

PITTSFIELD POST

A FREE WEEKLY PRODUCTION BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

"A good conscience is a continual Christmas." *Benjamin Franklin*

December 21, 2022

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Join your friends and neighbors and bring the whole family to a wonderful traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve service, Saturday, December 24, 7 pm, at the First Congregational Church, 24 Main Street. The service includes beautiful music by the Chancel Choir and the JuBellation Handbell Choir, lessons and carols, the sanctuary shimmering in candlelight and the singing of "Silent Night." Include this lovely evening service in your holiday plans. Parking and wheelchair access are available at the rear of the church at Chestnut Street. For more information, call the church office at 603 435-7471.



In northern New England, the conditions are perfect for growing Christmas trees. (Courtesy of Paul Doscher)

The Christmas Tree Dilemma by Paul Doscher

Every year about this time articles appear in various places that try to answer some version of the Christmas tree question: "Which is the better choice, real or artificial?"

As a New Hampshire Christmas tree grower for the past 40 years, I know I'm biased and you can easily predict my answer to the question.

But I have lots of friends and some neighbors who have a different perspective. They make a list of pros and cons for real trees vs. plastic trees, and come to a different conclusion. Their pro-artificial list is not unreasonable.

Pros include: No mess bringing the tree into the house and then later taking it down. If they keep it a long time, it saves them money over annually buying a real tree either at a pre-cut tree lot or on a local farm. I even know one friend who joked about installing her tree on a platform that would be lowered through a hole in the floor into the basement so she could decorate it once and just bring it back up every Christmas season! (She never did it.) And, of course, if you keep the artificial tree for a number of years, you can save money.

OK, I get all this. And apparently so do lots of people in the U.S. According to the American Christmas Tree Association (the association of artificial tree manufacturers and sellers), of all the families that display a tree, 80 percent are artificial. Given that most Americans live in places where getting a fresh locally grown tree is not an option, this probably is to be expected.

But here in northern New England, we have ideal Christmas tree growing conditions, and there are dozens of small and large farms that produce fresh, real trees close by.

So that brings me to the "cons" of artificial trees. According to the U.S. Commerce See **Trees** on page 3

Town Crier Andrea Riel 603-435-6346
pittsfieldtowncrier@hotmail.com

Tuesday, January 3 at the First Congregational Church of Pittsfield, the Infant Toddler Diaper Pantry will be open from 9-11am. We generally have NB through size 6 diapers, along with pull-ups and overnights. Please use the parking lot off Chestnut Street. We appreciate your donations!! Financial donations, donations of diapers (including open packages) and donations of wipes are always welcomed. Please call 603-435-7471 with any questions.

The Josiah Carpenter Library's StoryWalk, "How to Catch a Gingerbread Man" is displayed. Grab a map at the community bulletin board on Main Street at Dustin's Park. Follow the story all around town and finish up with a visit to the library for your free gift! For the month of December, stop in at the Josiah Carpenter Library and make yourself a cocoa at the cocoa bar and enjoy the Christmas Village Display. There's even a scavenger hunt for the kiddos and holiday take-and-make crafts for all ages!

Pittsfield History Society 2023 Calendar is on Sale. The theme is "Tour the New Museum" with 29 pictures depicting the museum and various displays. The calendar may be purchased at the Historical Society, the Josiah Carpenter Library and the Town Hall. The cost is \$15.

The town of Pittsfield's Winter Parking Ban on town roads is effective November 15 through April 15. This ban prohibits parking in or on the town's roads or right of way between the hours of 10 pm and 7 pm. The purpose of this parking ban is to allow the winter or inclement weather maintenance crews unobstructed routes for snow removal and ice control, to maintain effectiveness of their routes.

If you are a 501(c)(3), have you heard about the **Globe Community Fund**? Established by the former fourth-generation family owners of Globe Manufacturing Company in Pittsfield, the donor-advised fund is administered by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. The fund's purpose is to enhance community wellbeing with a focus on the towns of Pittsfield, Barnstead, Epsom, Northwood, Gilmanton, and Chichester. For more information and an application, email the fund at GlobeCommunityFund@globefiresuits.com

The Victory Workers 4-H group and The Dowboro Farm have created a farm stand at 615 Dowboro Road in Pittsfield! The Young Entrepreneurs Program gave 4-Hers the opportunity to apply for grant money to start our own businesses. The farm stand is a great place for us to be able to sell our products. We have an abundance of homemade items and fresh vegetables for sale. The participants of the program are helping run the farm stand, and we are open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 9:30 am- 6pm.

Happy Birthday wishes to Aunt Carolyn Davis this past Monday, to Rich Hillsgrove on Tuesday, to my nephew, Tim Riel on Friday. I hope you all enjoy your special day. **Happy Anniversary** to Fred & Liz Hast on Sunday, December 18!

Due to the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays the **PITTSFIELD POST** will not be published on December 28, 2022 and January 4, 2023. The next **POST** will be published January 11, 2023. The **POST** Volunteers wish all our readers a very happy holiday season and new year.

Want to see the pictures in color?

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www.pittsfieldnhcommunitycenter.org

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Trees Department, about 9 million artificial trees are shipped to the U.S. across the ocean each year from China. That's 85 to 90 percent of all the artificial trees sold. These trees are made of metal and plastic (derived from fossil fuels) and are not recyclable. Eventually they almost all end up in landfills where they reside for so long that no one really knows for sure when or if they degrade. And because of very weak environmental regulation in China, there's no guarantee that the tree you buy won't contain lead or other toxic residues, and that has resulted in California requiring consumer warnings on imported trees.

So, you ask, what about the fire danger? While some artificial trees are treated to be fire retardant, I wonder if that fire retardant isn't another of those nasty PFAS chemicals we are all now very worried about.

According to numerous studies, real trees are not a fire hazard if cared for properly. If you buy a pre-cut real tree at a roadside stand and it was cut weeks prior to your purchase, it may dry out. To prevent this from happening quickly, keeping water in the tree stand at all times is essential. Checking the water daily, at least for the first week or so, is a must.

But if you cut a fresh tree yourself (with family in attendance, of course!) and bring it home and put the base in water immediately, it will stay moist and green for weeks.

Some worry that cutting trees is bad environmentally. Almost all analyses I've found say that's not the case. Christmas tree growers have to plant more trees every year to keep their business sustainable, and most plant more than they cut. While the trees are growing (about 8 years in most cases) they provide clean air, wildlife habitat, and income to local farmers so they can afford to keep the land from being sold

for development. And finally, real trees are entirely biodegradable. Whether you just throw it into the woods, chop it up, or the municipal waste service grinds them into mulch, they will not fill up our landfills.

After growing and selling Christmas trees for nearly four decades, I can say that the best reward is the arrival each season of local families who come with smiles on their faces to continue an annual tradition. My family and theirs have a few minutes to catch up on where the kids and grandkids are now, who has moved away or moved back, and who will be home for the holidays. They all say that cutting the real tree is a big part of their Christmas traditions. Going to a big box-store and coming home with a tree in a box just doesn't have that nostalgia factor.

Finally, this is NOT a commercial for my own Christmas tree farm. By the time you read this we will have sold out our supply of trees for this season. Consider looking for the nearest local farm and start a tradition that will not just make for precious memories, but help support a local farmer and his or her family.

Paul Doscher is a former environmental science professor and retired conservation professional. He and his wife live on and manage a Certified Tree Farm in Weare. This commentary was previously published by the New Hampshire Bulletin <https://newhampshirebulletin.com>

Crabby at Christmas

Dear Readers of the POST:

With all the achievements that the plant scientists have made, why can't they develop a GMO Xmas Tree that has a star on top? *Crabby, who hates ladders.*



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Select Board Review December 13, 2022

On December 12, the Merrimack County Delegation met for an organizational meeting (elect officers) and a public hearing on the 2023 budget. The election of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Clerk went by party lines - all democrats. As a State Representative, you are also elected to your local county delegation. There are 45 Merrimack County representatives with a 25 D to 20 R breakdown.

We met with Code Compliance Officer Scott Lacroix to review his new employment contract. Scott wears a number of hats: building inspector, zoning administrator, and advisor to the planning board as well as assisting the health officer. He is knowledgeable, amiable, diligent and agreeable to most any request we make. Like all our department heads, (and frankly all town employees) Pittsfield is lucky to have him. Scott is on-board for another 3 years.

The public hearing was open and closed without testimony. The county administrator presented the budget with a proposed increase of 2.9%. At \$102 M, that is almost \$3 M! To be fair, he also presented a history of flat spending over the last three years. Since this budget reflects nearly a 50/50 split between tax revenue and income, a more careful analysis is required before fully understanding the trends.

We discussed parking and a well at the town's lot at 36 Main St. Having just completed a survey of the property, we have placed a concrete boundary to distinguish lot lines which now requires some individuals from nearby apartments to relocate their parking. Without question, space during the winter on-street parking ban (Nov. 15-Apr 15) is an issue for many people living in buildings that simply have no parking of their own. Ultimately it's an issue between landlord and tenant, which should be addressed in lease agreements.

For property taxpayers, your bill will reflect this payment under the County portion. You will find that this is about 10% of your tax bill. You can count on Cyril and me for fiscal responsibility, and we will do our best to bring this down. Every financial source predicts a tough economic period, and we need to control spending. As part of the minority, we will vote to get it right and look for every opportunity. You have our word.

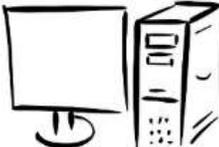
We have been getting a number of sewer user-fee abatement requests due to leaking water fixtures or occasional over-use that doesn't put water through the sewer system. Each request is determined on an individual basis, but anyone on town sewer or Pennichuck Water needs to keep a few things in mind. First, if you have both water and sewer, your sewer bill is determined by your water consumption, as that tells us how much you're putting through the treatment facility. If you are going to use water for some purpose that doesn't put it into the sewer, your choices are as follows: call the Town Hall so the Administrator can put you in touch with Wastewater to address your particular situation, or; install a separate meter on your outside hose bib so that water can be deducted from sewer use (you still have to pay for the water), or; pay both bills based solely on water consumption. "After-the-fact" abatement requests are scrutinized carefully and dealt with as fairly as we can.

Merrimack County gave us a great breakdown of departments within the County. Please visit CyrilCyril4House.com to learn more about where your property tax dollars are going. *Cyril Aures and Clayton Wood*

Employee evaluations for Equipment Operators Scott Jackson, Keith Donovan and Peter Elliott, and Fire-fighter/AEMT Joe Anderson were reviewed. All these men go above and beyond on their own initiative to do an exemplary job. We were happy to approve their step increases and thank them for their dedication. *Carl Anderson*

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Cook's Corner

Chocolate Trifle – Here We Go!

Looking for a different, fun, special dessert for Christmas dinner? Well, my dear friends, you've come to the right place. Chocolate Trifle to the rescue! You can make this with chocolate chips and chopped pecans, but using the crushed Heath bars is the game-changer ingredient here. Don't worry about how to store the leftovers, there won't be any. My very best wishes to you and yours for a fabulous, magical and peaceful Christmas. I look forward to reconnecting with you in the New Year. *MP Christakos*

1 (19.8 oz) pkg brownie mix, prepared according to package directions, cooled completely and crumbled

2 (3.9 oz) pkgs instant chocolate pudding mix, prepared according to package directions

3 (1.4 oz) bars chocolate covered English toffee bars (such as Heath bars), crushed

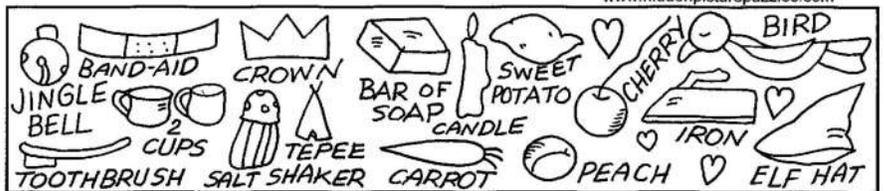
1 (16 oz) container frozen whipped topping, thawed (such as Cool Whip)

In a clear glass 4 to 5 quart trifle bowl or other clear glass bowl, layer half of the brownie crumbs, half of the pudding and one-third of the crushed toffee bars and half of the whipped topping. Repeat the layers.

Cover and chill at least 8 hours and up to 24 hours. Before serving, top with the remaining crushed toffee bars.

If you don't have toffee bars, you can use chocolate chips and chopped pecans.

Santa and Friends Hidden Pictures



www.hiddenpicturepuzzles.com



Post-It in the Post

Community groups, businesses, and individuals, please send us your news, opinions, and creative work! Deadline is noon on Friday.

Email: pittsfieldnews@pnhcc.org
 Info: www.PittsfieldNHCommunityCenter.org

Paul's salon

96 Fairview Drive / Pittsfield NH 03263
603.435.6900
 Cell 603.848.5565

• BY APPOINTMENT ONLY •

Advertising in the POST

Costs begin at \$5.00 for a brief classified ad. Guidelines and order forms are located at www.pittsfieldnhcommunitycenter.org

**Catamount Womenaid Receives
Grant from New Hampshire
Charitable Foundation**

Catamount Womenaid recently received a \$1,500 grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. This grant, from the Thomas W. Haas Fund, will help further Catamount Womenaid's goal of providing financial assistance to individuals in need. Since 2011, Catamount Womenaid has granted over \$90,000 in assistance for utilities, rent, food, transportation, medical supplies, home repairs, etc.

Catamount Womenaid is a women-led, volunteer-run nonprofit serving the towns of Barnstead, Deerfield, Epsom, Northwood, Pittsfield and Strafford. See catamountwomenaid.org to find out how to seek assistance for a community member or contact catamountwomenaid@gmail.com

Please Support the *Pittsfield Post*

Pittsfield Center Development Corporation (PCDC), owner of the Community Center, is the fiscal agent for the *Pittsfield Post*. PCDC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to engage in activities that benefit Pittsfield. Checks should be made out to:

**Pittsfield Center Development Corporation, memo: Newspaper
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