Twas a fine gatherin’ indeed, when MaH Members celebrated St. Patrick’s Day at the Jaffrey Civic Center on March 16, 2016.

Once again, Good Shepherd Healthcare Center’s Chef, Damon Anthony, presented a delectable variety of dishes – each with a distinctive Irish flair. These included beef stew cooked in Guinness Beer, and brownies also made with Guinness!

MaH member Larry Foley maintained the Guinness theme by sharing the long and colorful history of Ireland’s famed brewers of beer. We learned the Guinness family is not only renowned for their beer, but for their ongoing philanthropic generosity as well. Larry also played a CD, which featured an Irish Tenor and commemorated in song the experience of Irish immigrants arriving at Ellis Island and their longing for home.

Member Kathy Graves movingly read several poems written by two of Ireland’s most famous and cherished poets: William Butler Yeats and Seamus Heaney. Her final reading was one of her own delightful poems titled, Twenty-Five Years After Graduating.

I did a dramatic reading of my original poem, The Abandoned and my accompanying short story, Candlelight Dinner. Both were based on my curiosity regarding those who were unable or unwilling to emigrate from Ireland during the great potato famine of 1845-1849.

Following the readings, MaH members had the pleasure and privilege of hearing the gifted Irish Folk Music singer/guitarist, John Sullivan. John’s Irish Ballads, sung only as he can do, were charming and bittersweet. It was a
MaH Volunteer Gatherings

By Bill Graf, MaH Volunteer Committee Chair

On February 3rd the Volunteer Committee hosted a coffee at SDE for all volunteers who provide direct services to our members: drivers, computer technicians, handypersons, and friendly visitors. Thirteen out of eighteen volunteers were able to attend. Our first activity was a group photograph taken by Board Member Annie Card (see photo). As is evident in the picture, this proved to be an effective ice breaker for the group.

Sandra Faber, MaH Member Service Coordinator, provided a variety of delicious refreshments while we got to know one another and shared our volunteer experiences. The goal of the meeting, in addition to becoming better acquainted, was to explore working more as a team and to better meet the needs of the membership. One major area of discussion was the transition of transportation services from the Red Cross to CVTC (Contoocook Valley Transportation Company). To date everything has gone smoothly, and our volunteer drivers are committed to ensuring that the needs of MaH members are met. MaH member Dwight Schenk accepted the responsibility of coordinating a communication system for our computer tech volunteers to ensure the best service possible for our members with “tech” questions.

At our volunteer coffee gathering, member Owen Houghton introduced a new program that he was proposing for MaH members. Titled “Members Helping Members,” the program matches volunteers with members who live alone and would like to receive regular telephone check-in calls. An announcement went out soliciting volunteers for the new program, and on March 9th a training session was held at SDE for the ten volunteers who responded. Owen, Sandra and Cindy conducted the training and six members who had requested check-in calls have already been paired with a volunteer caller. Some members have also expressed an interest in an occasional visit from their caller.

Since many of the volunteer callers are also members, this program helps reinforce our sense of MaH as a true community. Monadnock at Home is fortunate to have both members and non-member volunteers to support our membership!
Helping Seniors Live Independently at Home          603-371-0809          www.monadnockathome.org

Hello everyone and welcome to the spring 2016 issue of “at Home!” MaH’s staff and Program Committee have been busy planning for late spring and summer! Just the sound of those words, “late spring and summer” brings a smile to my face! Speaking of MaH’s programs and events, members occasionally ask why we offer the programs that we do and why we move them from town to town. The answer is directly related to our recently revised mission statement, “Provide seniors of the Monadnock Region with the support and practical means to live and thrive in their homes and communities.”

Rick now finds himself serving as President of that national Network and wants to let our members know a little more about “VtoV,” which has grown to over 350 “Villages” since last year!

Monadnock at Home (MaH) exemplifies the Network’s Village definition as “community-based networks that expand options for older adults so they can live fully and independently in their communities.” MaH’s vision is closely aligned with that of the Network’s: Through cutting edge innovation, collaboration, advocacy and inclusion, the Village to Village Network expands opportunity, choice, support and care for all older people. The Network is committed to be word of mouth, by our members sharing their experiences with others. For more information, interested folks can call 371-0809 or visit our website www.monadnockathome.org.

As the spring weather approaches do keep in mind that your MaH membership offers you access to pre-screened service providers and volunteers that are ready to assist you. Don’t let spring chores overwhelm you! Do remember that MaH has vetted service providers and volunteers ready to help! All it takes is a single call to 371-0809 to find the help you need. We are here for you!

I hope this issue of “at Home” finds you healthy, safe and happy! 

Left to Right: Cindy Bowen, MaH ED and Russ Armstrong, MaH Chair joined Kirby Dunn, VT Homeshare ED and Natalie Galucia, VtoV ED at the UVM Gerontology Symposium

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I had the pleasure of visiting with MaH member, Jo Putnam, recently. Having lived in many places in the U.S. and abroad, Jo has led, and still leads a life of learning, fun and observation, passing on lessons learned through her writing.

Jo is a writer, but she was also a school teacher. She brought creativity and a unique perspective to teaching, as she believes in integrating storytelling into the curriculum. “Learning should be fun!” she says. She was lucky enough to be given the freedom to apply this to her own classroom and ultimately go on to write and publish her own curriculum.

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As we sat talking in her cozy home, in front of a large picture window, we paused several times to watch a red headed woodpecker feeding just outside. Suddenly, Jo laughs and points out the very large squirrel that has come to visit the feeder. Sometimes she shoos him away, she explains, but other times she watches his tricks and antics. “I love writing AND nature”, she says. “When I write, I think of nothing else.” In college, Jo was encouraged by her professor to nurture her love for writing. She went on to publish poetry and other works. When asked what project she’s currently working on, Jo says, “Memoirs for my children and grandchildren, ‘Grandma Jo Stories’”. She shows me the National Geographic sent to her from her grandchild - a thoughtful gift from a grandchild who knows her Grandmother’s love for writing, nature and travel. It is clear that Jo has a wonderful family support network, even though loved ones are spread all over the country and even abroad.

Jo was a member of MaH years back and found she just wasn’t able to get involved the way she wanted to, but recently Jo has come back and rejoined MaH. She now attends a lot of programs and the monthly coffee group. She has made many connections with other MaH members, some that she knew previously through mutual interests in writing and nature. Jo explains she really likes the program offerings, but she says, “most importantly is the reassurance that when I need something, I can call you and I know the person coming to my home to help me is fully vetted. Living alone, I’m weary of having just anybody come to the door and into my house.” And MaH is so happy to have you back as a member, Jo! The photo of Jo, captures our visit well…vibrant, happy, laughing, smiling Jo, outside and always ready for a new adventure!