



# atHome

with Seniors in the Eastern Monadnock Region

Summer 2020 / Issue No. 34

## In this issue of *atHome*

2 Member Spotlight:  
Virginia Aldrich

3 Village News:  
The Impact of Coronavirus;  
Memberships Are  
Now Being Accepted

4 Walk to End Alzheimer's;  
A Volunteer Testimonial

5 Beware of Coronavirus and  
COVID-19 Scams

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## Living in an Alternate Reality

By Cynthia Sue Martell, Member, Monadnock at Home

During the era of “no group meetings” Monadnock at Home Members continue to meet via conference call once a week under the cheerful direction of our Executive Director, Sandra Faber, and Member Services Coordinator, Deanna Mullins. Although we don’t have the excitement of sitting down face-to-face at a coffee get-together at the Bagel Mill or Monadnock Hospital the calls create a pleasant and informal forum in which members can continue to share ideas and concerns.

I became a member and booster of Monadnock at Home not long after it was founded in 2010. There has never been a time when I haven’t found

belonging to Monadnock at Home a rich and rewarding experience. One of many excellent benefits it has offered me over the years is encouragement and assistance in solving the frequent problems that arise from home ownership. I can sincerely say it is a major factor in my ability to continue living in the place I love and know best – my own “home sweet home.”

Monadnock at Home has always played and continues to play a powerful role in my social life. A few examples: Culturally educational and just plain fun on-the-road adventures, visits to delightful local farms, scenic walks, enriching presentations by notable

*Continued on page 5*

# Member Spotlight: Virginia Aldrich

By Deanna Mullins,  
MaH Member Services  
Coordinator

If you have attended a Monadnock at Home monthly drop-in or joined us for our Weekly Social Call, you likely have had the pleasure of speaking with Virginia Aldrich.



Virginia was first introduced to Monadnock at Home after she accidentally broke her hip in her kitchen. She received excellent care at Monadnock Community Hospital and upon discharge was given a brochure for Monadnock at Home. She was happy to have someone to call if she needed help staying in her home safely while recovering from hip replacement and a subsequent heart procedure.

Prior to these two unexpected health issues, Virginia had led an active, adventurous life. Virginia's parents were from New Hampshire but they met in Boston as students. She grew up in Arlington, MA and spent a lot of time in New Hampshire, especially the Lakes Region. One of her earliest memories is of being in Laconia during motorcycle week and seeing the parade of motorcycles. She also has fond memories of being a "horse crazy" kid in high school and taking the bus to Mystic River to rent and ride horses. Virginia thinks this all led to her later interest in a different type of horsepower!

In high school, Virginia played piano for the Baptist Sunday School in Arlington. She attended Radcliffe College – commuting from her home and taking the bus for 10 cents a ride. In college she played the French horn in the Gilbert & Sullivan Club Orchestra. Later she took up the alto recorder, an instrument that she would like to play again.

In the 1970s, a friend introduced

Virginia to motorcycle racing. She bought a Yamaha and started racing. Virginia enjoyed doing all of the preparation and mechanical work on the bike. She also created a cartoon called *Road Racer Rat* for the racing club's newsletter.

Virginia spent her career working in the field of computers, starting in her Radcliffe days when during summer breaks her first job was as a "computer" in MIT's Meteorology Department. She used an electromechanical calculator and did statistical calculations for studies of the planetary circulation of the atmosphere. After college, Virginia moved to California and worked full time as a programmer at UC Berkeley while also doing her graduate studies in electrical engineering. Virginia's favorite job was the 18 years she spent in engineering and software development for embedded systems at a small company in Seattle. Virginia is a life member of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers).

After working for over 50 years, Virginia decided to move back to New England to be among family, friends, and familiar places. Her sister and cousins all live in New Hampshire so Virginia moved to Peterborough about 5 years ago and settled into a beautiful home from the 1700s. Virginia always dreamt of having a small flock of her own, but after her health issues, she decided to enjoy living in an area where there are farms and sheep

nearby. Virginia enjoys walking country roads and photographing sheep and shared one of her prizewinning photographs with us at last year's Monadnock at Home's Got Talent program.

In addition to photography and cartooning, Virginia is also interested in watercolor painting. She inherited her artistic talents from her mother who was a professional artist and a graduate of the Museum of Fine Arts. Her mother did commercial art and worked at the Women's Educational & Industrial Union. Virginia has a beautiful collection of her mother's artwork – pen & ink and pencil drawings – on display at her home.

Virginia is enjoying being active again and loves walking in her neighborhood and up Pack Monadnock. She also enjoys power lifting which she took up while living in California and says is good for bone health. She enjoyed gardening in Seattle but finds that what she learned there does not necessarily transfer to the NH climate! She has many beautiful lilac bushes in her yard and is currently working on maintaining a garden around her patio which is home to an adorable iron sheep.

Virginia is looking forward to continuing to get involved with Monadnock at Home and appreciates the social aspects – expanding her social life, making connections with new people and new places.



# Village News

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director

It's hard to believe it has been three months since the coronavirus caused school and business closures and drastically altered our everyday lives. Some facts became clear right away and stay true to this day; staying at home, physical distancing, and mask wearing are key factors in keeping oneself safe. After canceling our in-person programming, we quickly shifted our focus to sharing current CDC recommendations with members, coordinating grocery deliveries, and checking in with members frequently.

While there is much tragedy with the pandemic, so much good has emerged as well. We have seen the good will of many wanting to donate their time, we've supported one another with reassurances

and advice, and we've experienced little moments that serve to remind us to be thankful for all that we have. I would like to share a few highlights over the last few months.

New friendships have been made! With many community members furloughed and wanting to fill their time with good, we were able to welcome 34 new volunteers to Monadnock at Home! We increased our check-in calls, making sure all members were called twice a week, keeping them informed and checking on their needs. In a time when we all could use more connection, it has been wonderful to hear about the enjoyment of these calls from both members and volunteers. A heartfelt thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers!



**Members Carolyn and Harry pick up their masks**

Volunteers have made a huge impact and community markets have stepped up in a big way! Our volunteers have cheerfully welcomed requests to pick up groceries to deliver to your door and are enjoying the conversations had while checking in with members. Our community markets have been working overtime, making sure

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**Memberships are now being accepted**

For more information call 603-371-0809 or visit our website [MonadnockatHome.org](http://MonadnockatHome.org)



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**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.*



**Volunteer Kathy picks up her masks**

We turned our monthly drop-in into a weekly social call using a land line. These calls have served to not only support one another through this strange time, but also learn more about each other and uplift spirits with lighthearted stories and laughter. NHPR host Jason Moon joined us for our first call to hear how those over age 60 were coping with the pandemic. He learned how flexible and caring you all are and especially how grateful! One of our long-time members, Gerry Hallgrimson, reminded us all to go outside and notice how the sun glistens and find beauty in nature. Her sentiment summed up the feeling throughout the call — when there is so much bad, look for the good, stay positive... we will get through this!

they are well stocked, picking and bagging items for delivery, and coordinating with us to help us make the deliveries happen. Grocery ordering assistance and delivery has proven to be a such a valuable service to many that we will continue to offer it after the pandemic as well.

Members have supported each other!

We know that we must remain vigilant for many more months until a vaccine is available. Monadnock at Home will continue to adapt to make sure we are supporting your needs along the way. We have started in-home services back up and sent out a flyer with guidelines that we ask our members and volunteers

to follow. We are looking to add some virtual programming through Zoom that I hope you will try! Our weekly social call continues every Wednesday at 11am. I hope you will join us! Please call us if you need instructions on how to dial into the call.

Lastly, I want to share a recent event that turned into the most memorable highlight of the past few months! In May, thanks to the coordinated efforts of area non-profits who serve older adults and a generous grant from the Tufts Health Foundation Fund, we acquired surgical face masks for our members and volunteers. Once the masks arrived, we set up a “drive-through” mask distribution operation. As Deanna and I stood waiting for you, wearing our masks, the anticipation grew! We were going to SEE you all! It was such a pleasure to greet you as you pulled up, smiling with your eyes, and wearing your masks too! It was clear you are “noticing the sun glisten” as Gerry advised, and even though we are all staying physically distant right now, we are still united and will all get through this together! Be well. 🍷



## Are you interested in participating in the 2020 Walk to End Alzheimer's?

Well, we are looking to form a Monadnock at Home team! MaH member and founder Owen Houghton is a long-time participant of the walk, which he used to attend with his wife, Norma. Owen continues to participate in memory of Norma who passed away last year from Alzheimer's.

The Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support, and research. Teams of walkers or individuals collect pledges which will go to funding the Alzheimer's Association's mission. The walk takes place on Saturday, September 26th in Keene.

Interested in joining the team, but not sure about the walking? That's okay too! You can be a part of the team and help raise funds to fight Alzheimer's without taking part in the walk day. Call MaH at 603-371-0809 to let us know you are interested!



**Owen and Norma Houghton**



“I’m so appreciative to have conversations every week with Norma and Eleanor. I may be checking in on them, yet they share life stories that inspire patience and fortitude during difficult times. And, we always find something to laugh about... such blessings!” —Volunteer, Patrice Hampson

*“Living in an Alternate Reality” Continued from page 1*

speakers, member talent shows, holiday celebrations, art exhibits, lunches in fine restaurants, and so much more.

One of the most delightful perks of belonging to Monadnock at Home is the growth of friendships between members. Equally extraordinary is the blessing of a caring staff and altruistic non-member and member volunteers. Reliable and

willing people who are consistently there for you whether you need a lightbulb replaced, a checkup phone call, someone to mow the lawn, pick up groceries, listen to your tale of woe, or drive you to a doctor’s appointment. You know where to call!

Today, it suddenly struck me more forcefully than ever before: All of

the rewards of membership described above have been precious throughout the years, but during these painful times they are proving to be even more stabilizing and consoling. A friend aptly describes this period we’re living in as an “alternate reality.” This is likely true, but there is one thing that still remains “real”– Monadnock at Home. 📧

## Beware of Coronavirus/COVID-19 Scams

Despite all the heart-warming stories of people banding together to help one another during this pandemic, there are also stories of scam artists trying to take advantage of the vulnerable. However, if we are armed with knowledge of the most recent scams, we are less likely to become victims. That is the purpose of this article – to spread awareness of these circulating mistruths. Below is a list of scams currently aimed at seniors and summarized by NH Attorney General Gordon MacDonald in a recent memo.

### Social Security Scam

Scammers claiming to be from the Social Security Administration (SSA) call a recipient and claim that due to the closing of SSA offices, the recipient’s benefits will be interrupted unless he/she provides personal identifying information, such as a Social Security or bank account number. The truth is that the SSA will not call a recipient unexpectedly and ask for personal information over the telephone.

### Medical Scams

Scammers are calling aging adults pretending to be a family member (often a grandson or granddaughter) in need of money to treat COVID-19 symptoms. Sometimes, the caller will ask the aging adult to send gift cards or cash for

payment. If you receive a call like this, you should hang up immediately.

Scammers are contacting individuals by telephone, email, and sometimes in-person, offering COVID-19 home test kits, medicines, or vaccinations in return for personal information such as your Medicare number or bank account information. Currently, no vaccines, pills, potions, lotions, medications, or other prescription or over-the-counter products are available to treat or cure COVID-19.

### Stimulus Scams

With many aging adults set to receive stimulus payments from the federal government, scammers are calling, texting, and emailing aging adults claiming to work for federal agencies, such as the Internal Revenue Service, and that they are in need of the aging adult’s personal identifying information prior to stimulus payment disbursement. No federal agency is going to contact you requesting Social Security, banking, or any other personal

identifying information. If you receive such a call, hang up.

### Fake Charity Scams

Scammers are contacting aging adults claiming to be from reputable charities or otherwise fictitious charitable organizations, seeking donations for a variety of causes related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these scammers request payment in the form of gift cards or electronic currency, such as bitcoin. You should be skeptical if you receive a call unexpectedly from a “charity” requesting a donation.

### Reporting

Anyone receiving scam communications related to COVID-19 or otherwise, is encouraged to make a report to the New Hampshire Consumer Protection Hotline:

- Phone: 1-888-468-4454
- Email: DOJ-CPB@doj.nh.gov
- Website: [doj.nh.gov/consumer/complaints/](http://doj.nh.gov/consumer/complaints/)

Stay vigilant and protect yourself from these scams!

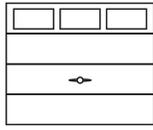


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### Welcome New Members and Volunteers!

#### New Members:

Judith,  
Rindge  
Romana & Bruce,  
Jaffrey  
Paula & Dale,  
Fitzwilliam

#### New Volunteers:

We have welcomed over 30 volunteers since the stay at home order began! Thank you to all! Your willingness to lend a hand, during this unprecedented time is very much appreciated!

If you would like to join or volunteer for MaH, please call us at 603-371-0809. We'd love to have you!



### Monthly Coffee Hour

MaH members gather on the third Tuesday of each month in Peterborough. Come join us for fun and delicious coffee! If you'd like to call, please contact MaH at 603-371-0809.

**NOTE:  
SUSPENDED DUE TO  
COVID-19**