

The Weld Observer

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the Weld Recreation
Committee

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Dancing Around Weld with Ashley Wright

by Ina Toth

When and why did you come to Weld?

We came to Weld in December 2015. We've been here more than 10 years now! My husband is an electrician and got a job at Irving's in Dixfield. We moved to Weld to be close to his work and then decided to never leave! Ha-ha!! And now I couldn't imagine living anywhere else. Weld is HOME!

You glide around the Town Hall like a beautiful butterfly, letting your wings swoop in and out of the dancers. Where did you get these amazing skills?

I don't know if I would call them amazing skills! Ha-ha! I came to line dancing when April Demers was teaching. Her classes helped me get out of a rut. I filled in teaching for April one day and now I am still in—two plus years later. I do have a background in ballet. I grew up in a pre-professional ballet program in Connecticut at the Hartford Ballet. I continued that through high school and some college.

Your uncanny personality delights and your beautiful smile is contagious. You are a very good motivator. To what do you attribute that wonderful skill?

Our group of dancers make it easy



to be positive! We have the most fun together. I'm so thankful you all put up with me and my crazy ideas!

Dance in town started about three years ago. What advice would you give yourself today, if you were back in the beginning days of dance here in town?

If you can believe it, back then I was a bit shy, before I got to know everyone! I am so happy to have the chance to put myself out there. It's all about our little community we've built!

What would you say to someone who is "all toes"?

There's no such thing! Ha-ha! The most important thing is to have fun. Mastering new dances is exciting, but

just moving to the music is what it's all about--not to mention all the laughs! Consistency is key and you just might be surprised what you can do!

When you are not flying around the dance floor, what would we find you doing?

My main job is professional chauffeur to my kiddos! Ha-ha!

Getting them to school and all their sports and dance classes and competitions is what it's all about! I do also teach an occasional ballet class at my daughter's dance school. Other than that, just the usual ins and outs of busy, everyday life!

I'm so thankful to have you all to dance with every week!!

Training Tips That Build Better Dogs (and Better Humans)

by Ashley Smith

Ashley raises Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers in Weld. Cami, pictured, was her first Toller, show dog, and breeding dam.

Whether you share your home with a dog, are thinking about adding one someday, or simply enjoy watching your neighbor's pup parade down the sidewalk, dog training touches our community more than we realize. Well-trained dogs are not only a joy to live with, but they're also safer, happier, and more welcome in public spaces. As a local breeder of Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers—a smart, energetic, and deeply owner-oriented breed—I've seen firsthand how a few thoughtful training principles can make all the difference.

The good news? Effective dog training doesn't require harsh methods, complicated tools, or hours of daily work. It's about consistency, clear communication, and making learning enjoyable for both ends of the leash.

Start with the dog in front of you

Every dog is an individual. Breed tendencies do matter! Tollers, for example, are intelligent, sensitive, and active, but personality, age, and life experiences matter just as much. A puppy learning to sit for the first time and an adult dog adjusting to a new home each need different approaches.

The most important training skill a person can develop is **observation**.

Is the dog engaged or distracted? Relaxed or overwhelmed? Training works best when dogs feel safe, understood, and motivated. Short sessions—about five to ten minutes at most—often produce better results than longer ones, especially for young dogs.

Reward what you want to see again

Dogs learn through consequences. Behaviors that are rewarded get repeated; behaviors that are ignored tend to fade. This is why positive reinforcement training has become popular. When a dog sits politely, walks nicely on a leash, or comes when called, rewarding that behavior teaches them, “Yes, that's the right choice.”

Rewards don't always have to be treats. Praise, play, or permission to sniff can all be powerful motivators. That said, food rewards are especially useful during early learning stages or when working through distractions. High-value treats can turn training into a game rather than a chore.

Consistency beats perfection

One of the most common training challenges I see isn't stubborn dogs; it's inconsistent humans. If jumping on guests is sometimes allowed and sometimes corrected, dogs get confused. Clear, predictable rules help dogs succeed. This doesn't mean you have to be perfect. It means everyone in the household should aim to respond the same way to common behaviors. Agree on simple



cues, expectations, and rewards. Dogs thrive when the rules make sense.

Training is more than commands

Many people think of training as teaching “sit,” “stay,” and “down.” While those are useful skills, real-life training includes calm behavior in the house, polite greetings, and the ability to settle. Teaching a dog how to relax is just as important as teaching them how to perform.

For high-energy breeds like Tollers, daily mental enrichment (training games, puzzle toys, scent work) can be as tiring as a long walk. A mentally satisfied dog is often a well-behaved dog. Training strengthens the bond; it isn't about control, it's about communication.

Training Tips

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Defying Gravity

by Mike Olson

I was asked by The Weld Observer's editor to author a short story on "flying around Weld." I agreed to try, but I am just another "from-away" newcomer to Weld. My 16 years of summertime experience qualifies for nothing, except that I am a pilot. I don't pretend to have the credibility or experience of long-time pilot residents Coval Conant, David Latham or any other pilots in the area with longer histories.

The paper's readership is a broad audience with varied opinions. How could I cover all the bases? The readers with youthful curiosity might have questions such as, how does gravity bind us to the earth? How do birds escape that irresistible force? What would it feel like to fly? Some folks in their senior years, resigned to earthbound bipedal lives, might be annoyed by an airplane engine overhead. And then there are the people in the middle, momentarily separated from their hectic lives, children, work and bill paying, who might glance skyward and think... "The world must feel different from that airborne vantage point. Is that really as liberating as it looks?"

So how do you know a person is a pilot? Just wait a minute, they will tell you.

That is an old joke but has some truth to it. Aside from the reference to an over inflated ego, there is a chance that a pilot is just passionate and has an eagerness to share experiences and emotions that can't be experienced on the ground.



From the poem *High Flight* by John Magee Jr.:

"Oh! I have slipped the surly
bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-
silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined
the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds, —and done a
hundred things
-wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring
there,
I've chased the shouting wind
along, and flung
My eager craft through footless
halls of air"

All of this flying may look easy, but it does not come so. There are inherent risks getting into a single engine flying machine with pistons and valves flailing around in a metal case producing rotational motion to a rotating propeller that is beating the air into submission. There is no emergency breakdown lane to pull over on. There is no roadside assistance! This is not to mention the weather, winds, legal regulations or skill level of the pilot. We all know of stories where a pilot overestimated his flying machine or overestimated his own skill. The mythical Greek, Icarus, was the first to fly and while warned, still flew too close to the Sun. It did not end well.

The saying goes: There are old

pilots and bold pilots but no old bold pilots. Yet...we still do it. Why? The rewards are worth the risk.

I had the pleasure this last summer of instructing the first training flights with my 15-year-old grandson. It was gratifying to see the young man learning to manage and control pitch, power, angle of bank, balanced flight, yaw, winds, position over the ground, glide slope, airspeed, trim, flaps, checklists and radio communications all at the same time. I did take some old man pleasure (not proud of it) while he struggled with the fact this was not a play station simulator or his game controller. What, no reset button? What, no extra lives?

At one point, when I believed he was not concentrating enough nor taking it serious enough, I consciously decided it was time to let him dig his hole a little deeper and take it a little closer to catastrophe. I would not help him so much and get his attention.

I let the next one of his attempted landings go until we looked more like we had springs instead of wheels. I took the airplane from him between the third and fourth bounce and headed for the weeds. I took it from his white knuckled fingers squeezing the black out of the yoke.

Defying Gravity

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You Never Forget Climbing Mt. Blue

By Dorothy L. Hall

As a teenager I climbed Mt. Blue every summer. It was just something I had to do. It went like this. First, I would call a few friends and hopefully I would get two or three friends to join me for the hike. Next, we prepared for the climb. I always took an orange, water, a few pieces of chocolate, and a tuna sandwich, all packed neatly inside my knapsack.

The day would begin around 9:00 am. The climb up had its tough moments, but I had my friends and that helped. About halfway up we were greeted by a ranger who had a cottage by a small river. At this spot we often took out our oranges and cut a hole in the tops so we could suck out the delicious juice.

My favorite part of the trip was when we arrived at the top. The view was better than we could have imagined. That

wasn't the end of the climb. Next, we climbed up the open stairs of a tower to the very top where we could see forever. About this time, we dove into our lunches.

Next was the part I never remembered well, climbing down the mountain. Well, it was close to falling down the mountain. If it took two hours or more to climb, we descended the mountain in half that time or less. It was scary because I couldn't always stop. My feet were on their own.

Looking back, I smile as I remember the many times I climbed Mt. Blue and flew down the mountain hoping I wouldn't fall and break a bone or worse. Once on the ground, we could hardly walk. Our feet and legs just shook. We had to wait until our legs were back to normal. The first time I climbed Mt. Blue I wondered if I would ever do it again. But I did, many times more.

Defying Gravity

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When safely back in the air I said to him: "Please look out your window and make sure we still have a wheel on your side (sarcasm intended)." Objective accomplished. His level of concentration "took off" and learning occurred!

Whether he becomes a pilot or not, the critical thinking skills and the ability to assess risk and make timely decisions should serve him well in life.

Flying over Weld, Webb Lake and Tumbledown is amazing. The natural beauty of this paradise is just as wonderful from the air as it is from the lake or the mountain top. Mount Blue serves as a landmark to orient your position in the air just as it does on the ground. We are all blessed with something truly special here and it makes me grateful to be part of this community.

Training Tips

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Sardine Special Training Treats

- 3 raw eggs
- 1 can of sardines (packed in olive oil)
- 1 sleeve of graham crackers

Instructions:

1. **Blend** all ingredients together until the mixture reaches a semi-thick, pancake-like batter.
2. **Scoop** onto a cookie sheet and spread into a thin, even layer, or use a silicone "dots" baking mat.
3. **Bake** at 350°F for approximately 20 minutes, or until lightly browned on top.
4. **Cool** completely, then cut into small squares or pop them out of the mold.

These treats are soft and ideal for rewarding frequent successes during training without overfeeding. Stored in the refrigerator or freezer, they keep well and make training sessions something dogs eagerly anticipate.

What's Up Outside

by Lise Bofinger

Conversations with lifelong New Englanders about the changing seasons often evoke a deep sense of shared connection and reflection. There is a collective understanding here—a rhythm that ties people to the land and to one another through the passage of time. While few would claim affection for the bitter cold of a -25°F January morning or the sweltering humidity of August, there remains something profoundly comforting in anticipating each change. The progression of the seasons brings a sense of belonging and appreciation for nature's cycles.

The transition from winter to spring is perhaps the most eagerly awaited. As daylight lengthens and air and water temperatures gradually rise, both humans and wildlife are stirred from dormancy. Chipmunks, little brown bats, and woodchucks emerge from hibernation, while bears, raccoons, and skunks awaken from torpor—a lighter state of rest resembling hibernation.

As spring progresses, the landscape offers a feast for the senses: the sights, sounds, and scents of renewal. The earliest visual markers appear on shrubs and trees as buds swell and branch tips thicken. Among the first to announce the change are two personal favorites—the red maple and the pussy willow.

The red maple greets the season with dense clusters of male or female flowers that bloom before its leaves unfurl. Closer inspection reveals the details of these tiny blossoms:



male flowers crowned with red stamens dusted in yellow pollen, and female flowers adorned with long red stigmas destined to form the familiar double-winged fruits—those “helicopters” many recall from childhood play. Interestingly, a single red maple may bear only male or only female flowers, both types simultaneously, or even alternate between them from year to year.

Equally emblematic of early spring is the pussy willow (*Salix discolor*), a member of the large *Salix* genus, which includes more than 350 species across North America—among them, the well-known weeping willow. Willows are among the first trees to leaf out each spring. As a child, I cherished collecting pussy willow stems—first alongside my mother, and later as a small gift for her.

For those interested in cultivating their own, pussy willows are remarkably easy to propagate. Begin by taking cuttings from a healthy specimen and keep the stems moist until planting. Choose a consistently damp location, water regularly throughout the growing season, avoid areas near leach fields, septic systems, or water pipes, as willows are vigorous growers with expansive root systems. Insert each cutting 8-12 inches into the soil, leaving

at least two inches above the surface. Once established, pussy willows provide an excellent, long-lasting source of nectar for pollinators. For those who prefer a simpler approach, cut stems placed in a mason jar of water will bring a touch of early spring indoors—a tradition I fondly recall from my childhood home.

As temperatures rise, more subtle signs of spring appear. Skunks begin to wander in search of mates, relying on their most notable defense—an unmistakable scent that doubles, rather paradoxically, as their method of communication during mating season. Early spring is their time to roam widely, establish territories, and seek companions, reminding us that even the less clamorous aspects of nature play their indispensable roles in the broader season rhythm.

Finally, the sounds of spring weave a rich tapestry around us. The chorus of spring peepers and wood frogs fills the evening air, while the cries of foxes and coyotes echo across the landscapes. Overhead, the calls of returning migratory birds signal nature's grand reawakening. Together, these voices form the symphony of a season brimming with life, reminding us to pause, step outside, and relish the renewal that surrounds us.

Nancy Murphy Innes

by *Carla Gauthier*

Nancy Murphy Innes's family has been part of the Weld community for more than 100 years. Their link to Weld began in the 1920s, when Nancy's father Read (pronounced Reed) Murphy, and his brother Whit, were recruited at age eight by a member of Camp Kawahnee's founding Frank family. They attended first as summer campers and subsequently camp counselors. Fourteen summers later, Read Murphy was called up to the US Navy (WWII) effectively ending his summers at the camp. Stationed in the Pacific during the war, Read Murphy met his bride to be in Hawaii. They were married in New York and honeymooned at The Kawahnee Inn. Read never forgot his time in Weld nor Camp Kawahnee, bringing his wife and three children here for summers staying at Pine Point located on the shores of the camp. Always a big supporter of Camp Kawahnee and its mission, Read last attended the 75th anniversary reunion of the camp.

During her college years, Nancy Murphy Innes came back to Weld as a chambermaid for the Kawahnee Inn, living on the second floor of the Inn with other female employees and camp families. The Kawahnee rented only cabins at that time, which Nancy cleaned under the watchful and guiding eyes of Jane and Walter Estabrook, the Inn's proprietors. She remembers the summer as one of fun, freedom, hiking, and kayaking, as well as



occasionally sneaking out from the second floor of the inn after her curfew to meet friends by the lake.

After years of camping at Mt. Blue State Park, Nancy and her husband Steve Innes bought their own camp on the west side of Webb Lake in 1998. Here she and her family have spent their summers and visited throughout all seasons, enjoying all the Town of Weld offers: Skiing, hiking, boating, blueberry picking, and above all, the unparalleled beauty of Webb Lake and its community.

Nancy is now best known for her creativity and passion in painting portraits of historical buildings, old camps, and the mountains, plants, and vistas around Weld. The only historical building in Weld she has not painted is the old Town Hall (it is on her roster for this summer). She has also been commissioned over the years to paint portraits of camps around the lake that have been passed down generation after generation. So far, she has completed ten camp portraits. Two years ago, she was approached to paint the oldest and longest contiguous home in Maine located on the Wilton Road. The Weld Free Public Library now uses the portrait Nancy created as

the logo on their letterhead. In addition, the Weld Historical Society auctioned off two of Nancy's paintings at their annual fundraisers – one of the Weld General Store and one of the swing gate and sign at Mountain View Cemetery.

Nancy loves getting her hands into new projects and is currently building an art studio inside the barn/garage at her camp to add more space to her studio. While she enjoys painting on her front porch where the morning sunrise behind Mount Blue is her favorite, she is excited to explore more mediums and themes in her expanded space and add to her collection of paintings, portraits, and notecards.

A longtime member of Webb Lake Association Board of Directors, Nancy also serves as the Webb Lake Loon Count Coordinator organizing boats in a systemic grid on the lake to count the loons at exactly 7:00 am (regardless of weather) as part of the annual Maine Loon Count in July (note: we had 22 this past summer).

When asked why Weld, Nancy replied, "I have traveled to many places around the world and there is no place that matches the beauty and serenity of this area, nor the peace and happiness I feel when I am here."

Silver Lining

By Lynda Redmond

The unexpected happens and often at an inconvenient time. Just a week prior to Christmas, when I went to put a casserole into my preheated oven, the oven was cold. My husband, a top-notch engineer and fixer-upper, checked everything out only to discern that although the gas burners, clock, and timer worked, the oven after twenty years was toast.

With sugar cookie dough in the refrigerator and pies to bake, I had to think quick. A new oven on a six-week back order and time constraints were an issue. I made the decision to bake them in our camper van. Unlike baking in the house, where I would feel compelled to throw in a load of laundry and do household chores, baking in my cozy van allowed me time to listen to Christmas music and write a couple of holiday notes while watching the light snow float over our white mountainous landscape. The aroma of my cookies sent me down memory lane with thoughts of Christmases past. The untimely breakdown had a silver lining and from my official taste testers, the cookies were a hit.

Sugar Cookies

- 1 cup softened butter
- 3-1/2 cups flour
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons cream of tarter
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Cream butter and sugar gradually until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each one. Stir in vanilla.

Add dry ingredients. Chill overnight then roll out to preferred thickness. Cut shapes with your holiday cookie cutters, then decorate as you wish. Cook for about 10 minutes at 375 degrees.



Facts About Goats!

by Lily Miller, Age 11

1. Do they escape? Definitely! Since they love to eat all kinds of plants, they want to get out of their fence to eat more. Our goats would put their feet on the wire of the fence then front flip off!

2. What do they eat? Well goats eat a lot. They love to eat all sorts of plants, and they like hay. We also found



that goats love to eat dandelions. They don't eat all plants, but they eat a lot of different ones!

3. How tall do they get? Goats can be all sorts of different sizes because there are so many different kinds, but the tallest one I know about is the Nubian goat. A normal adult height would change for their genders: females are usually 2.5 feet tall, and males are 35 inches (just under 3 feet). Which if you think about it is pretty tall.

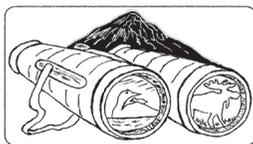
4. How many stomachs do they have? Goats have four! They chew their food then swallow it, and it goes to one stomach, then it comes back up and they chew it more, then it goes to the next until it went to all four!

5. What about the babies? Well goats are like people or deer because they give birth and don't have whole litters. There are usually one, two, or three babies through one pregnancy. When the baby is first born, on the same day it starts to walk, unlike humans.

6. Do they have different personalities? Yes, I've found that some are more controlling, some are calmer, some are shy, and some just are normal (hanging out and not super mean or shy).

7. How often do they get milked? Twice a day. If they don't get milked enough that can give them a painful infection of the udders (*mastitis*) and they will be hard to milk because the udders are so full!

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN



**The
Weld Observer**

2026 Submission Deadlines:

May 1st | August 1st | Novemberst

Articles, letters, drawings, cartoons, photos, recipes....

All submissions will be published in black and white.

Via e-mail: **weldrecnews@weld-maine.org** or drop your submission
in the Weld business box in front of the **Weld Town office**,
23 Mill Street in Weld. Attention: **Weld Recreation Committee**.

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