

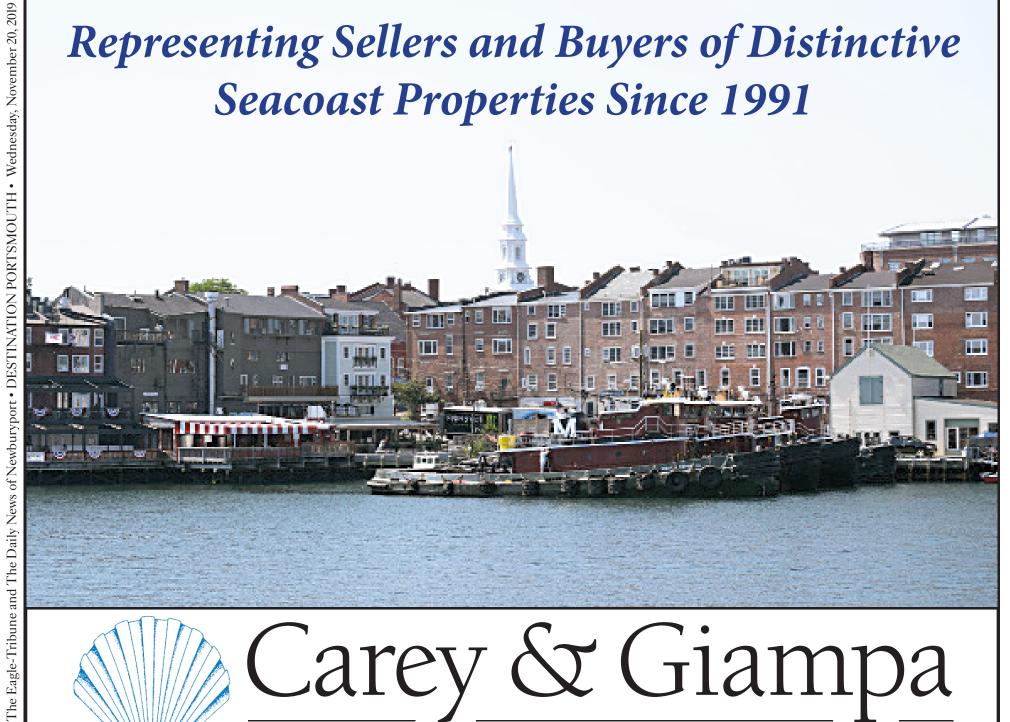


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WINTER FUN • HOLIDAY EVENTS









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SEASON of TRADITION

RING IN THE HOLIDAYS WITH TIMELESS EVENTS

By Katie Lovett CORRESPONDENT

Revelers of all ages will find a slew of festivities to enjoy around the city this holiday season.

From concerts to shows, to the beloved traditions such as the downtown tree lighting and holiday parade, Vintage Christmas and the Candlelight Stroll at Strawbery Banke, there will be many moments to treasure.

"The parade and tree lighting kick off the holiday season in Portsmouth," says Brinn Sullivan, the parade organizer for the city. "Our big, little city hosts a 'Vintage Christmas Schedule' over the holidays including 'Annie' at The Music Hall, the Candlelight Stroll at Strawbery Banke, and a Gingerbread House contest — so much family fun in such a quintessential New England coastal community."

Tree Lighting and Holiday Parade

Few moments showcase the magic of the holidays like the downtown tree lighting and parade.

Set for Saturday, Dec. 7, in Market Square (with a rain date of Dec. 8), the tree lighting begins at 5:30 p.m., followed by the parade down Islington Street and through Market Square at 6.

This year's tree is a Colorado blue spruce, which is being donated by Martins Point HealthCare, according



Photo courtesy Michael Winters Photography

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to James Dumont, general foreman of the Department of Public Works.

The tree, which weighs about 3,000 pounds, will arrive in Market Square on Nov. 25.

"The tree will be lit with around 1,750 to 2,000 lights," Dumont says. "We typically use around 300 ornaments."

A crowd of about 10,000 spectators gathers downtown to watch the festivities each year, says Sullivan, the parade organizer.

Seventy units participate in the parade, or about 1,200 people, Sullivan says. That includes marching bands, dance groups, community organizations, student organizations and nonprofits.

Participants will collect food as they march, which will be donated to Gather and Operation Blessing.

Strawbery Banke **Candlelight Stroll**

The Eagle-Tribune and The Daily News of Newburyport

This year marks the 40th



Courtesy photos

Victorian skaters entertain the crowd at Strawbery Banke Museum's outdoor rink.

anniversary of the beloved Candlelight Stroll at Strawbery Banke.

"The theme this year is 'A Tradition for Every Family' and we are dedicating Stroll to Bill Moss, our town crier for all 40 years, who died this summer," says Stephanie Seacord, director of marketing and communication.

"We are inviting people who have photos of their families making Stroll one of their own holiday traditions to send us copies we tree in our Visitors Center."

The Stroll showcases 350 years of seasonal and holiday traditions spread through the museum's

historic houses.

Lighted candle lanterns line the grounds and the homes are filled with handmade decorations created will use to decorate a special with greens, dried flowers and herbs collected from the museum gardens.

Visitors are greeted in each house by costumed role-players and performers



A marching band proceeds past North Church during the Christmas parade.



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who recreate past traditions. such as Mrs. Shapiro, who prepares a Hanukkah celebration in her 1919 Russian Jewish kitchen, or the Goodwins' Victorian Christmas. Elsewhere, the Abbotts wait for news about their soldier fighting in Europe in WWII.

"Some role-players are our normal role-players," Seacord says. "Others are hired for Stroll. Some new. some returning favorites." The role-players are paid.

The evening also includes carols, holiday crafts, demonstrations, and complimentary refreshments. Each year, the Stroll draws about 10,000 visitors of all ages.

The Stroll anchors the Vintage Christmas celebration in the city. It will be held Dec. 7, 8, 14, 15, 21 and 22; Saturdays, 5 to 9 p.m., and Sundays, 4 to 8 p.m.

For tickets, visit http:// www.strawberybanke.org/ events/candlelight-stroll.cfm.

Vintage Christmas

A hallmark of the season, Vintage Christmas, is celebrating its 15th year with an assortment of events. which encompasses the Stroll, the parade, the New Year's Pops, and the Music Hall show.

However, another highlight of the festivities is the Gingerbread House contest, which runs from Nov. 29 through Dec. 22 at Discover Portsmouth, 10 Middle St.

A kickoff party, hosted by the Historical Society, will be held on Friday, Nov. 29 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Local artists, families, kids and businesses create the gingerbread masterpieces.

Free to check out, the gingerbread exhibit will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day with extended hours Friday Nov. 29 and Saturday Dec. 7 until 8 p.m.

Those who attend can vote for their favorite until Friday, Dec. 13, when the People's Choice Award winner will be named.

In addition to the Candlelight Stroll, visitors can return to Strawbery Banke to walk through five houses on the museum property, decorated for Christmas for the Holiday House Tour.



Photo courtesy David J. Murray

Outdoor skating is one of the attractions of Portsmouth's Vintage Christmas.

The 90-minute multi-sensory tour highlights seasonal traditions of yesteryear. Participants will "trace the history of winter holidays and celebrations in New England and learn how traditions evolved, expanded, and changed over the centuries," according to the museum.

Guided tours are offered on the hour and the tour starts at 2 p.m. To see the schedule and ticket prices, visit http://www.strawberybanke.org/events/holidayhousetour.cfm.

Revelers will also have a chance to hop aboard a Vintage Christmas Trolley, which will run on a 15-minute loop of the downtown.

The free rides run Sunday, Dec. 1, through Saturday,

Dec. 22 from 1:30 to 10:30 p.m. Stops occur at public parking lots, garages, hotels, The Music Hall and Strawbery Banke Museum.

Cherished classic 'A **Christmas Carol'**

Seacoast Repertory Theatre will present the holiday classic "A Christmas Carol" from Nov. 30 through Dec. 21.

The beloved story by Charles Dickens follows Ebenezer Scrooge as he learns about the true meaning of Christmas.

Showtimes are generally Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m..

Tickets are available online at https://

seacoastrep.org/a-christmas-carol/ or by calling the box office at 603-433-4472.

Christmas concert Dec. 15

Portsmouth Pro Musica Chorus will present holiday music with Portsmouth Brass Quintet and The Overtones a cappella group Sunday, Dec. 15, from 3 to 5 p.m. at North Church Market Square.

Tickets at the door cost \$16 general admission; \$13, students and seniors; in advance they are \$13, general admission; \$11, students and seniors.

For more information, visit portsmouthpromusica.org.

LaBrie Family Skate at **Puddle Dock Pond**

Gather up your family and

head to Strawbery Banke during December for some seasonal skate time on Puddle Dock Pond.

The outdoor skating rink every day of the month from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Skate rentals and sharpening services are available for a fee.

For tickets, visit www. strawberybanke.org/skate. cfm.

'Annie' at The Music Hall

The Ogunquit Playhouse has selected "Annie" as the holiday show at The Music Hall this year.

The production will run from Nov. 27 through Dec. 22 at the historic theater, 28 Chestnut St.

The musical depicts the

story of a redheaded orphan named Annie as she meets billionaire Oliver Warbucks and wins his heart with her cheerful personality. The production features Sally Struthers in her reprisal of Miss Hannigan.

Performances will be held at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. For ticketing information, visit www.themusichall.org/ events/annie2019/.

Ring in 2020 at First Night

A longtime favorite event, First Night Portsmouth will ring in 2020 with a lineup of traditional favorites Tuesday, Dec. 31.

"There's a certain comfort in knowing First Night is going to be what it is every year," says Barbara Massar, the executive director of Pro Portsmouth, which runs the annual event.

A range of shows will entertain audiences with music, magic, puppets and brain benders. Entrance to shows is available with the purchase of a First Night button.

Outside festivities are free for all who attend. The night will cap off with fireworks.

"We're working to keep it going," Massar says, noting that Portsmouth is the only community in the area to still offer a First Night celebration.

A nonprofit, Pro Portsmouth uses proceeds from button sales to fund the evening, including paying for the large ice sculpture in Market Square and the fireworks show. Typically, 3.000 or so buttons are sold each vear.

New Year's Eve Pops

Welcome in 2020 at the New Year's Eve Champagne Pops presented by the Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra.

The show, which begins at 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve, will be held at The Music Hall Historic Theater, 28 Chestnut St.

To see the program or for ticket information, visit www.portsmouthsym phony.org/events/.



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THE MUSIC HALL A LASTING CITY LANDMARK

Many of the holiday events — and events year round for that matter are hosted by the historic Music Hall in the heart of Portsmouth.

For close to 140 years, The Music Hall has been a notable landmark in the city, drawing international and nationally acclaimed artists.

Opened in 1878, The Music Hall has become a meeting place, a destination point, and a venue for high-class entertainment. Artists and performers from all genres have walked through the building's doors, including Mark Twain.

The theater stands on the site of one of Portsmouth's original meetinghouses. "The Temple," as it was known, had once been a Baptist meetinghouse, as well as a prison. It was also the site of the country's first almshouse.

1876-1900

Over the years, the location has seen a series of fires, including a significant blaze on Christmas Eve of 1876. That fire inspired a group of residents, including the Peirce family, to build The Music Hall.

The D'oyly Carte Opera Company (Gilbert & Sullivan) performed "Pirates of Penzance" within weeks of its U.S. premiere, and countless Shakespearean actors known around the world performed on The Music Hall stage, including Margaret Mather, Thomas W. Keene and John Drew.

Buffalo Bill Cody and his Wild West show performed their smaller indoor show numerous times. The theater hosted its first moving picture, "Edison's Graphophone," in 1898.

1901-1987

In 1901, the theater was partially renovated and



The interior of The Music Hall today.



The Music Hall circa 1945.

restored by Frank Jones, a local politician-brewerrailroad baron. It was a cenamong many others. The tral feature of the downtown shows came to Portsmouth through the mid-1920s.

Productions included

Oz" and "No, No, Nanette," within weeks of leaving New York City. The venue also

"Peter Pan," "The Wizard of housed local community events.

> Fewer traveling shows were presented between the world wars and movies became the primary source

of entertainment. However, The Music Hall couldn't compete with other movie theaters and went through a period of partial closings that lasted until a Kittery, Maine, man purchased the building in 1945 at auction and renamed the hall The

For almost four decades, audiences watched the stars of the silver screen ranging from John Wayne to John Barrymore and were able to catch up on the latest newsreels or episodes of their favorite serial.

By the mid-1960s, the hall had been leased to movie palace mogul E.M. Loew and operated in tandem with his other theater, The Colonial, in Market Square. Though relegated to showing some lesspopular film titles, The Civic remained a favored venue until it was sold to

a holding company in the early 1980s, when it was "too old" to be of any use to Loew.

After another brief period of closure and trip to the auction block, The Music Hall was once again reopened. Due to the efforts of a group of residents known as The Friends of The Music Hall, the theater emerged as a nonprofit center for the performing arts.

1987-PRESENT

In 2003. The Music Hall was designated as an American Treasure by the U.S.

Today, the venue draws more than 120,000 visitors each year. Its programs include signature series, such as Writers on a New England Stage, Telluride by the Sea, and Met Opera broadcasts from Lincoln Center in New York. The Music Hall's contribution to the local economy in showand visitor-related spending is about \$9.1 million annually.

The restorations and renovations of The Music Hall's landmark historic theater have brought back details dating to 1878 and 1901, periods of architectural significance.

The Music Hall Loft opened in 2011, a 124-seat theater on Congress Street that also houses administrative offices. The Loft received the N.H. American Institute of Architects award for design excellence.

Source: www.themusic hall.org





Imbibe the flavors of the blossoming Portsmouth brew-pub scene

risp summer beers have made their CISCO BREWERS annual exit with shorts and sandals, replaced by hearty sweaters and brews of the season.

Sure, you can predict what you'll get in your pint glass this time of year — porters, stouts and ales. But unconventional is the new norm in the Portsmouth craft beer scene: Think juniper berries, peppermints and wild carrot.

The city is home to six breweries, mostly born from at-home operations and tucked into former warehouses without walls to separate brew spaces from tasting rooms. Many have become popular tourist destinations.

There's a dialogue between brew masters and beer connoisseurs, each with an investment in what the other has to say. Brewers say they want to be pushed to provide new options. Customing lunch," he said. "People stop by for ers want their palettes challenged.

Those expectations don't stop when breezes turn colder and visitors to the area go home.

Here's a roundup of what's going on as the year comes to a close, paired with insights from founders and major players.

35 Corporate Drive, **Pease International Tradeport**

You can get a taste of Nantucket by driving past the C&J bus station at Pease International Tradeport, skipping the ferry entirely.

With a couple of turns, you'll get to Cisco Brewers, a popular satellite location of the flagship Nantucket brewery. Among the area's newer breweries, Cisco replaced Red Hook Brewery in June 2018.

General Manager Nick Wright described the place as a brewpub popular at most times of the day, not just nights and weekends.

"There are 10,000 people who work on Pease, and we get a lot of business dura beer and our food menu, which partly rotates monthly."

Dining options are from land, sea and garden — crab cake sliders, fall harvest salads and short rib chili.

Guests enjoy a large outdoor space during the warmer months, with live music, games, concerts and festivals.



"There's enough room for 5,000 people," Wright said.

They cozy into the open indoor restaurant and bar for the rest of the year.

He touted Crantucket, a cranberry IPA coming to a Cisco draft soon. It's paired well with ski movies, he said, and holiday celebrations.

"We host banquets and events," he said. "From conferences to weddings. All of it is served well by the small batch stuff made here on site in Portsmouth and the classics that Cisco fans love."

EARTH EAGLE BREWINGS 165 High St.

There are options at Earth Eagle Brewings. You can sit back and enjoy a beer, you can pick up supplies at the homebrew store to make your own, or you could indulge in both.

Alex McDonald, the owner, should be listened to for advice. Seven years ago he started a home brewery that grew into the nanobrewery and brewpub tucked into High Street.

"Sometimes people have a hard time finding the door to get in," he laughed. "But they find us. They always do. We're here."

McDonald's sought-after brewery is named after a Native American belief that turkeys were the eagles of the Earth. The feathered ground-dwellers are renowned in that culture for step, to how they collabospirituality and connection to nature.

is carried through the business, down to the flavors.

"We've got a curry pumpkin porter and stouts, IPAs like always, and we offer a gruit, which is a beer with little hops flavored instead with spices and herbs," he said.

The flavor of the moment? Wild carrot.

It's a hit in the 49-seat indoor space — doubled in the summer when the adjacent patio is open — where local ciders, cocktails, lunch and dinner are served every day.

"We pride ourselves on being eclectic," he said. "We're always switching things up."

GREAT RHYTHM BREWING COMPANY 105 Bartlett St.

There's a definite rhythm at the brewery on Bartlett Street, from the way employees work in rate with the husbandand-wife founders on That same focus on nature what should be made next.

Great Rhythm Brewing co-owners Scott and Kristen Thornton have been on a mission since 2012 to brew flavorful, hoppy beer for every season. They started in borrowed space and expanded to their own warehouse and taproom overlooking North Mill Pond in August 2016.

Through the floorto-ceiling windows, the Thorntons' guests have a clear view — wet signs of spring, summertime haze,

Please see BREW, Page S10



November 20,

■ Continued from Page S9

giant orange oak leaves or winter whites.

Despite what's happening outside, Great Rhythm is producing beer every day of the week, Scott Thornton explained. So far, all of it stays in the Granite State.

The majority of its signature beers — like those launching for the holidays — can only be enjoyed in the tasting room.

"Pumpkin porter with a cinnamon sugar rim for the fall, and a smoothie style sour, called Bliss, for when the holiday season gets going," Scott Thornton said. "It's double fruited with cranberry, tangerine and cherry with milk sugar."

From the testing room, to production and packaging, everyone gets behind the beer.

"We're always making adjustments and coming up with new things," he said. "It takes a lot of hands to do this work."

LIAR'S BENCH BEER CO. 459 Islington St., #4

Former University of New Hampshire roommates Dagan Migirditch and Dane Nielsen have come a long way since slugging cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon and Red Dog beer as freshmen.

In opening Liar's Bench Beer Co. in May 2016, the duo home, it's this third space became major players on the Seacoast's craft beer scene.

They split ways after graduating college in 2008. Nielsen moved to the West Coast to pursue professional tales and entertain. At this brewing. Migirditch staved closer to home and worked at restaurants. Their friendship withstood the wild schedules.

"It was 2014 or 2015. Dane was home from out there. and we had a conversation that we were both ready to open something together," Migirditch said.

That something was a nanobrewery, taproom and biergarten in Portsmouth's budding West End.

Migirditch explains the theme as "down home commercial with a little grit."



Nielsen piggy-backs that with Liar's Bench being "the third space."

"It's not work, it's not where you gather regularly," he said.

And what exactly is a liar's bench? It's a place to exaggerate the truth, to spin one, there are eight taps.

The business partners say they can pour something for everyone.

"If someone walks in and says they don't like beer, we take it as a challenge to find something they'll enjoy," Migirditch said. "And more times than not, we win that challenge."

LOADED QUESTION BREWING COMPANY 909 Islington St., Suite #12

Tom Bath has been asked the same loaded question

since he started home brewing in 1995: What's the best beer?

He laughed while giving his steady answer: "The last one I finished."

"How are we supposed to pick one 'best' when the seasons change, the setting vou're drinking in changes." he said. "Am I savoring it? Or am I maybe having one too many?"

A year and a half ago, that methodology and his home brew operation morphed into Loaded Question Brewing Company.

He teamed up with Ben Moy, his business partner, and they landed a brew space and bar at the end of a dingy hallway in what was once the world's largest button manufacturing facility.

"We came in with sledgehammers," he said. "There a keeper of history, and was a lot of getting dirty to turn the place into what

we wanted."

Bath spends his days crafting beer he's proud of. Customers are rewarded with decades of his coast-to-coast experience.

Regulars know that Loaded Question dedicates time to the craft, building hype around some small batch flavors.

Near the end of November, they'll feature a sour red beer that has been in the works for over a year. Bath describes it as his take on a classic Belgian.

"It's soured on cherries in a cabernet sauvignon barrel for over a year," he said. "People have been waiting for this one."

PORTSMOUTH BREWERY 56 Market St.

Head brewer Maxine Munsey is a master of the craft, responsible for filling Portsmouth Brewery pint glasses with holiday cheer.

At the city's historic namesake brewery, Munsey and her small team of two assistants work below diners on the flavors they have come to expect including the annual batch of Uskumata (pronounced oo-skoo-ma-ta).

"It has juniper berries and juniper bough," Munsey said. "Sugar wheat is filtered through to help with booms, so do the number of that evergreen flavor; piney and citrusy."

The flavor will join a holiday gingerbread porter on tap, as well as a peppermint stout reminiscent of the seasonal pinstripe candies.

"But not in a way that makes you feel like you're drinking toothpaste," Munsey clarified.

Portsmouth Brewery opened in 1991, with the same brewing system used today. Munsey has

come to know the ins and outs of it over the last six years. In June, she was promoted to lead the brewpub operation.

"There's a lot of history here," she said. "I'm a keeper of some really great recipes, but I'm also responsible for keeping things current."

She recognizes, however, that as the craft beer scene experts. People are learning more about beers and how they're made.

"They'll come in and really enjoy a lager because they know it takes three months to make and there are so few flavors to hide behind. It has to be done well," she said.

Most of the beer stays in house. Some is canned and sold in a quaint adjoined gift shop or eateries in the neighborhood.



Portsmouth Rec director advises on the best spots for sledding and snowshoeing

It's a scenario that appeals to many: A winter storm has ended, leaving a fresh blanket of snow to play in, walk through or go sledding in.

So, where are the best spots around Portsmouth to head to when you have a snow day?

There are plenty of choices. It all depends on what you are looking for, says Portsmouth Recreation Department Director Rusty Wilson.

SLEDDING

South Playground is a popular sledding spot for families with young children, Wilson says. There's plenty of parking, and the hill is not too big for little adventurers.

Wagon Hill Farm, 156 Piscatagua **Road, Durham:** For bigger kids seeking a greater thrill, head to Wagon Hill in nearby Durham, says Wilson.

The big hill at Sagamore Golf, 22 North Road, North Hampton: This is any season.

also a popular choice, Wilson adds.

SNOWSHOEING

For outdoor lovers of all ages, snowshoeing on a trail through the woods after a snowfall is a peaceful way to spend a winter

There's a range of popular recreational areas to pick for an afternoon out.

Peirce Island: This 27-acre property owned by the city alongside the Piscataqua River South Playground, Junkins Avenue: offers trails for walking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

> The Sagamore Creek Highlands: This 10-acre park is located a mile and a half from downtown

and is a popular destination along the waterfront. Also, the scenic Urban Forestry

Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, and Odiorne Point State Park, 570 Ocean Boulevard, Rye, are always inviting spots for



"They all have good walking trails with gradual slopes," Wilson says.

With a mix of trails to choose from, all the recreational areas are welcoming for beginners,

he adds.

Snowshoeing is garnering more interest, Wilson says, as kids become acquainted with the pastime in physical education classes and have more

opportunity to practice. It's an activity that anyone can try and enjoy.

"It's not very physically taxing and you can go at your own pace," he adds.

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