

---- January-2025---Volume 4, Issue 1

# 16th Annual Golf Tournament

Saturday October 12, 2024 saw intrepid golfers participate in the Pine Grove Programs 16th Annual Golf Tournament at the J.W. Parks Golf Course in Pittsfield, Maine. The tournament format was a scramble where each member of a foursome each make a shot and the next shot is taken from the best shot and so on until the ball is holed. The annual golf tournament is one of PGP's major fundraisers and as such it was again a great success this year. While the temperatures were mild for October, the winds were gusting up to 35 MPH which made the golf very challenging.



Our Thanks To Our Hole Sponsors A foursome that included four Veterans, Dee Richardson (Air Force), Greg Jordan (Air Force), Ray Mountain (Army) and Paul Violette (Army) won the tournament having birdied a designated tie breaker hole. They each were awarded a heavy duty Pine Grove Programs Hoodie.

There were numerous raffles

and drawings for prizes. The big drawing for the day was for a custom firepit that was won by David Aumick from PA. As the golfers made the turn, they had a choice of either chili or venison stew. At the end of the tourney, they were provided with a sit down meal.

Our thanks to the Staff of the J.W. Parks Golf Course, to our hole sponsors and to all the vendors and friends of the program that donated prizes; all of whom contributed to make this event a resounding success. A big thanks to Modern Woodman Fraternal Financial for their matching funds grant. A special thanks to each and every player who participated in such challenging wind conditions.



Check Out Our Monthly Podcast On YouTube

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# Upland Game Bird Hunt

The first hunting event of the fourth quarter was David Giampetruzzi's Tribute to Service Upland Game Bird Hunt over dogs held on October 22, 2024. If you have never had the opportunity to hunt Grouse and Woodcock over dogs, it is an amazing experience. Hunting dogs are trained either to be a pointer or a flusher. A pointer will locate its quarry and go on point looking at where the bird is on the ground. It will hold point so that the handler and hunter can approach the bird and flush it so that a shot can be taken. The flusher, on the other hand will flush



the bird on discovery which may leave the hunter and handler with little time to make a shot. In either case, watching a handler and their dog work is an incredible experience.

This year's hunters started with a hearty breakfast and shared comradery.



The six hunters included Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Veterans. As to the day's hunting, Bob Howe summed it up succinctly stating, "Scared quite a few birds, but only took home a couple. "



Shooting Grouse or Woodcock on the wing is not easy. A Grouse can get up to 35 MPH in seconds and Woodcock often do not flush until you almost step on then and then pop up right in front of you veering off in all different and unexpected directions. Hunters miss more often than not.

Our thanks to the volunteer dog handlers who volunteered their time and especially to their dogs that were the stars of the hunt.

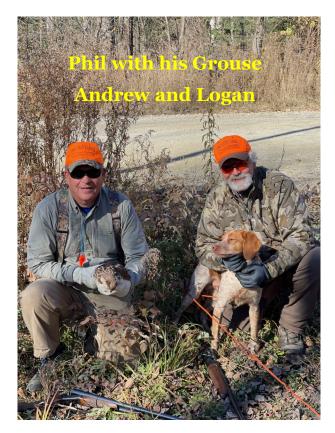


Our thanks to Andrea and Edna for preparing a great breakfast and lunch. A shout out to David Giampetruzzi for his continued support to the program.

# Upland Game Bird Hunt (Continued)

Some of the Veterans who participated in the Upland Game Bird Hunt on Tuesday decided to give it a go again on Friday October 25, 2024. Andrew Koukoulas volunteered as dog handler with his dog Logan. Paul Violette the program Outreach Coordinator acted as a volunteer guide. David Giampetruzzi and Phil McGraph completed the hunting group.

The weather was great, sunny, with a cool breeze. Logan, a young dog in training, performed excellently locating six birds. It was Phil's day as he scored two Woodcock and a nice Grouse. David opined that there is a difference between a Partridge and a Grouse. If the hunter shoots the bird on the ground he states, "It's a Partridge." If the bird is shot on the wing, he states, "It's a Grouse." So Phil, congratulations to you for harvesting a Grouse.



Andrew was ecstatic, and proud of how well Logan performed, especially for his two firm points that resulted in the Woodcock kills. The highlight of Logan's performance occurred during the hunt of the last cover for the day. Phil had taken a shot at a Grouse that he flushed away from the dog and that he did not find or retrieve. On the return sweep running



## Logan Sniffs a Woodcock

parallel to our original sweep in the opposite direction, Logan zoned in on a deadfall and retrieved the Grouse that Phil had shot earlier.

David, Phil and Paul are all Army Veterans and were thankful for Andrew volunteering his dog and services as dog handler.

## 2024 - 2025 Coyote Night Hunt

The State of Maine allows the daytime hunting of Coyotes year round except for Sundays. Daylight hunting times are from 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset. Coyote night hunting is allowed this season only from December 16, 2024 to August 30, 2025, again except on Sundays. Night hunting hours are from 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise. In addition to a Maine Firearms hunting license you must also purchase a Coyote night hunting permit. Maine also



requires the hunter to have either an electronic or mouth predator call.

Pine Grove Programs (PGP) maintains several shooting shacks over baits for Coyote night

A Single Shooter Shack

hunting. Some of the shooting shacks can accommodate two hunters and others on-



A Coyote Approaches a Bait Before Dark

ly one. The bait sites are maintained from the start of the Coyote night hunt through the end of March.



A Coyote Viewed Through an IR Illuminated Day/Night Scope

If you are a novice Hunter and would like to try Coyote night hunting, contact us by e-mail at: <u>info@pinegroveprograms.org</u>.

Check out our Coyote Hunting Primer video on the PGP website under the ME-DIA Tab at <u>www.pinegroveprograms.org</u>.

Also check out our Maine Knows Howe podcasts for March and October on <u>YouTube</u>.The guest speakers address Coyote hunting in those episodes.

Additionally, you might want to check out the *Coyote Hunting and Trapping Primer* available from the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine (SAM) website for a nominal fee of \$12.00.

The bait sites vary with some baits lighted by solar powered LED lights that allow one to hunt with optical scopes and others that are unlighted which require the use of red or green spotlights with optical scopes, or Infra Red Illuminated or Thermal scopes. As a novice, you can start with an optical scope mounted on your favorite deer rifle. If you find the

## 2024 - 2025 Coyote Night Hunt (Continued)

hunting of Coyotes at night to be a continuing challenge in your hunting repertoire, you may decide to upgrade to either an IR Illuminated or Thermal night vision scope. Likewise, you may want to acquire a rifle chambered in a cartridge more suitable to varmint hunting than your standard deer hunting calibers. While there are a number of calibers suitable for Covotes to include .17 Hornet, .22-250, 22 Nosler, 220 swift, .223 Remington/5.56 NATO, .204 Ruger, and cross-over cartridges that can take Coyotes and deer such as the .243 Winchester, 6mm ARC and 6mm Creedmoor. My personal favorite is .243 Winchester, Hornady Superformance Varmint 75 grain V-Max.

Eastern Coyotes are larger than their western cousins as they are part wolf, have keen eyesight, sense of smell and hearing. They are smart and extremely wary. They provide the hunter with a challenging hunt.

# A Hunt Story

Bob Howe called me on Friday morning December 20, 2024 and told me that there was Coyote activity around the bait they had set out in front of the "Missing Shack" and asked if I wanted to hunt that evening? I agreed and spent the day getting my gear ready which included charging the battery in the day/night scope and making sure I had fully charged batteries for the IR Illuminator. I packed up my sled, tripod, two rifles and backpack with ammunition, headlamp, coyote call, bioculars, thermal monoscope, etc.

By 2:45 PM I had all my gear loaded and

dressed in layers as the temperature was 19 °F and I anticipated a colder night.

I stopped by the Lodge to let Bob know that I was on my way into the shooting shack and told him that I would notify him when I came out. When I got to the shooting shack, it took me awhile to get my tripod and rifle set up so that I could scan the area around the bait. This took

some time as the shooting hole is only about 8 inches by 8 inches and the rifle, day/night scope and IR illuminator fill the hole with very little room to spare.



About 5:00 PM I saw a Snowshoe Hare traverse my scope's field of view. At about 5:30PM, the IR Illuminator was starting



to draw down its battery and I opted to change it out. When finished, I turned the IR Illuminator on and lo and behold, there were eyes in the brush to the right of the bait. There were two sets, and they were checking out the shooting shack and the bait. Eventually, one Coyote came into view and turned back in-

to the brush. I now was able to confirm that the eyes were those of Coyotes. Then two Coyotes emerged and I settled the crosshairs behind the shoulder of one and squeezed the trigger. After the muzzle flash cleared, I could see an unmoving eye of the one I shot. I retrieved a nice 35 pound female. It was a good start for the new Coyote Night Hunting Season.

# 2024 - 2025 Coyote Night Hunt (Continued)

One of the questions that I get a lot is "What do you do with the Coyote after you shoot it?"

There are a number of options available. Let us say that you harvest your first Coyote and want to have a trophy done. You can elect to have a full mount done as I did for my son's first Coyote. As I told him, some firsts are special.



## A Full Mount

Or you can elect to have just a head and shoulder mount. Other options include having the pelt tanned. Some people like the pelt to be made into a rug/wall hanging while others elect for a Trapper pelt. The rug means that the Coyote is skinned so that it can be spread out with the hide cut through the underside. The trapper version is skinned into a tube with no



break in the pelt. Some elect only for a skull to be kept as a trophy.

You can also gift your Coyote to someone if they have an interest to tan the pelt if you do not (see DIFW Hunting regs.).

Some people elect to have their pelt made into articles of clothing such as fur hats.

If you are going to have your Coyote tanned or mounted, you must get the coyote tagged by a Warden with a Fur Bearer Tag.

A Trapper Pelt have come and tag your Coyote.

There is no cost to have a Warden vote.



## Build Your Own

For hunting Coyotes, I like to use rifles chambered for .243 Winchester ammunition. I have had great success with Hornady Superformance Varmint 75 grain V-max bullets on Eastern Coyotes. My Henry Long Ranger, magazine fed lever action rifle in .243 Winchester caliber plants Coyotes on the spot. The Henry has a twist rate of 1:10. The cartridge has 3580 FPS at the muzzle.



#### Henry Long Ranger .243 Win with an ATN X-Sight 4K Pro Day/Night (3-14X) Riflescope with an ATN IR 850 Supernova IR Illuminator

For my daughter, I configured my Wyndham Weaponry SRC .223/5.56 AR 15 as a Coyote shooter. I chose Hornady Superformance Match 5.56 NATO 75 Grain BTHP ammunition for that configuration. It has a 1:9 twist rate. The cartridge has 2910 fps at the muzzle.



Wyndham Weaponry SRC .223/5.56 NATO with an ATN X-Sight 5 (3-15X) Ultra HD 4K+ Smart Day/Night Scope with an ATN IR850 IR Illuminator and a Brigade Tactical Infantry Model Suppressor

Whereas the .243 Winchester round

delivered excellent results and the 5.56 NATO round was untested on Coyotes as of this writing, I got the itch to explore a .243 Winchester chambering in an AR type platform.

My research revealed that I needed to go to an AR 10 platform and in general those available in .243 Winchester were few and pricey to say the least. So I decided to build my own, shopping for lower priced components across various vendors.

You might be amazed how the same brand component is priced differently. One item that was a challenge to find was a 5 Round .243 Winchester Magazine as Maine requires a 5 round magazine for hunting. There were plenty of 10 and 20 round magazines available, but not 5 round magazines. Incidentally, the magazine is actually a .308 magazine.

I elected to buy both the upper and lower assemblies from the same vendor as not all AR 10's uppers and lowers are compatible. The upper sported a 20 inch barrel in 1:8 twist which is ideal for 60 to 80 grain projectiles and which fits my favored cartridge choice.

A plus is that I can interchange other



The Finished Rifle that I Built

upper AR 10 assemblies so I can shoot .308, 6.5 Creedmoor, 22-250 as well on the same AR 10 Lower. I added a Nikon Pro Staff Scope I had on hand.

One of the great things about the AR 10 platforms is the flexibility they provide as seen by the ease of changing calibers just by changing the upper assemblies. The bolt carrier group remains the same for .308, 6.5 Creedmoor, 22-250 and .243 Winchester. With the Picatinny Rails there is an advantage of using the ATN scopes. They have a feature where you can establish and save profiles for different calibers and or rifles you shoot. The scope can be moved between the upper assemblies or rifles and you can select the saved profile for the cartridges you are shooting. Once zeroed for a given cartridge and saved, you can switch between profiles for the upper/rifle being used. You simply move the scope and select the profile for that assembly/rifle and you are then zeroed for that weapon. The AR 10 platform enables you to buy several uppers for the price you might pay for a single rifle. If you like shooting AR style rifles, you might want to build one on your own. You can do it as detailed as buying all the various parts and doing a true custom build or take the easier way out and buy the uppers and lowers of your own choosing as I did. In closing, when asked how many rifles one needs, you can always answer, "One more!"

#### Not Registered?

If you are not registered with the program, you can go online to our website and register at:

#### www.pinegroveprogr ams.org/become-amember/

Once registered, you will receive all notifications. You must have a valid E-mail.

## **Raffle Winners**

Custom Fire Pit—David Aumick Berry Patch Quilt—Charles Gedn Custom PGP Logo Rifle—Thomas Renzuella



### MAINE KNOWS HOWE



If you have not viewed our Maine Knows Howe podcasts, you can view them on YouTube , just search for Maine Knows Howe in your browser. 2024 Podcasts to date to include guest speaker:

January – John Olivera, Navy Veteran

February - Paul Violette, Outreach Coordinator

March-Gerry Lavigne, Wildlife Biologist

April-David Trahan, Executive Director SAM

May—Joe " Salty" Saltalamachia, Turkey Hunter

June–No Podcast

July- Mike Dugas, First Sportsman's Challenge

August-Lanny Benoit, Master Deer Tracker

September— V. Paul Reynolds, Editor *Northwoods Sorting Journal* 

October-Seth Edwards, Coyote Hunter

November-Dennis Bolduc, Serious Angler

November Short-Tim Bolduc, Muzzleloaders

December-Tenely Scholfield, Master Maine Guide

December Short-Ed Musserol, Fly Tying Expert

January 2025—Al Swett, Maine Snowmobile Association

January 2025 (Short)— Lanny Benoit, Master Deer Tracker

February 2025—Randy Flannery, Wilderness Escape Outfitters

## SPONSORS NEEDED

If you enjoy our Maine Knows Howe podcasts and want to see them continue, we need sponsors to help defray the production costs.

If you are a business owner, consider using the podcast for advertisement as we reach thousands of viewers, many whom are local.

Contact Andy Collar at:

#### Digital Spirit Media

to get sponsorship and or advertising rates.

## 207-557-9022

https:// www.digitalspiritmedi a.com/contact-us/



## Veteran Deer Hunt

Whether we like it or not, weather is a fact of its own over which we have no control. The first week of the November firearms season for deer was for the most part unseasonably warm. The next two weeks saw more seasonable weather temperatures and without snow and or rain. During one week, gusty wind prevailed for the entire week. The last week saw tracking snow and colder temperatures. December heralded muzzleloader season with both snow and cold.

The program hosted nine Veterans for the November Maine Firearms Hunting Season. There were additional Veterans whom were paying Pine Grove Lodge hunting customers as well as other sportsmen.

There were some Deer harvested, others missed and some that were judiciously let go by the hunters observing



them as they looked for that gigantic trophy buck.

The days started at "O-dark-thirty " with a robust breakfast. The hunters then proceeded out to their respective stands, blinds and or hunting areas. Lunch varied from a group get together in the outdoors, sandwiches packed for the day or a lunch grabbed back at the lodge.

At the end of the day's hunt, each hunter returned for supper and the telling of tales about the days hunt. These tales varied from successful shots, missed shots, recalcitrant deer, other wildlife encounters and the "murphy is out there" events that occurred.



It is amazing how an observed deer that was let go or missed grows in size as the week progresses. It has often been said that you always remember the ones you missed.

One thing that is evident to the casual observer watching those tale telling sessions is the shared comradery so special between Veterans. No matter the service, their duty stations, or time in service, they quickly establish a commonality.

One hunt required Wyatt to bring a buck back by canoe across a white-

# Veteran Deer Hunt (Continued)

capped and breezy lake to save miles of dragging.



# The Infamous Canoe Caper

We would be remiss if we did not take time to recognize all the preparatory work done before, during and after the hunt by Bob Howe, Wyatt Howe and Jeff Liskowacki to scout locations, to place the stands/blinds /shooting shacks , to guide the hunters, to retrieve game and to bring all that gear back in when hunting is done.



## **One Person Shooting Shack**

They take the time to mark the trail into the hunting location so a hunter need only to follow the tapes to get on site once dropped off.



## Another Shooting Shack

Then there are the repairs to be made as winter is unforgiving on the more permanent shooting shacks used for Deer and Coyote hunting.



Wyatt Carries in A Stand

# Dawn An Inspiration

On November 13, 2024, I had the opportunity to interview one of the Veteran deer hunters at the lodge. Dawn, a disabled Army Veteran, talked about the days' hunt and what the opportunity to hunt in the Maine woods meant to her. She related how she had seen a bird that she could not identify, but which she had photographed. The bird turned out



## Spruce Grouse

to be a Spruce Grouse, a protected species in Maine. While Dawn is mobility impaired, her spirit has no bounds, and she was truly an inspiration to me as she related her story, the challenges she faced, and what she had accomplished despite the odds all being against her. She stated, *"I would like to see more adaptive hunting and fishing opportunities for those mobility impaired."* She appreciated the opportunity that Pine Grove Programs provided. She epitomizes the realization of the therapeutic nature and healing that outdoor adventures can provide.

Dawn entered the Army at age twenty, but suffered herniated discs in her lower back which ended her Army career. She lived with excruciating pain for twenty years and in May 2009, she underwent spinal cord surgery. In July 2010, she collapsed in her home and was diagnosed with incomplete paraplegia caused by two herniated discs that imploded on her spinal cord.

Dawn, describes herself as a stubborn athlete and though her body was breaking down, she did not give up, and was grateful to her husband whom supported her throughout her arduous journey.

After the collapse, Dawn could feel her legs, but could not move her ankles or buttocks on command. She would not accept the diagnosis that she was paralyzed and decided to concentrate on training her body to move in those areas. Gradually, she progressed so that she was able to depend more on her legs and less on her wheelchair.

She worked on strength building at a Wounded Warrior clinic. She subsequently was introduced to para bobsledding through an Adaptive Sports Foundation clinic in Lake Placid, NY. She avidly pursued her para bobsledding dream and at the age of 45 successfully completed at the Para Bobsled World Cup Race in Park City, Utah finishing with the fourth fastest time of 50.96 which tied her for 11th place.

In her own words, "I'd hear things like how scary and dangerous it would be for me to bobsled, that I'd be putting my life at risk. To that I say after all I've been through in my life, all the pain and suffering I went through, the thought of being scared is now the furthest thing from my mind. I'm

# Dawn An Inspiration (Continued)

reborn again. I'm actually able to use my body again, use it to the best of my potential. It's a gift that allowed me to pursue my dream and I'm hoping people with disabilities will see my story and realize they can achieve their dreams too."

During my interview with Dawn, I was singularly impressed by her vibrancy and spirit. As she talked about her time with Pine Grove Programs she effused a deep seated appreciation for being able to go out into the Maine woods. She gave me the sense that just being out there with the sights, sounds, and smells coupled with the chance to observe native wildlife, was sufficient to the day. While the Maine elusive Whitetail Deer did not afford her the opportunity of a shot, her hunt was a complete success. She gets it!

Bob Howe, as a guide, views success as affording the hunter the opportunity to have an experience in the great outdoors and coming out safe at the end of a hunt. Harvesting a Deer is only a bonus. The experience of the outdoors is what it is all about.

Our focus of Pine Grove Programs is to pay tribute to our Active Duty Military, Veterans, Gold Star Family Members and First Responders by offering an experience in our great Maine outdoors. Our goal is that the experience will have the same therapeutic effect for them as this hunt had for Dawn.

If you have a disability and you have let it preclude you from participating in a Pine Grove Programs event, we suggest that you reconsider, don't give up, in-



# Dawn With A Nice 8 Point Buck From Another Hunt

stead give us a try. We can work with you to make it happen. It does not have to be a hunt, it can be any number of outdoor experiences depending on your needs.

When Dawn was told that she would always be paralyzed, she did not give in. Instead, she fought and worked to gain mobility. While still living with some disability, her spirit is indomitable, and she sets an example for what the human spirit can achieve.

Do not let your disability, whatever it may be, stop you from having your own outdoor experience with us.

### TO HUNT MUZZLE LOADER OR NOT

Maine offers up to two Muzzle loader hunting weeks after the end of regular firearms hunting season. For 2024, December 2-7 allowed hunting statewide and WMD's 12, 13, 15-18, 20-26, 29 allowed an additional week December 9-14, 202. This provided a hunter who did not get a deer during the firearms season to have another chance to harvest one.

As a novice to muzzle loading, I did a lot of research on the pros and cons of various muzzleloaders. You can get them in a variety that runs from actual flintlock, percussion cap, and the newest NITROFIRE. With the exception of the NITROFIRE, all the rest require you to load powder and projectile through the muzzle. This requires you to measure out the powder load, and is susceptible to dampness causing misfires. It also requires you to discharge the firearm before putting it back in you vehicle after a day's hunt.

I opted for a Traditions NITROFIRE muzzle loader which still requires the projectile to be loaded down the muzzle. The difference is you load the powder charge in a weatherproof Fire Stick cartridge into which you insert a shotshell primer. At the end of the day, you can remove the Fire Stick cartridge and your firearm is legal for transport. The Traditions NITROFIRE eliminates much of the hassle of traditional muzzle loaders and is a boon to hunters who want to hunt muzzle loaders without all the fuss. You still only have a single shot, but I believe the NITROFIRE is safer, easier to use, and quicker to reload. I use a Smackdown XR 250 grain sabot round. It is accurate and sighted in at 100 yards, drops 3 inches at 150 yards, and drops 9 inches at 200 yards. The Hodgdon<sup>™</sup> Triple 8 powder burns cleaner which allows you more shots between cleaning than traditional muzzle loaders. When you load the projectile, you push it down the barrel until it stops as the barrel has a ledge to seat the round.



Federal<sup>™</sup> Premium FireStick is a part of a whole new muzzleloader system that uses a primer inserted into an encapsulated powder charge. The FireStick is a premeasured selfcontained powder charge filled with an exact charge of either 100 or 120 grains of all-new, ultra-clean black powder substitute Hodgdon<sup>™</sup> Triple 8 granular powder.

Disclaimer: Pine Grove Programs does not endorse any products. Author opinions are their own.



## ICE FISHING

An Army Veteran proudly displays his first Landlocked Salmon



## Two Nice Landlocked Salmon

The Winter cold brings ice fishing to Maine and Pine Grove Programs has several volunteers who are willing to take participants out ice fishing. If interested, you will only need a Maine



Fishing License, as our volunteers will provide the necessary equipment. If you have never ice fished before, your volunteers will teach you how to set up the tip-ups to target different fish to include Brook Trout, Brown Trout, Landlocked Salmon, and or Northern Pike. Chasing flags is a hoot, and who knows what fish you may catch.

## Upcoming 2025 Schedule of Events

Coyote Night Hunt-January-March 2025

Ice Fishing Derby—February 15. 2025\*\*

Veteran Hare Hunt-March 2025\*

Allagash Wilderness Canoe Trip—June 2025\*

Annual Tribute To Service Fishing Derby— June 2025\*

2nd Annual Sportsman's Challenge June 28, 2025

Lobster Bake on the Lake–July 12, 2025

Annual Golf Tornament\*\*—August 23, 2025

\* Dates To Be Determined (TBD)

\*\* Fund Raising Event

Note: This list is not all inclusive as events may be deleted or added and tailored to specific individual or group needs that develop during the year.



Watch Out For The Upcoming Veteran Hare Hunt Announcement

#### Veteran of the Year Nominations

Each year Pine Grove Programs gives an award for Veteran of the Year. If you have a Veteran you want to nominate, please contact Andrea Howe.

andrea@pinegroveprograms.org

#### NOTES FROM THE OUTREACH COORDINATOR

The first quarter of 2025 promises to be a great time with our annual ice fishing derby on Wyman Lake, Coyote Night Hunting, Veteran Ice Fishing Trips, and our Veteran Hare Hunt. My job as Outreach Coordinator is to reach out to as many Veterans and First Responders as possible to provide them information about Pine Grove Programs with the hope that they will participate in the program events. If you are registered with the program, you receive notifications by e-mail of these newsletters, podcasts and event notices. You can help me out by telling your Veteran and First Responder friends about the program. Let them know that they can register online on our website at

www.pinegroveprograms.org/become-a-member/

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