

BUSINESS REAL ESTATE

REAL ESTATE

Buying a house for your dog

BY PAIGE O. ROBERTS

I love reading about generational norms — not generational stereotypes, but behaviors and trends that have some data and science behind them. It's fascinating to read about the different relationships each generation forms with the world around them, and I get a sort of satisfaction out of recognizing these differing behaviors from the people in my life.

It was no surprise to me when I found an article about how more and more millennials aren't buying houses for marriage or children or other "typical" house-buying reasons. Instead, they're often opting to buy a house for one very cute four-legged reason, their dog. I know this trend packs some truth because, well ... I did that exact thing.

The road I took to home ownership was nontraditional because I rented my house for almost a decade before I bought it. But the main reason I chose to move there in the first place was that I could have a dog, and the place I had been renting at the time didn't allow animals. When the opportunity came for me to buy my house, I knew it was the right choice for a lot of reasons, but the main one again came back to my little furry roommates.

Many people are looking for homes suitable for their pets. People think of their pets as their kids, and a lot of their 'must-haves' when buying a new home or land can look very similar to what folks are looking for when house-shopping with kids in mind: a large, possibly fenced-in yard, tucked away from busy streets, perhaps a park nearby.

Although my landlord had always allowed me to have pets, after buying my house, I was relieved that I would never need to worry about finding a "pet-friendly" rental again.

"Some folks may not even have pets yet, but their desire to have one can be a driving force in deciding to switch from renting to owning," adds Badger Peabody & Smith Agent Jennifer Woodward.

As Gen Z enters the workforce and the house-buying pool, it will be interesting to see the trends they follow or create. They're a very creative bunch. I wouldn't be surprised if they somehow figured out a way to have their dogs buy houses for them, and if that's the case, I might give my Millennial card back, become a pseudo-Gen Z-er, and see if my pets can find us an upgrade.

Written by Paige O. Roberts for Badger Realty. Roberts has a degree in creative writing from Southern New Hampshire University. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in "The Heniker Review," "Sidereal Magazine," "Rejection Letters," and "Cypress." She has been nominated for a Best of the Net and Pushcart Prize. She lives in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.



The original Brown School, built in 1914, is seen in the background while the new addition, built in the 1950s, is in the foreground. After serving as a school for more than 100 years, the school closed in 2019, and is being rehabilitated as apartments. (LISA D CONNELL PHOTO)

For Brown School, a new purpose amid its past memories for many

BY LISA D. CONNELL
THE BERLIN SUN

BERLIN — Most of the mementos that distinguish Brown School in the city's academic history have been removed. The once lively sounds of children, teachers and staff filling the grade school's spaces have been silent since its June 2019 closure due to decreasing student enrollment.

The path to the school building's next life continues, however, with a workforce housing and affordable housing plan envisioned for its next chapter.

Through a public-private partnership, the

school building will be renovated to serve Berlin's new need for more housing. The completed renovation will also allow for taxes to be collected on the property, another city need.

The city currently maintains the property and its utilities.

It remains to be seen what the name of the apartment building will be, and whether it will be keeping the Brown School name as part of the building's rehabilitation and reuse.

see **BROWN SCHOOL** page 12

Kuster meets with Northern N.H. tourism officials offering help from Washington

BY PAULA TRACY
INDEPTHNH.ORG

LINCOLN — Northern New Hampshire tourism officials met at Loon last Friday with U.S. Rep. Annie Kuster (D-N.H.) to discuss ways that the federal government can help with climate change, utility costs and their relationship with White Mountain National Forest, among other issues.

Officials from White Mountain Attractions, Jackson Ski Touring Foundation, Great Glen Trails, Loon

and Ski New Hampshire heard about her hopes for the passage of the bipartisan SHRED Act, which would have many benefits to their business.

For the first time, it would allow their rental payments to the Forest Service to use federal land to go directly to the agency rather than the fund in Washington and help on the ground here to nourish the region's outdoor economy.

see **TOURISM** page 11



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Plans call for the Brown School building to be converted into 20 apartments, a percentage of which would be for low-income or workforce housing. (LISA D. CONNELL PHOTO)

BROWN SCHOOL from page 10

The 2023 fair market housing prices for Coos County mean a one-bedroom apartment in the building may rent for \$779 and a two-bedroom apartment for \$950.

Current plans call for the building to be made into 20 apartments.

All such units would help the city's housing crunch, especially for workforce housing. There is currently a 1 percent vacancy rate for housing in the city.

Grants are helping the project move forward. Through Gov. Chris Sununu's Invest NH housing fund, under the umbrella of the federal American Rescue Plan Act, money is available by application.

Brown School project planners Tim Coulombe and Kevin Lacasse, the CEO of New England Family Housing, have ties to Berlin. The state's Community Development Finance Authority directly awards money in the form of Community Development Block Grants, including to this project, which received \$405,000.

It is expected that about \$2 million will be needed to complete the project. Private equity is one source of funds. The Bank of New Hampshire has expressed an interest in the project, said Lacasse.

Coulombe and Lacasse are also putting some of their own money into the project. This is important for other investors to note, Lacasse said, to show that he and Coulombe "have skin in the game."

Work has been done to remember the school's past role in the life of the city. In November 2022, the state added the Brown School to its register of historic places. The school, located at 190 Norway St., was dedicated on Nov. 24, 1914.

And while the physical objects

inside the Brown School may no longer be present, yet what endures are the memories made in the school.

Corinne Cascadden, an experienced classroom educator, former superintendent of the Berlin Public Schools and now a state representative, spoke earlier of her memories of Brown School.

A Berlin native, Cascadden recalled her father, Henry Cote, and his brothers, growing up on Norway Street. One of their "tasks" at Brown School was "to feed the coal burning boiler on weekends and school vacations."

With Berlin's population greater in earlier decades, the activities Cascadden remembers reflect that: "Growing up in the neighborhood, near the St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Brown School was a site for summer parks programs with a culminating activity of a large children's parade downtown where all parks programs participated with a theme."

In 1980, Cascadden transferred to Brown School from Burgess School to teach in the district's fourth grade English-French bilingual program.

Her classroom teaching career continued. She remembers watching the Challenger space shuttle mission on television with the last class of fourth graders she taught. The mission — which was to have featured lessons from the first teacher in space — ended in a tragic, explosion that killed its seven astronauts, including Concord teacher Christa McAuliffe, shortly after lift-off on Jan. 29, 1986.

In July 1986, Cascadden became principal of Brown School, which served grades K-4. Her leadership role would later increase to include serving the Bartlett and Marston schools as principal. In 1994, the Marston School closed.

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BROWN SCHOOL from page 12

Grade 4 students in the city's three elementary schools moved to a new Hillside School, formerly the junior high building. At that new location, students in grades 4-6 were educated. Cascadden became principal of Brown and Bartlett elementary schools, serving kindergartners to third graders.



Corinne Cascadden

In 2000, the school district reopened the Marston School to serve and teach three kindergarten classes. At that point, Cascadden was principal of three elementary schools in Berlin, responsible for 460 students.

From 2009-2019, more changes took place for Cascadden and the city. She became the district's schools' superintendent. Bartlett and Marston schools were closed. Brown School served kindergartners through Grade 2. Grade 3 students enrolled at Hillside School and the Marston School became the district's special education offices and its Title 1 office. Title 1 is a federal aid program for public schools in the U.S.

Cascadden remembers the Brown School's Leather's Lane Playground, with over 100 community volunteers and organizations bringing to completion

this 1990 project.

"The community was very generous with providing materials, food, equipment and time," she said.

The PTO also sponsored dinners, events book fairs and student activities. The Brown School was awarded Blue Ribbon and Gold Circle Awards for many years by N.H. Partners in Education, Cascadden noted.

On the sports front, Brown School had "2 basketball teams, one was the Brown School Bulls coached by Gene Griffin."

Brown School, in a project with the U.S Postal Service, had its own postal mailing and delivery service in the school building.

Sharing memories with Cascadden on Brown School, per the list, were Ann Nolin and Sue Griffin.

Nolin spent 35 years at the Brown School, from 1974-2009, and is now the chairwoman of the Berlin School Committee. She recalled: "The excitement and feeling of the first day of school when all teachers were out to meet and greet the students. Sharing great books with students."

Sue Griffin, of her 41 years at Brown School, noted the importance of its "small community feeling with students and staff, like a family. Everyone supported each other. Halloween parades sharing Fairy Tale units as a whole school. Very active and engaged PTO and volunteers."

In Berlin today, the public schools are Berlin Elementary School and the Berlin Middle Senior High School. The district's total student enrollment, as shown on the state's Department of Education website is 1,051.

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among the most challenging winters of the past decade.

The good news is that just about all ski areas in the state have more than 50 percent and as much as 100 percent of their terrain open with spring to man-made conditions, thanks in large parts to man-made snow which uses expensive electricity to be

made.

Even Nordic terrain is enjoying a pretty good season, said Ellen Chandler, executive director of Jackson Ski Touring Foundation, which just added snowmaking to its terrain.

She said the winter has been solid with new and returning groups enjoying lots of open terrain and good conditions and she expects a busy week with the weather looking fairly seasonable.



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