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# atHome

## Helping Seniors Live Independently



## Member Spotlight: Dottie Wilcox

*By Deanna Mullins, MaH Member Services Coordinator*

Dorothy Wilcox, known to her friends as Dottie, celebrated her 99th birthday on March 1st! Dottie has seen a lot of history in her 99 years. Growing up in a farming community of 14 families in Rhode Island, Dottie attended school in a one room schoolhouse for grades 1- 8. Many of her classmates went to

*"Although I think I am supposed to be cheering Dottie up with my call, she is always cheering ME up with her incredibly positive attitude and her amazing gratitude for the things people do for her."*

*– Barbara Michelson, Volunteer*

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## Dottie Wilcox *Continued from page 1*

work on the farm after the 8th grade, but Dottie said that she was frail – not a good farm girl – and her mother wanted her to continue with her schooling. Consequently, Dottie went on to attend a private, Methodist high school on Narragansett Bay. While there she waited on tables and cleaned the halls to help pay for her room and board. Dottie says the most important thing that happened during her high school years was the 1938 hurricane. Known as “The Great Hurricane of 1938,” this Category 3 storm is still considered the most devastating hurricane to hit New England in modern history. Dottie remembers the storm hitting Narragansett Bay at night and that she helped to set up beds for people and serve meals in a temporary shelter. She said that back then people had no prior knowledge about hurricanes.

When asked how she moved from Rhode Island to New Hampshire, Dottie said she “met a Marine on a train and he lived in Marlborough!” Dottie and her Marine, Robert, ended up getting married in 1947 and settled in Marlborough, NH. She and Robert had five children – Bruce, Brenda, Brian, Naomi and Bonnie. Dottie is now a grandmother to 8 grandchildren – 6 boys and 2 girls, and she’s also a great grandmother to 7 great grandsons!

Prior to having children, Dottie worked full time at the National Grange as a key punch operator – a precursor to computers. Once she was expecting her first child, the Grange no longer allowed her to work so she stayed home for the next 17 years taking care of her family. Her children attended school in Keene and stayed active in sports and plays and other activities. When her children were older she went back to work at the Grange and worked for 20 years doing premium counting and checking in payments.

Robert passed away 10 years ago after he and Dottie had been married for 63 years. For their 50th anniversary,

Dottie and her husband took a train from Brattleboro to Florida to visit their daughter – celebrating by train, the way they first met.

Dottie remembers when she first got connected with Monadnock at Home (MaH) in 2015. A friend of hers who was

Dottie has also made nice connections with MaH volunteer Barbara Michelson who does her grocery shopping, and MaH member and volunteer Chris Gallagher, who has helped her over the years, including when she broke her hip a few years back. Knowing Dottie’s

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“I’ve known Dottie for about 5 years. Every year she ponders another winter staying in her old house by the Minnewawa and this year, Dottie will be there as she turns 99 on the first of March. She is an amazing lady and still “at Home,” in the family house in Marlborough, since her husband came home from serving in the Pacific war about 70 years ago. Alone now that her husband passed, Dottie has cultivated many friends, myself included, and a network of folks with whom she regularly interacts. In spite of COVID she still votes regularly, attends church, and continues learning thru KSU CALL classes when available (since COVID, Dottie and a friend in Harrisville, take zoom classes together on her friend’s computer). MaH is there for shopping and weekly check in (not to forget the soup deliveries this winter as well - yum!)”

– Kieron Walsh, Volunteer

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familiar with MaH was concerned about Dottie living alone. Executive Director Sandra Faber recalls that when Dottie first became a member we coordinated to have MaH volunteer Kieron Walsh call Dottie once a week to check-in. Right away, Kieron expressed his fondness for Dottie and his willingness to help her with other needs. Five years later, Kieron continues to call, help take out the trash, and deliver soup, but most importantly he enjoys their visits and their friendship.

interest in genealogy - her mother’s side of her family came over from England in 1636 and her ancestor, Gregory Dexter, was a printer who helped settle Rhode Island – Chris encouraged her to attend a genealogy program he organized for MaH members which she truly enjoyed. Dottie expresses her appreciation for all her connections through MaH and says, “Monadnock at Home has been wonderful to her!”

# Village News

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director



At times in the last year, it felt like we were standing on the cusp of the deep ocean floor being hit by crashing waves. As the news came of the shutdown, it was shocking and as information kept changing, we wanted to make sure our members were informed and knew how to stay safe. More waves would hit us as we learned we'd be "shut down" much longer than first thought, but

resiliency, kindness and optimism came to the surface. Despite the challenges and tragedies of the last year, one did not have to look hard to see the good.

So many community members reached out to volunteer their time to deliver groceries and make check-in calls. We received notes not just from members who were appreciative, but from volunteers expressing how these new connections were helping THEM get through this tough time.

Our weekly call with members quickly became an ongoing highlight and served many purposes throughout the year. At first it was a compass, navigating through the sea of ever-changing information, but soon it was a sharing of memories and daily nature observations through the window on snowy days.

With the slower pace, came more time. More time to chat and learn about your history, your interests, and your family. One member who is always fun to talk to is Dottie Wilcox. Dottie has the distinction of having the most birthdays of any of our

members! We celebrate Dottie and her positive and energetic spirit in this issue of *At Home*. Happy 99th Birthday Dottie!

We also honor those members who passed in the last year. Although we did not experience a COVID loss in our group, we were very saddened by the passing of 9 of our members. Our sympathies to all who have experienced loss in this difficult year. With the challenges of the past year, some members decided it was time to make a change in their living situation and we wish them well in their new homes.

It is my hope that Monadnock at Home has helped you through this past year and also that you've enjoyed some positives and special moments. As we look beyond COVID, we will continue to offer and expand upon our grocery delivery program and look to serve more people who could benefit from a little help at home. We will always work to ensure membership fees are not an obstacle to receiving service. We are excited to announce that thanks to a generous donor who shares this vision, we are able to offer additional supported memberships to those in need, ensuring that more folks in our community have access to much needed services.

Thank you to Monadnock at Home members Cyndy Martell and Kathy Schongar who agreed to share their personal reflections on this past year with us in this issue of *At Home*. I encourage you to try our social call or monthly Zoom! We hope to see you soon and wish all of you good health as we continue on this journey together.



## Monthly Coffee Hour

Due to COVID, the MaH Member Coffee Group will gather outside, socially distanced, once the weather warms up. When the gatherings begin, the group will meet at 10 am on the first and third Tuesday of each month behind the United Church of Jaffrey, 54 Main St., Jaffrey. If you'd like to receive updates regarding the start date for the group and future changes, please contact MaH at 603-371-0809. We hope you will consider joining this fun gathering of MaH members!



## OUR MISSION

*The Mission of Monadnock at Home is to provide seniors of the Monadnock Region with the support and practical means to live and thrive in their homes and communities.*



# COVID Comforts

By Kathryn N. Schongar, MaH Member



MaH Member  
Kathryn N.  
Schongar

Welcome to my inner thoughts, which I attempt to keep positive. It isn't always easy. In mid-March 2020 – when the COVID-19 cases were very low by today's numbers – the virus hit our family like a professional punch to the gut. My sister Gail rushed her husband Don to the ER. She never saw him again before he passed eight days later. Since then I have tried to focus on what I call my COVID Comforts: People. Programs. Pastimes. They overlap. May they remind you of what comforts you.

## PEOPLE

**Family:** I feel grateful but sometimes guilty for having my children nearby. Last March COVID-19 hit Manhattan, so my daughter Jennifer came to stay with me “temporarily” while working remotely. She's still here. Yay! My son Bill and my

two grandsons host Jennifer and me most Sundays for games, Chinese take-out, and catching up. My kids' support through ideas, muscles, and humor comfort me.

**Friends/Neighbors/Groups:** Sharing support through weekly calls, texts, chats, Zooms, and emails lessens my loneliness. It increases my knowledge, my laughter, and my appreciation for each person who comes into and touches my life.

## PROGRAMS

**Union Congregational Church:** Sunday worship on Facebook and weekly contacts are welcoming. Our free Monday Night Suppers (drive-thrus) are open to all.

**Peterborough Recreation Department's Senior Program:** Our Friday Lunch Bunch gets together via Zoom with support and jokes at the ready!

**Monadnock Writers' Group:** Each monthly open Zoom meeting has a talented guest presenter and many updates about writing and submission opportunities.

**Monadnock at Home:** Our weekly chats provide laughter, solutions for our house problems, and updated relevant information, especially regarding COVID. Our monthly

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Sharing Unusual Items on Zoom

## Zoom Fun!

Halloween Zoom Call



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themed Zooms are just plain fun! Whether it's a Halloween costume or an item we try to identify, we discover more about each other's interests and talents.

## PASTIMES

**Cats:** Did I mention that Jennifer brought her three cats? They have entertained us with their antics...and proved that I can't quite "cat-proof" my house!

**Memories:** My husband Larry and I joked that we never met a piece of paper we didn't like! Now there's joy in finding paper treasures in boxes: a high school note I wrote to him in Morse Code, a thank you note from one of my students, an itinerary.

**Yard work:** An acre requires attention. Nature needs a chance to refresh and inspire.

**Poetry:** During the pandemic I have written more about what moves me, like "Ways to Cry," "My 20/20 Vision Test for 2020," and "Cardinal Visit." I was also published in *Generations*, a book of family stories. My poem "Your Poinsettia Star" allowed me to share my faith with each church friend who received a Christmas poinsettia.

During COVID's emotional rollercoaster I hope deeply that YOUR People, Programs, and Pastimes prove comforting for you.

## Your Poinsettia Star

Kathryn N. Schongar



*These crimson leaves that form a Star  
can guide no matter where you are.*

*A Star led three to Bethlehem,  
and we are seekers too, like them.*

*Your living Star now beckons you  
toward peace that love and faith renew.*

# Reassurance from the Natural World

By Cynthia Sue Martell, MaH Member



From the time my five senses first awakened to the natural world surrounding me, my fascination with it has never diminished. I feel a life-long gratitude toward this team of five for providing me with the resources to savor nature's endless wonders.

The difficulties of the past year have brought new perspectives on the above. Though I have always had a profound connection with the spirituality of our living world, this year has led me even further down that path.

No doubt certain senses diminish with age. But, guess what? Perhaps you have rediscovered during solitude that many of nature's colors, sounds, scents, even taste (grandma's blueberry pie) and touch (how smooth is a pussy willow?) are still alive! During reflection, they may brightly emerge out of our deep repository of memories. Those of childhood seem to be among the most pleasant and vivid.

My earliest memories of what might be called a "childhood time of wonder" was focused on the yard surrounding my home. Here are some examples: There was a June pink bush with a mesmerizing aroma and blossoms the color of wild roses. Twin lilac bushes stood opposite each other beneath my bedroom window and wafted a tantalizing fragrance at bedtime.

Among my favorites, a sprawling weeping willow tree I worshipped like a Druid child beneath a sacred oak. And sweetest of all? Whippoorwills calling at dusk while my little world gently quieted.

It is my hope that through treasured memories and daily experiences your awareness of the natural world will uplift your life. Just consider the sky: Its ever-changing colors and cloud dramas. Its glowing dawns and crimson sunsets.

It doesn't matter if you're peering out a window from a wheelchair or snowshoeing a rugged woodland trail. The sacred domain of nature is always available.

# Choosing a Medical Alert Device

Medical alert devices can provide you with peace of mind and play an important role in keeping you safe in your home. We receive many inquiries from our members asking which medical alert device they should choose. There are so many different products and features available it can be a challenge to figure out what to buy. From our research and conversations with MaH members, we have put together a chart of suggested devices to help

guide you. Before considering your options, ask yourself the following three questions:

**Do you want a home-based or mobile option?** Whether or not you have wi-fi and cellular coverage are important factors in this decision.

Home-based systems used to work only through landlines. Now, companies also offer home-based systems that work over your

cellular network (wi-fi) and connect with a base unit that is located in your home.

Mobile alert systems allow you to use the system when you are out and about AND at home as long as you can access the required network from home. They work by connecting to cellular networks and GPS.

**Should you choose a system that is monitored?** A monitored system will

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## Gratitude in the Midst of COVID-19

*By Sandy King, MaH Newsletter Chair*

Coronavirus. COVID-19. And now variants. For more than a year it seems that's all we've been thinking and hearing about. This disease has changed our behavior, especially for adults over the age of 65 who are at higher risk for complications from the virus. So many of us have done our best to stay at home and minimize our interactions with others to limit our exposure to illness. Getting sick from COVID-19 has been a constant worry for many seniors.

On the flip side, for those of us who live in New Hampshire and particularly the Monadnock region, we're fortunate that total coronavirus cases have been lower than other regions of the state and country. Fewer cases mean less risk and that is certainly something for which we can be grateful.

Community spirit and a willingness to help others also provokes gratitude and we have seen plenty of that in our neck of the woods. Early on, so many local businesses and countless volunteers either procured or made thousands of masks that were donated to local hospitals, nursing homes and the general public at large. Here at Monadnock at Home (MaH), we were able to acquire surgical face masks for our members and volunteers thanks to the coordination of

area non-profits who serve older adults and a generous grant from the Tufts Health Foundation Fund.

More recently, we've helped our members navigate the arduous CDC vaccination site to register for their vaccines. As a follow up, we coordinated member rides to the vaccine sites with CVTC (Community Volunteer Transportation Company), whose wonderful volunteer drivers provide a much needed service in our region.

We're grateful for Monadnock Community Hospital who has been coordinating with the Keene vaccination site and provided us with information regarding a vaccine wait list. Many of our members had their first shot appointments scheduled for the end of March or into the month of April. With the help of the wait list, most all of our members appointments were moved up by weeks, ensuring enhanced immunity well ahead of schedule! We are now learning from the CDC that those who are fully vaccinated will be able to visit with family members, many of whom they have not seen in-person for nearly a year. That is truly something to celebrate!

We must also give a shout out to the recently created Community Meals

To Go program. Donated funds are paid to area restaurants to make either refrigerated or frozen meals that are passed out for free on a first come, first serve basis. The distribution began on February 2nd and occurs on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 5-6 pm in the upper parking lot of the South Meadow School in Peterborough. Participating restaurants have included Nonie's, Brady's American Grill, Aesop's Tables, Cooper's Hill Public House, and Grappelli's pizza, which provided gift certificates. In the first four weeks of operation, Community Meals To Go has distributed the equivalent of more than 1,300 meals! This is a win-win situation, helping restaurants stay afloat while also feeding those in need within our community.

Living in a smaller community certainly has its advantages. The pervasive attitude is that we in the Monadnock region, ranging from individuals to larger businesses, are truly all in this together. Although COVID-19 has presented us with new challenges, I feel such gratitude for my community and know that we will emerge from this trial with more love and respect for one another. Isn't that what humanity is all about?



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connect you with a trained operator when you press the help button. Alternatively, when the help button is pushed, an unmonitored option would automatically dial a friend or family member that you have pre-programmed into the device. A device may also have the option to be set up so it reaches out to emergency services if your friend or family does not answer.

**Do I need fall detection?** This is many times an add-on to the device and an additional fee. The device senses a fall and automatically dials the dispatch center. Some people worry about the possibility of false calls, but if you have had a history of falls, this is definitely something to consider.

Fees can range between \$20-\$50 per month. There is a charge for the device and in some cases, an activation charge. Look over the information we have provided and give us a call if you have any questions. We are also happy to put you in touch with other MaH members to talk about what has worked well for them.

## New Members

**In the past year we have welcomed 11 new members!**

Judith, Rindge  
John, Rindge  
Pat, Rindge  
June, Hancock  
Bruce and Romana, Jaffrey  
Mark and Marilyn, Jaffrey  
Dale and Paula, Fitzwilliam  
Sharon, Peterborough

## Members Who Have Passed Within the Last Year

**We offer our sincerest condolences for those we have lost within the past year:**

Jane Garry, Hancock  
Ruta King, Jaffrey  
Chris Barnes, Hancock  
Larry Foley, Dublin  
John Van Ness, Jaffrey  
Danny Craig, Rindge  
Anne Clark, Peterborough  
Eleanor Falcon, Hancock  
Larry Pierce, Marlborough

## Thank You To Our Volunteers!

A special thank you to Mayfair Farm for your donation of home-made soups each year. They are very much appreciated! And thank you to all of our volunteers, who throughout this difficult year, have delivered soup, checked in on members, given rides, delivered groceries, trouble-shot tech issues and more. You have truly helped brighten the days of many folks in our community!



## Donor Supported Memberships

At MaH we provide many valuable services to our members such as grocery/pharmacy delivery, handyman help and safe socialization during this isolating time. Thanks to a generous donor, memberships are available at a reduced rate for those who qualify. Contact us for more information at 603-371-0809.



## Memberships are Now Being Accepted

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