

Pentangle Says Goodbye to the Woodstock Pharmacy

The leaves are doing their dance, the brilliant russets swirling with the gold and saffron in the fall breeze.

As we welcome October and let September go, we conclude our September movie series. We were so gratified by the turnout for the five screenings and the partnership with the North Chapel. Rev. Dr Leon Dunkley introduced both documentaries *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, and *I am Not Your Negro*, both sharp reminders of our complex and ugly past and its implications for our future.

This is the time of year when I usually check in with school faculty and administrators to confirm dates for live shows, in-school residencies, and workshops. With campus closed to the public those programs are not in the cue for the near future. We are, however, putting our collective heads together with our peer organizations to develop programming for area youth that is safe, engaging and thought provoking, combining outdoor and in person and virtual components. Watch this space for updates!!

While October brings ridge line views, and canopies of color along roadsides for which there are not enough adjectives to describe, it brings the sad closing of the Woodstock Pharmacy.

I dedicate this column to Gary Smith and his amazing staff for their many years of service to the community.

Though I do fondly remember the soda foundation of yore, and Helen and Joe Nalibow, the Pharmacy's previous owners, I will treasure the years of personal interactions with Gary, Wendy, Betty, Jim, Colleen and Gail, through good times and bad.

Wendy always welcomed our ill-behaved puppy, sternly asking her to "sit" before she handed out a biscuit or two, while I endeavored to stop her from toppling the cough drops off the shelf. I will miss Jim's ties and his movie recommendations. I will also miss consoling voices during hard times like when my mother and her partner died within months of each other.

On the lighter side there was always entertaining exchanges of town gossip – star sightings in town, the fate of the flowerpots, and of course the bets on when Bentley's would reopen.

I will also miss having a place to pop in for a birthday present, wrapping paper, Valentine supplies, and cards. I remember Betty's patience behind the one-way mirror in the office when our boys were little and sat on the floor, looked at books and touched every box of Playmobiles. Colleen never judged (overtly) my ridiculously large order of colorful birthday balloons that upon leaving her hands would become so tangled I would have to snip the colorful ribbons she attached to each one.

I also wish to thank Gary for his years of support for Pentangle Arts through sponsorships and ads in our season Playbills. I will miss our chats while he leaned on his broom in front of the store. And when I would ask him a question about some town happening, and he would shake his head and say, "don't get me started!" Body language alone told me to leave it alone! Don't even get me started on his love for the sidewalk sale!!

When we lose a village institution like the Woodstock Pharmacy, we lose a sense of connectedness and shared history. A constant flux in store fronts chips away at the sense of community most of us find so appealing about living in a small town. I hope going forward we do not forget the Woodstock Pharmacy and all erstwhile shops that met the needs of the local folks in addition to pleasing our throngs of visitors.

Farewell Gary and crew. Thank you for everything, and most recently your impeccable service during the pandemic.

I look forward to seeing you around town!