

PITTSFIELD POST

A FREE WEEKLY PRODUCTION BY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

"Every election is determined by the people who show up." *Larry J. Sabato*

March 3, 2021

Pittsfield Area Senior Center

March for Meals on Wheels Fundraiser

The Pittsfield Area Senior Center is participating in **The March for Meals Fundraiser, the Lunch Box Paint Box**, a virtual, beginner painting class being held March 18th, 1pm to 2:30, led by Larry Frates, a well-known artist and instructor from Laconia, NH.

The event will raise money for the Meals on Wheels (MOW) program for the Community Action Program of Belknap and Merrimack Counties. Last year the MOW program provided 1,749 individuals with 291,537 home-delivered meals and daily check-ins. This program provides necessary nutrition, wellness checks, and the ability for seniors to remain in their homes.

The cost to participate in this FUN program is \$35.00 and includes the class and supplies. For those with their own supplies, the cost is \$20 and, if you would like to use supplies provided by the Senior Center, you will receive a \$10 refund when the supplies are returned. You may sign-up by phone at 435-8482, or at the Josiah Carpenter Library. The class requires a computer, tablet, or smart phone, and internet access.

If you are coming by to pick up supplies, please stop in on March 18th, between 11am and 12pm; also, free to pick up a hot Corned Beef lunch to go!



Inspirational photo that will guide Larry Frates' painting instruction.

MERRIMACK COUNTY
4H LEADERS ASSOCIATION
2021 FLOWER FUNDRAISER



Think Spring...Order Your Flowers Today

It's that time of year again -- The Victory Workers 4-H Club is once again taking orders for their Annual Flower Sale. There are six gorgeous color combinations to choose from which can be purchased as a hanging basket or window box. There is also a beautiful succulent option, as well. All flowers will be available for pick up the week before Mother's Day.

Hanging baskets and succulent combos are \$25 each, and window boxes are \$30. All proceeds go back to the local 4-H club and help with numerous educational programs, camp scholarships, life skills projects and more! To order your flowers, contact any local 4-H'er or call/text Melissa at (603)496-3928. Orders and payment are needed before March 26th.



Voter guide information from the Pittsfield Budget Committee begins on page four.

Town Crier

Andi Riel, 435-6346
pittsfieldtowncrier@hotmail.com

A 4-H Community Service Project, led by Jeremiah Chapman, is requesting donations that benefit folks who utilize Meal on Wheels. Items requested are: size 9 or 10 manila envelopes, books, birthday cards, stamps, puzzle books (preferably word searches and crosswords), individually wrapped snacks, coffee, tea, baskets of any size, and small gift items (for example pens and pads of paper). Donations may be dropped off at the Josiah Carpenter Library until June 1.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and concerns, the **Greater Pittsfield Chamber of Commerce** is not holding the usual "Meet the Candidates" night. As an alternative, all candidates were asked to submit a letter to be published on the Chamber's website, in the *Pittsfield Post*, and on the Pittsfield town website www.pittsfieldnh.gov

Tuesday, March 9, Voting Day, 7am-7pm at the Pittsfield Middle High School Gymnasium. The Second Session of Annual Town and School District Meeting (Election Day) will be held. ****Please note:** Oneida Street is one way to the Middle High School. Berry Avenue is one way leaving the school. Masks shall be worn (masks will be available). Social distance spacing of at least 6 feet. No public restroom facilities. Poll workers will be available to provide direction and answer questions. Please call or e-mail the Town Clerk's office with any questions or concerns prior to Election Day. (603)435-6773 ext 15
eanthony@pittsfieldnh.gov

Pittsfield Youth Workshop (PYW) - We are happy to announce that PYW has opened for winter in-person programming! Program activities will continue to look different, but we are positive we will have fun while staying safe and healthy! We are not requiring that youth register ahead of time for each day of programming, but we may need to implement this if we feel the need to limit participation (due to space regulations). Programs will be scheduled monthly, and each day will have an organized activity. Masks will need to be worn in the building at all times, except when eating. A friendly reminder to all families that membership and program fees for the 2021 school year will be waived to insure all youth will

have the opportunity to participate in PYW activities! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at 435-8272, send us an email, or go to www.pittsfieldyouthworkshop.org for more information.

PMHS Winter Athletic Season - All home games at PMHS will be streamed live on facebook @pmhsathletics. We appreciate the support! GO PANTHERS!!

The Pittsfield Alumni Association has decided to postpone the PHS ALL CLASS REUNION until the Summer of 2022. We are saddened to make this announcement but we are hopeful that we will be able to have a huge, wonderful gathering in 2022. We will keep you updated!

Tuesday, March 9, 10am - The Senior Center is beginning virtual programming. This is just getting together virtually over coffee, and talking. If you are interested in participating, please call the center at 435-8482 or email cschiferle@bm-cap.org

The Pittsfield Senior Center is now offering curbside meal pickup for seniors in the community. While the center is still not open for seated dining, we have tasty frozen meals to go. Please call the center 435-8482 for menu details and ordering; we will meet you in the parking lot with your meals.

A special **Happy Birthday Wish** to my fabulous sister-in-law, Terry Riel, yesterday. I hope you enjoyed your special day! Happy Birthday wishes to Tobi Chassie on Saturday!

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Just for Laughs: Another thought about the Second Amendment – People who are waiting for a Covid 19 shot support the right to bare arms. *Bill Miskoe*

Select Board Meeting February 23, 2021

Our next scheduled meeting would be March 9 (election day), so we cancelled that meeting and will reconvene on the 23rd of March.

The Library Trustees notified us that they are returning \$27,000 to the town's General Fund in unspent 2020 appropriations. This was largely due to reduced hours and library use due to Covid 19 and prudent choices by the library.

We accepted a Covid 19 vaccination agreement with NH Health & Human Services to provide volunteer EMTs to assist the state as shots continue to be administered. EMTs will be paid by the state.

The Board of Selectmen strongly encourages all registered voters to show up between 7am and 7pm at the High School on March 9 to cast their ballots. You, the voters, have the final say in almost all matters which are then carried out by your elected officials. This year in particular, it is absolutely necessary that voters take the time to read every ballot question carefully before checking 'yes' or 'no.' The "knee-jerk" reaction when answering some of the questions could actually be the opposite of your intended choice. Take your time - you can have as long as you want in the voting booth! When you are considering money questions, remember the subject of the question and the tax ramifications are important to both renters and property owners - nobody rides for free. Whatever your position on a matter is, be certain your vote expresses that position! Majority rules, so you definitely want to BE HEARD! See you at the polls! *Carl Anderson*

The voters of Pittsfield,

I am writing in hopes that the voters of Pittsfield will vote NO on the proposed school budget on March 9th. I have been on the school board for 8 years and this has been the most difficult year so far. The impact of Covid has been devastating. Our state funding is based on enrollment and reduced and free lunch enrollment. As in every school district, not only in NH but across the country, our enrollment numbers have dropped due to families that are not able to be part of a hybrid or remote school model. All school lunches for every student through June are free. The impact on our budget has left us in a terrible situation.

We have kept our budget tight; we are highly restricted on where to spend any funds received due to Covid 19, and it has been spent appropriately. The situation is NOT because of overspending; it is because of a situation totally out of our control.

Please don't vote for the proposed budget. It is close to a million dollars in cuts to our already very thin school budget. The cuts that will have to be made will have a deep and everlasting impact on the education of our children. Programs, extra curricular, some athletics, class sizes, and positions are on the line.

A no vote is a yes for supporting the future of our schools and our children. Sincerely, *Bea Douglas*, School Board Chair and *Ted Mitchell*, School Board Member

To my Constituents in Pittsfield,

This week, the House met in the NH Sportsplex facility, where we had over 50,000 sq. ft. of space for social distancing. It seemed to be enough, as some of the legislators who sued the Speaker for remote access attended in person. In fact, 350 legislators attended, which is normal. It started very congenially, as we passed the consent calendar of non-controversial bills with none removed: a first in my experience. My committee had only one debate, on HB 274, which had the state pay 5% of the local employers' pension contributions, which had no recommendation because the committee could not agree on any disposition. I spoke in favor of killing the bill, and the vote to do so was 189-168.

After extensive debate, we passed two important pro-life bills: HB 625, prohibiting abortions in the third trimester except to save the life or health of the mother, and HB 233, requiring any infant that survived an abortion attempt and was born alive to receive appropriate medical care.

We also passed HB 242, on the content of an adequate education. This sets a basis for calculating state aid to schools, with a focus on what the state has to pay for and ensure each school provides, rather than attempting to average up districts that spend less than others. One factor that was restored to the calculation is fiscal disparity aid, which grants more funds to property-poor districts such as Pittsfield. This bill was sent to Finance for inclusion in the budget. *Representative Carol McGuire*, mcguire4house@gmail.com 782-4918

Warrant Article Explanations from the Pittsfield Budget Committee

In order for the Pittsfield Budget Committee to best assist voters in the practical appropriation of public funds, we present this series of explanations of some of the warrant articles for the 2021 Annual Town Warrant and 2021-2022 School District Warrant. There are many Warrant Articles to be considered when you go to the voting booth to vote on the Town and School District budgets this year. Please accept this information on reading and understanding warrant articles.

Any article that has money attached to it is presented in the same manner. This is based on rules and regulations overseen by the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA). You will see the phrase "...vote to raise and appropriate the sum of..." at the start of each money-related article. This phrase is mandated, regardless of where the money is coming from.

For example, Article 10 is seeking to raise \$40,196 for a Fire Department grant to purchase radios. It says we are voting to "raise and appropriate the sum of \$40,196 for...with a grant revenue offset of \$38,186..." The bulk of the money for this purchase is coming from a grant, not taxes. Even so, we still have to "raise and appropriate" the total amount in order to be able to expend the grant money. The remainder of \$2,010 will come from the Fire Department Small Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, not from taxes.

Reading through to the end of Article 10 you will see a line which reads "There is no estimated tax impact," which means approving this article will not affect the tax rate. That is true because the money being expended for that specific purpose in the article has already been previously raised, such as in a capital reserve fund, or is coming from another source such as a grant, in this case.

In other articles it will say "Estimated tax impact is \$0.08 per \$1,000 of assessed value," with different amounts specific to each. That is the amount of money you will fund in your taxes if the article passes. However, this does not always mean it is a tax increase over the previous year. A great example of this is the capital reserve funding articles that we see each year. If the amount on these articles is the same from one year to the next, and were approved the previous year, then approving the article this year does not represent a tax increase over the previous year.

Finally, at the bottom of the articles you will see how the Select Board and Budget Committee voted on recommending the article. Article 10, for example, was recommended by all Select Board members with no one opposing or abstaining from the vote (5-0-0), as well as all Budget Committee members with no one opposing or abstaining (12-0-0).

Please take the time to review the Town Meeting Warrant and the School District Warrant ahead of time. Copies are available on the Town web site, or you can get them at the Town Hall. If something is confusing or difficult to understand, ask for clarification at the Town Hall or School District. You can also reach out to a member of the Budget Committee. Once you are at the voting booth you cannot ask what the articles mean, so make sure you are an informed voter ahead of time.

Town Warrant Article 6: Municipal Operating Budget

The proposed Municipal Operating Budget reflects a modest increase over last year due to several specific things, such as a 5.8% increase in health insurance costs (less increased employee contributions of 1%), state mandated increases in retirement costs of 10% for fire, 20% for police, and 26% for town employees, an increase in the BCEP contract obligations, and money allocated for pay increases for our non-union public works department **if** article 7 passes (preserving equal pay for non-union workers in line with those of union workers). This proposed budget is essentially the same as last year and was unanimously recommended by the budget committee.

Town Warrant Article 7: cost items for AFT-NH Local #6214 bargaining unit

This is the union contract renewed every three years for the fire department and town employees. The police department has a separate union contract that was approved last year. You will see the article displays Wage Costs, Insurance Cost Sharing, and Net Costs. This illustrates that the new contract requires employees to pay an additional 1% per year towards their health insurance, reflected in the cost sharing number, and reducing the overall net cost of the contract for taxpayers.

Town Warrant Articles 9 - 12: Expenditures with no estimated tax impact

These four articles are asking voters to approve expending funds that do not require us to raise any additional funds by taxation. Article 10 was used as an example earlier in this Budget Committee explanation, and the other 3 articles are variations of that. Article 9 allows spending money on sidewalks that was previously raised by vehicle registration fees. Article 11 allows us to purchase a new police cruiser using funds previously raised from fees we charge other municipalities when our police provide special details for them, combined with the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve fund. Article 12 authorizes us to replace the old backhoe used by the Public Works Department, again using funds we have been saving over the years in the Backhoe Capital Reserve fund.

Town Warrant Articles 13 through 23: Capital Reserve Fund Contributions

These warrant articles set aside funds for equipment used by the Fire Department, Police Department and Highway Department. This equipment needs to be maintained and replaced periodically. The Capital Improvement Program Committee established in 2019 has proposed a strategic plan of replacement for each of the vehicles represented by these Capital Reserve Funds. The proposed amounts reflect the committee's desire to stabilize the tax impact over the coming years according to this long-term plan. The plan for 2021 represents \$0.00 in increases over 2020 and, as explained earlier, represent no tax **increase** in 2021.

Town Warrant Article 24: Add to the Floral Park Cemetery Fence Expendable Trust Fund

The Select Board is in favor of continuing the work on the fence around Floral Park Cemetery. One of the selectmen has offered their salary/stipend to the fund totaling \$500. There is no impact to the tax rate and no other funds are being asked to fund this project.

School District Warrant Article 3: Operating Budget

The proposed school warrant article requires a little background information for proper context. Below are the previous two years' ballot-approved school budget numbers, and the various numbers presented by separate groups for this year's proposed budget.

2019-2020 \$10,399,738 (Ballot Approved)

2020-2021 \$10,731,265 (Ballot Approved)

2021-2022 \$11,016,306 (School Board Proposed)

\$10,918,600 (Approved Default)

\$10,529,306 (Budget Committee Proposed)

\$10,029,306 (Voter amended at deliberative session)

The approved default and voter amended numbers are the two that appear on this ballot.

A **"Yes"** vote on this ballot means you approve the school budget of **\$10,029,306** with an estimated tax change impact of **\$1.85** per thousand dollars of assessed value.

A **"No"** vote on this ballot means you approve the school budget of **\$10,918,600** with an estimated tax change impact of **\$4.43** per thousand dollars of assessed value.

Both options are an estimated tax increase this year, even with the voter-amended number which is far lower than last year. We had a decrease in the tax rate last year only because of one-time funding from the state, which prevented a tax increase last year. That added funding is simply unavailable this year.

Please note we use the term "estimated tax **change** impact" above, which differs from the article itself. The School Board has historically listed this number as the estimated change from the previous year rather than the tax impact itself. So please do not compare these School Ballot tax impact numbers with those on the Town Ballot, as they have quite different meanings.

Dear Pittsfield Community,

Please find the budget reductions recommended by Administration and approved by the Pittsfield School Board.

INSTRUCTION (teachers + professional staff) 8.5 positions	\$755,327.00
SUPPORT STAFF (paraprofessionals, related support) 5 positions	\$118,000.00
PES SUPPLIES/ MAINTENANCE	\$17,812.00
PMHS SUPPLIES/ MAINTENANCE / ATHLETICS	\$87,861.00
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	\$8,000.00
TOTAL	\$987,000.00

THIS LIST REPRESENTS ALMOST A MILLION DOLLARS OF CUTS TO THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT. *John Graziano*, Interim Superintendent of Schools



Cook's Corner

Chicken with Artichoke Hearts & Mushrooms

I realize it's early days in March, but I think we're all yearning for Spring. This dish always lifts my spirits and puts me in the mood for the light and fresh flavors that warmer weather brings. I hope this recipe does the same for you. Although it looks to be a long list of ingredients, this chicken is actually quite easy to make. Enjoy and Bon Appetit!

4 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts (cut them in half crosswise if they're very large)

Garlic powder (for seasoning the chicken)

4 Tbsp butter

1 Tbsp olive oil

1 large shallot, thinly sliced

½ lb mushrooms, cleaned & stems removed

1 Tbsp flour

1 can cream of chicken soup

1 cup dry white wine

1 cup chicken broth

½ cup heavy cream

1 tsp salt

¼ tsp dried tarragon

¼ tsp fresh ground black pepper

1 (15 oz) can artichoke hearts, drained & halved or quartered, if large

6 scallions, sliced thin on an angle

2 Tbsp fresh chopped parsley

Heat oven to 350. Prepare an oven-proof baking pot or Dutch oven with a thin schmear of olive oil. Pat the chicken dry and season with salt, pepper and garlic powder. In a large skillet (or the Dutch oven if using) place butter and 1 Tbsp olive oil, heat over medium. Add the chicken and cook, turning once for about 10 minutes total, or until chicken is browned on all sides. Remove chicken to a platter and keep warm.

In same pan, with all of the pan juices (add 1 Tbsp of butter if necessary), saute the shallots for 3 to 4 minutes. Then add the mushrooms and cook for 5 minutes. Now add flour and stir. Then add the soup, wine and broth, whisk gently until smooth and simmer the sauce for 8 to 10 minutes.

Stir in cream, salt, tarragon and pepper. Transfer the chicken back to the pot, spooning the sauce over the chicken to coat. Bake uncovered for 35 to 40 minutes. Remove from oven, add the artichokes, scallions and parsley and gently stir to combine. Return to the oven for another 5 minutes or so until everything is heated through.

Serve over cooked linguine or other pasta, or with mashed potatoes, maybe some steamed vegetables or a salad, and definitely crusty bread to soak up the delicious sauce. - *MP Christakos*

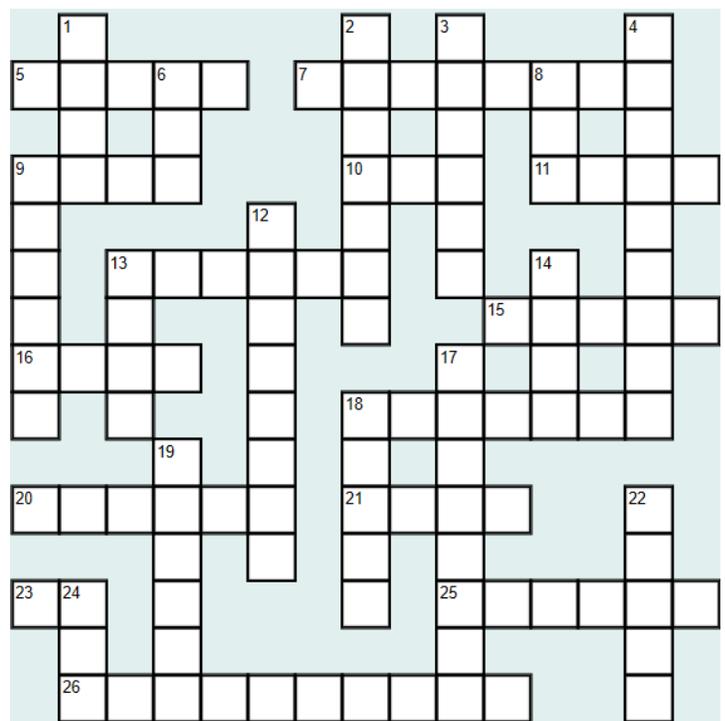
Winter Fun

Across

- 5) New _____ Day
- 7) Long wooden sled for one or more people.
- 9) Flexible Flyer is best known for this.
- 10) On your mark, get _____
- 11) Type of football game.
- 13) Deep _____
- 15) AKA hot chocolate
- 16) Let the _____ begin.
- 18) Hanging water
- 20) Old Man _____
- 21) Used when ice fishing
- 23) Expression of disappointment
- 25) Type of hot cider
- 26) Go house to house Christmas caroling

Down

1. Preceded by sleigh.
2. Sled known for speed.
3. Cold polar air.
4. Used to walk on snow.
6. Sign of a cold nose.
8. To talk a lot.
9. Used for winter transportation.
12. One of two months winter carnival is usually held.
13. Winning the winter Olympics brings you this.
14. A common stocking stuffer for some.
17. A type of flavored stick.
18. An ice cold house.
19. Opposite of ends.
22. Granular snow.
24. Expression of surprise.



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:
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 Donations are tax-deductible. Donations above \$50.00 may be acknowledged as sponsor of the week.

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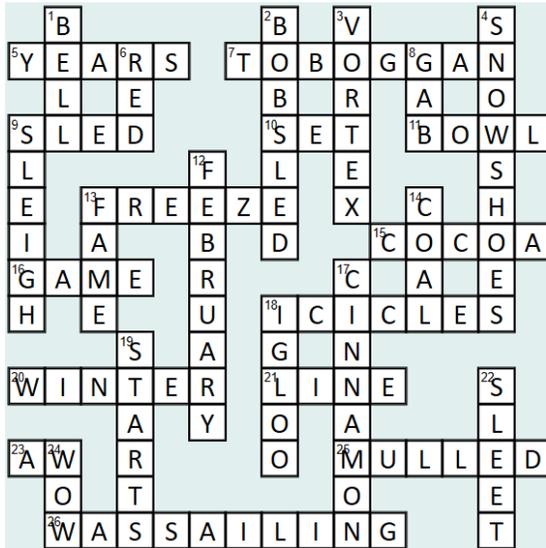
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Text for Sponsorship: _____

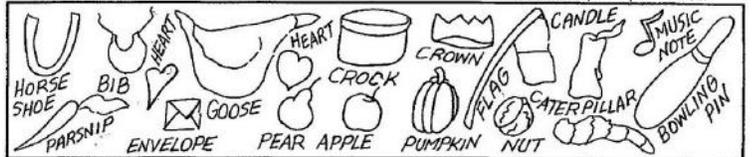
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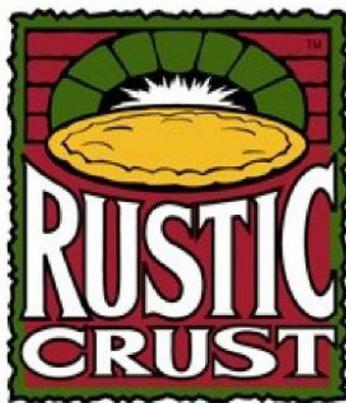
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St. Patrick's Day Specials

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