DECEMBER 2026 VOL. 66

BARNSTEAD BANNER

Good News from a Small Town



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IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN EVENT OR CLASSIFIED FOR THE BARNSTEAD BANNER, PLEASE EMAIL DANIELLE@OSCARFOSS.ORG WITH THE DETAILS.

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YE OLDE CHOPPING BLOCK

by Kristina Schram

This summer we paid a company a copious amount of dollars to cut down several trees in our yard so they wouldn't land on our buildings and cost us even more dollars. Not long after that, the electric company's hired guns showed up and removed three more giants at the end of our driveway. The second half of my summer was spent splitting the remnants. It was hard going, mainly because I split wood the old-fashioned way. My ax, like its owner, isn't the sharpest tool in the shed, and I'm not strong enough to split most wood just by axing it, so I have to use a sledge hammer to help. Yes, I have the bruises to show for my unconventional method. And yes, I know you can get one of those log-splitting machines that split a cord of wood fast as Paul Bunyan after an excessive number of espresso shots. But I'm too cheap. So I stick to my Cro-Magnon method, which works. Just very slowly. On the plus side, my biceps are approaching superhero status.

Those of you who split wood know that not all wood is created equal. You have your soft woods (easy to split) and hardwoods (not so easy to split). Then you have your knotty wood (which likes to misbehave), your petrified wood (more scared than scary), and your octopus wood (so many branches). Then you get your odd pieces that are too long to fit in the woodstove, or the ones that are too short to easily pile. You have your really dead wood–which is much nicer to split, as opposed to the not-quite-dead wood, which still has some fight in it. Like humans, some wood works with you, while other wood will battle you until you give up and buy a new ax because the old one is stuck inside the wood like wet cement hardened instantly around the poor thing, trapping it forever.

As I mentioned, splitting wood isn't easy, so luckily there are bonuses that make the experience more bearable… Even, dare I say it? Exciting! Like when you split wood that's been sitting around slowly returning to the earth and encounter a surprising variety of creatures inside. I'm not particularly squeamish, but it's always a bit startling when the wood splits and a bunch of many-legged creatures swarm upward and outward, seemingly right at my face. The pale wiggly grubs are the worst. (I'm sure they're not too keen on seeing my big ugly mug peering down at them, either.) On the plus side, they're a free and easy-to-catch source of protein.

Hey, maybe as a side hustle I could set up a food truck and call it Grub on Wheels. I'll keep you posted.

I tell myself that, in the end, all my effort will be worth it when it's a cold January morning and I start a fire in the stove and the flames are super pretty and the sparks are flying and the smell of woodsmoke is in the air. But I'm lying. Because once that fire runs its course, there's ash to clean out, newspaper to be rolled, and kindling to be tee-pee-ed. Then there's the fire itself to maintain, which means remembering to put more wood in every couple hours when I can't even remember why I walked into the room. Finally, there's the refilling of empty wood containers and hauling of more wood to the house when it's below freezing and the wind is blowing ice needles at my eyeballs and I'm using a wagon with wheels and there's three feet of snow on the ground. Of course, after bringing in all that wood, I have to clean up the inevitable mess.

Maybe I should just move to Florida, where it's warm most of the time and I won't need to split wood. I bet the grubs there are super big, too, and I could save money on groceries. Then again, Florida grubs would probably fight back. So I think I'll just stay here in the Shire, splitting my wood and taking care of my fire and buying my food truck. When I have the Grubmobile up and running, I'll let you know. You can trade me wood for grubs. Win-win!

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BARNSTEAD PARADE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Worship Service 9:00 A.M.
Rev. Sandy Pierson—483-2846

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthy and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF NORTH BARNSTEAD - UCC
504 N. Barnstead Rd. Center. Barnstead, NH
ccnorthbarnstead.com
Worship with us in-person or join on Zoom at 10am

CENTER BARNSTEAD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Worship Service - Sundays @ 10AM

www.centerbarnsteadcc.org

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1009 Upper City Rd, Pittsfield, NH
(Just off Route 28)
603-507-2378

Check our Facebook page for hours of operation
Facebook - page: sugarslocal or visit the Barnstead Business Uncensored group for updates!

DECEMBER LIBRARY HAPPENINGS

Good to Know Info: We are closed for staff training on the second Thursday of every month until 3:00 (Dec. 10). We are also closed Thursday, Dec. 24, and Friday, Dec. 25, and Thursday, Dec. 31, and Friday, Jan. 1, for the holidays.

Home School Group: Run by group members, it takes place at the library meeting room on Fridays from 10:30-12:30. Involves a mix of stories, simple science/learning activities, and a creative art/craft activity that all go along with a theme for the week. The activities are geared towards kids ages 4 and up, and younger siblings are welcome to come along. There will be an event posted ahead of time on the group's Facebook page (Barnstead NH Library Homeschool Group) for each weekly meet-up, so you'll always know what to expect and if you need to bring anything.

Music and Movement Storytime, aka Littles Love to Learn! Join us on Tuesdays at 10:30 for an interactive storytime filled with group singing, dancing, imaginative play, crafts, and stories, all designed specifically for babies and toddlers.

Every Wednesday at 10:30 is Children's Storytime. Visit us at the library for stories, crafts, and singing. Then experience the cozy ambience in the children's area, which has all sorts of neat things to do. Make new friends. Set up playdates. Check out books, movies, and games, play with the trains, Legos, and puppets. Come for the learning, stay for the fun!

Start your week off with Yoga Monday! Gentle Hatha-Flow runs from 10:15-11:40, Senior/Beginner/Chair Yoga is 12:00-1:00, and Intermediate Hatha-Flow lasts from 5:30-6:50. Classes are by donation (suggested $8). All are welcome and encouraged to attend, regardless of ability to donate.

Playing a musical instrument alone at home is fun, but it's more fun to make music with others. Adult musicians of all ability levels are invited to join our small group. We meet in Barnstead's library meeting room from 6:00 to 8:00 pm every first (Dec. 1) and third Tuesday (Dec. 15) of the month, and play acoustic (non-amplified) instruments like guitars and ukuleles. Other instruments that might round out our sound would include the harmonica, fiddle, mandolin, etc. (Unfortunately, horns and other instruments that can't be played softly would overpower our softer sounding instruments.) We play various kinds of songs including folk, country, Irish, rock, and more. Sessions are very informal, and the goals are to meet people, share skills, and have fun. Check the calendar on the library website to confirm dates. Please join us!

Our Read the Room Book Club (ages 18+) takes place on the first Wednesday of the month (Dec. 2), from 6:00-7:30. This month's book will be "A Psalm for the Wild-Built" by Becky Chambers. Next month's book will be "Cultish" by Amanda Montell. Books are available at the library. Bring food, bring thoughts, bring a friend!

Calling all Mahjong fans - come join us at the library! Players meet the first (Dec. 3) and third (Dec. 17) Thursdays of the month at 1:30. No registration or expertise required. Please note that we play the Chinese version, not the American one.

NEW! Join us on Thursday, Dec. 3, at 6:00, for the first meeting of Booked for Investigation: A True Crime Book Club (18+). Each month, we'll explore a fascinating true crime book, listen to a related podcast, examine the known evidence, and discuss theories and unanswered questions. Our first book is "The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper" by Hallie Rubenhold. Copies can be picked up at the library. Curious minds and armchair detectives are all welcome—come ready to discuss the book and follow the clues!

On Thursday, Dec. 3, at 6:00, OFML is hosting a NH Humanities presentation: "Songs of Old New Hampshire" by Jeff Warner. Drawing heavily on the repertoire of traditional singer Lena Bourne Fish (1873-1945) of Jaffrey and Temple, NH, Jeff Warner offers the songs and stories that, in the words of Carl Sandburg, tell us "where we came from and what brought us along." These ballads, love songs and comic pieces reveal the experiences and emotions of daily life in the days before movies, sound recordings, and, for some, books. Songs from the lumber camps, the decks of sailing ships, the textile mills, and the war between the sexes offer views of pre-industrial New England and a chance to hear living artifacts from the 18th and 19th centuries. Registration is required.

On Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 6:00, join us for a Festive Animal Tote Bag crafting program. Come hand sew your very own festive animal tote bag! All supplies are included, and light refreshments will be served. Registration is required, so please contact the library to secure a spot. This program is intended for older teens and adults.

NEW! We are starting a Chess Club! Join us at the library every 2nd (Dec. 10) and 4th Thursday (we will not have Chess Club on this day due to the holiday) of the month at 6:00. No registration required–this is a drop-in program hosted in the adult fiction area. All ages and skill levels are welcome. Please bring your own board if you have one, or use one of ours!

Hey, tweens and teens, it's that time of the year again! On Thursday, Dec. 10, at 6:00, join Leah from Cookie Bear Baking to learn the techniques for decorating beautiful holiday cookies and practice on a set of your own to take home! Ages 10 and up. Registration is required.

We're hosting a special Storytime with Santa on Wednesday, Dec. 16, at 10:30! Grown-ups, if you can, please bring a wrapped new or gently used book to exchange after story time. But in case you forget we will have extras on hand.

NEW! Introducing Young Readers Book and Art Club! Held the third Wednesday of each month at 3:00 (12/16), this program is designed for children in Kindergarten through Grade 5. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss their favorite books and enjoy crafts or art activities. Light refreshments will be provided.

On Thursday, Dec. 17 (temporary day change: we typically meet the last Thursday of the month, but that's Christmas Eve this month!), from 6:30-8:00, join us for Books & Banter. Read what you want, then come talk about it! Books & Banter is an 18+ book club with no assigned reading. Discuss whatever you've been enjoying lately, whether it's new, old, borrowed, or rediscovered. Share what stood out, hear what others are reading, and find your next great recommendation in good company.

Our "Let's Write a Novel!" writing group is looking for fresh faces (16+) to join our "Hero's Journey" experience. This structured group will help take your MG, YA, NA, or Adult story idea from concept to can-do! This class runs 6:00-7:30, typically on the last Friday of the month, but will meet early this month due to the holiday (Dec. 18). No writing experience necessary.

For events that require registration, please contact us at 269-3900 or ofmlstaff@gmail.com to reserve your spot!



Joy to the World

by Sam McKeen

Christmas is almost here! For many of us, the season comes with a list of things that are supposed to make us happy. Maybe it's finding the perfect gift, or gathering the whole family around the table. Yet once the wrapping paper is cleared away, that happiness often fades as quickly as it came.

One of the most familiar Christmas carols points at something deeper than happiness. Isaac Watts, an English minister and hymn writer, published "Joy to the World" in 1719. Surprisingly, Watts did not write it as a Christmas song. He based it on Psalm 98, which calls all the earth to "*make a joyful noise unto the Lord*" because the Lord comes to judge the world with righteousness. Watts was celebrating Christ as King. In 1839, More than a century later, American music educator Lowell Mason set Watts's words to the tune we sing today, and the hymn became one of the most popular songs sung during the Christmas season.

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.

It is easy to see why. On the night Jesus was born, the angel told the shepherds, "*I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people*" (Luke 2:10). The joy of Christmas is found in Jesus himself.

Watts captured this in another verse:

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.

This joy reaches into the broken places of life. It can live alongside grief and disappointment, because it rests on Jesus Christ rather than on our circumstances.

As you celebrate this year, I invite you to do what Watts wrote: prepare Him room. Make space in your heart for the One who came to bring lasting joy. Have a blessed and joyful Christmas!



Barnstead Historical Society

Christmas Sale

Saturday, December 5, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Parade Fire Station
305 Parade Road



BARNSTEAD PARADE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

COOKIE WALK

DECEMBER 12TH, 2026
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

1 Parade Circle
Barnstead, NH 03218

Historical Society Page

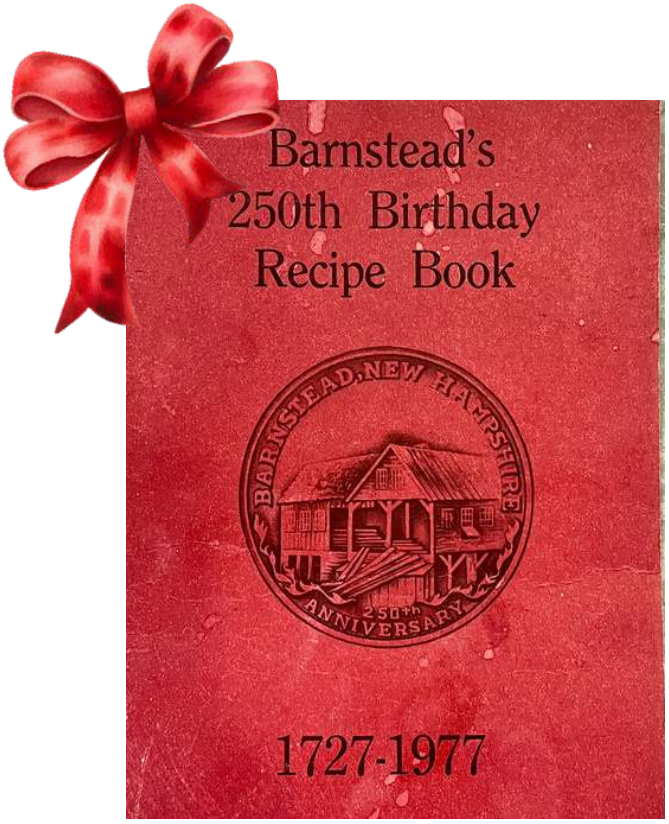
Barnstead 300 Years Strong!

Join us in celebrating Barnstead's 300th anniversary in 2027!

The charter creating the Town of Barnstead was signed on May 20, 1727 by Governor John Wentworth. The Tricentennial Committee will be commemorating this milestone throughout 2027, with a variety of events that are being sponsored by both the Committee and its partners throughout the town.

To kick off the year, we will be hosting The Barnstead Bake Off on January 23 at the Parade Fire Station from 11am-3pm. From the 250 th Anniversary Recipe Book, use a bread (pgs 1-17), cake (pgs 18-35), or cookie (pgs 41-54) recipe. Don't have a copy of the red covered book? No problem, we've got you covered! A copy of the book is available for viewing the Oscar Foss Memorial Library. Library staff are ready to make a copy of the recipe you select. Copies are also available to purchase from the Historical Society at the following link: https://www.barnstead.org/1413/Historical-Society-Merchandise

Help us Honor the Past and Celebrate the Future of this special place we call home!



The Tricentennial Committee Presents

THE BARNSTEAD BAKE OFF!

JANUARY 23, 2027

BARNSTEAD PARADE FIRE STATION
305 PARADE ROAD

Choose a recipe from the 250th Anniversary Recipe Book -
You can find it at the
Oscar Foss Memorial Library!

SHOW OFF YOUR BAKING SKILLS!

Choose from Breads (pg 1-17),
Cakes (pg 18-34), or
Cookies and Bars (pg 38-54)

Schedule of Events

- 10:00-11:00 am Sign-up/Drop-off
- 11:00-2:00pm Tasting
- 2:30pm Prizes Awarded

Award Categories:

- Adult
- 12-18
- Under 12

Be a "taster" for only $1!



Community Events

Board of Selectmen Meeting is weekly on Tuesdays starting at 6PM.

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held Tuesday evenings at the Center Barnstead Christian Church and Sunday at the American Legion Post #42 at 1078 Beauty Hill Rd, Barnstead, NH 03218 starting at 7PM

Anderson and Reid Holiday Concert is Saturday, December 5th. 2026 at 4:00 PM at the North Barnstead Congregational Church

Barnstead Tricentennial Committee meets on December 7th, 2026 at 7:00 PM at the Oscar Foss Memorial Library

Barnstead Parade Church Cookie Walk will be held on December 12th at 9:00 AM

Milfoil Committee Meets on December 12th at 9:00 AM at the Oscar Foss Memorial Library

Senior Bingo sponsored by the Barnstead Police Department will be on December 19th at 12:00 PM at the Barnstead Town Hall.

9th Annual BOB 319 Craft & Vendor Fair

Saturday, December 5, 2026, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Prospect Mountain High School, Alton, NH

More than 50 local crafters and vendors and a visit from Santa between 10AM and 1PM!

Admission is free to the public.

For more information, contact the BOB 319 Robotics Team at Prospect Mountain High School.

Christmas Candlelight Service at Center Barnstead Christian Church

Tuesday, December 22nd | 7:00–8:00 PM

Need a break from the Christmas hustle? Take an hour to slow down, enjoy the beauty of candlelight, and be refreshed by the hope and joy of Christmas. Step away from the busyness and remember the greatest gift of all. Bring your family, invite a friend, and join us for a special evening.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at Congregational Church of North Barnstead

Thursday, December 24th at 5:00 PM

Need a break from the Christmas hustle? Take an hour to slow down, enjoy the beauty of candlelight, and be refreshed by the hope and joy of Christmas. Step away from the busyness and remember the greatest gift of all. Bring your family, invite a friend, and join us for a special evening.

For more information about Barnstead Events, use the following links:

Community Event Calendar: https://teamup.com/ksojztyx6jsgmd92n2

Barnstead Elementary School Calendar: https://bes.pmsau.org/o/bes/events

Prospect Mountain High School Calendar: https://pmhs.pmsau.org/o/pmhs/events

Barnstead Town Calendar: https://www.barnstead.org

Barnstead Fire Rescue Department

Christmas Fire Safety

The holidays are a time for family, friends, and festive traditions. Follow these simple fire-safety tips to help keep your home and loved ones safe this Christmas season.



HOLIDAY LIGHTS

- Use only UL-listed lights.
- Check for frayed wires, cracked sockets, or damaged bulbs.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.



CANDLES

- Keep candles at least 12 inches from anything that can burn.
- Never leave candles unattended.
- Consider battery-operated flameless candles for a safer option.



CHRISTMAS TREES

- Choose a fresh tree with green, flexible needles.
- Keep the tree at least 3 feet from heat sources such as fireplaces, stoves, and space heaters.
- Keep the stand filled with water and check it daily.



DECORATIONS & GIFTS

- Keep decorations away from heat sources.
- Use nonflammable or flame-resistant decorations.
- Keep wrapping paper, gift bags, and boxes away from open flames and heaters.



BE PREPARED

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Test alarms monthly and replace batteries as needed.
- Have a home fire escape plan and practice it with your family.

REMEMBER

A little preparation today can help prevent a fire tomorrow.

From all of us at the Barnstead Fire Rescue Department, we wish you a safe and happy Christmas season!

Jeannie's Recipe Corner

Here we are in December! It's a busy month for everyone, and I thought it would be fun to go back 50 years and share a couple of recipes from Barnstead's 250th Birthday Recipe Book.

Apple Pecan Crumb-Top Pie

Recipe from Alice Hodgman



Pie filling

- 1 unbaked pie shell
- ¼ cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 6 cups thinly sliced tart apples
- 2 tablespoons butter

Crumb topping

- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup butter
- ⅓ cup sifted flour
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ cup chopped pecans

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Sprinkle the pecans over the bottom of the unbaked pie shell.
2. Mix the sugar, flour, nutmeg, and cinnamon, then toss with the apples. Heap the apples into the pie shell and dot with butter.
3. To make the topping, blend the brown sugar, butter, flour, and cinnamon. Stir in the chopped pecans and sprinkle the topping over the pie.
4. Bake at 350°F until done.

Cheddar Cheese Soup

Recipe from Master Chef Harold O. Huckaby, Crystal Quail



Ingredients

- 1 small leek
- 1 celery stalk
- 3 medium carrots
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon white peppercorns
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- 2 ounces butter
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 pound cheddar cheese
- 1 cup cream sauce
- 2 drops Tabasco sauce
- ½ cup cream

1. Sauté the leek, celery, carrots, bay leaf, peppercorns, and dry mustard in butter, taking care to keep them from browning.
2. Add the chicken stock and bring to a boil, then remove from the heat.
3. Cut the cheddar into medium-sized pieces. Add the cheese and cream sauce to the stock and stir until smooth.
4. Strain through a sieve, then stir in the Tabasco and cream. Serve hot or cold.

In 2027, we'll celebrate Barnstead's 300th birthday, with something special happening each month. Cookbooks will be available through the Barnstead Historical Society.
Wishing you a lovely holiday season and a happy New Year!

Jeannie