# THE CONCORD INSIDER '

DEC. 28-JAN. 3 Hometown Heroes edition

There have been a lot of positive stories to tell in 2023. Revisiting this year's Hometown Heroes

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The Concord Insider is published weekly by the Concord Monitor. Our offices are located at 1 Monitor Drive, Concord, NH. Our postal address is P.O. Box 1177, Concord, NH, 03302-1177.



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**ABOUT THE SERIES** 

Each week in 2023, the Monitor recognized one of our region's many Hometown Heroes. Follow along at 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 2023 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. This is their story. Ledyard National Bank is proud to support the 2023 Hometown Heroes, who were nominated by members of the community and selected by editors of the Monitor. Nominate your Hometown Hero today at concordmonitor.com.



## Connector of all faiths

Finding an impartial voice 2023 these days, especially when  $\overset{\infty}{\sim}$  it comes to certain topics, seems difficult. But when it December comes to the world's religions, Art Rosen plays it right down the middle. Thursday, He lectures in schools, writes books and designs college courses. Rosen is Jewish, but don't be shy to ask him about Christianity, or the many branches that that religion has spawned.

ask him about Christianity or the many branches that that religion has spawned. He prides himself on treating all religions the same. And, at 92, he's surprisingly progressive.



#### The Easter bunny's helper

**Connie Fellows** appreciates the offers to help.

Her nonprofit – giving homemade Easter baskets to kids – has grown over the past nine years, to the point where an ordinary individual might welcome help packing all those baskets, containing everything from snacks to toys to clothing.

But Fellows is no ordinary woman. Her passion to give to others in a creative manner is unmatched. She's created a factory-like conveyor belt at her home in Pittsfield to produce each basket herself.



## Serving those who have served

Sarah Stanley's family name, Griffin, is forever part of Frankin's landscape. Her married name, meanwhile, has had its own impact on the town, this one centered at the Veterans Home in Tilton. That's where Stanley has worked the past three years.

She works full-time at the Veterans Home, often putting in more than 40 hours to make sure soldiers who have stormed beaches and been wounded in action receive the comfort they deserve.



## For the love of animals

**Debbie Mille**r would have made a nice complement to Dr. Dolittle.

While Dolittle carried on conversations with the animals, Miller would have done practically everything else: fundraisers to help homeless cats and dogs, opening the farms she's lived on to ferals and livestock, donating 100% of the proceeds from her homemade soap business to support shelters and so forth.

Debbie and her husband are owners to several loved pets on their farm in Canterbury.

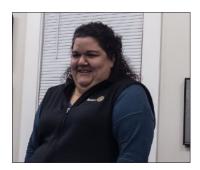


## Stroke leads to new opportunities

Strange as it may sound, a debilitating stroke suffered by **Marty Bender** 25 years ago quickly evolved into one of the luckiest chapters.

How, you ask? Bender says his career as a lawyer had taken its toll on him mentally, 20 years before his retirement age.

So now in Webster, where he's lived for more than 40 years, a free monthly movie screening of the one a popular new release is offered at the public library. You can thank Bender – a lover of film – for that.



## Passion for giving back

**Fallon Reed** was nominated for her years of work for the state, first at the Department of Safety and now at the Department of Corrections.

But residents of Pittsfield recognize her for the loyalty she and her family show.

As the president, she works with her fellow rotary club members to fundraise and support community projects and events, including the annual hot air balloon rally, scholarships for graduating seniors, a penny sale raffle and organize several donations.



#### **Creating connection**

Without the help of a community organization dedicated to supporting and assisting refugees and New Americans, soccer prodigy Boris Hirwa wouldn't be as successful or talented as he is today.

Project S.T.O.R.Y, which stands for Supporting Talents of Rising Youth, operates as a non-profit without the status and funding of one. It was first founded by **Charm Emiko**, toward the end of 2019 when she realized how difficult it was for children like Hirwa to overcome barriers they face as refugees.

"It has helped me with everything I have done so far with soccer and school and supplies me with things I need for the future like all of the classes Charm [Emiko] does and it's a step to help us in the future with whatever we need," Hirwa said. "Without Charm and her whole family, I wouldn't be where I am today – they've taught me certain lessons that I needed to learn, through the good and the bad."



## A pledge to be a leader

Every Tuesday, rain or shine, **James Weber** is at the Bow Community Center dressed in his Scoutmaster uniform. As Scouts fill the space, he gathers them in a circle and leads the Scouts BSA Troop 75 in a pledge.

For one has worked as a Scoutmaster for eight years, the best part is watching kids grow into self-assured young adults. He and the other adults he works with share the philosophy that scouting is a youth-driven organization.





#### A sight for sore eyes

It's going to take more than legal blindness to force John Golembiowski of Hooksett to pull over and stop reaching out.

Even with macular degeneration limiting his field of view to the outer edges of what he's looking at, Golembiowski sees well enough, in familiar surroundings near his home, to zip around on his electric trike to deliver vegetables from his garden to his friends.

"He always overplants," said Golembiowski's daughter, Kathy Ivon of Northfield.



#### **Risk and reward**

Mother's Day was meant to honor people like Cyndi Magee.

Magee has navigated through life juggling responsibilities like a circus performer. She's a registered respiratory therapist who works through the night, treated patients with COVID at the height of the pandemic, has four children ages 16 to 22, and became good at not sleeping.

So good, in fact, that her husband, Sean Magee, nominated Cyndi for our Hometown Hero award, writing to the Monitor: "She puts herself at risk, treating others, despite the fact that her own asthma makes the prospect of contracting COVID especially dangerous. She does this while being a wife, and mother to four, including one who has severe asthma one on the autism spectrum."



#### Perspective through experience

Sometimes when Kaleigh Greene tries to list her volunteer roles, it's hard to know where to start. There's her stepson's Boy Scout Troop, his school parent-teacher organization in Northfield, the Concord Young Professionals Network and the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce.

And these are all positions in her free time. Day to day, Greene runs her own marketing firm that helps nonprofit organizations spread the message state-wide about what they offer.



#### **Concord's career** connector

Melissa Goyait of Weare helps local students access college and career opportunities through a program that supports them long after high school.

Goyait is the associate director at Educational Talent Search, a federal program housed at UNH which offers academic, career and college advising to help prepare NH students who are first-generation or might need financial support to attend college. Goyait does administrative programming and also works directly with students in Rundlett and Concord High. 9



#### 50-plus years of dedication

Judy Tibbetts has been teaching at Franklin High School for 53 years.

Mrs. Tibbetts, as she's known to her students, is the family and consumer science teacher at Franklin High School. She teaches basic and advanced food courses at the high school level and also college-level culinary courses as part of the school's Running Start program, a statewide initiative that allows students to take reduced-price college courses at their high school for college credit.



#### A career of connections

Beloved by a huge section of the Greater Concord Area, a doctor who probably delivered some of you, Dr. Oge Young has attracted headlines through the decades simply because of his unmatched bedside manner and the incredible number of babies he's brought into the world.

"I love those Hometown Hero stories because they're about people who have quietly done things and never got any credit," he said. "Obstetricians get more credit than we deserve. The women deserve the credit."



#### **Ready to rescue**

Scott Carpenter travels for work.

One day, he may have an appointment on a mountain somewhere, other days on a huge rock. And sometimes, he'll work at a senior housing complex, breathing life into people, which has evolved into his main function, no matter where his place of business takes him.

Carpenter, a 65-year-old Wilmot resident, has been the team captain for the Upper Valley Wilderness Response Team, based out of the Hanover Fire Department, for nearly 20 years.



#### Bridging the gap

Wanted: 40 employees to bolster the wafer-thin staff at Community Bridges, an organization that provides support of all kinds to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"And that is just us," said Ann Potoczak, the CEO of Community Bridges. "That's not counting other vendors."

The shortage of employees in a profession with high stress and low pay has not stopped Potoczak from dedicating her life to an altruistic endeavor.



#### The heart of the matter

**Aidan Mini** and Michelle Fridlington had no idea last spring that their lives would be intertwined forever.

They formed an alliance last May, unknown to them at the time, before Aidan's senior year at Gilford High School. She was the wellness teacher at the high school, teaching CPR. He was the student, absorbent like a sponge. Aidan, like most who take the course, never figured he'd need to perform CPR. He was wrong, though. Soon after the class, he performed it on his father, Adam Mini, until help arrived. Adam had suffered a cardiac arrest. His son was credited with saving his life.

"I don't remember how long it was," Aidan said. "I wasn't thinking about time."



#### Rising to occasion for Sunset League

Steve DeStefano, the longtime president of the Sunset League, known as the oldest after-supper adult baseball league in the country, would prefer to put his feet up.

Some of DeStefano's joints hurt after pitching for six decades, emerging as one of the faces of organized baseball in the city. So who can blame him for wanting to step down as the heart and soul of the league for the past 30 years? And don't forget, he began in 1974 and retired in 2017.





#### Community staple

For eight years, **Julianne Gadoury** of Concord was one of the grant coordinators for the New Hampshire Council of the Arts, assisting nonprofit organizations to enhance their arts education through a state-administered grant process.

She also worked with teachers on how to improve the arts for educational outcomes for students in kindergarten through high school. Drawing, dancing, music, theater and media were emphasized.



#### Connecting land, sea, table

Monica Rico's good friends wonders how she reaches out in so many directions.

With her daily schedule of volunteer work and dedication to bringing healthy, organic food to the Granite State, it's a wonder how she gets it all done.

"She's always a risk-taker, multitasking," said Joan O'Connor, who lives near Rico in Henniker. "I've worked with her, so I know. I say, 'Oh my God, Monica, slow down.' "

That's not happening anytime soon. Rico accepted a new, food-related path in life recently, working as the executive director of New Hampshire Community Seafood, a not-for-profit organization.

In that role, Rico supports the local small-boat fishing community, working with the seacoast captains, overseeing the distribution of their fresh fish and shellfish across the state.



#### Driving force in friendship

At 89, **Rhoda Hardy** drives friends far younger than herself to doctor's appointments and the grocery store. She chauffeurs four other senior women around, asking each what they would like to do on a particular day.

She helped build the food pantry in Boscawen, she lives alone, and until recently, she played the tracker action organ at her former church, Boscawen Congregational, mastering a NASA-like instrument panel and dozens of pipes of different heights.



#### **Pulling his weight**

Steve Garside's family welcomed some guests to their home this fall: Buddhist monks from the Drepung Gomang Monastery in Tibet. His wife, Lisa, who owns Ohana Yoga in Contoocook, has been connected with them for several years now. This will be their third visit to the Garside home.

As part of their trip, they spent days intricately designing a sand mandala with numerous colorful patterns and perfect symmetry, only to destroy it shortly thereafter. It draws attention to the impermanence of life, a key doctrine in Tibetan Buddhism.



#### Pointing the way

**Dawn Shimberg** of Campton works at a vendor booth at the annual Tilton-Northfield Old Home Day.

There, as the director of the Youth Assistance Program in Tilton, she promoted a service that she's led for a dozen years, aimed at troubled teens who might have had a brush with the law or suffered from addiction.

It's nearly impossible for Shimberg to attend a local event such as this without being recognized. Young adults stopped by, recognized her, pointed to her, and then thanked her.



#### In times of trouble

If there's something strange ... in your neighborhood ... who ya gonna call?

John Murphy, of course. At least if the problem is centered in Allenstown. Murphy doesn't chase ghosts and he's not part of a commercial enterprise that does, but he keeps a sharp lookout around town, in case anyone needs a hand.

"John is always there to help people, keep them informed of community activities," wrote Murphy's neighbor, Terri Allum, who nominated him for our Hometown Heroes series.



## Combining skills, resolve and passion

Nina Gardner's fingerprints are all over Sanbornton.

Few residents in town have spread themselves this thin. Gardner contributed to Sanbornton's school system, its historical society and its overall look. She's 76, and her arms still extend in various directions like an octopus as she juggles her responsibilities, which nearly always are designed to improve the town in which she grew up and has lived for 44 years.

That's why her friend, Lynn Chong, nominated her for the series.



#### He's hitting his stride

In another life, **Dan Gagnon**, a truck driver from Center Barnstead, smoked a pack of cigarettes a day.

"(Running) is the biggest part of what makes him a Hometown Hero," his wife, Jodie Buffum, wrote. "It also makes him a St. Jude Hero."

That's the kicker. Sure, Dan wants to stay in shape and avoid all-night munch fests after quitting smoking 12 years ago, at age 40. But that's secondary to raising money for St. Jude Children's Hospital, as it continues searching for better ways to combat a relentless foe.



#### Fabric of the community

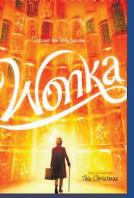
**Barbara Hays** trained employees at a communications company for decades.

These days, at 80, the Bow resident is still involved in communications, but she no longer needs to say anything to anybody. Her quilts say it all.

"Barbara has been making lap quilts to donate to Concord Hospital for a number of years," her sister wrote to the Monitor. "Recently, she learned about fidget quilts, which are small quilts, especially for a person with Alzheimer's disease or other mental conditions. These quilts provide texture that engage them kinesthetically."







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#### **Student starters**

**Nick Pagauisan**, a sophomore at Bishop Brady, is growing in more ways than one.

At the age of 16, in which height and maturity are often on the rise, his vegetable plants are, too, giving him a green thumb that would fill the Jolly Green Giant with envy.

Once matured to a certain height, he and his team of 10 Brady students transfer the plants, grown in the high school, to the Sycamore Garden on the campus of NHTI.

Individuals, mostly refugees from Nepal and Bhutan, come to the garden and bring home their favorite vegetables, to replant or build salads or something else.



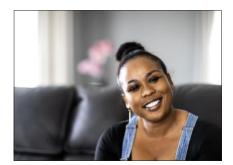
#### From birds to blooms

**Susi von Oettingen** is always on the lookout for endangered species. Take her to a river, and she'll look

for mussels. Bring her to a wetland at dusk, and she'll watch for bats in the sky. On a sandy beach, her focus shifts to scanning for plovers along the shoreline.

"Every time I spot endangered species, it puts me in a happy place," said Von Oettingen, a retired endangered species biologist who formerly worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "It's just such a great feeling to know they're out there still, and that people are protecting them. I just get this warm and fuzzy feeling."

Von Oettingen, a Warner resident, has earned recognition as a 2021 Recovery Champion for her leadership in the recovery efforts for the roseate tern population in Northeastern North America.



#### Leading the way

When **Claire Nepa** arrived in NH in 2000 with two kids under the age of two, little help or guidance existed for her family. Two decades later, she's raised three kids in Concord and now is helping other New Americans find their way.

"You see good in America. You do good and you get where you want," she said. "If you have a good heart, you give back and that's what I do. I give back."

To "give back" is loosely defined by Nepa. In some cases, it's specific, like organizing music for Concord's Multicultural Fest. In others, it's connecting with New Americans who are new to the area.



#### A whale of a challenge

When **Jonathan Hunt** came on board at Whaleback Mountain, which like many independent ski areas had repeatedly flirted with failure for 20 years, he knew that it would take more than speeding up the chairlift to keep things going.

"Immediately my job was to provide stability in the organization and leadership to staff – to continue to find ways to do our job better and provide other revenue sources," said Hunt. "We needed to re-earn the community's trust in the product we were trying to put out by making the investments that were necessary, doing deferred maintenance."



#### Where every pooch is top dog

Helen St. Pierre owns and operates Old Dogs Go To Helen in Epsom. She cares for dogs who are near the end of the line, be it from illness or old age. She spoils them in a separate building, called the Sanctuary, with hugs, walks, treats, toys and belly rubs until they pass away.

Her hospice dogs live for an average of about six months, some for a shorter amount of time, others for a year or two. She also runs No Monkey Business Dog Training in Concord, and her dedication to dogs' welfare is why St. Pierre was nominated to be recognized.



## Box office takes center stage

At the Cap Center for the Arts, customers sometimes use old techniques, preferring a trip to the box office over convenience of online sales.

That gives them a chance to see **Lorne Gregory**, face to face.

"Just being an overall incredibly friendly and helpful guy is just some of the reasons people love coming to pick up their tickets," said Ashley Wakefield, his co-worker.

Gregory goes above and beyond to make the theater experience more enjoyable than it might have been had someone else been the director of ticketing services.



#### A connection with kids

Each day at 2:30 p.m., as the school bus arrives with kids from Beaver Meadow for their afterschool program at First Start, **Heather Tobine** stands ready at the entrance of the building to welcome them.

"The best part of coming to work is spreading a little joy and getting the smiles when kids come running up to me and give me a hug. I just love it," said Tobine, coordinator at First Start, a children's center.

Tobine she spends her entire week, nine hours a day, with children who have captured her heart.

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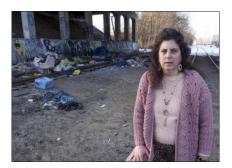
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#### Heart on her sleeve

Mary Aranosian of Concord says she doesn't always follow the rules.

Aranosian works in her family business, but her concern with homeless people is what she's known for as well. She wears her compassion and empathy for others on her sleeve, and her dedication to caring for homeless people who could use a hand is why her friend, Cathy Cushing, nominated her to be a Hometown Hero.

"To her, helping the homeless is a heartfelt passion," Cushing wrote. "She clothes them, feeds them, validates them and prays for them. She certainly is a hero to me."



#### Sowing seeds of community

Mike French's green thumb means food for the less fortunate. He tends to the Lions Club Community Garden in Henniker and ships his produce to two food pantries, one in his hometown, the other in Hopkinton. And if he has a surplus of food after the harvest, he delivers it to the Friendly Kitchen in Concord.

That's why his friend, Marti Capuco, nominated French to be a Monitor Hometown Hero. Because French grows, then gives.

"As the leader of the garden, Michael goes to the garden daily to water, weed and pick vegetables," Capuco said. "He coordinates volunteers from the Lions Club and has sponsored the local Boy Scouts and other community volunteers to come and help with the harvest."



#### A journey of goodwill

Shilo Lynn of Allenstown read on Facebook this year that residents in the area had given food and money to a woman in the downtown village of Suncook.

The woman had been spending an inordinate amount of time on a bench under a street light, alone, barefoot and wrapped in a blanket. Sometimes she'd be sitting, other times sleeping.

Lynn worked alongside her friend, a local landlord, to provide the woman with food, clothing and shelter, driving her to New London, where a representative of the area's welfare department secured a room for her at a hotel, at no charge.



#### Feeding a need

12

For Maria Manus Painchaud, the Capital Region Food Program is a family affair. She served as vice chair under her late father Mark, who helped spearhead the organization. Now, she's watched her own children join the board.

And in the four decades Painchaud has been involved, the program has evolved from small nonprofit that put together holiday baskets, to a voucher program that served over 1,700 families last winter.

"This has become a family event in our family," she said. "And we joke about it because we call it the 'family business'."

#### **Blazing a trail**

**Tim Blagden** is heading in the right direction.

For several years, he's been dreaming of a hiking, biking and walking trail 34 miles long that, with a landowner's permission, would allow snowmobiling in certain spots. As Blagden saw it, a trail connecting Concord to Newbury Harbor on Lake Sunapee would reveal the region's rich history

In turn, Blagden has worked tirelessly with more than 100 volunteers, developing the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail. Many portions of the trail are usable today, and others still under construction.



#### Finding acres for all

At 84 years old, **Fran Philippe** earned the right to change the name of the hiking groups she's been leading for years.

After all, Philippe runs three to four miles each Monday through Friday. She was instrumental in saving 272 acres at Broken Ground, turning land destined for development into hiking trails.

And to Philippe, when you're active like she is, names like 'The Old Goats,' or, simply, 'The Goats,' both of which were initially offered as names by members, did not sit well with this spry athlete from East Concord.



#### **Planting appreciation**

Olivia DeAngelis, a recent Concord High grad, volunteers to plant flags alongside headstones during the annual pre-Memorial Day spruce-up at the NH Veterans Cemetery each May.

DeAngelis partnered with the Green Beret Foundation to help raise money for Special Forces soldiers and their families. She smashed her stated goal of \$500.

Her volunteer work was recognized nationally as she was one of 51 individuals chosen to receive the Billy Michal Student Leadership Award for her unselfishness, optimism and sacrifice.



## A connector for seniors

Before the Penacook Community Center closed last year, **Kristen Pinard-Kenney** was the intergenerational outreach coordinator, working to bridge the generation gap through activities in an official capacity.

She doubled as the senior program director at the PCC for 10 years.

These days, with the PCC now under the umbrella of the Concord Boys and Girls Club and its Penacook building torn down, those programs no longer exist, so Pinard-Kenney has set out on her own and works independently.



#### Serving local hospitality

Hold the phone. Don't count **Soula Maloutas** and her popular downtown restaurant out just yet. She thinks that, perhaps, no news

is good news.

Maloutas, one of many unknown stars in the universal book known as Reaching the American Dream, is hopeful that she can remain at 204 North Main Street, home of her Gas Lighter Restaurant. A bank pur-

chased the building two years ago, so Maloutas's life remains in limbo for now.

Stay or not her friend thought enough of Maloutas to add her to our list of local heroes, writing "She built her business from the bottom up without staffs, investors ... She's out there serving her community with hard work, affection and responsibility."



#### A life of altruism

Marilia Procopio, the portfolio manager at Elm Grove Companies in Manchester, is flexible like Gumby.

How else to explain how she crams three sections of her busy life into one neat little daily package? She's a single mother raising her 14-year-old daughter, works full-time at Elm Grove, and volunteers for several organizations in a life rich with unselfishness and altruism.

"Yes, my job is flexible," said Procopio, who's 34. "I do networking after work, so thankfully I'm good at my job."



#### 'I found my home'

When someone is in need, they can count on **Tanya Frost** to be there. Whether it's loading up her car to move someone's belongings or assisting a struggling pedestrian to cross the road, she's the one who steps up.

Although she found excitement in her sales job, Frost felt a void and decided to redirect her efforts toward community service.

Transitioning to the role of vice president at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central New Hampshire, she passionately raised money for initiatives like student scholarships, finding satisfaction in making a positive impact.



#### A group powered by unity

Twelve years ago, **Deb Horton** visited a patient in hospice who couldn't afford a surgery for his wife.

The circumstances and the search for help gave Horton a new view of the possibilities.

She helped found Catamount Womenaid in Deerfield, a womenrun nonprofit that aids men, women, children, the elderly, the unhoused, and anyone in need of financial assistance.

The nonprofit is primarily dependent on donations and fundraisers, like their 5K in November, which is their largest fundraising event of the year.

Over the past 10 years, the nonprofit has grown slowly and just surpassed \$100,000 in donations to the community.



#### **Crafting pride**

**Caia Kimball** needed to come up with a project for her Silver Award in Girl Scouts. Who better to help out than Karen McCormack, her former art teacher at Broken Ground School, she thought.

She'd seen that McCormack was trying to find a way of getting a makerspace into her art room. Kimball made it her mission to help.

"I wanted to help at my school that I used to go to, and it was kind of a fun opportunity that came to mind," Kimball said.

Over the course of the project, which began about two years ago when she was in seventh grade, Kimball raised roughly \$1,500.



#### In tune with changing needs

Hopkinton's **Heather Bigelow Hearne** is the dance movement therapist at the Concord Community Music School, incorporating music, song and dance to reach inside and unlock potential and confidence and focus while working with various age groups, from children, some with special needs, to the elderly.

She's doubled as the dance director at First Church in Hopkinton for six years and is identified as the Sacred Dance Director.

She says the human body can be used as a tool to aid with anxiety and trauma.



#### School days and beyond

Some people like their job. And then there's **Ruthie Nichols** of Penacook.

"I can't wait until the alarm goes off in the morning," Nichols said, "so I can get ready for school."

She's worked in the Merrimack Valley School District for 33 years, both as a teacher and, in recent years, a paraprofessional.

"Ruthie arrives early every day to greet all students and staff as they arrive. She knows all 475 students' names," wrote the middle school's principal.



#### They're all smiles

**Earle Simpson** has a message for every patient who walks through the door of his dental practice: take today and go forward.

For many, a trip to the dentist was a rarity before they visited Simpson's practice, Saving People's Smiles in Concord.

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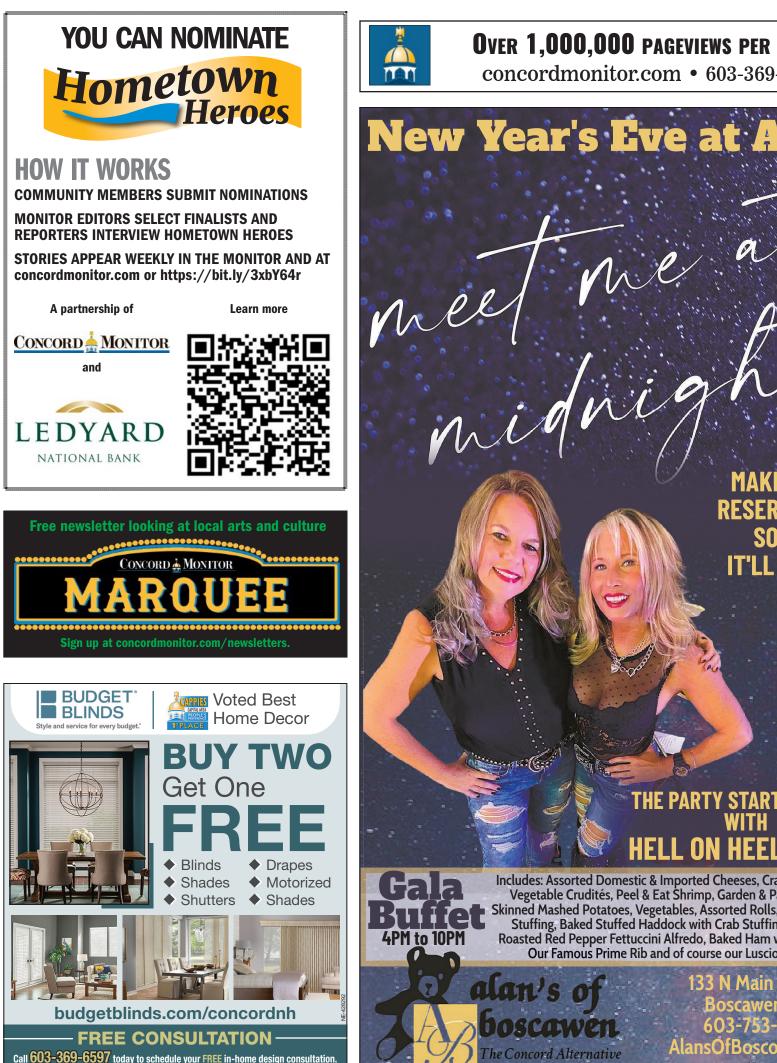


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4



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#### book of the week

## The Last Tale of the Flower Bride

By Roshani Chokshi (292 pages, fantasy, 2023)

R ooted in fairy tales and folklore, "The Last Tale of the Flower Bride" can leave the reader wondering what really happened. Is there magic? Did it touch the two narrators? I'm still thinking about the events in the story.

The first narrator we meet is The Bridegroom. We never learn his name. He's a scholar of folklore and fairy tales who has traced the ownership of a particular book to the fabulously wealthy Castaneda family. When he is finally able to



meet the scion of that family to discuss access to the book, he's surprised – and enchanted – to find the heir is a beautiful and mysterious woman, Indigo Maxwell-Castaneda. He goes home with Indigo that night and never leaves, promising only that he will never look into her past.

Our second narrator, Azure, appears when The Bridegroom and Indigo return to Indigo's childhood home as the health of her aunt fails. Indigo and her aunt have not shared a roof since Indigo came into her inheritance at age 18. Azure was Indigo's best friend from the age of 10 until their graduation from high school, when Azure disappeared. No one has seen her since.

Azure tells the story of her friendship with Indigo, their lives leading up to high school graduation. The

Bridegroom tells of his meeting with Indigo and their life together, years after the events of Indigo's school days. Besides the lure of fairy land, there is the very real magic of Indigo's great fortune and privilege, which changes life for Azure and for The Bridegroom. Indigo can make things happen, and she is not hesitant to use her power whether it's her political and economic influence in her adulthood or her glamour as a preteen and teenager.

The author weaves together all too real horrors of modern life – mean girls in high school, boys whose parents erase the past they thought they remembered – with a belief in and a

longing for magic that will wash away all the unpleasantness of the real world. There are echoes of "Bluebeard's Castle" and Margaret Atwood's brutal story of frenemies, "Cat's Eye," not to mention numerous retellings of fairy tales. It's a Gothic tale, unsettling and thought-provoking, probing the importance of memory and the courage (and vulnerability) required to face the past.

At the end, I'm not sure it really is a fantasy genre book. Maybe it's literary fiction. You'll have to read it yourself to decide.

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Julia Miller





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Dec. 28, 1863: Henry Plummer Brooks, a Pittsfield boy of 14 years 10 months, enlists in the Third Regiment, New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry. After fighting in two battles, he will die of illness in North Carolina. A history of the town's Civil War soldiers will assert that although there were younger drummer boys during the war, Plummer was the youngest by 10 months of any soldier who carried a rifle. Thus the town will claim both the youngest and oldest enlistees in the Union army. The same history book says that the oldest, at 66, was Israel Drew.

Dec. 28, 1835: William Chandler is born in Concord. He will go on to become a U.S. senator and secretary of the Navy. He will found the Rumford Press and revitalize a struggling Monitor.

Dec. 28, 1862: Private Miles Peabody of Antrim

writes to his parents from Falmouth, Va., that after the Battle of Fredericksburg, his infantry regiment, the 5th New Hampshire Volunteers, can muster fewer than 100 men for duty. "We can afford to be disbanded for we have achieved a name that no one in New Hampshire need be ashamed of," he writes. This suggestion will prove to be wishful thinking. The regiment, which left Concord 14 months earlier with more than 1,000 men, will fight at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg before being sent home to recruit.

Dec. 29, 2002: After nearly 103 years of countless weddings, baptisms, confirmations and funerals, the sounds of Mass echo through St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Franklin for the last time. The church closes because of dwindling numbers of parishioners and the financial burden of serving a small community.





Dec. 29, 2001: A threealarm fire guts the former Allied Tannery complex in Boscawen. Firefighters from 14 towns work most of the day before they extinguish the blaze.

Dec. 29, 1933: The low temperature in Concord is 21 below zero. That's what it was yesterday. And that's what it will be again tomorrow.

Dec. 30, 1999: First Night organizers vow to carry on with most of their plans despite a bomb threat. However, the annual fireworks display is canceled, as is a planned countdown to the new millennium. Organizers are advised by the police that security would be

difficult at such a large Main Amoret Hollis deed Con-Street gathering.

Dec. 30, 1894: The first meeting is held at Christian Science's lovely stone Mother Church in Boston. The religion's founder, Mary Baker Eddy, a native of Bow, authorized the building of the Mother Church two years before.

Dec. 30, 1993:The state Supreme Court rules that the state has a constitutional Jr. obligation to provide adequate public education to all children. Gov. Steve Merrill says that because the state is meeting this obligation, the ruling represents no challenge to the state's tax system.

Dec. 30, 1926: Allen and

ALL THINGS BASEMENT

cord the land for "a playground and athletic facility for the citizens of the City of Concord." They also donate a plaque for what will be known as Memorial Field, in honor of the city's dead from the late World War. Among those who died during the war were the Hollises' son, Allen Jr., and nephew, Henry Hollis

Dec. 31, 2002: The Environmental Protection Agency formally issues major changes to clean air rules for utilities, refineries and manufacturers, easing certain requirements of the Clean Air Act's "New Source Review." The action

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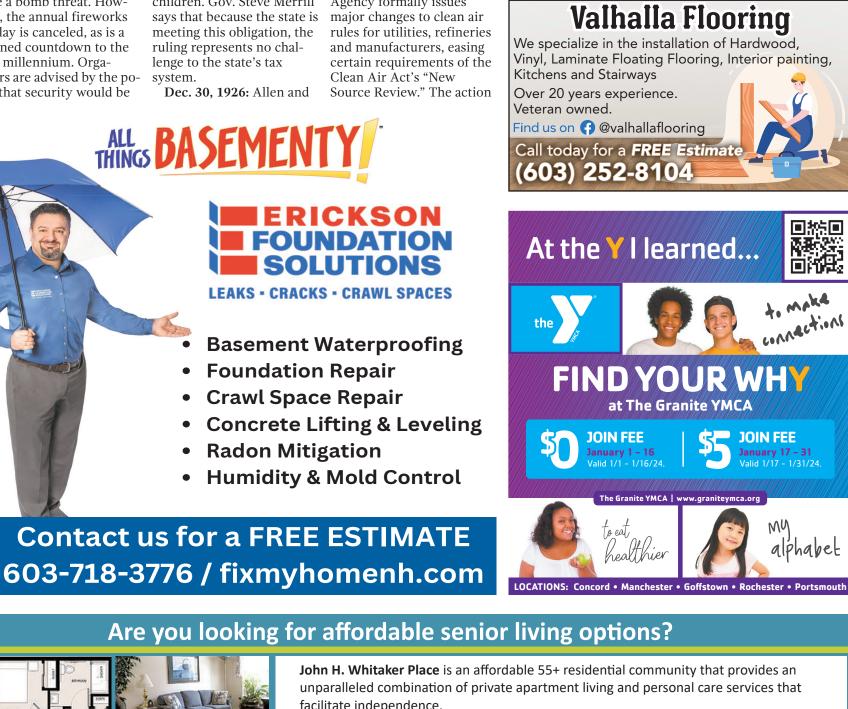
prompts a court challenge hours later from a coalition if New England and mid-Atlantic states, including New Hampshire.

Dec. 31, 1866: Fire burns the roof and destroys machinery at the Penacook Mill. Though it is so cold that the firemen's clothing freezes, a horse-drawn steam fire engine speeds at 30 mph from Concord and saves much of the mill building. The mill's 250 em- young men from Concord

ployees are thus out of work only briefly.

Dec. 31, 1975: The New York Times reports that Kevin Cash, who wrote and published Who the Hell Is William Loeb? has sold 30,000 copies of the book and has 50,000 more in print. The book is a big success in bookstores and corner groceries across the state.

Dec. 31, 1869: A group of



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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."

Dec. 31, 1847: Of the measure banning slavery in all territories gained through the war with Mexico, New Hampshire Whigs proclaim: "The Wilmot Proviso has no more steadfast friend than the Whigs.... Come weal or woe, they will abide by 'the white man's resolution.' "

Dec. 31, 1979: The body of a third skater who fell through thin ice in Squam Lake is recovered, hours after frantic efforts to revive two other skaters failed.

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 Legisla-

ture grants Concord official townhood.

Jan. 2, 1942: The state en-

#### courages women to go to work in factories to replace gain admittance to such men who have joined the classes. armed forces. Walter M. Jan. 2, 1960: U.S. Sen. May, deputy state education

commissioner, says he will

schools open to women at

once so that they can learn

mechanical skills. To now,

throw the state's 13 defense

John F. Kennedy announces he will run for president. Because he is from neighboring Massachusetts, his chief rivals for the Democratic nomination - Hubert

women have tried in vain to Humphrey and Stuart Symington – concede New Hampshire's 11 convention votes to him. Neither plans to enter the state's March 8 primary.

> Jan. 3, 1981: Republican Warren Rudman of New Hampshire takes the oath of office as a U.S. senator.



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#### calendar

#### Dec. 28

Adult Drop In Basketball: Noon to 2 p.m. Green Street Community Center, 39 Green St, Concord.

■ Chair Yoga: 11 to 11:45 a.m. Yoga can help your mind, body and spirit and enhance your quality of life. Free. GoodLife Programs & Activities, 254 N State St, Unit L, Concord. 603-228-6630. kgagnon@goodlifenh.org.

■ Come eat with us and support Pembroke Academy Yearbook Club!: 4 to 8 p.m. Please support the Pembroke Academy Yearbook Club in their pursuit to upgrade equipment, attend educational workshops, and fuel their creativity. Free. 20% of meal value will be donated to PA by D'Angelo. D'Angelo, 126 Loudon Rd, Concord. 603-485-7881. kmyers@sau53.org.

■ Delta Dental Protecting your Smile for Life: 2 to 3 p.m. Learn more about this topic during an interactive presentation. Free. GoodLife Programs & Activities, 254 N State St, Unit L, Concord. kgagnon@goodlifenh.org.

**Drop In Pickleball:** 8 to 10 p.m. Green Street Community Center, 39 Green St, Concord.

■ Frozen Sing-Along: 2 to 4 p.m. Concord.

**Stretch & Strengthen:** 1 to 1:45 p.m. Stretch, increase coordination, confidence and flexibility with gentle exercise, and



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Don't miss drop in Pickleball at the Green Street Community Center and the City-Wide Community Center.

stretching. Free. GoodLife Programs & Activities, 254 N. State St, Unit L, Concord. 603-228-6630. kgagnon@goodlifenh.org.

■ Winterfox Art Market: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free. DIY Craft and Thift, 46 N. Main St., Concord. charthibault@gmail.com.

Dec. 29

■ Winterfox Art Market: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free. DIY Craft and Thift, 46 N. Main St., Concord. charthibault@gmail.com.

#### Dec. 30

Adult Drop In Pickleball: 8:30

to 11:30 a.m. City Wide Community Center Gymnasium, 14 Canterbury Rd, Concord.

**Family Open Gym:** Noon to 2 p.m. City Wide Community Center Gymnasium, 14 Canterbury Rd., Concord.

■ Family Open Gym: 10 a.m. to noon. Green Street Community Center, 39 Green S.t, Concord.

■ Middle School Open Gym: 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Green Street Community Center, 39 Green St, Concord.

■ Noon Year's Eve: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Concord Public Library, 45 Green St., Concord. jsalemy@concordnh.gov.

■ Storytime Stations at the Heights: 9:30 a.m. Enjoy books, crafts, activities, and felt board/manipulatives at your own pace with our self-guided stations. (Recommended for ages 0-9) Free. Heights Branch Library, 14 Canterbury Rd., Concord. jsalemy@concordnh.gov.

■ Winterfox Art Market: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free. DIY Craft and Thift, 46 N. Main St., Concord. charthibault@gmail.com.

#### Dec. 31

New Year's Eve at the Grap-

pone Conference Center: 7 p.m. New Years Eve Disco Party at the Grappone Conference Center. Dinner Buffet, Cash Bar, Dancing with Precision E Grappone Conference Center, 70 Constitution Ave, Concord. (603)-573-4014. sferns@dupreyhotels.com.

#### Jan. 2

**Low-Impact Kung Fu and Tai Chi:** Noon to 1 p.m. \$14 - \$20. \$20 drop-in price. Multi-class bundles available for less. Zenith Martial Arts, 40 Thorndike Street, Concord. 603-513-9993. zenithmartialarts@gmail.com.

#### Jan. 3

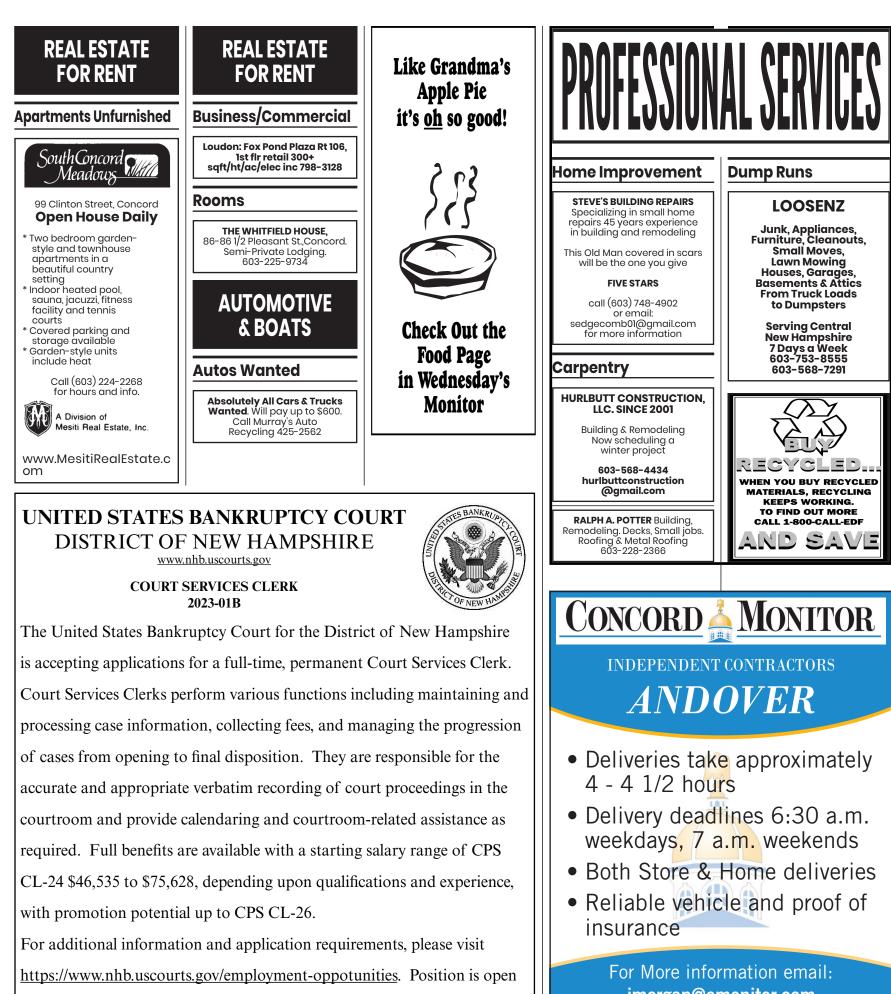
■ Hockey Game: 7:30 to 9:20 p.m. Douglas N. Everett Arena, 15 Loudon Road, Concord.

#### Jan. 4

■ Bach's Lunch: Drumming to Build Community: , 12:10 to 1 p.m. Grace Schust & Lindsey Schust will give a talk on West African drumming traditions and the use of drumming as a crosscultural bridge/community builder. Concord Community Music School, 23 Wall St, Concord. 603-228-1196. ccms@ccmusicschool.org.







to participate in a personal interview at their own expense. EOE.

jmorgan@cmonitor.com until filled. Preference will be given to applications received by 5:00 p.m. on or Call Joe at 603-369-3393 Friday, January 12, 2024. Applicants deemed most qualified will be invited please leave a message CONCORD MONITOR

Concord Insider — Thursday, December 28, 2023 ß



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