

THE COÖS COUNTY DEMOCRAT

IEWS AND COMMENTS

The long road to Martin Luther King Day

Offices closed nationwide this past Monday in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. King was the chief spokesperson for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement from 1954 until his assassination in 1968. The federal holiday falls around the birthday of King on Jan. 15.

Republican President Ronald Reagan made the holiday official in 1983. In 1986, the first observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day took place. In the year 2000, the holiday was observed by all 50 states for the first time since 1986.

Labor unions in contract negotiations brought forward the idea of celebrating King via a national holiday. Republican Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts and Democrat John Conyers of Michigan brought forth the legislation in 1979, where it was five votes shy of passing in the House.

Those in opposition of the day cited costs in that paying federal employees would be too expensive. Others stated that honoring a private citizen would go against tradition, in that King never held a public office.

In 1980, Stevie Wonder released the single "Happy Birthday" to shed light on the campaign. The largest petition in favor of an issue in the history of the United States gathered six million signatures.

Two Republican senators from North Carolina (Jesse Helms and John Porter) opposed the bill because of King's opposition to the Vietnam War, and also accused King of being a communist. However, an FBI investigation dating back to 1963 turned up no evidence that King had been influenced by communists.

The bill ultimately passed the House of Representatives 338-90. Within the bill was language establishing the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday Commission. King's wife, Coretta Scott King was made a life long member of this commission by President George H.W. Bush in May of 1989.

Martin Luther King Day is seen as a day to promote equal rights for all Americans. While there are few traditions surrounding the holiday, many educators use the day to teach their students about the struggle against racial segregation and racism. In New Hampshire and Arizona the day is combined with Civil Rights Day. In Idaho, the day is referred to as Human Rights Day and in Wyoming, Equality Day.

King, who was born in 1929, was an American Baptist minister from Atlanta, Georgia. In 1963, during the March on Washington, he delivered his famous 'I have a Dream' speech. In 1964, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in promoting nonviolent resistance and for advocating for Civil Rights.

King was assassinated at the age of 39 in Memphis, Tenn. by James Earl Ray. Ray, 41, was sentenced to 99 years in prison. The assassin died in prison in 1998 from hepatitis.

As King said in perhaps his most famous speech, "So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire; let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York; let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania; let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado; let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that. Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia; let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee; let freedom ring from every hill and mole hill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

"And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: 'Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last.'"



CORT ROUSSEL

The Super Blood Wolf Moon was captured in Franconia on Jan. 22. The total eclipse could be seen in North America, South America, Western Europe and Northwestern Africa. The next lunar eclipse will take place in May in 2021.

READERS' FORUM

Federal employees affected by shutdown need us to put politics aside

To the Editor:
The current partial government shutdown is the longest in history. In the North Country, there are federal workers (border patrol, customs and border protection, federal prison guards, federal park staff, etc.) that have not been paid

in almost a month. Many of them live paycheck to paycheck. Let's put politics aside and come together as a community to help our federal workers. A great way to do this is to give to our local food pantries:

Colebrook Area Food Pantry
55 Pleasant Street
Colebrook NH
603-237-8030
Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9 to 4.

Northeast Kingdom Community Action
253 Gale Street

Caanan VT
802-266-7134
Hours: Monday and Tuesday, 8-12; Wednesday, 2-6; Thursday, 1-5 & Friday 8-12.

COÖS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE

Substitute teaching is a rewarding job

To the Editor:
If you have been on Route 3 North in Whitefield lately, you have seen on the White Mountain Regional High School sign, "Substitutes Needed District Wide Call 837-9363."

This has been a problem nationwide for several years. I have been subbing in the WMRSD for about 11 years. It is a good part-time job for mothers with school age children, retired people who only want to work

a few days a week. You start at 7:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. You don't have to be certified or have a degree. It pays \$80 a day. The staff and administration are good to work with in all of the schools. If you have problems

with a student, you let the teacher or administration know, and the problem is taken care of.

BILL JONES
WHITEFIELD

Your new Senator is off and running

To the Editor:
At the beginning of the year, I was sworn in as the Senator for District 1, representing Coös and Northern Grafton Counties. It has been quite the experience attending legislative committee meetings and working with other legislators to craft legislation that will benefit the North Country. After being sworn in, I was assigned as a member of the Senate Education Committee and given a license plate for my car with the number 1, signifying that I was honored to represent the people of Senate District 1.

As a member of the Senate Education Committee, I had the opportunity to hear a briefing from the Commissioner of Education as well as

the Community College System and University System of New Hampshire on the great work they do. I am pleased with the support White Mountain Community College receives from the state and the success of the Career and Technical Education Centers in Coös and Grafton County.

The most critical part of education that needs to be addressed is our school funding model. North Country residents pay far too much in property taxes to support our schools. There is a bill in the Senate to restore education stabilization grants to towns like Berlin, Lancaster and other towns which lack the property base to support our schools. It is time we fixed this problem and I

signed on as a cosponsor to support the towns that are losing funding while trying to educate our children.

Outside of the State House, I recently attended a tour of the Friendship House, part of the North Country Health Consortium, in Bethlehem with Gov. Sununu. It was a pleasure to meet with both patients and staff who updated us on the efforts to help the people dealing with addiction issues in the facility. We had the opportunity to speak with some of the patients who shared their stories including the ups and downs of their struggle with sobriety.

The staff at Friendship House does a remarkable job, but it is clear that the 28 bed

capacity is not enough. I am grateful for the opportunity to tour this facility serving Northern Grafton County and will make substance abuse recovery a top priority during my time in Concord.

I hope to offer regular updates of what is happening in Concord on a regular basis to the people of Coös and Northern Grafton Counties over the next two years. Please reach out to me if there is anything I can do to help those of you in need or even if you just want me to attend an event in your area. I can be contacted by phone at 271-7875 or david.starr@leg.state.nh.us.

SEN. DAVID STARR
FRANCONIA

SUMMIT BY MORRISON AND THE MORRISON ASSISTED LIVING AND SKILLED NURSING CARE

Make sure your medication management is safe

As we age, we become more dependent on medications that help us lead healthy lives. It can be confusing keeping track

of which pill to take when, at what time and dosage, with food, milk or water, and, well, you get the idea.

It's a lot to swallow!

Studies show that many people over the age of 65 take up to seven prescription drugs a day. So, it's easy to become confused, especially if you take medications at various times. Here are some helpful steps seniors and their caregivers can take to eliminate uncertainty and ensure medications are being taken safely and in the proper dose.

Keep all medications in one place, stored and locked, away from children and pets. It's also much easier to stay organized by keeping them in one location.

Pre-sort medications for the week. Pill organizers with multiple compartments for each dose taken throughout the day will eliminate confusion. If pills need to



BY SHANNON LYNCH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

be split in half, it's a good idea to do that at the beginning of the week.

Keep an updated list of all medications and write down how often each drug is taken, the dosage, the reason for taking the drug and the healthcare provider who prescribed each medication. Don't forget to include a list of emergency numbers. This information will be an invaluable resource

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It's easy to use the Democrat – here are some helpful tips how:

PRESS RELEASES

Send press releases with date, time, location and phone number to Editor at e-mail: tara@salmonpress.news. We can receive them by mail at PO Box 29, Lancaster NH 03584 or by fax at 603-788-3022.

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B Section: Friday 9 a.m.

(Sports, Business)
A Section: Monday 9 a.m.
(News, Letters to the Editor, Obituaries)
(PLEASE NOTE THAT ADVERTISING DEADLINES ARE DIFFERENT THAN NEWS DEADLINES.)

ENGAGEMENTS & WEDDINGS

E-mail or mail the information and photograph to tara@salmonpress.news. Those run about once a month. You can also stop in the office and deliver the text and we can scan the photo.

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E-mail, mail or fax the letter containing 600 words or less. Include your name and phone number for verification by Monday 9:00 a.m. to tara@salmonpress.news. (Unsigned letters will not be published except in rare cases.)

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Mail or stop by with a card of thanks or in-memoriam ad with payment by Friday 2:00 to Cathy Grondin at cathy@salmonpress.news.

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THE DEMOCRAT
79 Main Street - P.O. Box 29
Lancaster, NH 03584
Phone: 788-4939 • Fax: 788-3022
E-mail: tara@salmonpress.news.