

# OPP NET HERALD

Opportunity Networks Newsletter

## In this issue:

- Job Coach Spotlight
- Spring Cleaning, Gardening and Allergy Tips,
- Shawn's Musings
- Local Food Review
- Spring Bird Watching Form
- Annie's Meals on Wheels Experience
- And so much more!



*Want to know how to unclutter your life with the nicer weather around the corner? Turn to Matt's Spring Cleaning Tips on page 5 for more!*

## Editors

- Sadie
- Nick
- Amanda

Ashley continues her reviews of local food spots on page 3



The people can't look away from Liz's Spring Bird Guide on Page 8

Join us on page 7 for a new feature—**Job Coach Spotlight featuring Chloe!**

Fan favorite Shawn's Musings on Page 6

# My Days at Meals on Wheels

By: Annie

I have been volunteering with Meals on Wheels for over two years through my day program. I usually go once or twice a week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, where I help deliver meals along different routes. My routes usually take about 30 minutes to an hour to complete, depending on how many clients we have. There are usually around 20 to 30 clients on a route, depending on the day and how many meals and pantry bags we need to deliver.



Some of my roles include: helping put out meals, especially during snow days, and I also help hand out holiday meals for Christmas and New Year's. Once a month, I deliver menus so clients can look over what meals they will get.

I enjoy volunteering with Meals on Wheels because I like talking to people and having conversations with them. I like greeting them, handing out their meals and menus, and saying goodbye. I also like helping with holiday meals because it gives people something to eat when they can't go out to visit family or buy groceries.

Some parts of the job can be challenging. One challenge is counting the meals and making sure we have enough for everyone. Another challenge is gathering everything we need before we leave, like pantry bags. Sometimes those are heavy, so someone else usually helps carry them.

Another part of the job is checking on clients. If someone doesn't answer the door, we have to call Meals on Wheels and sometimes call their emergency contact. There are times when clients are in the hospital or have been taken by ambulance, so we have to report that.

When I first started, I was worried because I didn't know what to expect or what I would be doing. Now I understand my role, and I feel much more comfortable delivering meals and knowing who I am delivering to.

I've learned a lot from this experience. I've learned how to greet clients, how to deliver meals, and when to knock or ring the doorbell. I've also learned about the clients, their families, and even their pets. We only have about five minutes at each house, but I still enjoy those short conversations.

At the beginning, it was hard to find the houses because I had to use an iPad with an app for directions. Now we use a different app, but sometimes it still takes time to get the directions right. It

was also challenging at first to know how to greet people, but now that I know them better, it feels much easier.

I have also formed connections with people at the Meals on Wheels office. I've gotten to know the staff and workers, as well as other people delivering on different routes. My co-workers have been very helpful, especially in situations like when we had a flat tire. We called Meals on Wheels, and they sent someone to help deliver the meals for our route.

I recently received the Volunteer Champion Award at Meals on Wheels, and it was signed by the governor.

I don't feel worried about Meals on Wheels anymore. I know the people, the houses, and the rules, like where to leave meals and whether to knock or ring the doorbell. I also know if someone lives alone or with someone else. If they live alone, we hand the meal directly to them. If they live with someone else, we may deliver two meals, like for a married couple.

## Food Review: Punk's Burger and Wings

By: Ashley

I went to Punks Burgers and Wings in Amherst, NH to try something new! They are a stationary food truck that serves a variety of menu items, including burgers, wings, and grilled chicken sandwiches. They are located in the parking lot next to Lowe's and Dollar Tree, and they even have picnic tables outside so you can enjoy your food outdoors.

While I was there, I learned that they make weekly grilled cheese specials, which really caught my attention. I ended up ordering a grilled cheese sandwich with ham, salami, cheese, and banana peppers. It was absolutely delicious, even though I had to wait in the rain for it to be ready!



The staff were very friendly and helpful while I was deciding what to order. Even though the service took a little while, the food was definitely worth the wait. I would absolutely recommend checking this place out if you've never been there before. Just make sure to check the weather first so you don't get stuck in the rain like I did!

# Spring Weather Report and Tips

By: Matt

Hey, calling all New Englander's, Spring is officially here! The Old Farmer's Almanac has made a prediction on the spring forecast, like Punxsutawney Phil making his prediction on groundhog day. According to the old Farmer's Almanac, it will be warm and dry along with a chance of showers and thunderstorms. A few storms could be strong to possibly severe, with characteristics including gusty, damaging winds, small hail, and frequent cloud-to-ground lightning. The soil forecast for spring 2026 indicates a seasonal split. I'm so sorry to announce that rainfall is expected to be below average this year, while temperatures are forecast to be warmer than average.

## Allergy Tips

1. Change your clothes when you are returning home from being outside.

2. Avoid being outside from 5:00AM-10:00AM and from 11:00PM-8:00AM.

3. Keep all windows closed and rely on AC during the peak of allergy season. Because you don't want a pollen family moving inside your house do you? I didn't think so.

4. Shower at night to prevent transferring pollen from your hair to your pillow, because you don't want pollen living on your pillow do you? I didn't think so.

5. Wash your Hands.

6. Seek allergy Medication. Use as directed.

7. Dust your furniture. Use cleaners as directed.



Hey calling all gardeners here are some tips for you...  
and yes, this will be on the test!

1. You should consider planting your vegetables, flowers, shrubs and trees in raised flower beds or mounded rows. They warm and drain faster than flat ground so your vegetables, flowers, shrubs and trees don't drown in water.
2. Kindly and obviously use row covers or cold frames to protect seedlings, to retain warmth and keep jack frost out.
3. You should consider waiting for soil temperatures, not calendar dates before planting warm-season crops for seeds.
4. Please visit local home improvement store and read the back of the Seed Packets for instructions!!

## Spring Cleaning Tips and Tricks

By: Matt

**Hey calling all homeowners here are some Spring cleaning tips:**

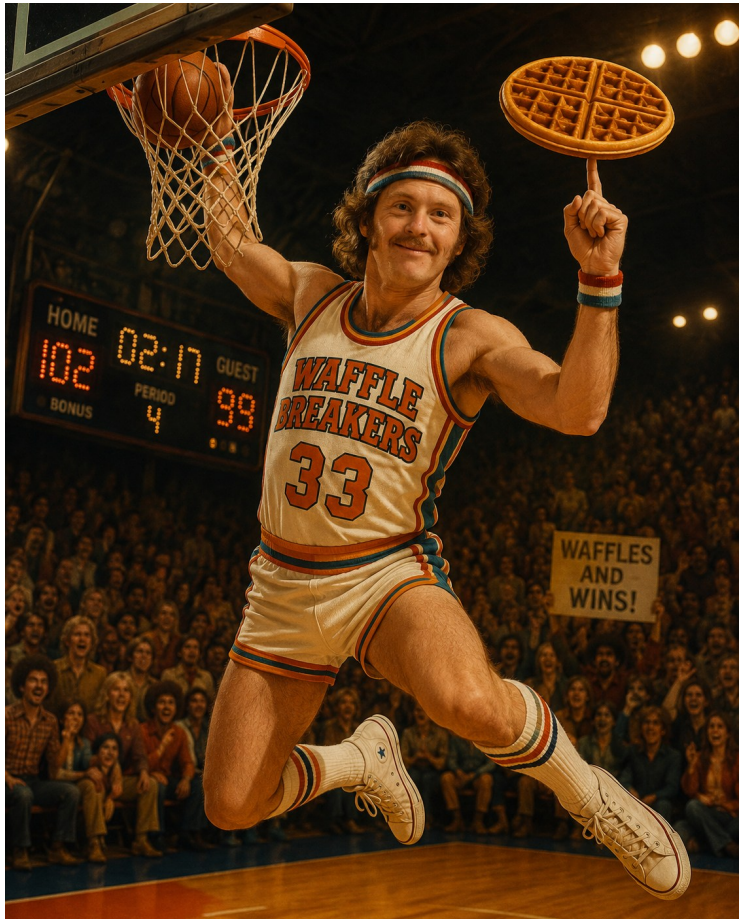
- A. Clean and inspect window screens from damage, in order to insects, flies and wasps out of your home or apartment.
- B. Inspect wooden decks, railings, windowsills and steps for rot.
- C. Inspect the washing machine water hoses for cracks. Because you don't want your house or apartment to flood, do you? I didn't think so!
- D. Inspect the air ducts for buildup of mold, allergens or debris. Because you don't want anyone to be very sick do you? I didn't think so.
- E. Make sure that your gutters work properly and running smoothly and kindly run practice tests with your gutters for any cracks or damage.
- F. Sharpen all your tools, charge and change batteries when necessary, lubricate moving parts and replace old gas.
- G. Inspect, test, and tune up any of your lawn equipment instead of driving it to be serviced.
- H. Trim trees and shrubs that are near your house. You don't want a tree living inside your house right? I didn't think so.

# Shawn's Musings

By: Shawn

I used to be a Red Sox fan, now I'm a Yankees fan. They have the best history and best chance to win. If someone called me bandwagon fan, I'd say "Ya I am." I wouldn't say to that person that my team is more likely to win because I'm in Boston territory, even though they are. Although you know the saying, don't count your chickens before they hatch. I am most interested in the history of baseball.

I've been playing sports on Thursday nights recently. I've been playing lots of basketball, which is my favorite. I just love to run. We get together to play some pick up. I would recommend others to find a hobby like that. As we get older, it's good to get out of the house. Because I'm getting older, I was sore the next day when we started. But I don't get sore anymore. It was worth sticking it out.



I haven't been grocery shopping in a while, but I need to go. I like grocery shopping. I like to pick out my fruit. It's another good way for me to get out of the house. I always put my cart back in the corral. Everyone should do it, and be safe. I even like putting the groceries away when I get home. I love being organized. I'll take a break in the middle and snack on some of the food. I usually go for the fruits and the veggies to snack on.

Speaking of food, we recently had a debate of pancakes vs waffles. I prefer waffles with real maple syrup. The waffle seems a little cleaner to cut. Those little squares hold the syrup just right. I'll also cheat on my diet with a good mediterranean pizza. It's delicious but also has some healthy stuff too.

If I had to do a talent show, I would be just fine. I don't get nervous. I would do comedy because I am funny, and I like to make people laugh. Here's a joke I'd perform on stage:

Where did the egg go for spring break?

New York City

Thank you, thank you...I'll be here all week...

# Job Coach Spotlight: Chloe

By: Justin

I wanted to start a new article highlighting the Job Coaches at Opportunity Networks. This newsletter I chose Chloe, who is a job coach at Louisburg in Nashua. While at Louisburg, Chloe helps three of my peers with their cleaning jobs. Each person who works at Louisburg has their own tasks, and Chloe works with each of them to complete their tasks in each building.

I got the chance to talk to Chloe about Job Coaching at Louisburg. She said she likes teaching people new skills and helping



them be successful at their job. It makes her and the crew feel good when the residents greet them and thank them for the work that they do. A few members of the cleaning at Louisburg said they appreciate working with Chloe because she helps them.

# Spring Bird Watching

By: Liz

What are the sure signs of spring? One of the best has to be waking up to the sound of birds singing and chirping in the early morning. Spring is my favorite season, and the return of birds is a big reason why. There's something so peaceful about looking outside and seeing them fluttering around, enjoying the warmer weather just as much as we do.

From colorful songbirds to familiar backyard visitors, spring brings so much life back into nature. One of my personal favorites is the Northern Cardinal, they're especially special because you can spot them all year round, and their bright red color really stands out against the early spring landscape.

## **Below are some interesting facts about birds you might see right in your own backyard!**

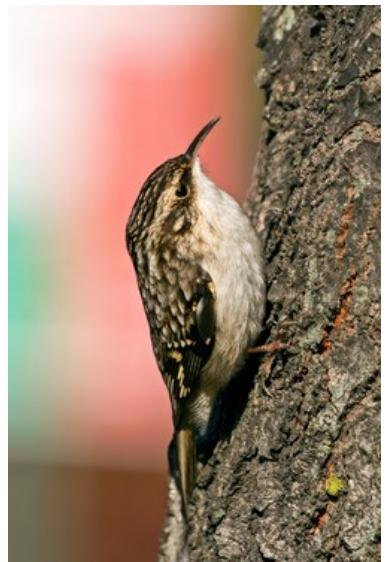
### **Brown Creeper**

- Quick description: Brown Creepers are smaller than white-breasted nuthatches. Tiny yet lanky songbirds. Long spine-tipped tails, slim bodies, and slender, decurved bills. They're feather pattern makes them blend easily into tree bark- their brownish heads show a broad, buffy stripe over the eye.

- Length, weight, wingspan: 4.7-5.5in, 0.2-0.3oz, 6.7-7.9in

- Behavior: Brown creepers have high pitched vocalizations. They search for small insects and spiders by hitching upward in a spiral around tree trunks and limbs. They move with short, jerky movements using their tails for support. Brown Creepers sing a high, warbling song, they also give a high, wavering call note that sounds similar to a Golden-crowned Kinglet.

- Breeding: Brown Creepers breed primarily in mature evergreen or mixed evergreen forests. You can find them at many elevations, even as high as 11,000 feet at treeline in the West. In the winter season, the species moves into a broader variety of forests and becomes much easier to find in deciduous woodlands.



- Migration, when do they come to NH (Northern America): Brown Creepers (*Certhia americana*) are partially migratory, meaning northern populations move south or to lower elevations in winter, while others stay residents. Migration peaks in April and late September to early October. They are generally considered short-distance migrants, with some moving from Canada as far south as North Carolina and Arkansas. Movement occurs in small flocks, peaking in early April and from late September to early October

### **Yellow Warbler**

- Quick description: Small, evenly proportioned songbirds with medium length tails and rounded heads. The thin straight bill is relatively large compared to their size. Northern Yellow Warblers are uniformly yellow birds. Males are a bright, egg-yolk yellow with reddish streaks on the underparts. Both sexes flash yellow patches in the tail. The face is unmarked, accentuating the large black eye.

- Length, weight, wingspan: 3.9-5.6cm, 7-25g, 16-22cm

- Behavior: Northern Yellow Warblers are usually at the tops of tall shrubs and small trees. They forage restlessly, with quick hops along small branches and twigs to look for caterpillars and other insects. Males sing their sweet, whistled songs from high perches.



- **Breeding:** Northern Yellow Warblers breed in shrubby thickets and woods, particularly along watercourses and in wetlands. Trees include willows, alders, and cottonwoods across North America and up to about 9,000 feet in the West.
- **Migration, when do they come to NH (Northern America):** They breed in late April/ May and that's the time they come to New Hampshire. Northern Yellow Warblers are early

long-distance migrants that travel between North American breeding grounds and Central/South America. Spring migration brings them north to the U.S. in March and early April, peaking in May. Fall migration starts early, with birds departing in August and disappearing from northern areas by mid-September.

## Northern Cardinal

- **Quick description:** The male Northern Cardinal is perhaps a bird even non-experts are familiar with. A shade of red you can't take your eyes off. Even the brown females display a sharp crest and warm red accents.
- **Length, weight, wingspan:** 21-23.5cm, 33.6-65g, 25-31cm. The male is larger than the female.
- **Behavior:** Cardinals will fluff up their down feathers to stay warm. Their feathers are small and hairlike. The Northern Cardinals legs and feet are thin



and lack feathers. In cold temperatures, cardinals will shiver and tense their muscles, even breast muscles to use their heat. Only a few female North American songbirds sing, but the female Northern Cardinal does. This may give the male information about when to bring food to the nest. A mated pair shares song phrases, but the female may sing a longer and slightly more complex song

than the male.

- **Breeding:** They can be found almost anywhere where there are dense bushes for nesting. Northern Cardinals often mate for life, with breeding season starting in March and lasting through August. Pairs can raise up to 4 broods per season. The female builds the nest and incubates 2-5 eggs for 11-13 days, while the male defends the territory and feeds her
- **Migration, when do they come to NH (Northern America):** Cardinals don't migrate and they don't molt into a dull plumage, so they're still breathtaking in winter's snowy backyards. In summer, their sweet whistles are one of the first sounds of the morning.

## Red Winged Blackbird

- **Quick description:** Glossy-black males have scarlet and yellow shoulder patches they can puff up or hide depending on how confident they feel. Females are a streaky brown, almost like a large, dark sparrow.

- **Length, weight, wingspan:** 6.7-9.1, weight is 1.1-2.7oz, and wing span is 12.2-15.8in.

- **Behavior:** Red-winged blackbirds are very territorial, noisy, and aggressive birds, especially during the spring breeding season. Males use a distinct "song-spread" display, flashing red shoulder patches to defend territories in marshes or fields. They are famously aggressive, usually divebombing humans and other birds that approach their nests.



- **Breeding:** They breed in salt water marshes, wet road sides, old fields and drier meadows. They're in the pastures, feedlots, and crop fields in the winter time.

- **Migration, when do they come to NH (Northern America):** They are short-distance migrants that return north early, often by late February or March, which signals spring! Northern populations migrate to the southern U.S. and Mexico in October/November. They often form massive, noisy flocks with other blackbird species during their journey. Males arrive first in the north, and use wetlands to set up breeding territories

## Eastern Blue Bird

- **Quick description:** Male Eastern Bluebirds are a brilliant royal blue on the back and head, and warm reddish-brown on the stomach area. Females have blue tinges on the wings, giving them a grayer look.

- **Length, weight, wingspan:** The length is 6.3-8.3in, weight is 1.0-1.1oz and wingspan is 9.8-12.6in.

- **Behavior:** Eastern blue birds perch on wires and stay on the ground for prey. They feed on insects and eat berries. They often use birdhouses or old woodpecker holes. Social and territorial, they forage in small flocks, feeding on berries in winter.

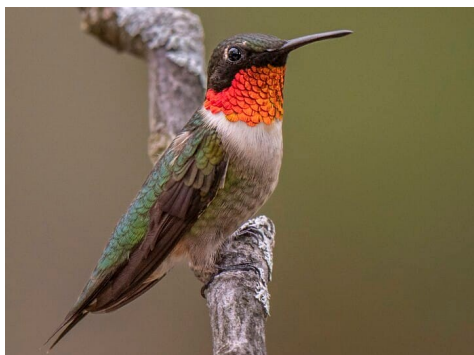


- **Breeding:** Eastern blue birds live in meadows. They nest on field edges, golf courses, and roads. Blue birds begin breeding in summer after they are hatched. The young cannot fend for themselves after hatching. Fledglings leave 15 to 20 days after hatching. A mature female raises two broods each season.

- **Migration, when do they come to NH (Northern America):** Eastern bluebirds are partially migratory, northern populations move to the southeastern U.S. or Mexico from September to December to escape cold. They return to breeding grounds around late February, often traveling in flocks. Many stay as far north as New York or New England if food is available.

## Ruby-throated hummingbird

- **Quick description:** The Ruby-throated Hummingbird is the only breeding hummingbird in eastern North America. It beats its wings more than 50 times per second. Both the adult male and female are green on the back. The adult male has a bright ruby throat which appears black, bright green back and sides, with a black tail. The female has a dull grayish white throat, is golden-green above and whitish below, with white tips on the outer tail feathers



- **Length, weight, wingspan:** The length is 7-9cm long, weight is 2 to 6g, and wing span is 8-11cm.

- **Behavior:** The female cares for her offspring. They are aggressive towards other ruby-throated hummingbirds. They defend territories and attack and chase other ones that enter their nest. At flowers, it usually feeds while hovering, extending its bill and long tongue into the center of the flower. At feeders, may either hover or perch. To catch small insects, they fly out and take them in midair, or hover to pluck them from foliage. Sometimes they will take spiders from webs.

- **Breeding:** The bird is polygynous. They depart after their parental care and they do not form breeding pairs. During breeding, the male flies back and forth in front of the female in a wide U-shaped arc, making a whirring sound on each dive. The male also buzzes back and forth in short passes in front of the perched female.

- **Migration, when do they come to NH (Northern America):** They come to New Hampshire in the early fall and late winter. They migrate away from other ruby throated hummingbirds. They migrate near orchards and gardens and even forests. They migrate from Central America/Mexico to the eastern U.S. and Canada in spring and back in fall. They travel alone, flying over 500 miles non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico. Feeders should be out by early spring and kept full into late October to support their migration!!