

TRENDY TIMES

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DECEMBER 22, 2009 VOLUME 1 NUMBER 12

A Community of Christians



A community can be described in a vast number of ways. A community can be determined by the houses, the businesses and the open land that exist in a given area. Community can also be defined by the people who live in those homes, own the businesses and take care of the land. A third was to define community can be by the people who join together to take on a task or to put their faith together to overcome daily troubles or life long issues.

One such community is the people of the Woodsville United Methodist Church. The second oldest church in Woodsville it is much more

than just the building. They have been yoked (sharing a minister) with the North Haverhill Methodist Church for about forty years. But that does not define this church by any means.

The current Pastor, Sue Ellery, has been leading the congregation for the past eighteen months after being asked and quickly accepting the position from the Arch Bishop. Pastor Sue and her husband live in the parsonage next to the Woodsville church and feel very much at home in northern New Hampshire.

When asked what makes this church so different, it didn't take her long to say "the people in it". She added that they are a "loving, caring, spirit filled" congregation with a very strong sense of mission both locally and in a greater sense as well.

Pastor Sue pointed out that a majority of her congregation in Woodsville is made up of older citizens. One such member is Barbara Robinson, who proudly says that she has been a member of the church since 1941. Though her mobility is not what it used to be, her spirit has not diminished. She was eager to sit and talk about her church and its history. But she was also ready for the conversation to be over so that she could go and pitch in with the current mission at

hand in the adjoining room.

Shirley Cobb, another long time member was also ready to pass along history of her church including some of the story of one of the prized possessions - the organ. A grand looking piece that sounds just as grand, the organ was a donation, dating back to the late 1800's, from the Whitcher family.

Both of these long time members of Woodsville United Methodist Church went to Sunday School in this building and have fond memories of those years. They also both agree that they would love to see more children in today's Sunday School classes. And as that increase happens, those children will be in good hands. The most recent Pastor of the church retired, and now is the Superintendent of the Sunday School. An arrangement that works very well on so many levels.

With a current membership of over 100, a membership that has stayed relatively even over the past decade, the weekly attendance has increased over the past couple of years. The missions of the church have also increased. The church is proud to offer their building for meetings to various groups including an AA meeting as well as a spot for WIC distribution and a home for the recently revitalized Boy Scout Troop.

The church building itself has gone through changes as well. From 1885 until 1891 the building was at 109 Central Street. There are conflicting stories about exactly why it was moved, but it was indeed moved to its present location. The building saw a major addition in the mid 1960's. The congregation had grown so much, including the Sunday School classes that more room was needed. Though some said it could not be done without a huge amount of cash, the members of the church pitched in and completed the addition, mostly with volunteer labor, for a fraction of the cost. The addition includes a meeting room

and kitchen on the ground floor, plus a second level that includes Sunday School classrooms, a library, a conference room and an office space for the Pastor.

The Woodsville United Methodist Church may not be the biggest congregation in the area, they may not have the oldest building

either, but the congregation has a spirit that they are all proud of. And they are more than willing to share that spirit with any who would like to join them. That includes the Christmas Eve service to be held at 7 PM on Thursday, December 24. A service of candlelight & carols, a service of spirit and hope.



More than one organization in the local area is taking heed of the need faced by families in this area. Like other groups the Woodsville United Methodist Church is putting together packages for those in need during the Christmas season. In fact a room full of people were sorting, distributing and wrapping gifts that had been donated by parishioners as well as members of the general public.

Coordinator Deb Upton pointed out that the local branch of the Laconia Savings Bank had taken about 40 tags off the giving tree and some of their customers helped fill the requested needs. Deb also pointed out a very interesting fact about the list of requests from those in need. There were a total of 54 children in 16 families that the gifts were going to. Yet when the wish list came in there was not a single toy on the list. It shows, according to Deb, that the need is even greater this year for the necessities of life.

This is not to say that those children will not get any toys. At least one contributor who knew what was on the wish list brought in a big pile of toys so that every child could get something to play with.

Along with the toys going to each family, the gift packages included warm clothes, mittens, hats and a food card thanks to the money donated for that purpose.



The Woodsville United Methodist Church has a special area of the sanctuary for a special ark of that some call "stuffedies". These stuffed animals are collected, blessed by the congregation, and given to those in need. That could mean a child or an adult who is ill. It could be for someone who has recently lost a loved one. Or it could be for someone who just needs a hug. This mission has gone well and the current supply is low. But more stuffedies will soon join the ark and be ready to go out and do their job and that of the church.

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Offer Good Through December 2009

350.org Candlelight Vigil In Bradford

By Andy Clark

December 15, 2009: Last weekend, from the 11th to the 13th of December, millions of people held rallies and candlelight vigils in over 130 countries to call for progress in the Copenhagen climate talks. The events, coordinated by hundreds of civil society groups under the banner of the TckTckTck campaign, were held from Kinshasa to Kathmandu and in Copenhagen, Denmark, site of the UN Conference on Climate Change, Dec. 07-18, 2009.

Concerned Bradford, VT area residents met at the United Methodist Church; started with a sidewalk candle light protest, and ended with a prayer vigil and statement of purpose. Handouts encouraged people to form carbon reduction accountability groups (through Vermont

Interfaith Power and Light), and sign the 350.org Survival Pact; which allies signatories with those whose lives are at risk now due to climate changes around the world. The message continues in the life of the church in the weeks to come. Hundreds of similar events were planned across the United States to push President Obama and Congress to adopt strong cuts in carbon emissions, at least 40% by 2020, and make a serious investment in helping developing countries develop on a low-carbon pathway.

Supporters were asking for all countries to urgently sign a climate agreement that is:

- a) Fair – by securing \$200 billion in climate financing for poorer countries
- b) Ambitious – by peaking global carbon emissions by

2015, and returning atmospheric carbon dioxide levels below 350 parts per million

c) Binding - legally enforceable
“We’re joining with people around the world to remind politicians that for many, ending the climate crisis is a matter of survival. We need a real deal in Copenhagen, not green wash,” said Andy Clark, one of the organizers of the Bradford event on December 11 at the Grace United Methodist Church.

At many vigils, citizens featured the number 350 in their banners. Many scientists, climate experts and progressive national governments are now saying that 350 parts per million is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. The number 350 has become a symbol of climate action since a massive global day of demonstrations organized by



the environmental group 350.org on October 24, 2009.

Bill McKibben, visiting professor at Middlebury College, and founder of 350.org said, “People of every faith, rich and poor, on every continent have spoken clearly in the last few months, rallying around the 350 target. Ordinary citizens understand the science. Our

leaders have no excuse for not producing a deal that meets the scale of the crisis.”

Highlights from the weekend included vigils at nearly every US Senator’s office, to put pressure on the US to commit to strong emissions reductions. A complete list of event highlights can be found on the 350.org website.

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By Ronda Marsh

Welcome to the premier column of Trendy Kitchen!

Even if you are not someone who already likes to cook, odds are that you DO like to eat. The goal here is to offer some delicious alternatives to restaurant dining, and to help the busy cook by expanding his/her recipe collection. I can promise you that there will be no hard-to-find ingredients, or difficult techniques found here; just good, down-to-earth food that anyone can be proud to serve their family or guests. The other thing I can promise you is that I have personally cooked and eaten every single thing described. I am not a professional chef or had any special culinary training; I just enjoy cooking and developing recipes, along with sharing what I've learned over the years. I hope that even if you are a dyed-in-the-wool non-cook, you will be able to find something here that piques your interest. I once saw a quote that said: "If you can read, you can cook. The problem is that most people can't read." Since you are already here reading, we know cooking won't be a problem for you, so jump right in and start cooking...your stomach will thank you!

Stone Lion Inn Scones

I have always *wanted* to like scones. They are currently a popular coffeehouse item, but actually they are a very old form of bread which originated in Scotland in the early 1500's. In Britain they are usually pronounced "skawn", and can be either sweet or savory. I had eaten scones from bakeries and I had tried making them myself. The one thing they all had in common was that they were...well, not so great. I always felt like I was trying to swallow a mouth full of cotton; dry and crumbly, like a biscuit left on the counter overnight. Then I found this scone recipe. It came to me from an Innkeeper on Cape Cod, who makes them fresh every morning for her guests. These scones have a moist, flaky interior, and are

perfect for serving warm with butter, jam, or whipped cream. Give these a try; they are easy to make and are sure to be the star of any brunch!



- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon baking powder

- 1 cup (approximately) dried fruit, chopped if necessary to the size of raisins
- 1-1/4 cup heavy cream

Preheat the oven to 425 F.
Line a baking sheet with parchment.
Combine flour, sugar, salt & baking powder in a medium bowl. Mix thoroughly with a fork.
Add dried fruit to mixture and stir together with fork.
Add cream and stir until dough comes together.
Turn dough out onto a floured surface and knead 8-10 times to form into a cohesive mass.
Pat dough into a circle about 10" in diameter.
If desired, brush top of dough with melted butter and sprinkle with course sugar before cutting dough into 8 or 12 wedges.
Place on prepared baking sheet and bake 15 minutes or until tops are just slightly golden.
Serve warm or at room temperature.

I almost always use two fruits in my scones. Here are some of my favorite combinations:
- cranberries & apricots
- pears & currants

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Monroe Consolidated School Honor Roll



Here is a list of our honor roll students for the first trimester period ---August 31 --November 18, 2009.

GRADE 8

Mariah Adam – High Honors in Math, Science & Honors in Social Studies & Language Arts
Vanessa Guion – High Honors in Language Arts, Social Studies, Science & Honors in Math

GRADE 7

Elizabeth Fiske – High Honors in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies & Science
Natalia Lundin – Honors in Language Arts, Social Studies & Science
Sadie Shelton – High Honors in Math & Honors in Language Arts, Social Studies & Science

GRADE 6

Rachel Cohen – High Honors in Language Arts & Honors in Social Studies, Science & Math
Mallory Duffy – Honors in Language Arts, Social Studies, Math & Science
Josiah Lundin – High Honors in Social Studies, & Honors in Math, Science & Language Arts
Danielle Martin – High Honors in Language Arts & Honors in Social Studies, Math & Science
Alice Morrison – Honors in Language Arts, Social Studies, Math & Science

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A Walk In The Woods – December 2009

By David Falkenham, Grafton County Forester

A relatively dry and warm hunting season this year had me dreaming of snow....

I remember a couple of seasons ago waking up at deer camp in Jefferson on opening day to rain and cold. It was not the snow that had been predicted, but rainy and cold is better than warm and crunchy. We drove north to Stratford then up a gravel road that ends on the boundary of the Nash Stream Forest. Around 1800 feet we hit it...SNOW. There were several inches and more white stuff was coming down. I was so excited I almost jumped out of the truck while it was still moving. We parked on an old log landing, made a quick plan and headed out. This was going to be one fantastic walk in the woods.

After about an hour of fast steady walking I found what I was looking for, a big set of deer tracks. They were old and filling with snow but I had all day so I started

walking after him. He traveled southeast across a brook and up a steep ravine to a flat area that was thick with balsam fir saplings under a canopy of yellow birch, spruce and maple. His stride was huge and he covered great distances with only a few steps. He had a very wide, staggered walk and his hoof prints were thick and heavy, easily showing his huge dew claws as they sunk into the snow. As I traveled through the woods, he led me through the least thick of all the thickets and purposely avoided gaps in trees that he could have walked through. He was keeping his antlers from getting caught in trees. After an hour and a half following this deer I figured his antlers were at least 22 inches wide and he cleared 300 pounds live weight. When he tangled with other deer, which he did frequently, his track was easily identified in the crowd. He

never made a loop, just zig-zagged through the swamps and forest all day in search of other deer.

We traveled downhill, continuing southeast through areas that had been logged over the years. The scene was beautiful and magnificent. The snow filled the forest, covering the evergreens in a carpet of white and clinging to everything including me. The forest was silent with only the sound of dripping melting snow, my footsteps and the occasional thundering wings of a grouse. At one point we walked the length of a beaver dam and the view across the pond made me wish I had a camera. The pond was not yet frozen and as the snowflakes fell they seemed to be absorbed by the black water. The air was wet and heavy with fog that clouded the valley I was in. The smell of balsam fir, musty wet forest and my own wet wool permeated my

senses. On the other side of the pond I could see the Percy Peaks rising out of the low fog against a slate grey November sky. The fog with the ring of evergreens topped by the Percy Peaks was all reflected in the pond. "Even that cranky old buck must have stopped to admire this view" I thought. I hoped the jaw dropping scenery would slow him down but it didn't. He traveled downhill, with me in tow until we were too low in elevation for snow and his track disappeared into the swamp.

I left him and hiked north onto "Potato Hill" back into the snow where I could look across the Nash Stream valley to the Percy Peaks and get my bearings. The storm was clearing and all around me chickadees and nuthatches fed with enthusiasm, systematically examining every crack in the trees for food. I held my breath and listened; I could hear the

forest and all the life that goes with it. I could smell the wonderful scent of wet forest, and wet wool. I was soaked and it was getting dark; time to find a dry truck. And... where am I?

I talked to my cousin back at the truck. Apparently he had tracked a huge buck up over "Potato Hill" and down the other side. He claimed this buck had magic powers and was able to high jump vertical cliffs with no running start. Hmmm... The buck I tracked didn't have magic powers; he was big and old and took me on a day long tour of his beautiful home.

A Walk in The Woods is one year old this week. Thank you all for reading and providing me with your wonderful comments. And thank you to my colleague Karen Bennett who encouraged me to start writing "sooner rather than later".

Happy Holidays!

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*Good Tidings & Best Wishes
 for your glad Holidays & good New Year*

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Trendy Times reserves the right to accept or reject publication of any letter to the editor or submission of any nature for any reason, of course you will need to be really out there for us to turn you down. However, we do reserve the right to make slight changes to submissions for readability purposes. Thank you for your understanding.

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION

TRENDY TIMES
 www.trendytimes.com

My Christmas List

Dear Santa,
 I have tried to be good this year. Please excuse my slips and transgressions (you know which ones I'm talking about). Here are the things I really, really need you to bring me.
PATIENCE. Let me listen to the same story told for the 100th time. Boring people need love too.
VISION. Help me to see far ahead to the ultimate goal in life and avoid the potholes along the road.
COURAGE. Enable me to stand up for my beliefs even when many others tell me I am wrong.
LOYALTY. To my friends and family. Give me a special loyalty to my loving spouse. It seems to be in short supply these days but I hope you still have enough in your bag to save some for me.
SENSE OF HUMOR. It is a pretty grim world out there. Help me to find the humor in situations to ease me along my journey.
HUMILITY. Give me a sense of my own worth seasoned with an appreciation for others.
 Forget the \$100 perfume, the diamond pendants, the 50 inch TV, the villa on the Rivera, these are only things. The intangibles are what I truly need. Reach into your pack and leave me these. They will not cost a cent and will lighten the load. The reindeer will be grateful!

Sheila (a good girl, mostly)

Calendar of Events

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

- 6:00 PM
Bethany Church, United Church of Christ, Pike
- 7:00 PM
East Peacham Baptist Church, East Peacham
- 7:00 PM
Haverhill Congregational Church, Haverhill
- 7:00 PM
Wells River Congregational Church, Wells River
- 7:30 PM
Bath Congregational Church, Bath
- 7:30 PM
Orfordville Church Building, Orford

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 CAROL SING

- 9:00 AM
Bethany Church, United Church of Christ, Pike
- CAROL SING
10:30 AM
United Congregational Church of Orford, Orford

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30 COMMUNITY MEAL - OPEN TO ALL

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
St. Luke's Parish Hall, Central Street, Woodsville

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31 FIRST NIGHT

4:00 PM
Saint Johnsbury

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3 BRING A BELL AND RING IN THE NEW YEAR

9:00 AM
Bethany Church, United Church of Christ, Pike

BRING A BELL AND RING IN THE NEW YEAR

10:30 AM
United Congregational Church of Orford, Orford, NH

SNOWMOBILE TRAINING COURSE

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WHENEVER DATE

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Reduce Your Electric Load Without a Lot of Cash Output

By Nancy Rae Mallery, *Green Energy Times*, Bradford, VT - 10.5.09 Issue.
For more info about Energy Independence: www.greenenergytimes.org

There are so many simple things that you may or may not be aware of that make your electric meter just hum!

To start with, many people don't heat with electric today, but if you do, a PV system might not be for you ... unless you do something about it. I don't even have a furnace in my home - or an electric heater! No need for one, when you make your home energy efficient. We will talk more about this later.

You really should do this before ordering your solar system, because the system should be designed with your electric consumption in mind. So, go get your electric bills

& figure out how many kWh you have been using. Some incentive to reducing your energy usage is to know that the average American uses 20kWh/day. My brother-in-law thought he didn't use much & found that he was using 27 kWh/day! What an eye opener! The average Vermonter (bragging) uses 17kWh/day. I use (bragging, again) 3.5kWh/day! & I live very comfortably. I used to be like the average person & designed my system to meet the old needs, along with attempting a goal to reduce my usage to 11.5 kWh/day. See what happens! I became an Energy Cruncher! It wasn't

difficult at all. Now my system produces more than I need & it would be way too costly to tie into the grid. :(

Most homes can inexpensively reduce their electricity demands by 20-30% with some simple adjustments that make a huge difference:

- Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent ones.
- Minimize the phantom (ghost) loads in your house.
- Upgrade your older appliances with Energy Star ones - choose ones that use the least amount of energy.
- Use vegetation to keep your home cool in the summer & maximize sunshine entering the house in the winter.
- Insulate your home well for colder seasons.

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You can also use the sun's warmth for your hot water needs. Either way, using thermal energy is a very smart & efficient way to make use of the power of the sun & reduce your energy usage.

Let's discuss Phantom Loads (ghost loads). Anything that is still lit up at all, when you turn off your lights at night.. is a phantom load! Phantom loads suck electric, even if not in use.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy (www.energy.gov/applianceselectrioni

cs.htm), 75% of the electricity that powers home electronics is consumed while devices are turned off! If that sounds like a high figure, consider that most home electronics, including stereos, computers, televisions & DVD players are using standby power - anytime they're switched off. That adds up quickly when these devices are plugged in 24/7.

Phantom loads are common not only in home electronics, but in many home appliances as well, such as stoves and washers & dryers - that electricity shows up on your bill just the same as if you were using it for something more rewarding. And, it makes the same contribution to air pollution, global warming & other environmental problems. The good news is that reducing these loads is an easy, painless way to start.

Turn it off, then unplug it. Consolidate your cords with power strips. It can be a hassle to unplug multiple cords, so plug them all into power strips to make it easy to turn off all the devices at once. Smart Strips can make this even easier. Use one with your computer or TV & it turns off all the peripheral devices automatically.

Ok - that's a start! You'll save quite a bit of energy this way, but you need to know that your two biggest energy consumers are your refrigerator & your water.

Appliances. As the largest energy consumers among home appliances, refrigerators & freezers can account for almost 15% of your electrical usage! In fact, they can use more electricity than space heaters, water heaters & lights. If your refrigerator is more than 10 yrs old, it is probably not nearly as

Continued on Page 7

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Reduce Your Electric Load Without a Lot of Cash Output

Continued from Page 6

energy efficient as today's models. Energy Star standards are to help you identify products that use less energy. To be an Energy Star rated refrigerator, the model must use at least 15% less energy than the 2001 federal standard. Most refrigerators that you see in local appliance stores use about 15-20% less than this standard. There is also a Sun Frost refrigerator that uses 53% less energy than the standard! It isn't cheap. To find the most efficient refrigerators, download a qualifying product list from www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=refrig.display_products_html.

If you would like to see how much electricity your current refrigerator uses, try plugging it into a Kill-A-Watt Meter. A reasonably priced freezer is made by Crosley & is available through some of our advertisers. Many local appliance stores carry what you need & work beautifully with solar. Remember, we only use 3.5 kWh/day, including the use of locally purchased energy star appliances.

There is one exception to appliances & that would be your cookstove. An electric stove is not an option with solar, if you are off-grid. They use a lot of energy to run, as does the oven in most gas cookstoves, as well as anything that uses electric to heat up. Beware of new stoves with a 500 watt electric glow bar pilot in the oven that runs orange hot all the time the oven is in use, consuming power rapidly. Peerless Premier kitchen stoves offer what you need. Premier offers many different models including stainless steel units, white, almond, or black, with cook-tops of 4, 5, or 6 burners, or built in griddle with cover, sealed burners on some models, & even one model has battery operated clock/timer. ... & a completely insulated oven that saves gas. Some of our advertisers carry them.

Water. Water is the other large energy user. Let's see how we can reduce our usage here. We use a lot of water in our every day lives. Every time you use water, it uses electricity to replenish what you have used. If you have your own well, it takes a pump to lift the water from the well, to start with. An energy saving tip is to use a low surge pump, such as Grundfos Soft Start. Definitely shop around for these. One of our advertisers was way less than any of the others.

Then an oversized pressure tank will make the pump come on less often. You can even have a couple of them, to really be conservative.

If you have an older, conventional toilet you are probably using more water than you need to clear to the bowl. Consider installing a new, low flush toilet. Another solution is to displace the water in the tank by a brick or two, a plastic bottle filled with water or sand...

Some other ways to conserve water are:

- The new, low-flow shower heads do a great job & really help reduce your water consumption.
- A dishwasher is actually more energy efficient than washing them by hand.
- A front loading washing machine is the most energy efficient one.

Water Heating Efficiency. Solar water heating systems can reduce a home's hot water heating demand by 60 to 90% by using a solar hot water system to pre-heat water before it enters your existing traditional water

heater, or on-demand heater. Remarkably effective & efficient, even in northern climates, solar water heating technologies have matured significantly in the past 30 years. Designed to easily last 30 years or more with minimum maintenance, typically solar water heating system will pay for itself in its first 3-7 years of use. Solar water heating systems heat your home's water with collectors that are usually placed on the roof of the home. The hot water produced is stored in an insulated tank until you're ready to use it. Your traditional hot water will only kick on to heat up the water when the water temperature is not quite high enough.

Solar Water Heating gives you the best return on your investment with this short payback period.

Some efficient models of domestic hot water heaters have also become available in the last several years. If you have an old hot water heater, chances are that it was not designed with efficiency in mind. Again, check out Energy Star's website (www.energystar.gov) to find out which boilers are the most efficient.

Another good alternative

to the traditional hot water heating tanks are On-demand Hot Water Heaters. The Rinnai is our favorite. Most of the year the water in the preheat tank that is heated by a Solar Thermal System, is plenty hot, so the On demand is turned off, but is available with a touch of a button, in the bathroom. We keep it turned off because it would be a 'phantom load'. These systems heat the water only when its being used. Normal water heating systems used in much of our country, maintain a large tank of hot water to be used only a few times a day. To keep the water hot & ready, they consume energy throughout the entire day, whether you need it or not. Instantaneous water heaters only consume energy the moment you need the hot water, saving the typical household 30 to 50% of the

cost of hot water heating. You can find instantaneous water heaters that use natural gas, propane & electricity from a variety of manufacturers.

There are literally hundreds of other little tricks & smart tweaks you can make to your home that will further reduce your usage such as: Make your coffee in your coffee maker or with a percolator on the stove & turn it off - keep it hot in a thermos or reheat in the microwave to save energy. Be sure to change your light bulbs & possibly your lighting fixtures to energy efficient ones.

Be creative & be aware of your energy usage. Once you get yourself on the path, you'll love the difference you make for yourself, your family, community & the planet. And, you'll do just fine living with solar to meet your energy needs.

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Lights On For Life

BMU Student Awareness Program



BMU VKAT members Olivia Wyatt and Shelby Peters show two of the many posters made to raise awareness of the "Lights on for Life" project on December 18th.

The Holiday season brings out the best in so many people. It is a time of year when goodness and light is brought to the forefront. Whatever your beliefs or your traditions, the month of December is an important time on the calendar. Not to mention that fact that winter is now officially here. (Winter Solstice was December 21).

On the other hand, this season also brings out some bad aspects of the human race. I refer to the issue of impaired driving, whether impaired by drugs or alcohol, it is an issue that kills over 16,000 people every year.

While there are many groups working to combat this issue, some of the youngest are those in the Blue Mountain Union VKAT (Vermont Kids Against Tobacco 5-8 graders) Group. As their name implies they are working on more than just impaired driving. They also are working to get everyone into a healthy living frame of mind.

The most recent project was called "Lights on for Life". This took place on Friday, December 18 and was promoted to help raise awareness of impaired driving. The 50 students at BMU in this program made posters, sent home information sheets and generally made fellow students, staff members, parents and the general public aware of the issue. Lights on for Life encouraged drivers to have their headlights on all day. Homeowners were also encouraged to leave on their outside lights or holiday lights in an effort to raise awareness that alcohol and drug related crashes are preventable. It was also a means of remembering those who have been killed or injured by impaired drivers.

Blue Mountain Union is not the only school with a VKAT Group. There are some 51 groups across the State of Vermont. Students from grades five thru eight are eligible and encouraged to join. After graduation from 8th grade many of these students will join their school's SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving) group.



Oxbow High School Student Council caroling at the nursing home as well as passing out 135 Christmas Cards they filled out for the residents on December 17th in the afternoon. Also of note BMU 4th grade class came in and sang Christmas Carols as well as passed out gingerbread houses that they had made this morning December 18th. WHS Band and Chorus did a Christmas concert here at GCNH on Dec. 17th in the morning.

We would like to send a special thank you to all the groups who have come in to the nursing home and spread a little holiday cheer. The residents and staff at the Grafton County Nursing Home appreciate it greatly!

Deadline For All Ads – Thursdays 5pm
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Trendy Threads
Woodsville, NH



L-R: William Scott, Grange Executive Committee, Councilor Ray Burton and Master Linda Lauer and 3rd Grade students at the Bath Village School.

Bath, NH Pine Grove Grange of Bath, annually presents dictionaries to 3rd Graders in Lisbon, Bath and Monroe Schools. This is a State wide project by Granges. In 2008-09 14,568 Dictionaries have been presented.

"This is one of the most important projects that Pine Grove Grange does for community service. It's rewarding to see the positive impact with the 3rd Graders" Pine Grove Grange Master Linda Lauer said.

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3 Rivers Furniture



Businesses change names for a number of reasons. In the business world of today, quite often they change names because of merger, or sale or reorganization. Here is a case where a new name was added to an already existing name to better describe what lies within the walls.

Wayne Minnick has owned and operated The

add a business name that better describes what he does. Therefore "3 River Furniture at The Way We Were" has become his new title. For years Wayne and staff have carried a large array of furniture including five different bed manufacturers with some 30 models ready to go. Plus there is an extensive selection of kitchen tables and chairs, hutches and

slowed things down. For that reason the drawing for two of those new chairs has been delayed until Christmas Eve at about noon. So you can still sign up for your chance to win. These chairs will make for great gifts for a couple of lucky customers.

There was one drawing that was held this past weekend. It was for concert tickets to see Taylor Swift at Gillette Stadium in June. The winner of those tickets was Jim Page of Pike.

In addition to all the fine furniture available at 3 River Furniture there are also many of the items you have come to expect to find at The Way We Were. Over 10,000 titles to be rented on either DVD or VHS. And for those not sure which format they want to use, Wayne has one of the very few DVD/VHS player systems in stock. You can also find plenty of electronics and accessories ready to take home and plug in.

There may be an extra name on the outside of the building, but on the inside it still has the experience of twenty-five years of doing business in Woodsville. 3 Rivers Furniture at The Way We Were, furniture, electronics, videos and people you know.




Way We Were for twenty-five years. He began where the McDonald's restaurant now stands at the corner of Forest & Central Streets in Woodsville. He outgrew that space and moved to the current location. Here he has made many changes over time. The latest change is to

curio cabinets. Plus a wide range of living room couches and chairs.

His latest shipment of some 50 chairs should be in the store early this week. The shipment was due in time for the Open House of this past weekend, but the snowstorm in southern New England

*And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet
ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling
and puzzling, how could it be so?
It came without ribbons.
It came without tags.
It came without packages,
boxes or bags.
And he puzzled and puzzled
'till his puzzler was sore.
Then the Grinch thought of
something he hadn't before.
What if Christmas, he thought,
doesn't come from a store.
What if Christmas, perhaps,
means a little bit more.*

~Dr. Seuss



Jeanne Emmons, Graphic Designer
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My Christmas Story

Jesus, Mary and Joseph Come to Bethlehem

By Sheila Asselin

It was a stormy winter day and Joseph and Mary were on their way to Bethlehem (New Hampshire, of course). Mary did not feel well to begin with and jostling over 302 on an elderly donkey did not help her already dire situation. Dang those government officials who said they had to go to their town of record and pay their taxes personally to the town clerk. And this in a state that brags about no taxes! But it could not be helped. No use arguing with a bureaucracy.

Mary told Joseph he better find a motel pretty quick.

He stopped at the first Motel 8 he found but the motel was full. The innkeeper would not make any exceptions. If he did then every fool that rode up on a 15 year old donkey would expect the same. He did ask Joseph what kind of mileage he got and Joseph said about 40 miles to a bag of oats!

When Joseph opened his wallet the innkeeper noticed his green card. Just as he expected. Aliens! Probably just here to have the kid anyway so it would be a citizen. Joseph seemed like an honest hard working guy but

Mary was clearly looney tunes. You would not believe who she claimed was the father of her child!!! Immigration is getting pretty lax to let people like her in. Another reason why we need to beef up the border patrol.

Feeling sorry for them he told of his friend who was a dairy farmer and had a warm barn they could use. A midnight birth would not bother him. Being a dairy farmer he was used to getting up at all hours of the night. In fact this fellow had been New Hampshire Dairy Farmer of the year a few years back and his barn was cleaner than most people's homes.

But a strange thing happened. The next morning when it was time to do the milking his hired hand Luke, otherwise known as Hired

Hand Luke, was no where to be found. He finally located Luke in a corner of the barn kneeling before a newborn infant adoring. Turns out all the other farmers in the area had the same problem. Their help had all gone off to adore the infant also. His neighbor the sheep farmer had the same situation. The shepherds were all bowing and kneeling and the sheep were running amuck.

Well, Joseph and Mary turned out to be a nice enough couple but he was frankly relieved when they located a house to rent in nearby Nazareth and moved out of his barn. With all this adoring nothing else was getting done.

A couple of weeks after they had moved to Nazareth three strangers rode into

town on their latest model camels and wearing Brooks Brothers suits. One of the strangers was black!!! Finding a black man in northern New Hampshire seemed like a miracle in itself. They seemed to know exactly which house to go to and said a star had guided them. So much for global positioning! They brought stuff the kid could really use. One brought a years supply of Pampers, one brought a gift certificate for groceries and the third one brought Mary information about the WIC Program.

The little family lived quietly for the next few years. Joseph was a well respected carpenter and pillar of the community. Mary kept a beautiful house for her little family. The son did seem a bit precocious but except for that incident in the temple when he was twelve their lives were uneventful. And so it was that they lived quietly among their neighbors and none suspected that the hope and light of the world dwelt humbly in their midst.

December 22, 2009 Volume 1 Number 12

Not all Times are Trendy but there will always be Trendy Times



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Merry Christmas to All!!
 We would like to Thank Everyone for all of your support and help this past year. We still have pet food boxes at Agway, Still Knockin, and the Town Hall. We also need newspapers, and blankets. You can drop these at Still Knockin in Woodsville or the Town Hall in N. Haverhill.

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Something To Think About

The Best Christmas Present I Ever Got

By David Turner

Many years ago, I owned a restaurant in Virginia. It was a small breakfast house near the V. A. Hospital. It was also one of the poorer areas of town. For that reason we got quite a few customers that didn't have a lot of extra spending money, and would not order large meals. Although it sometimes upset my waitresses, who didn't receive many large tips, I took it as a part of doing business.

One day a lady, dressed in worn clothes came in and sat at one of the booths. She took off her gloves and carefully placed them on the table and waited to be waited on. I could see through the shabby outer garments at a person with some refinement, at least at some point in her life. With a roll of her eyes, figuring here was another one who wouldn't tip, the waitress went over to her table to take her order. A minute later she came back to the kitchen complaining that the woman just wanted a cup of hot water. "She's got used tea bags in her purse!" she complained. "And she's just going to take up one of my tables during the lunch rush!" and as she walked away I heard "She will probably sit there all day!"

I looked out at the booth where the lady sat. She sat there quietly arranging and rearranging her gloves, looking around the room at the other customers. There was something about this lady that got to me. She seemed out of place dressed like she was, like maybe she belonged in a better place and circumstances dictated otherwise.

Anyway, my heart went out to her and I cooked a couple eggs, put them with some hash browns that had been cooking on the grill, buttered some toast and gave it to the waitress to give to her. "You are just going to encourage her by doing this!" The next thing you know we will be feeding the whole neighborhood!" "Just take it out there! I will worry about the neighborhood!" I answered, making a mental note to let this waitress go as soon as I could find a decent replacement. Her negative attitude made me uncomfortable, and I was sure it was felt out there on the floor.

A little while later, she came back, a look on her face. "She gave me a tip! A whole twenty five cents!" She exclaimed, her voice full of sarcasm. I reached in my wal-

let and came out with a five dollar bill and handed it to her and told her to give the money back and to tell the lady a tip wasn't necessary. I don't think she wanted to, but a fiver was better than a stupid quarter and she did as told.

Before the lady left, she walked up to the window to the kitchen and looked back and caught my eyes. She said nothing, just smiled at me, and the warmth of that smile was worth much more than a couple eggs. Then she turned and walked out and I didn't see her again.

Until, one day, late December, I looked out from the kitchen to see her standing at the counter. She motioned me to come out and I did. When I got to her she reached into her coat pocket and handed me what appeared to be a present. I say appeared to be, because it was covered in used wrapping paper and tied with what was obviously recycled ribbon. "Thank you for the breakfast!" she smiled.

I smiled a nervous smile, not knowing really how to respond. This was obviously not going to be a watch or a camera. I didn't want to embarrass her, or myself, by opening it in front of everyone and I told her I would put it under the tree and open it Christmas day. "Open it now!" she said.

I really did not want to. I am not good at acting grateful when I am not, and I was pretty sure that I wouldn't be. Besides this "gift" of whatever Christmas to me had become just watching people act all excited about opening a present that would soon end up in their garage sale, or some odd clothing item that would only be worn for that day. I guess I had lost a lot of the magic of Christmas in December of 1969, when it was just another day in the Mekong Delta of Southeast Asia to me. Other Veterans who have more "anniversary dates" than holidays left in their lives will understand what I mean.

Anyway, I was stuck. I had to open it. I braced myself for whatever this would be, having no idea at all what. I slid the ribbon off and carefully pulled at the paper. Because it was so rough to begin with I felt that if I just ripped it off it would somehow show some disrespect and I found myself suddenly afraid of hurting this woman's feelings. If it had been new paper I never

would have thought anything like that.

I put the paper on the counter and turned back around and there in my hand was, packed in a used zip-lock baggie, a mismatched, different sized, mended, pair of socks!

I was caught completely by surprise! I had absolutely no idea how to react! I had never been in any kind of position like this, and I had been in quite a few. What would I possibly do with a used pair of socks, especially when one was obviously too small?

I felt nervous, because I didn't know what to say without hurting her feelings and stupid, standing there with this in front of all my other customers. I looked around quickly to see their reaction and I thought I could sense people waiting to see what I would do or say. By then this scene had attracted all their attention, putting even more pressure on me to "do the right thing" whatever that was.

But one guy stood out. At just a glance I could almost read his mind. He was waiting for me to laugh or even scoff at this lady for even thinking about doing something like this. It was almost like he couldn't wait. I don't feel comfortable around people like that and I knew I wouldn't give him that kind satisfaction anyway. But, I had no idea where to start. So I just stared at them for what seemed like a very long uncomfortable time.

Then, I noticed something about the mending. It wasn't just "circle sewn" like the Army taught me to do. This was more than even a professional looking repair! The closer I looked, the more I saw. Where there was a hole and some fabric was missing she had weaved regular sewing thread into a design that reminded me of a doily at my grandma's house! The pattern was absolutely mag-

nificent, amazingly perfect, actually beautiful! There were no bumps or ridges on the insides either. They looked just as nice as the outsides.

The time she must have put into doing all that sewing, hours, maybe days, maybe many days, all the time thinking nice thoughts about a simple breakfast some guy had given her once, and how it had made a difference to her. This wasn't a last minute throw it in the shopping cart check it off the list present. This was a gift, a gift of her time and her talent, and there was talent in those mismatched socks. I knew it was the very best she had to give and it was something else!

This woman had done this before and I was sure that somewhere in this world on a few tables, in some real fancy houses, there are some wonderful examples of her work. No matter where she was at this moment she will have left this world a more beautiful place.

I looked up at her, waiting expectantly for my reaction. I knew right then she would have seen right through any feeble attempt from me to fake some look of appreciation, but I didn't need to. I had been touched in a place I didn't think existed in me anymore. I had once again found not the "reason for the season" but the reason "because" of the season. This was not only a gift for the day, but something I could carry with me for the rest of my life, if I took the time to remember it each day. My heart felt warm and my smile showed it. She beamed with delight. "Thank you so much!" was all I said, and I meant it and it showed, and out of the corner of my eye saw smiles around the room, even that guy.

She placed both her hands, around mine, still clutching my new belongings, and I felt how rough they were from living the life she now did. I realized how they must have ached while she worked

at all that fine detail, and how she probably didn't care. The look of contentment, of true happiness at my genuine acceptance of her gift, that look on her face, gave me such a feeling of satisfaction. Then I realized that I had given her an equal gift, maybe woke something in her she hadn't felt in quite a while either. It was one of being appreciated!

I kept those things for many years. They have been misplaced or lost over time, but each year about this time, when things start to get a little hectic and I find myself just trying to get something done instead of trying to just do things, I take the time to remember the gift of those darned socks, and I relax, even if just a little bit.

David Turner is a freelance writer, living in Vermont. He and his wife Deborah own the Variety Store, 147 Central St. in Woodsville. They donate profits to help those in the area with temporary emergency needs. They would like to let you know that, like themselves, there are a lot of good small businesses along Central Street that have felt the effects of recent expansion. They all need your support to continue. The Variety Store's pre-paid lease runs out February 1st and without continued support and an increase of customers, they may not be able to continue after that time. At present they have given much of their daily sales amounts, and goods like clothing from their store, back into the community in the form of emergency aid, and with the recent cold snap, requests are coming in faster than they are able to provide, let alone save for future business expenses. Please take the time to stop in and buy at least a little something from all of the small businesses in town. A lot of little would make a lot and towns never look good with a bunch of empty buildings.



Merry Christmas
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OBITUARY – ARTHUR GRAY, JR.

HAVERTHILL, NH - Arthur Gray, Jr., the distinguished Wall Street veteran who as a brash young investment manager not long removed from his own wartime exploits in 1951 helped organize a grassroots rally for Dwight Eisenhower in Madison Square Garden that was instrumental in convincing the general to enter the presidential race, died Monday, December 14th in New Hampshire. He was 86.

Following successful double knee replacement, he died unexpectedly in the hours that followed, said Betty Johnson-Gray, his wife.

Mr. Gray, a highly decorated Army Air Force navigator in the European theater, had joined with Charles Willis and Stan Rumbough, former Navy and Marine pilots, to form Citizens for Eisenhower, even before, as Mr. Gray frequently said,

they knew whether Eisenhower was a Republican or a Democrat. "We all just believed that he would make a great president." The trio snared the help of popular radio performers Tex and Jinx McCrary and other stars and did what the political establishment of the day said couldn't be done: Filled the old Madison Square Garden to the rafters for a political rally that couldn't start until the fights ended at 10:30 pm. The kinescope footage of the crowd shouting, "We like Ike!" was raced across the Atlantic the next day – and Eisenhower credits it, in his autobiography, as one of three key factors in his decision to run.

Mr. Gray continued working for the Eisenhower campaign as an advance man, and with C. Langhorne Washburn, is credited in William Safire's "The New Language



and more in that, but in the investment management business, everything that goes on in the world is grist for your mill. I can't wait to see what's going on in the world. That's what keeps you going. A new challenge every day."

Except for a short sojourn in the movie business in the mid-1950s, Mr. Gray worked in investment management for the remainder of his life. From 1957 to 1959, he was EVP and Director of A.M Kidder Co., Inc., before founding his own New York Stock Exchange member firm, Gray & Co., in 1959, and continuing to actively manage its affairs there until 1974 when he merged with Mitchell Hutchins & Co. Subsequently Mr. Gray continued to manage his clients' affairs through affiliations with Tallasi Management Co, Dreman Gray & Embry, Dreyfus Personal Management, Cowen Asset Management and lastly Carret Asset Management, LLC retiring December, 2008.

of Politics" with contributing as well to the political lexicon by conceiving of the "Eisenhower-Nixon Bandwagon" of 1952. These were a trio of 25-ton trailer trucks, each with a three-man crew, which "advanced" Eisenhower appearances throughout the campaign. Each brightly decorated truck was outfitted with a jeep, powerful searchlights, campaign balloons, dresses and other paraphernalia designed to create a stir wherever it rolled.

On Wall Street, Mr. Gray's career spanned 64 years. Freshly discharged from the army in late 1945 and having had his fill of aviation, he had asked John M. Schiff, then head of Kuhn Loeb, for a job – and started counting securities in the cage for \$30 a week—a drastic cut from the \$120 a week flight pay he had been drawing. But Arthur Gray found his métier in Wall Street: "It's not work. It's fun. The wonderful thing about Wall Street is that it's so broadening. If you're in the steel or the chemical business, you specialize more

1940 to 1942 before enlisting. While serving with the U.S. 8th Air Force from 1942-'45 he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, four European Battle Stars and a Presidential Unit Citation.

During the war, he married Adele Hall. They divorced in 1953. Mr. Gray is survived by their four children: Michael Gray, Santa Barbara, CA; Kathleen Gray, Los Angeles, CA; John Gray, Stockton, CA; and Wendy Gray, Washington, DC.

In 1964, Mr. Gray married Betty Johnson-Gray, of North Carolina, now residing in Haverhill, NH. He is survived, in addition, by their two daughters, Lydia Gray Bartholow, Haverhill, NH and Elisabeth Gray Gonzalez, Madrid, Spain, a step-son, H. Richard Arthur Redding, Charlottesville, VA, fourteen grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Monday, December 21, 2009, at 2 PM at the First Congregational Church of Haverhill UCC, 120 School St, Haverhill, NH, with Rev. Dr. Kenneth Johnson, Mr. Gray's brother-in-law, and Rev. David Pendleton, pastor of the church officiating.

At the family's request, memorial contributions may be made to Speare Memorial Hospital, 16 Hospital Road, Plymouth, NH 03264 or Cottage Hospital, P.O. Box 2001, Woodsville, NH 03785.

Ricker Funeral Home, Woodsville, NH is assisting the family with arrangements.

For more information or to sign an online condolence, please go to www.rickerfh.com

December 22, 2009 Volume 1 Number 12 Not all Times are Trendy but there will always be Trendy Times

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Back From Combat, Women Struggle For Acceptance

By Kimberly Hefling

AP — Afghanistan veteran and founder of American Women Veterans, Genevieve Chase, 32, of Alexandria, Va. Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Nobody wants to buy them a beer. Even near military bases, female veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan aren't often offered a drink on the house as a welcome home. More than 230,000 American women have fought in those recent wars and at least 120 have died doing so, yet the public still doesn't completely understand their contributions on the modern battlefield. For some, it's a lonely transition as they struggle to find their place.

Aimee Sherrod, an Air Force veteran who did three war tours, said years went by when she didn't tell people she was a veteran. After facing sexual harassment during two tours and mortar attacks in Iraq, the 29-year-old mother of two from Bells, Tenn., was medically discharged in 2005 with post-traumatic stress disorder. She's haunted by nightmares and wakes up some nights thinking she's under attack. She's moody as a result of PTSD and can't function enough to work or attend college. Like some other veterans, she felt she improperly received a low disability rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs that left her with a token monthly payment. She was frustrated that her paperwork mentioned she was pregnant, a factor she thought was irrelevant. "I just gave up on it and I didn't tell anyone about ever being in the military because I was so ashamed over everything," Sherrod said. Then Jo Eason, a Nashville, Tenn., lawyer working pro bono through the Lawyers Serving Warriors

program, stepped in a few years later and Sherrod began taking home a hefty monthly disability payment. "I've never regretted my military service, I'm glad I did it," Sherrod said. "I'm not ashamed of my service. I'm ashamed to try and tell people about it because it's like, well, why'd you get out? All the questions that come with it."

The Defense Department bars women from serving in assignments where the primary mission is to engage in direct ground combat. But the nature of the recent conflicts, with no clear front lines, puts women in the middle of the action, in roles such as military police officers, pilots, drivers and gunners on convoys. In addition to the 120-plus deaths, more than 650 women have been wounded. Back home, women face many of the same issues as the men, but the personal stakes may be greater. Female service members have much higher rates of divorce and are more likely to be a single parent. When they do seek help at VA medical centers, they are screening positive at a higher rate for military sexual trauma, meaning they indicated experiencing sexual harassment, assault or rape. Some studies have shown that female veterans are at greater risk for homelessness. Former Army Sgt. Kayla Williams, an Iraq veteran wrote about her experience in a book titled, "Love My Rifle More Than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army." She said she was surprised by the response she and other women from the 101st Airborne Division received from people in Clarksville, Tenn., near Fort Campbell, Ky. She said residents just assumed they were girlfriends or wives of

military men. "People didn't come up to us and thank us for our service in the same way. They didn't give us free beers in bars in the same way when we first got back," said Williams, 34, of Ashburn, Va. "Even if you're vaguely aware of it, it still colors how you see yourself in some ways."

Genevieve Chase, 32, of Alexandria, Va., a staff sergeant in the Army Reserves, said the same guys who were her buddies in Afghanistan didn't invite her for drinks later on because their wives or girlfriends wouldn't approve. "One of the hardest things that I had to deal with was, being a woman, was losing my best friends or my comrades to their families," Chase said. It was that sense of loss, she said, that led her to get together with some other female veterans for brunch in New York last year. The group has evolved into the American Women Veterans, which now has about 2,000 online supporters, some of whom go on camping trips and advocate for veterans' issues. About a dozen marched in this year's Veteran's Day parade in New York. "We just want to know that when we come home, America has our back," Chase said. "That's the biggest thing. Women are over there. You want to feel like you're coming home to open arms, rather than to a public that doesn't acknowledge you for what you've just done and what you just sacrificed."

Rachel McNeill, a gunner during hostile convoys in Iraq, said she was so affected by the way people treated her when they learned she fought overseas that she even started to question whether she was a veteran. She described the attitudes as "Oh, you didn't do anything or you were just

on base," said McNeill, who suffers from postconcussive headaches, ringing in her ears, and other health problems related to roadside bomb blasts. The 25-year-old from Hollandale, Wis., was a sergeant in the Army Reserves. She said she seemingly even got that response when she told the VA staff in Madison, Wis., of her work. She said she was frustrated to see in her VA paperwork how what she told them had been interpreted. "It would say like, 'the patient rode along on convoys,' like I was just a passenger in the back seat," McNeill said.

Other women have had similar complaints. The VA leadership has said it recognizes it needs to do more to improve care for these veterans, and as part of changes in the works, female coordinators are in place at each medical center to give women an advocate. The agency is also reviewing comments on a proposal to make it easier for those who served in non-infantry roles — including women — to qualify for disability benefits for PTSD.

Sen. Patty Murray, a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs committee, recently asked VA Secretary Eric Shinseki and Defense

Secretary Robert Gates to ensure that service members' combat experience is included on their military discharge papers, so later they can get benefits they are entitled to. Research has shown that a lack of validation of a soldier's service can make their homecoming more difficult.

"What worries me is that women themselves still don't see themselves as veterans, so they don't get the care they need for post-traumatic stress syndrome or traumatic brain injury or even sexual assault, which obviously is more unique to women, so we still have a long ways to go," said Murray, D-Wash. Chase said one challenge is getting female veterans to ask for changes "Most of us, because we were women service members, are so used to not complaining and not voicing our issues, because in the military that's considered weak. Nobody wants to hear the girl whine," Chase said.

McNeill said that when she's been out at restaurants and bars with the guys in her unit, they make sure she gets some recognition when the free beers go around. "They'll make a point ... usually to say, 'She was over there with us, she was right next to us,'" McNeill said.

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Women In Combat –

The Changing Face of US War Efforts

By *Howie Howe*

When back in the Clinton years it was decided to reduce the military active forces, and use the Reserves as the backup forces, few probably realized the implications that this meant that women would be placed in combat roles.

While the DOD strictly forbids placing women in front line combat roles, fighting a war where there are no lines drawn means just serving in a combat zone puts you on the front line.

I think many of us veterans still hold a chauvinistic view of

Women in the military that prevents us from fully understanding the assignment of women in the military these days, and we need to take a serious look at this because it can cause us to dishonor them for their service even though some of them may have had more combat experience than their male counterparts.

A link to a news article came to me overnight, and truly highlights the ways things have changed. We should no longer view women in the military as holding rear guard positions at best. We must accept them for their actual duty rather than our old expectations.

To give you some examples from this article:

Rachel McNeill, a gunner during hostile convoys in Iraq, said she was so affected by the way people treated her when they learned she fought overseas that she even started to question whether she was a veteran.

She described the attitudes as "Oh, you didn't do anything or you were just on base," said McNeill, who suffers from postconcussive headaches, ringing in her ears, and other health problems related to roadside bomb blasts. The 25-year-old from Hollandale, Wis., was a sergeant in the Army Reserves.

She said she seemingly even got that response when she told the VA staff in Madison, Wis., of her work. She said she was frustrated to see in her VA paperwork how what she told them had been interpreted.

"It would say like, 'the patient rode along on convoys,' like I was just a passenger in the back seat," McNeill said.

Genevieve Chase, 32, of Alexandria, Va., a staff sergeant in the Army Reserves, said the same guys who were her buddies in Afghanistan didn't invite her for drinks later on because

their wives or girlfriends wouldn't approve.

"One of the hardest things that I had to deal with was, being a woman, was losing my best friends or my comrades to their families," Chase said.

As a Vietnam Vet I think some of us saw similar separations because of race after we returned, where who we hung out with and saw as veterans deteriorated over the years to white versus black.

Yet we embrace rear echelon vets (Remington Raiders) as equals for just having been in country. It is time we accept all without questioning their assignment, because things truly have changed, and so must we.

I encourage all to read the full article in the link below, and accept the changing face of the wars we now fight.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/us_female_veterans_finding_a_place

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Female Veterans Join Ranks of Homeless ¹⁵

By Kimberly Hefling

Posted Sunday,
December 13, 2009
The Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. - The \$15,000 that former Army Pvt. Margaret Ortiz had in the bank when she left Iraq is long gone, spent on alcohol and cocaine.

By the time she found her way to a program run by the nonprofit U.S. Vets for homeless female veterans in Long Beach, she'd slept on the beach or anyplace she could find after a night of partying. One morning, she woke up behind a trash bin, her pants torn, with no memory of what happened.

Instead of helping her forget her six months in Iraq,

where she said she faced attacks on her compound and sexual harassment from fellow soldiers, the alcohol and drugs brought flashbacks and blackouts. She tried to kill herself.

"You knew something was wrong with you, but you didn't know what was wrong with you," said Ortiz, 27, from atop her twin bed in a plain dorm-style room, a black 4th Infantry Division cap on her head.

Ortiz is one of the new faces among America's homeless veterans.

They're younger than homeless male veterans and more likely to bring children. Their number has doubled in the past decade, and there

are an estimated 6,500 homeless female veterans on any given night - about 5 percent of the total homeless veteran population.

But women-only programs such as the one in which Ortiz participates are few.

"Most of the VA facilities cater to men, and you can't take a mom with two little kids and put her in the middle of a homeless center with 30 or 40 male veterans," said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

The distressed economy only made things worse.

"People think we're just coming out of the military and we should have our stuff to-

gether," said Tiffany Belle, 33, a former Navy sailor who served in the Philippines after 9-11 and lives with Ortiz at the U.S. Vets program. "It gets really hard. Some people don't know where to go, what to do."

Like male veterans, many homeless female veterans face substance abuse and mental health problems. Many also struggle with sexual trauma that occurred in their childhood, in the military, or elsewhere.

Ortiz said she was the victim of childhood sexual trauma. In Iraq, she said she dealt with harassment from male soldiers who talked to her as if she were a prostitute. A driver, her convoys were

regularly attacked, she said.

She said she's particularly bothered by an incident in which she was 40 feet from a building destroyed by a mortar where she was living in Tikrit.

A few months after she returned to the U.S., she was back in California, with plans to go to college, living with her parents and burning through her money on drugs and alcohol. She eventually ended up in a psychiatric hospital after attempting suicide, and later in inpatient treatment programs for drugs and sexual trauma.

"I didn't know how to process it, and I didn't know what to process because there was so much of it," she said.

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