

Reflections from the younger generation

I had gone grocery shopping on Dec. 3 when I spied a copy of The Coös County Democrat and purchased it. Imagine my surprise when I got past the front page and the obituaries and saw a couple of pictures of my paternal grandfather captioned with his name — Fred Matthews. My eyes then went to the author, Uncle George, then back to the pictures; in one, Grandpa Matthews was fairly young and reminded me of my father and uncle when they were younger, but the older picture of my grandfather is how I remember him.

I would like to continue what my uncle started — which was the newspaper equivalent of a tome such as Tolstoy's "War and Peace" — and wax nostalgic on the next generation, approximately from the late '50s to the late '70s.

My parents had met young in the Lancaster area, got pregnant with me, temporarily moved to Potsdam, N.Y. chasing a welding job my father wanted, got married in a simple ceremony, had me, and moved back to Lancaster several months later, where we lived in an apartment above the old bowling alley — later demolished. This must have been a horrible situation for my parents, but was rather enjoyable for me and my brother, who had also been born by then — our parents ended up with five boys, and the precious girl, all, much like our predecessors, semi-wild. Our father worked at a garage across the street — gone long before the bowling alley — and my memories of that time include our first dog that Dad brought home one day, a little pointer

NORTH COUNTRY MEMORIES

KENNETH M. MATTHEWS
LITTLETON

puppy on a leash named "Gus" that was having trouble bounding up the stairs to eagerly greet us; a party my parents once had for family; me walking to Kindergarten class — then located on the bottom floor of the old elementary school building, and which is currently a courtroom — and sometimes walking across the street to my grandfather's hardware store to "help" him; he probably never caught on that I was mostly after toys, but I remember that he would pick me up, gently put me on the counter, and give me a tin of sardines to eat, thus keeping me out of

the way until my parents came looking for me.

When I was about six, we had moved once again — this time to the house my grandparents had bought and the very one that my uncle George had referred to. Less than a year later, we had moved into a rather dilapidated old house not far from Grandpa's house; it had an old hand-dug well for water that dried up every summer, so me and my brother would have to haul an old style milk can on a wagon to the brook, fill it up, and haul it back to the house for flushing water (we did have indoor plumbing). One of the first things that I remember doing was me and my brother trying to dig a ditch for a new hot water heater line in the hard-packed, stoney earth with just shovels, and at the ten-

der ages of six and seven, spent all day in that ditch and made very little progress, so my brother and I were expecting a "whipping" when Dad came home from work, but much to our relief, he simply grunted and completed the task himself.

There was a huge fire one early evening right next to our house — apparently, the old barn had caught on fire. Now, this barn could barely be seen, as it had collapsed long before, and the field had taken over; as the fire department worked to put the blaze out, I noticed that one of my brothers was acting out of character (I was eight-ish at this time), clinging to our mother's right leg for dear life. I pointed this out to our other brother, and he agreed — it turned out that the fire that was formally pronounced an

act of God due to a timely thunderstorm was actually caused by some little rascal out on his own, and who happened to be intrigued with how matches work. Somehow came very close to being punished.

Grandpa was reunited with Grandma about that time, and the hardware store became defunct. Our father worked part time on the house for the next six or seven years, and my brother and I were selected to perform such jobs as concrete/mortar mixer for the new block foundation that our father was installing and general laboring duties such as cleaning up the piles of lathing, dusty plaster, and itchy old insulation when found. My brothers and I also put many holes in the sheetrock

Memories, PAGE A10

WMRS D LEADERS & LEARNERS- Your COMMUNITY CONNECTION

For the month of January, the Lancaster School, as part of practicing STARR behavior (Safe, Tolerant, A Team Player, Respectful, Responsible) has challenged all grade levels and staff to perform acts of kindness. The challenge was given during their Welcome Back STARR assembly where it was explained that each student will choose a kind act to focus on during the month of January. These kind acts can range from holding a door to kind words being said to classmates and staff. Teachers were provided with videos to show examples of kind acts and how best to carry them out during the school day as well as to spark discussion for

morning meeting and advisory times about acts of kindness. Each grade level was provided a specific color to represent each kind act. Each student's chosen kind act will be written or drawn on a strip of colored paper and will be made into a chain. When a student is reported by another student or staff member as performing a kind act they will receive a strip of colored paper to write or draw what they did and add it to the growing class chain. The Lancaster School is looking forward to seeing a very long and colorful chain of kind acts on January 31st. They will encourage the students to keep adding to their class chains throughout the year. This challenge

encourages all students and staff to create a school culture where they can all be STARR's.

The Whitefield School remodel is well underway. Over vacation Kingdom Construction did the bulk of the demolition work in the office, opening up the space for reconfiguration. A recess was opened in the vestibule floor to install a grate and an opening for the transaction window was cut. Masonry block was delivered and the work this week will focus on putting up the interior walls in the office.

Math and Munchies will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 23 from 6-7 p.m. at the Whitefield School. Students are excited to invite their

families to play their favorite math games from the Bridges in Mathematics program. These games are focused to engage kindergarten to fifth grade students, but all ages are welcome and encouraged to attend. Along with games, there will be snacks and door prizes available.

At WMRHS, English teacher, Jen Granducci is experiencing a new kind of problem: her students won't stop reading! According to a 2017 survey released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average 15-19 year-old reads only eight minutes per day. With numerous studies reporting a correlation between reading time and success as an adult, this statistic doesn't

bode well for our nation. However, if students are exposed to reading material that is relevant and interesting to them, they will be more likely to engage out of their own desire. Finding novels that teens enjoy is as easy as talking to your local librarian or researching titles that have appeared on the New York Times young adult bestseller list.

Redesign Project: There's still time to join! The Steering Committee will meet monthly and the Project Team will have a series of tasks to complete between monthly meetings. The redesign project is estimated to run from Feb-

ruary to June/July 2019. If interested in becoming a committee member, or have questions, please contact Roxanne Ball at the WMRS SAU office at 837-9363 or rhball@sau36.org.

Looking for last minute updates, press releases and other exciting District happenings? Follow WMRS on Facebook and Twitter. Quarterly, be on the lookout for the District newsletter: The District Dialogue which is sent out electronically to families of White Mountains Regional School District and can be found in print version at our local businesses.

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

Social Security trends for 2019



BY SHANNON LYNCH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Social Security provides much-needed income to more than 62 million Americans who have paid into the fund during their working years. Approximately one in four families receive some sort of benefit, either through retirement, disability or death of an immediate family member.

Social Security will frequently change and 2019 is no different. Keep up with those changes so you fully get the most out of your Social Security benefits. Here are a few changes for 2019 that you should be aware of if you are currently receiving or will soon be eligible to receive Social Security.

The benefit is going up 2.8 percent for a cost of living adjustment.

The full retirement age is increasing to 66 and six months if you turn 62 in 2019.

The maximum retirement benefit is increasing.

Then again, so is the maximum payroll tax for people still paying into Social Security.

We all want to enjoy retirement the way we choose, something that is certainly possible for people who have a robust retirement fund or pension to augment their Social Security check. But even without a supplementary retirement fund, there are ways to make the most out of what you receive from Social Security.

Longevity in the workforce. Social Security payments are based on your top annual earnings over 35 years. If you didn't work for 35 years, zeros are factored in. Claim the full amount. You can start claiming your benefit at age 62, but you will receive upwards of 30 percent less than if you had waited until full retirement age (either 66 or 67, depending on when you were born).

Think about delaying. You can earn more if you delay receiving benefits until after you reach full retirement age, as much as 132 percent if you wait to age 70.

Budget. Taking cost-cutting measures before you reach full retirement age or once you retire will allow you to save more. Downsize

your home, reduce your car payment or even take a part-time job.

Social Security has been part of our system since 1935 and while the system's long-term future is cloudy, that won't immediately affect people who currently qualify for Social Security or are about to reach the age of retirement.

For now, Social Security is a necessary source of revenue for anyone on a fixed income, so it's advantageous to know how to make the most of that money. If you have questions, the Social Security Administration offers benefit planning for retirement (www.ssa.gov/planners) that is helpful.

John CHRISTMAN CONSTRUCTION

New Homes • Garages
Decks • Additions
Siding • Roofing & More!

Call John 802.371.7555
FULLY INSURED AND FREE ESTIMATES

SAMAHA RUSSELL HODGDON PA
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

125 MAIN STREET
PO Box 70
LITTLETON, NH 03561

STEPHEN U. SAMAHA *of Counsel* T (603) 444-7778
MARK C. RUSSELL F (603) 444-2552
JODY A. HODGDON E info@nnhlaw.com
NIKOLAS K. FRYE W nnhlaw.com

- General Civil Practice
- Real Estate
- Estate Planning
- Wills
- Probate
- Family Law
- Divorce
- Personal Injury
- Litigation
- Business
- Mediation