

EDITORIAL

When you're on your own, we are there for you

Rarely in our nation's history has any phenomenon overtaken our society so quickly or caught us so completely by surprise as the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Amid this atmosphere of uncertainty, it has become more important than ever for you to have access to an accurate and balanced portrait of how the outbreak is affecting your community, and we want you to know that as your local newspaper, we are here for you — and with you.

As the ongoing pandemic continues to make its way through our region, we will be there to keep you up to speed on how the community we share is handling the situation, from its effect on the local business community, to the steps being taken by local officials to combat the spread of the virus, and most importantly, how readers like yourself are facing the challenge of not just staying healthy, but adjusting to life under the new social distancing restrictions we have all been forced to adapt to.

There is another side to this story, however. There are quiet heroes throughout our community taking extraordinary measures to help their neighbors and spread some positivity in the midst of all this fear and anxiety — business owners who, even amid their own hardship, are stepping up with donations for those in need; nursing home residents sewing homemade protective masks for health care workers; postal workers offering to deliver food and supplies to elderly, high-risk residents on their routes; and of course, the health care workers on the front lines of the crisis — and we are committed to bringing you their stories as well.

Whatever happens, wherever and whenever it may happen, we will be there at your side, helping you maintain perspective on this situation and helping you navigate your way through it. Our country, and our community, have faced down horrific events before, from terrorist attacks to natural disasters, and emerged on the other side stronger than ever, and we will survive this outbreak with the same grit, determination, and commitment to one another that has seen us through in the past. More than any of the political or societal divisions that too often separate us, what defines our character is our resiliency. We have built this unique and vibrant community together, and as long as we continue to support one another, we will get through this. Together.



Papi, a nearly 90-pound pitbull from Bethlehem, surveyed the landscape after a quick hike to the top of Cannon Mountain with his human last weekend.

North Country Notebook

Of burls in the trunks of trees, and phantoms you just can't see



By JOHN HARRIGAN
COLUMNIST

Right out a kitchen window, right from where I write, I can see a couple of spruce trees with big bulges in their trunks. Because they're softwood trees, I've never paid much attention. If they were hardwoods, I'd have taken notice.

The above is a classic case of species bias, to which I throw myself on the mercy of the woods and plead "Guilty!"

A burl is a defect in the trunk of a tree or big limb that produces a bulge, sometimes all around the tree, sometimes on the side. Burls are often quite valuable to shapers and finishers of wood, who prefer hardwoods because they stand up better to crafting, use, and abuse.

If a mature hardwood tree with a roundish growth or bulge is carefully cut down and cut up, a skilled woodworker can turn the burl's curve and grain into all sorts of beautiful things.



COURTESY CABINWINDOWS.COM

A river hog using his pike-pole like a tight-rope walker, ca. 1930s. Loggers shepherded drives on the Connecticut, Androscoggin, Kennebec, Penobscot, and St. John rivers, using poles to push, pull, and cajole logs downstream.



COURTESY CLKER.COM

An old piece of line-art depicting a fisher, probably from around the turn of the last century.

I enjoy dabbling in etymology, the study of the origins of words, although I'm the last to claim any great proficiency. The subject stems from a lifetime of widely varied reading that continues apace, a faucet I can't turn off. Then too, it's my great good fortune to have abundant French-Irish ancestry on our father's side, and to live in a strongly Francophone region along one of the friendliest borders in the world.

"Woods Words" is one of my favorite parts of my favorite magazine,

Northern Woodlands. In it, Laurie Morrissey of Hopkinton recently had the fun she so obviously has when looking into words, and looked into "burling," or as it's most often been spelled around here, "burling." And I'll admit that I've long puzzled over the connection between a growth on a tree and spinning a floating log with your feet.

Well, score another one for serious etymologists. Laurie, with the help of UNH's Don Quigley, traced it all the way back to mill ponds. The theory goes that because they're heavier, bulges would be on the underwater part of a floating log, and someone tending out on logs being floated to the mill would roll them with their feet so the sawyer could get a heads-up on deformities.

This is a pretty neat conclusion, except that we have to be sure we're

talking about softwood logs here—spruce, fir and the like—because in my reading and experience, hardwood logs (as opposed to four-foot pulpwood) won't float, at least for long,

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Here is a lightly edited note I received this past week from longtime readers of the Littleton Courier. As they knew when they sent it, it is typical of countless cougar-related missives I've received by ear or by mail over the years:

"Just a quick note to add my name to the list of people who say they have seen a mountain lion and not gotten a picture of it.

"We live on an old farm. I keep our large fields mowed and open so we can enjoy the deer and turkeys and occasional other animals that share the property.

"On March 17 at around 7:30 a.m., our Lab started to growl while looking out the slider. Out in the open field, approximately 120 yards away, was a mountain lion trotting across a shelf between two hills. My wife pulled out our binoculars to get a good view of this cat, which appeared to be the size of a good-sized coyote (maybe a bit longer).

"We watched as it covered 80 to 100 yards before

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LETTERS

A Message of gratitude

To the Editor:

Your Littleton Regional Healthcare physicians, clinicians, nursing staff, frontline staff and incident command team would like to extend our gratitude for the support we have received over the past weeks. The community has generously provided gifts of food for staff, flowers, masks, high quality sanitizing equipment, baked goods, hand quilted items and much more. We cannot thank you enough.

As the President & CEO of LRH, I am humbled by the outpouring of support through phone calls, emails, kind notes and social media comments thanking LRH for everything we are doing to keep our patients and the community safe from the spread of COVID-19.

I can assure you that our incident command team, physicians, nursing staff and clinicians are well prepared for whatever hurdles we face during this COVID-19 public health emergency. For community members who are staying home, please continue to follow best practices such as social distancing and good hygiene. If you or someone you know is concerned about COVID-19, LRH has set up a hotline to address questions and concerns. You can reach the hotline by calling 575-6400.

We will continue to work with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, New Hampshire Hospital Association and the Centers for Disease Control so that we can continue to provide you with current information related to COVID-19.

There are many heroes among us. Our entire LRH staff is working tirelessly to keep our patients and community safe along with our local law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel. While it can be said that this is their job, they show up to work under extraordinary circumstances to provide vital care as well as a semblance of normalcy through this emergency. For that, I am full of gratitude for their compassion and perseverance every day.

Please continue to visit our website to see daily updates from Littleton Regional Healthcare at littletonhealthcare.org.

Robert F. Nutter
President & CEO
Littleton Regional Healthcare

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