

Hometown Volunteer Hero: John C. Pilgrim

By Missy Pilgrim

John Pilgrim's 40-plus years of volunteerism to over a dozen different organizations in Littleton has helped both the town grow as well as served all ages of the community from kids to senior citizens. And GoLittleton.com would like to highlight his many wonderful accomplishments while donating his time, skills, and dedication to always helping to keep Littleton going strong.

Born and raised in Berlin, New Hampshire, John's family moved to Littleton in the late 1950's where he then graduated from Littleton High School. He attended Hesser Business College in Manchester, then returned to Littleton to work in his family's retail business (Pilgrim Furniture, Inc.), taking it over with 2 of his brothers (Peter and Donald) when his parents retired. In 1965 he married Margaret Carbonneau and they had 4 children (Judith, Melissa, Michael, and Stephen). In the 1960's he was a member of the N.H. Army National Guard for 6 years, receiving an honorable discharge in 1969. He worked in the furniture retail business for over 40 years, selling it in 2001.

John Pilgrim's volunteer services began in the late 1960's and spanned throughout the 1970's when he first focused on the town's government needs. He served 2 terms as 1 of 3 Littleton Park Commissioners, assisting with the construction of the Littleton Town Swimming Pool (in 1969) and also volunteered to help keep the Mount Eustis Ski Tow open. He was a member and the Chairman of both the Littleton Conservation Commission and the Littleton Planning Commission, as well as a member of the Littleton Chamber of Commerce. He was the President of the Littleton Community Center. He served on the Littleton Water and Light Department Budget Committee and the Fire Station Building Committee, helping to create the current fire station building. He also served as a Bank Director for the former People's National Bank (which is now Mascoma Saving's Bank) helping area businesses.

During the 1970's, John also coached youth baseball programs, assisted with Lakeway Elementary School's Learn to Ski program at Cannon Mountain, and started teaching his favorite hobby of fly-tying to kids and teens through his membership in Trout Unlimited (and he still teaches it to this day). This all led to a desire to help Littleton's youth, so in the early 1980's he became the Scoutmaster for Littleton's Boy Scout Troop 209, earning the *National Honor Unit Recognition* by the Boy Scouts of America in 1980 and then the title of *Scout Master of the Year* for the N.H. Great Northern District in 1985. During this time the troop was sponsored by the Littleton Rotary Club (it is currently sponsored by the Littleton VFW, Post 816).

During the years John was Scoutmaster, he saw a need for the troop to have a safe shelter for overnights as well as a fun place to meet in an outdoor setting. So he then developed and oversaw the construction of the *Palmer Brook Scout Reservation*, which is a 24 by 40 foot lodge located on 40 acres of land on Broomstick Road. Many volunteers in town came together to help the scouts build this rustic lodge, including Assistant Scoutmasters Tony Ilacqua, Ken Craigie, and Bob Iles. And besides creating a great outdoor place for the troop to gather as first planned, Paul Dovholuk and Glen Haney also volunteered their time and equipment to help create a large pond that could be annually stocked with trout so the scouts could enjoy fishing on the property.

This beloved, well-used scout lodge is still being enjoyed by many area children and teens to this day.

After selling the family's retail business in 2001, John has been spending much of his retirement keeping busy by finding new organizations that can use his services and skills. Since 2007 he has been a member of the RSVP Chore Corps Program, a senior volunteer program sponsored by the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council that serves Northern Grafton County. The Chore Corps focuses on helping seniors and adults with disabilities, assisting them with things such as small home repairs so they can live safely and securely in their residences. Along with moving many seniors, John has also used his home maintenance expertise and carpenter skills to put in air conditioners, fix broken railings and front steps, install hand bars, and build handicap ramps on resident's properties.

John has also been a very active volunteer member of his church, St. Rose of Lima, for the past several years. Working with many other church parishioners, he has overseen the development and remodeling of many projects in both the church and rectory, including the entire downstairs church hall (which involved renovating the kitchen and bathrooms), as well as adding new handicap entrances to both buildings. This has enabled many parish members to now be able to get downstairs and enjoy events taking place in the new church hall.

Thank you, John Pilgrim, for helping to keep Littleton going over the past 4 decades (and still counting) with your continued service to the community through your involvement with all of these organizations over the years. You've truly helped to make Littleton a great place to live!