy of *The Four Winds* from the library.

Visit Concord Public Library online at [concordpubliclibrary.net](http://concordpubliclibrary.net).

*Emily Kosowicz*



**Ray Duckler**  
A different take on the news at hand

CONCORD MONITOR



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on display

# Art and the environment

New Hampshire Art Association fine printmaker Kate Higley will have her work displayed at the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center beginning Jan. 6.

The work being shown at the Chamber arose from a focus on environmental issues, in particular the waste stream. As she was preparing to teach Introduction to Printmaking at Great Bay Community College in Portsmouth, Higley began collecting textural trash generated in her own home for student collagraphs. Collagraphs are created by gluing textural materials to a backing, then inking, and printing the resultant plates to dampened paper via an etching press.

Higley, a long-time resident of Wolfeboro, now lives near the Piscataqua River in Eliot, Maine, where

she has her home and studio in an area of exquisite wetlands

Higley's exhibit will run at the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center from Jan. 6 through March 3.

The gallery hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Check the Chamber's website at [concordnhchamber.com](http://concordnhchamber.com) for hours. All work is for sale by calling 603-431-4230.



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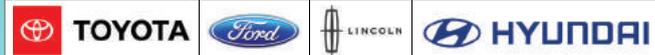
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