

# TRENDY TIMES

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DECEMBER 21, 2010 VOLUME 2 NUMBER 6

## American Christmas Comes From Many Cultures

By Marianne L. Kelly

Watching those mind-numbing holiday commercials and hearing children's demands for more, newer, better, is enough to make those who don't know better believe that American Christmas was authored by Macy's, Wal-Mart, and the myriad other retailers who want our cash, especially at this time of year.

American Christmas actually derives from ancient legends and those wonderful immigrants, who, looking for a better life for themselves and their families, brought us their sacred, honored traditions. Our area has been especially fortunate and blessed by such people. Here are a few familiar traditions and legends.

### POPULAR TRADITIONS AND LEGENDS

Clement Clarke Moore's A Visit from St. Nicholas, better known as The Night Before Christmas, was inspired by the English tradition of hanging stockings over the fire. Legend tells us that St. Nick accidentally dropped gold coins into drying stockings as he slid down each chimney.

Do you place a holiday wreath on your door? Thank Polish immigrants who made straw wreaths to remember the manger, and the Italians who decorated theirs with fruit signifying abundance in the New Year.

Our Christmas Caroling tradition comes from Puerto Rico, where three "wise men" visited homes on Christmas Eve playing carols on their guitars in remembrance of the original three wise men's journey to Bethlehem.

Dutch children celebrate St. Nicholas Day on Dec. 5, by setting their shoes beside the hearth for "Sinterclass" to fill, and leaving a carrot for his steed. One or more "Black Peters" accompanies St. Nick as they toss presents down chimneys.

People in Mexican villages customarily placed a gift on the altar for baby Jesus. Legend says an angel instructed one child to bring dried roadside weeds to the altar. The child obeyed and the weeds miraculously turned into the first poinsettia or Holy Night Flower.

Another legend with roots in Russia and Italy tells of a grandmother who refused to accompany shepherds to the manger because of the cold. The next morning when she arrived at the manger with a gift basket for the babe, she found it empty! It is said this grandmother travels the earth looking into children's eyes to see if she can spot the Christ child, and leaves a gift for each, hoping one of them is He.

Burning a Yule log might seem a charming tradition, however early Americans feared that not following specific instructions in burning this log, that incidentally had to come from their own or a neighbor's woods, would portend a disastrous year. They used a saved piece from the old log that they kept under the bed to guard the house from fire and light-

ning, and used it to light the new log. If this new log didn't catch fire the first time, misfortune would befall the family. The log had to be kept burning for twelve hours and could not be tended while there was any Christmas dinner left on the table. They told ghost stories and a "headless" shadow appearing on the wall meant death in the coming year.

### HOLIDAY FOOD

What would Christmas be without all that food! Gifts of food, loving prepared, have always been the most treasured of all. Thank our immigrant ancestors who brought an incredible variety of food to America.

Bread, the staple of many traditions, ultimately found its way to American tables. Ukrainians used their Kolach for a centerpiece on their holiday tables. Greeks placed a coin in the center of their bread, believing that whoever finds it will be lucky in the New Year, while the Italians gave us their rich Pandoro whose preparation takes a week.

A Christmas would never be the same without all those



The recent Open House at Cottage Hospital had many parents lining up with children in hand. Not only were pictures with Santa being taken, but Santa (as he is prone to do) had a gift for every one who came to sit on his lap.

cookies. The Scandinavians brought us a cookie fried in a rosette iron, and sprinkled with powdered sugar, while the Italians gave us biscotti to accompany our favorite beverage.

Holiday meals are as diverse as the people who brought them here. The Irish re-set their tables after a meal with traditional soda bread, a pitcher of cold milk, and a large lighted candle. They leave their doors unlocked on Christmas Eve to welcome Joseph, Mary and anyone else travelling that night.

Those of Scandinavian ancestry might enjoy pork, herring and brown beans on Christmas Eve, while our Eng-

lish cousins prefer roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, and those of French ancestry served the best varieties of meat and wine they could find.

Americans enjoy "turkey with all the trimmings," an Eastern European tradition, while other cultures might enjoy more or less hearty fare.

This year as we gather at Christmas, let's take a moment to celebrate the diversity and origins of our holiday traditions, and silently thank those who gave them to us.

Nollaigh Shona Dhuit (Irish), Feliz Navidad (Spanish), Buon Natale (Italian), Joueux Noel (French) Merry Christmas!

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# A DOLL TO SHARE: A True Christmas Story

By Sheila Asselin

The year was 1942 and I was five years old. Our nation was at war with Germany and Japan and our army was woefully short of qualified officers to lead it. The government decided to enlist some of the more promising sergeants in OCS (officers candidate school) and try to turn out in three months what West Point did in four years. The candidates were known as "ninety day wonders" and my father was such a wonder.

However there was a drawback to this plan. The candidates had to sign a waiver that they would not receive any pay until they graduated as newly minted Second lieutenants. With no money coming in Christmas looked pretty bleak for my brother and I.

Christmas morning dawned as gray and tasteless as our breakfast oatmeal. At nine o'clock there was a knock at the door. There on the doorstep was a

mother and her four little daughters. They were members of our church but I did not really know them. The mother had heard of our plight and told the girls there was a family who would not have a Christmas because their father was away training to defend our country. Of their own accord the girls selected two of their gifts to bring to us. The oldest girl, the one who was my age was named Angela. Angela and her sisters truly looked like angels to me. She handed me a beautiful doll. I cherished that doll for many years because it always reminded me of their unselfish kindness which saved my brother and I from a sad Christmas.

Fast forward 11 years. I was attending a Catholic girls school and Angela was in my class. I recognize her as the girl with the doll but she did not remember me. We became good friends and had many happy times together but I never told her the story of the Christmas doll. I was much too ashamed of needing charity at Christmas and thought she would think less of me if she knew this. So I kept the secret for another fifty years.









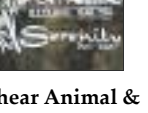



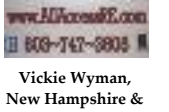


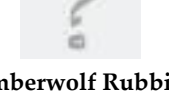




We went our separate ways and did not meet again until our class's fiftieth reunion. I finally revealed my secret to Angela. Far from belittling me she could hardly wait to tell her sisters. As

soon as the reunion was over she flew to Florida where her sister, Janet, was terminally ill with breast cancer. She was able to share the story with her and they both agreed this is exactly the sort of kindness their mother would do. I like to think Janet's last days were gladdened a little by this story.

As we go through life many people show us kindness that we feel we can never repay. The only thing we can do is pass it on. We never know how wide and far reaching an act of kindness is. One small doll touched so many people and it all began with a loving gift some 68 years ago. Merry Christmas. Be kind to one another.

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## Here Comes More Broadband From Fairpoint Communications

### Informational Meeting December 21 at JRM Municipal Building

MANCHESTER, N.H. (December 17, 2010) – FairPoint Communications is holding an informational meeting on December 21 in North Haverhill to announce broadband expansion plans in the towns of Haverhill, Lisbon, Woodsville and surrounding communities. The event is being held at the JRM Municipal Building, 2975 Dartmouth College Highway in North Haverhill and begins at 6 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.

Residents will have the opportunity to hear from Teresa Rosenberger, FairPoint's New Hampshire state

president and learn about the expansion of FairPoint's VantagePoint network, a fiber core, IP-based network, which provides speed options as fast as 15Mbps.

Broadband service on the VantagePoint network means customers can smoothly stream live video, play online games and upload photos and large files with ease. Always-on broadband access provides almost instant connections to information, news and entertainment.

Since April 2008, FairPoint has invested \$129 million in the communications infrastructure and technol-

ogy to bring broadband to northern New England, including building more than 700 miles of new fiber across the region.

#### ABOUT FAIRPOINT

FairPoint Communications, Inc. is an industry leading provider of communications services to communities across the country. Today, FairPoint owns and operates local exchange companies in 18 states offering advanced communications with a personal touch, including local and long distance voice, data, Internet, television and broadband services. Learn more at [www.FairPoint.com](http://www.FairPoint.com).




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December 21, 2010 Volume 2 Number 6

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

# Haverhill Recreation Survey

## Do Your Part And Fill It Out

There are many people who are putting in a lot of time to make recreational opportunities available for the residents of Haverhill and the surrounding area.

The Haverhill Recreation Commission is a group of vol-

unteers who meet once a month to put their heads together in an effort to create recreational opportunities for the entire population. Over the dozen or so years of existence this group has seen many changes in the programs of-

ferred and the number of people who are served. The survey on this page is another step in the process of making sure the programs offered are the programs the residents of the area want.

The survey itself comes from the Haverhill Select

Board with the intent to be sure all is on course. The more people that answer this survey, the better the results will be. It does not matter if you have participated in events in the past, or not. Your input will help form the direction of the

Recreation Program. It is your chance to speak out.

So please take the time to read the survey. Answer the questions truthfully, and return to the Haverhill Town Offices at the address listed. Your input is greatly appreciated.

### HAVERHILL RECREATIONAL SURVEY

Have you participated in any Haverhill recreational programs before?  Yes  No

If you answered "No" to question #1, what are your reasons?

(check appropriate responses or use the comment lines)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Does not offer activities in which I am interested.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Need child care.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities offered at inconvenient times.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Need transportation.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor equipment or facilities.  | <input type="checkbox"/> I have a handicap.          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know what programs are offered.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs are too expensive. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desired activity is not offered for my age group. (example: over-the-hill basketball). |  |

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Haverhill resident?  Yes  No

If no, what town? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about the program(s)?

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper     | <input type="checkbox"/> Flyers                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contacted Recreation Office at Municipal Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of Mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> Haverhill Town Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                                      |

Please indicate your level of interest in the following  
**RECREATIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**  
with 1 being least interested and 5 being most interested.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| _____ Youth basketball                        | _____ Father/Daughter Mother/Son Valentine Day Dance |
| _____ Co-Host Mt. Lakes Winterfest            | _____ Snowshoe/X-country Ski Full Moon Fiesta Event  |
| _____ Co-Host Family Movie night              | _____ Let's go Ice Fishing _____ Teen Dances         |
| _____ Little League T-ball                    | _____ Paddle the Border _____ Easter Egg Hunt        |
| _____ Railroad Park clean-up                  | _____ HARP _____ Railroad Park Concerts              |
| _____ Kayak group                             | _____ Hiking group _____ Haunted Happenings          |
| _____ Community Pool                          | _____ Youth Soccer                                   |
| _____ Senior Stretching & Preschool Playgroup | _____ Community Carnival Event                       |

Which categories most influenced your decision to participate in the program(s)?  
(May select more than one.)

- |                                       |                             |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ Convenient time                 | _____ Instructor            |
| _____ Reputation of activity or event | _____ Quality of facility   |
| _____ Good value for the money        | _____ Not offered elsewhere |

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What types of recreational programs would you and members of your household be most interested to participate?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth intramurals (K-Grade 3)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult league sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational classes to include computer   | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Crafts     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Activities (dances, theater, music, etc.)                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Activities   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Sports (golf, tennis, skiing, kayaking/ canoeing, biking, snow machine etc.) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Activities (stretching, walking, games, etc.)                                  |  |

What other program(s) would you like to see offered?

\_\_\_\_\_

What changes would you like to see made to the recreation program? Please specify program(s). \_\_\_\_\_

Should the Woodsville Armory or a part of that facility be used by the Haverhill Recreation Program for a combination Recreational and Teen Center?  Yes  No

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to pay more for recreational programs if price hikes were necessary due to increased costs?  Yes  No

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

The Town of Haverhill is one of the few remaining New Hampshire municipalities that has a resident tax of \$10 per resident. This tax generates approximately \$28,000. Should this tax revenue be dedicated to the Haverhill Recreational Program?  Yes  No

How many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

How many children (17 and under) live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide us with any comments you would like to add to help us improve the Haverhill Recreation Program. (Use a separate sheet if necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU and Please return or mail to:**

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# Passing The Torch...

## Ross Business Center Becomes *Copies And More*

By Marianne L. Kelly

WELLS RIVER, VT—"The most important thing for people to know is when they come here, they can expect excellent, personal customer service," said Glenda Hofmann, new owner of Ross Business Center, now Copies and More.

Ross Business Center has been in Wells River for the past sixteen years with Steve Ross at the helm. Steve and then partner Ted Clark started the business in Woodsville some 35 years ago in what is now Everything But The Cook. Clark retired due to illness leaving Steve the sole proprietor, with Glenda keeping the books "for a couple of years." "The business was Ted's dream and he started very small," said Glenda, a lifelong area resident. "Now it's Steve's turn to retire and decide what's next for him."

### JIFFY MART TO HER OWN BUSINESS

Before becoming involved with Ross, Glenda was the store manager for Jiffy Mart in Wells River, and later became a supervisor. "There was too much stress, so I decided to wait for another management type position to become available in Wells River."

Glenda took the initiative by walking into Ross Business Center, and asked Steve if he "was looking for help," explaining that she wanted a local job. She was traveling at the time, taking inventories for various businesses, and didn't like being on the road and away from her family.

Steve told her he might have 20 hours available for

her. "I don't think I've worked just 20 hours since he hired me thirteen years ago," laughed Glenda.

Steve meanwhile wanted to make a change in his own life and one morning approached Glenda about taking over the business. "I quit," laughed Steve. After "a few tears," and much negotiation, they came up with a plan that benefited both, and on December 6, Ross Business Center became Copies and More. "I don't have a sign yet," said Glenda, "but I'm working on it."

### GLENDAS IMMEDIATE VISION

Glenda plans to keep the business just as it is with more focus on copying and printing services. "Many people are not aware that we have a copy center as well as sell office supplies," said Glenda, "but they can get their business cards, invoices and most any other printing and copying right here," she added.

In addition to serving the general public, Copies and More also does printing and copying for local churches and non-profit organizations. "We try to give them a good price so they will keep their business local," she explained, emphasizing the personal service customers receive at Copies and More. "We work with our customers one on one until they are satisfied, and let them see and approve their project before we go to print. We can do projects that require special folding as well as booklets where more information is needed."

Copies and More provides custom printed calendars, invitations, greeting cards, and more. "Right now people want calendars and Christmas cards" noted Glenda. "They can use their pictures, and we create a personalized calendar." Glenda doesn't see herself as a graphic artist, "but I can do enough to make customers happy." Copies and More also offers UPS shipping and fax services, and Glenda hopes to purchase a self-service photo machine in the future.

Steve will continue for a short time to service machines that he sold, but when he leaves that service will no longer be available, as there is no one currently available with the skills to service them. Customers can still purchase ink and toner for their machines.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Glenda is toying with several ideas "down the road," to add to the store's offerings. She's thinking about placing locally produced products behind the office supplies area, and possibly a gift basket service.

For coffee lovers, Glenda offers K-cups along with their coffee makers and carousels. "We have something here that no one in the area has," said Glenda pointing to an entire wall with a large variety of coffee from several manufacturers. "The coffee cases are open and people can take a bag and mix and match the 24 flavors they like best for the same price as a box of one flavor."

Chocoholics can indulge in Bread and Chocolate's flavored hot cocoa mixes, bread, pancake, cookie mixes



and more.

Glenda will special order items not in the store such as office lamps and other accessories, and again emphasizes the personal service that anyone coming to Copies and More can expect.

The store is open Mon.-Fri. 9am-5pm and Sat. 9am-1pm.

You can contact Glenda during business hours at 802-757-8105 Fax 802-757-8107 ghoffman59@yahoo.com.

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# The Pink House

By Elinor P. Mawson

"Don't tell anyone you are paying \$45 a month for this place--everyone will want to rent it," announced our landlord. It was a 2-story house on Canobie Lake and it looked OK from the street. We were renting it sight unseen from my husband's former football coach, so we figured if it was good enough for him, it was good enough for us.

We weren't too surprised when we saw the eat-in

kitchen and spacious bath. It looked a little bedraggled, but after all, a family of 7 had lived there prior to our moving in. It was in the living-and dining rooms that we were a little mollified--someone somewhere had found a few gallons of pink paint and had really gone to town. Walls, window frames (even the sash), book shelves, the stairs--all pink. And to make matters worse, there was a

pink dining table and chairs, pink end tables, and even (would you believe?) an enormous pink piano! And to top it off, there was a pink corner cupboard in the dining room.

Fortunately the painter had stopped at the upper level, and most of the rooms were painted yellow. Nobody had bothered to paint the bedsteads or the bureaus--but they all looked the worse

for wear.

Since we weren't planning to live there past the end of the school year, we decided we could stand our colorful place. What we didn't know at the time, there was a huge oil barrel waiting to be filled, and in the cellar, there was a water pump inside a refrigerator box, underneath a 60 watt bulb which was on all the time.

We loved the place in the early fall. Living on a lake is always fun; my husband went fishing every night after supper. We enjoyed eating on the porch with our baby son in his high chair.

But when the weather turned cold it was a different story. The house was heated by a floor furnace which was quite dangerous for a little child just learning to walk. And of course the floor furnace was connected to the oil barrel which was half empty most of the time.

When winter came, we kept the kitchen faucet dripping; when we didn't hear the water pump on a regular basis, my husband would bolt from wherever he was and head for the cellar. He replaced the light bulb, tucked the refrigerator box more closely around the pump, and did a lot of praying.

It was one of the coldest winters in recent memory. We dismantled the pink dining room set and replaced it with a bed from upstairs. We closed off the stairs with blankets, turned up the floor furnace. In the event that the pump became inoperable, we would fill the bathtub with water so we could flush the toilet or heat water for dishes. And we were always cold.

One morning we awoke to a strange quiet. We didn't hear the pump. The water in

the tub was frozen. And we knew we were in trouble.

The pump was broken. Pipes were broken. Puddles were everywhere. My husband, who had no plumbing skills, learned them very fast. We took the pump to the pump doctor who braized it for \$4.00. We took it home and hitched it up underneath a 100 watt bulb and prayed some more.

We lived the winter just like that. Whenever he didn't hear the pump turn over--even in a deep sleep, my husband would leap up saying "What was that?" and head for the cellar. There were no more trips to the pump doctor, but there were always frozen and broken pipes. By Spring, I don't think there was 4 inches of pipe that hadn't been dealt with. We were nervous wrecks.

Sometime in the early spring, we made arrangements to buy a house in another town. Our weekends were spent going back and forth and exclaiming happily about the oil burner and town water in the new house. Although we would have to pay taxes we were thankful that our days worrying about water pumps and floor furnaces were over.

There have been many years since we lived on Canobie Lake. Awhile ago, we went to see if the house was still there, and even though we thought we knew where it was, the neighborhood was unrecognizable. Occasionally even now, we think about that winter and are happy to face cold weather in our house here on the river.

And we try to forget the place where it was flamingo pink as far as the eye could see.

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# Celebrating The Holidays, Saving Money and Sharing Traditions

By Deb Maes, Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Resources

Were you a Black Friday or a Cyber Monday shopper? Jeff Yeager, writing for AARP, says that the holiday season has ballooned into nearly a \$400,000,000,000 shopping spree. That averages out to about \$740 per adult on gifts alone.

Finances are still tight for many families across the country. I held a recent workshop, "Celebrate the Holidays without Going Broke", and was amazed at the many ways that families have managed to reduce their expenses and still celebrate the holidays with family and friends. Here are some of the creative ideas that were shared that evening on how to spend less but still create special memories. One mom said she and her children create and decorate the wrapping paper that they use for their gifts. Another family uses pictures taken by their in-home photographer, frames them, and shares them with family members.

One mother talked about her tradition of buying seasonal t-shirts for \$2 each after the holidays and saving them to be put on first thing in the morning. The family drank cocoa, opened presents and laughed about this year's crop of shirts. With a third child on the way, one couple joined in the family's tradition of swapping names for gift giving. One of my favorite ideas came from a family that stopped at a local convenience store, ordered hotdogs for a late breakfast and ate them on their way to share the day with relatives. Each idea has created a special

tradition for their families, doesn't involve spending a great deal of money, and everyone has fun.

If you are struggling to come up with the "perfect present" here are some other ideas that Yeager offers to let you stretch the fun as well as the dollars.

Everyone gets a dollar to go to the nearest dollar store and see how creative they can be.

Or how about only exchanging gifts that were made by the giver?

Search your pile of old photos and make copies of family heirloom pictures. Add whatever information you have: people in the picture, dates, location, etc. It's a good way to share and preserve your family history.

Is your house already overflowing with gifts? Let people know what your favorite charity is and have them make a contribution in your name.

Set a limit of \$5 and see who can purchase the tackiest gift.

Exchange the gift of time. Who wouldn't appreciate their car being washed and vacuumed, especially after a winter's worth of salty roads? What young couple wouldn't love an evening out without worrying about who is taking care of their child(ren)? Maybe your neighbor needs help with painting a room or getting some spring cleaning done.

Have you ever tried a re-gifting exchange? Agree to wrap something you won't ever use and share it with someone who might like it. Think of it as recycling, celebrating a

greener holiday, or reducing your carbon footprint.

Between gifts, cards, decorations and travel, the holiday season can be expensive for families. If you are trying to cut expenses think about the family traditions that you currently share. Ask your children what traditions mean the most to them. This way you can make decisions about what traditions to keep based on what is important to your family.

Think of what you remember about the holiday season when you were younger. Did you head out into the woods to chop down your own tree complete with a cookout? Was there an official "baking day" where

family members made dozens of cakes, cookies and pies? Did you live in a neighborhood where you walked around singing carols? I remember riding around town to check out the lights that decorated homes. Create your own contest rules and let your family decide what the

best, prettiest or most tacky display is. Consider traveling to Enfield to see the lights at the LaSalette Shrine.

Think of creative ways to make special holiday memories. Work to help your family set realistic expectations, but most of all, enjoy the holiday season!

# The Christmas Spi



Pictured are some members of the Cottage Hospital Auxiliary at their Annual Memory Tree Dedication and Lighting in front of the hospital. Shown left to right are auxiliary members Barb Fitzpatrick, Reita Jones (co-President), Donna Batchelder, Eileen Belyea (co-President - reading the names of those for whom bulbs have been donated), June Klitgord, Margaret Cope, Evelyn Brown, and Noelle Donahue. The dedication and blessing ceremony was lead this year by Father Jeffrey P. Statz from St. Joseph's Church in Woodsville. Father Jeff, guests, and other members are to the right of the picture. Bulbs may still be purchased until Christmas at the front desk at the hospital or from members of the auxiliary. A small red paper bulb with the name of the dearly departed so remembered is placed on a green felt tree on a bulletin board in the main hall at the hospital. Funds from the Memory Tree are used to purchase items for the hospital.

Another part of the Holiday Season are bell ringers. This one was a bit different. Newly elected NH State Senator Jeannie Forrester stood outside the front doors of Wal-Mart in Woodsville for a little over an hour on Friday, December 17. During that time she (along with assistant Barb Dutile) took in \$234.88. That amount was matched by Wal-Mart and the entire amount of \$469.76 was given to the Horse Meadow Senior Center. Senator Forrester said she has fond memories of the Senior Center as that is where she held her first spaghetti dinner as part of her campaign for the State Senate.



Cottage Hospital Auxiliary donates a "Difficult Airway Management" cart to Cottage Hospital's Emergency Department. Pictured: John Eppolito, MD - Reita Jones, (Cottage Hospital Auxiliary President) - Floraine Place, RN - Annie Wischerth, RN - Eric Carrier, Respiratory Therapist and Pat Thayer, RN pictured with Difficult Airway Management Cart.

*Merry Christmas  
To One And All*

December 21, 2010 Volume 2 Number 6

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

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*May the warmth of your home and family  
last throughout the Holiday Season*

# rit: Alive And Well



One of many groups putting together Care packages at this time of year was the Cohase Lions Club. The club has done such gift giving and grocery shopping for many years. This year about 30 homes were visited. Each receiving two bas of groceries plus 10 pounds of potatoes, and most also got gifts for the kids. The Lions Club wants to thank the Grafton County Farm and Aldrich General Store for helping the dollars go further.

On December 9th Glencliff Home for the Elderly sponsored their annual holiday buffet. This Luncheon was open to the community for no charge and has been free to the public for several years.

In addition to the buffet, there was also a silent auction and raffle. Glencliff Home for the elderly is currently fund raising to be able to provide a pavillion for the patients to enjoy when they go outside.



Toys for Tots is a program of the US Marine Corps. Locally it is coordinated by Mary Ann Brant who was well assisted this year by the WHS chapter of Rachael's Challenge. Thanks also go to the Town of Haverhill who donated space at the Clifford Building in Woodsville. Gifts came from many directions including the ten collection boxes around the area and a very special gift of 21 afghans and 7 scarves from Diane Greene of Benton. Though most of the packages were sorted and sent on Saturday, December 18, Mary Ann wants all to know that if there is someone in need she can still make a miracle happen. Also donations are still needed and will be gratefully accepted through Christmas.

In case you were worried that the people of this area had somehow forgotten how to share, then please look around.

Elsewhere on this page are several examples of groups of people who have found a way to share with others, and therefore to care for others. These photos by no means cover all the acts of kindness that go on during this time of year. But they give some sense of the many forms such giving takes.

Among the many groups are Cottage Hospital and the Cottage Hospital Auxiliary, the Cohase Lions Club, The Glencliff Home for the Elderly, the Toys for Tots Program, and even a politician getting in on the act.

One other very special program that is not pictured here is a brand new event for 2010. The owners of All Good Foods in Lisbon will be hosting a Community Meal on Christmas Eve. From 3 PM until 5 PM they will be offering a free meal to any area resident that would like to take advantage of their generosity. This will not be a special buffet meal, or something made just to serve those who show up. No, indeed. They will be serv-

ing items right off their everyday menu. The owners at All Good Foods pride themselves in using locally produced foods. As they put it "We support our neighbors, in hopes they will support us." And this meal is just another way of supporting their neighbors and neighborhood. For those who would like to participate there is no charge, but donations from those who wish to, will be accepted.

These are just some of the

acts known about in this great area we live in. There is no doubt that many more exist. To those not mentioned, thank you for what you have done, whether noticed or not. For those who actions are seen and recognized, thank you for doing your part to keep the Christmas Spirit alive and well.

Gary Scruton, Editor.



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# Wartime Victory Gardens

*By Heather Bryant, Extension Educator, Agricultural Resources*

The increased interest in backyard gardening has drawn some of its knowledge from the phenomenon of victory gardens. Most of us think of them as a WWII activity, but when I started the research for this article, I found that they actually started in WWI.

As war broke out, men from all over Europe and later the US left their jobs – including agricultural jobs – and joined the military. This left fewer people to run the farms, and production fell. The need to provide resources to troops caused transportation shortages that further impacted the food industry which at the time was dependant on railroads. In Europe battles were fought in agricultural areas, destroying thousands of tons of crops before they could be harvested. Submarines sunk ships sending goods to the bottom of the ocean further exacerbating the problem. Even before we got into the war it became clear that in order to prevent our allies from starving, some of our own production needed to be diverted to overseas mar-

kets. Not an easy task as the previous decade in America had seen an unrelated exodus of rural populations to urban areas diminishing the agricultural workforce. What then would happen when we joined the war and our workforce and transportation resources became more stressed as they had in Europe?

One solution was to form a National War Garden Commission. The goal of the Commission was to engage the public in gardening – an activity that would allow them to assist the war effort by raising food close to where it would be consumed. Children, teens and seniors could participate. It was hoped this would increase food production without further stress on the diminished workforce and overburdened transportation industry.

The challenges were pretty immense. These gardens, or victory gardens as they were later called, would need to be in urban areas, not just rural. Communities would need to buy into the effort and urbanites without backyards would need to

learn the skills to organize land procurement and labor in order to build community gardens in public spaces. The produce would need to be raised, preserved and stored by people who may not have ever done these activities before. So the Commission began a motivational and educational campaign. They produced posters, slogans, and 'how to' publications.

The campaign worked. People grabbed hold of the idea of victory gardens as a way for ordinary people to contribute. Five million gardens were started and by the end of the war they produced over a billion dollars worth of food. When the soldiers came home, life got back to normal and the gardens were abandoned.

However, when WWII broke out similar challenges to food production rose up again and the campaign was restarted. More than 20 million victory gardens were planted over the course of that war producing upwards of 50% of America's vegetables.

The USDA even made a film to help beginner gardeners get started. I watched it and was fascinated by the very literal use of horsepower in a suburban Maryland backyard. I was also struck by how the film talked about the need to plant a "small" manageable garden which they defined as a quarter acre managed primarily by a grandfather and two teens. You can watch the film on line at [http://www.archive.org/details/victory\\_garden](http://www.archive.org/details/victory_garden) although I strongly urge you to cover your eyes when you get to the out of date pesticide recommendations.

At the close of WWII people again abandoned their victory gardens, but what impresses me the most about this piece of our backyard food production history is how quickly people were able to institute substantial changes in the food system. The way the growing backyard food movement seems to be drawing on the lessons learned from these gardens shows how good ideas can be dusted off and used again.

Information resources used in this article were The War Garden Victorious by Charles Lathrop Pack, Wikipedia, and the USDA film "Victory Gardens".

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## Letter To The Editor

To The Editor

Sometimes good things happen to careless people. In this case, I was the careless person, and people at Cottage Hospital were honest enough to make a good thing happen for me.

While I was on a recent doctor's visit to the rehab section of Cottage, I managed to drop quite a few cards out of my wallet onto the carpeted floor in the waiting section - bank cards, my driver's licence and some good amount of cash as well.

It was picked up by a hospital employee, turned over to her supervisor, and I was contacted as soon as possible about the find and told it would be held safe until I picked it up.

Contacting me took a little trouble because I'm not in the phone books. Our fam-

ily name is there, with my father's first name. When I did show up to collect my belongings, they were all there, and when I offered a certain monetary amount as further thank you, I was turned down, more than once.

The good people here are Amanda Chamberlin who found the goods, and Laurie Fellows, of Environmental Services who called me so promptly. I dropped a note to the top person at the hospital, Maria Ryan, telling her of this incident, and I also wanted to express my gratitude to them all publicly in Trendy Times. People like Amanda and Laurie are one reason I enjoy living in a relatively small town. You and I both know what likely would have happened to all those cards and the cash in a larger city.

Robert Roudebush

Robert,

*Ain't it great! Many of us who live in this area have said that many times. It could be because of the wonderful views that surround us daily. It might be because of the weather that changes so dramatically from day to day. Or, as in this case, it might be because of the great people we live near and who serve us in all aspects of life.*

*In regards to those great folks who returned your paper work, and paper money, that's the way it should be. It is sad to think that you are right and in many other areas of this great land you may have never seen those items again.*

*In regards to Cottage Hospital more specifically, they have been in the news for other reasons of late as well. First was a fire on December It was discovered and quickly extinguished. As part of the follow up it was learned that the Hospital had practiced just such an emergency the night before the real thing happened. Quick reactions from employees and called in firefighters prevented any major damage.*

*Cottage Hospital also had their annual Open House on December 14. This event was a planned event and everyone was invited (with many locals accepting the invitation).*

*All three of these occasions show that the folks at Cottage Hospital, along with so many others in this area, are caring, competent and community minded employees, friends and neighbors.*

*So, again I say, "Ain't it great" to live in this wonderful area.*

Gary Scruton, Editor

## Letter To The Editor

Mr. Scruton,

I have been looking for an article in your paper about the controversial Dept. of Energy action by which Northeast Utilities plans to bring a high voltage line from Quebec straight through NH. We would not gain jobs. We would not get low-cost energy. We would be a "back alley" to Boston. The energy is for the southern NE states, not NH. None of the local newspapers have covered this and it has been a hot topic for a month now. There are groups of resistance forming. There are petitions being circulated. There is a major effort to file intervenor petitions with the DOE. We need to get this HVDC on the town warrants for discussion in March meetings. People need to be informed about this. They need to call or write the governor to find out just what is going on. This energy project has been in

the works for 2 years but the people of NH have just found out about it. And they are not happy. This HVDC would scar our state with 160 miles of very tall towers. There will be a magnetic field that could affect migratory animals and maybe even your compass. Public health could be affected. The landscape will be changed. And for what?? Ask the governor why we should allow this to go through our state when we only stand to lose. The Connecticut River Valley is seen as one of the possible routes for this monstrous plan. That means the North Haverhill area. We better be concerned and informed about this. It could affect property values, crops and farm animals and our rural landscape forever.

Sincerely,

M., Lisy Meyers and W.D. Meyers  
North Haverhill, NH

To the Meyers,

*Thank you for bringing this item to the attention of the readers of Trendy Times. It is this type of information that is great to receive from readers.*

*There are many questions still to be asked and answered regarding a project like this. If it does indeed show up on town warrants come March, I certainly hope public hearings will be held (either by the town or by supporters of the article) to better inform voters. As always, Town meetings in New Hampshire and Vermont could be very interesting, and well worth attending.*

Gary Scruton, Editor

## Letter To The Editor

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for including Mr. Fillion's recent letter complaining about the Haverhill public libraries in your paper. Which I disagree with.

This shows that you, at least, understand that opinions should be expressed even if you personally agree or disagree with the matter.

Fortunately our constitution dictates in its first amendment that we have freedom of speech. That includes writing and publication that we don't necessarily agree with. Unfortunately, many Americans today can't accept that fact and most likely would change or delete that factor if they could.

In how many wars have our young men fought and many died for that principle? Too many to lose our constitutional rights now.

Keep up the good work, at least your newspaper follows the First Ammendment and accepts crank letters like this one.

George B. Clark


George,

*First let me point out for other readers that George Clark is a regular contributor to Trendy Times. He writes many of our military stories as he is a historian with an emphasis on the Marine Corps.*

*Regarding your comments about the philosophy of Trendy Times ... you have hit it on the head. We have in the past, and will continue to in the future, publish Letters to the Editor or Op-Eds that do not always agree with the thoughts and opinions of this publication and/or its staff. That statement is at the heart of "Freedom of Speech", as well as "Freedom of the Press". When it comes to Letters to the Editor, I feel it is not my job to control what the readers of Trendy Times get to read. As one person said to me recently, "I look at the author's name first. Then if I don't want to read the letter, I don't". That sounds pretty American to me.*

*So please, keep the letters coming. But remember that we do reserve the right to edit material that borders on libel. And we will also edit "bad language". But if you can write your idea out in an understandable and calm manner, it doesn't matter if I agree or not. It deserves to be printed.*

Gary Scruton, Editor



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*Editor's Note: This poem came to me via email after being read at the Monthly POW MIA Vigil in Manchester on Wednesday, December 1st.*

*The email also contained the following: PLEASE, would you do me the kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be coming soon and some credit is due to our U.S. service men and women for our*

*being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us.*

LCDR Jeff Giles, SC, USN  
30th Naval Construction  
Regiment  
OIC, Logistics Cell One  
Al Taqqadum, Iraq



## Different Christmas Poem

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,  
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight.  
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,  
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest..

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,  
Transforming the yard to a winter delight.

The sparkling lights in the tree I believe,  
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.

My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,  
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep.  
In perfect contentment, or so it would seem,  
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,  
But I opened my eyes when it tickled my ear.  
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,

Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.

My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,  
And I crept to the door just to see who was near.

Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,  
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,  
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold.  
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,  
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear  
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!  
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,  
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift,  
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts..

To the window that danced with a warm fire's light  
Then he sighed and he said "Its really all right,  
I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night."

"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line,  
That separates you from the darkest of times.

No one had to ask or beg or implore me,  
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.

My Gramps died at ' Pearl on a day in December,"  
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram always remembers."  
My dad stood his watch in the jungles of ' Nam ',  
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

I've not seen my own son in more than a while,  
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile.  
Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,  
The red, white, and blue... an American flag.

I can live through the cold and the being alone,  
Away from my family, my house and my home.

I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,  
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.

I can carry the weight of killing another,  
Or lay down my life with my sister and brother.  
Who stand at the front against any and all,  
To ensure for all time that this flag will not fall."

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,  
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."  
"But isn't there something I can do, at the least,  
"Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?"

It seems all too little for all that you've done,  
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,  
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget.

To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,  
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.  
For when we come home, either standing or dead,  
To know you remember we fought and we bled  
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust,  
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

## Trendy Threads

will be closing for Vacation

on Friday, Dec 24th at noon

and Reopening Tues, Jan. 4th at 9:30

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*

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# Calendar of Events

## MONDAYS/THURSDAYS

NORTH COUNTRY YMCA  
AEROBIC FITNESS CLASS  
6:30 PM  
Woodsville Elementary School

## MONDAYS

THE AMERICAN DREAM;  
MYTH OR REALITY  
1:00 PM  
Horsemeadow Senior Center  
North Haverhill

## WEDNESDAYS

BINGO  
6:30 PM  
Haverhill Memorial VFW Post #5245  
North Haverhill

## WEDNESDAYS/FRIDAYS

WEST BARNET SENIOR MEAL  
12:00 Noon  
West Barnet Senior Meal Site

## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21

NH STATE VETERANS COUNCIL  
REPRESENTATIVE  
8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon  
Woodsville American Legion Post #20

## HAVERHILL COOPERATIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL HOLIDAY CONCERT

6:30 PM  
Haverhill Cooperative Middle School

## FAIRPOINT EXPANSION PRESENTATION

7:00 PM  
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill  
*See article on page 2*

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

FREE COMMUNITY MEAL  
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM  
All Good Foods, Main Street, Lisbon

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

7:00 PM  
North Haverhill United Methodist Church

## SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER  
12:00 Noon – 2:00 PM  
Bradford Congregational Church

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29

BASKETBALL SIGNUP GRADES 1-4  
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM  
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill

## MONDAY, JANUARY 3

GOOD OLE BOYS MEETING  
12:00 Noon  
Happy Hour Restaurant, Wells River  
*Public is invited.*

## HAVERHILL SELECTBOARD MEETING

6:30 PM  
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill

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## TUESDAY, JANUARY 4

NH STATE VETERANS COUNCIL  
REPRESENTATIVE  
8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon  
Woodsville American Legion Post #20

## CONNECTICUT VALLEY SNOWMOBILE CLUB MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM  
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5

3 RIVERS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION  
MONTHLY MEETING  
8:00 AM  
Wells River Savings Bank, Wells River

## WOODSVILLE/WELLS RIVER 4TH OF JULY COMMITTEE MEETING

7:00 PM  
Woodsville Emergency Services Building

## MONDAY, JANUARY 10

ROSS-WOOD AUXILIARY UNIT 20  
MONTHLY MEETING  
6:00 PM  
American Legion Home, Woodsville

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12

MONTHLY MEETING - ROSS-WOOD  
POST #20 AMERICAN LEGION  
6:00 PM  
American Legion Home, Woodsville

## UPPER VALLEY BEE CLUB

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM  
Westshire School, Rte 113, West Fairlee

## MONDAY, JANUARY 17

HAVERHILL SELECTBOARD MEETING  
6:30 PM  
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 13

VERMONT LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSION  
6:30 PM  
Fairlee Town Hall, Route 5, Fairlee

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 18

NH STATE VETERANS COUNCIL  
REPRESENTATIVE  
8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon  
Woodsville American Legion Post #20

## WHENEVER DATE

Place your event for your town, school or organization at no charge.

**Submit your entries by:**

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**Deadline for submissions is Thursday, December 30, 2010 for our January 4th issue.**

# Cottage Hospital November Stork Report

15

**Child One:**

**Sex of Baby:** Female

**Name of Child:** Isabella Snow Fraser

**Birth Date:** November 21, 2010

**Hometown:** West Newbury, NH

**Delivering Physician:** Dr. Stephen Genereaux

**Parents' Names:** Emily & Andrew Fraser



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*Happy Holidays!*  
Karen & Diane

## THE HAVERHILL RECREATION DEPARTMENT IS PROUD TO PRESENT YOUTH LEAGUE BASKETBALL

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR 2011

**SIGN UP:** Wednesday, December 29th from 5:00-6:30 PM in the James R. Morrill Building. The cost will be \$15 if you register on or before the sign-up date. After the deadline date the fee is increased to \$20. T-shirts will be handed out at registration. Make your checks payable to the Town of Haverhill Recreation Department.

**AGES:** 1st- 4th Grade boys and girls

**LOCATION:** Haverhill Cooperative Middle School Gymnasium

**TIMES:** 1st and 2nd grade 8:30-10:00 AM  
3rd and 4th grade 10:15 -12:00 PM

**DATES:**

- January 8 - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th grades
- January 15 - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th grades
- January 22 - 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th grades
- January 29 - There will be no practice due to the coaches having a game. All children urged to attend and support your youth coaches while they play BMU. The game is being held at BMU and starts at 2:30 PM.
- February 5 – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th grades. This will be the last day for 1st and 2nd graders.
- February 12 – 3rd and 4th graders only. Basketball will be at the James R. Morrill Building.
- February 22-27 - Lions Tournament for 3rd & 4th graders – time and dates to be announced.

*Feel free to bring your own basketball and  
don't forget to have it labeled with your name!*

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

December 21, 2010 Volume 2 Number 6

# The Most Essential Vitamins

• **VITAMIN A** - fat soluble, requiring fats and zinc as well as other minerals and enzymes for absorption. Counteracts night blindness, weak eyesight, and strengthens the optical system. Supplementation lowers risk of many types of cancer. Retinoids inhibit malignant transformation, and reverse pre-malignant changes in changes in tissue. Particularly effective, even in large amounts, against lung cancer. An anti-infective that also builds immune resistance. Helps develop strong bone cells; a major factor in the health of skin, hair, teeth and gums. Deficiency results in eye dryness and the inability to tear, night blindness, rough, itchy skin, poor bone growth, weak tooth enamel,

chronic diarrhea, frequent respiratory infection.

Effective food sources: vegetables

• **BETA CAROTENE** – a vitamin A precursor, converting to A in the liver as the body needs it. A powerful anti-infective and anti-oxidant for immune health, protection against environmental pollutants, slowing the aging process, and allergy control. Supplementation protects against respiratory diseases and infections. A key in preventing some kinds of cancer, and in developing anti-tumor immunity.

Effective food sources: green leafy vegetables, green pepper, carrots and other range vegetables, sea vegetables.

• **THE B COMPLEX VITAMINS** – the B Complex vitamins are essential to almost every aspect of body function, including metabolism of carbohydrates, fats, amino acids and energy production. B Complex vitamins work together. While they can and do work as partitioned substances for specific problems or deficiencies, they should be taken as a whole for broad-spectrum activity.

• **VITAMIN B1** – Thiamine known as the “morale vitamin” because of its beneficial effects on the nervous system and mental attitude. Promotes proper growth in children, aids carbohydrate utilization for energy, and supports the nervous system.

Enhances immune response. Helps control motion sickness. Wards off mosquitoes and stinging insects. Pregnancy, lactation, diuretics and oral contraceptives require extra thiamine. Smoking, heavy metal pollutants, excess sugar, junk foods, stress and alcohol all deplete thiamine. Deficiency results in insomnia, fatigue, confusion and poor memory, and muscle coordination.

Effective food sources: asparagus, brewer's yeast, broccoli, green leafy vegetables, eggs, wild rice, mushrooms, yogurt.

• **VITAMIN B2** – Riboflavin – commonly deficient in the American diet. Necessary for energy production, and for fat and carbohydrate metabolism. Helps prevent cataracts and corn ulcers, and benefits vision generally. Promotes healthy skin, especially in cases of psoriasis. Helps protect against drug toxicity and environmental chemicals. Pregnancy and lactation, red meat, excess dairy consumption, prolonged stress, sulfa drugs, diuretics and oral contraceptives require extra riboflavin. Deficiency is associated with alcohol abuse, anemia, hypothyroidism, diabetes, ulcers, cataracts, and congenital heart disease.

Effective food sources: almonds, brewer's yeast, broccoli, green leafy vegetables, eggs, wild rice, mushrooms, yogurt

• **VITAMIN B3** – Niacin – broad spectrum of functions,

including energy production, cholesterol metabolism, sex hormone synthesis and proper digestion. Promotes healthy skin and nerves. Deficiency results in dermatitis, headaches, gum diseases, sometimes high blood pressure, and negative personality behavior with mental depression. However, because niacin can rapidly open up and stimulate circulation, (a niacin flush is evidence of this), it can act quickly to reverse deficiencies and disorders. Relieves acne, diarrhea and other gastrointestinal disorders, migraine headaches and vertigo attacks. Supplementation is synergistic with chromium, via GTF to improve blood sugar regulation for diabetes and hypoglycemia. Helps reduce serum blood fats, triglycerides and cholesterol, while raising HDLs.

Effective food sources: almonds, avocados, brewer's yeast, fish, organs meats, legumes, bananas, whole grains.

*Melanie Osborne is the owner of Thyme to Heal Herbs and practices on Route 302 in Lisbon, NH. She has been in practice since 1991. She is certified in Therapeutic Herbalism through the Blazing Star Herbal School in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts. Much of her work is private health consultations, teaching herbal apprenticeships and intensive herbal workshops, Reiki I, II & III into mastership. In her shoppe, located in Lisbon are over 200 medicinal bulk herbs, teas and customized capsule formulas, all created on premise. Apprenticeship 2011 starts January 8th & 9th. Will continue to be the second weekend of every month for nine consecutive. There is placent for two more students.*

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*As we celebrate the birth of Christ,  
let us rejoice in His glory.*  
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*Merry Christmas*  
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# Christmas Long Ago And Far Away

By Robert Roudebush

*(Editor's Note – The writer spent 4 years in the U.S. Navy, two of those in Vietnam. He arrived in-country just days prior to the TET offensive of 1968, a massive multi-front attack of North Vietcong troops on numerous U.S. military installations in South Vietnam. Most sailors in Vietnam did not serve aboard ships, but rather at shore installations or up and down the Mekong River system on patrol craft of one sort or another. Roudebush spent time on river patrol boats part of his time in country, but initially worked at the Vietnamese Naval Supply Center, on the banks of the Saigon River. Like all military personnel, he stood multiple guard duties at the various locations where he worked in the daytime and where he slept at night.)*

Bing Crosby was softly crooning "White Christmas" from the eight-track tape player beside me. Moving to one side of the gun port, and keeping my hands close to the dirt floor I knelt on, I struck a match, lit the candle inside Santa, tucked him away, slapped a new magazine into the M-16 and began firing again.

Glowing red tracers arced out of the automatic weapon into the heavy wet night air, telling me in the dark where my bullets were going. From his deep depression in the dirt nearby, the red and white porcelain Santa Clause watched, silent, his eyes twinkling at me now from the flame inside.

I wondered a little about the man out there I was trying to kill, somewhere in the dark, maybe twenty or thirty yards away, who was firing back at me, trying to kill me. We were both engaged in impersonal death dealing – it was a war – but it felt pretty personal to me. I didn't know about him, didn't want to. I did know he was pretty good at what he was doing and I wasn't – I was a rank amateur in Uncle Sam's war. I was 18, felt stupid, and nearly scared out of my wits and my soul. I bet I looked crazy and I sure felt that way.

Christmas Eve night in Saigon, December 24, 1969 – welcome to my new hell.

I wondered if the invisible shooter out there knew how close he was to getting the job done, how close his rounds were coming to me. I'd seen his muzzle-flashes often enough to know about where he was out there in the dark and his position kept changing. He was readjusting about every two or three rounds. Moving closer. He was working a single-shot rifle of some kind, no automatic bursts. It sure was not the automatic weapon of choice for Charlie, the Chinese knock off of a Russian made AK-47 machine gun – you could identify those overloud cracking harsh reports anywhere, anytime. Maybe the kid (I thought of him as a kid because I was one) had a little M-1 Carbine or even a newer larger M-14, both American issued semiautomatics, but he was squeezing off

one round at a time – U.S. weapons ended up in enemy hands too often.. It happened a lot in Nam, being shot at with our own weapons.

He didn't have any tracers. He didn't seem to need them.

I ejected the magazine, slapped in another, released another burst out into the night. Plenty of ammo, thank God. But the walkie-talkie was putting out and receiving static and nothing else. No communication. There was no John Wayne cavalry charge coming, trumpets blaring, to help old Robert out. No helicopter gun ships circling overhead, with searchlights and Puff the Magic Dragon – a six-thousand-rounds-a-minute capable mini-gun, a kind of multi-barreled super machine gun that would even pulverize the bunker I was in if it was aimed that way, and would sure make Charlie out there just a wet memory. It was just him and me. His shots kept coming, carefully, chosen – I remember thinking even in my crazy, he was a better rifleman than I was, more thoughtful. The shooting port in front of me in the concrete bunker guard post was about 18 inches side to side and maybe 10 or 11 inches in height. The thickness of the walls was re-assuring to a teenager in his first firefight. His bullets kept coming – and until one actually hit me, they would continue doing what they were doing now – either thudding sledge-hammer-like into the outside walls surrounding me as I crouched there in the stinking dirt and my own sweat and choking on concrete dust, or the bullets would go whizzing through the shooting port past my head and thud into the walls about 10 feet behind me. I even heard them drop into the dirt after impact behind me, no ricocheting, thank God again.

It was the first time in my life I'd been shot at, no matter the weapons training the Marine Instructors had given all us Navy boys in Little Creek, Virginia before they loaded us up for Vietnam. My reactions to every bullet, inside or out, had been about the same for a long time. How long? My screaming mind said about two hours, my watch said 20 minutes. Thudding bullets outside jolted my heart physically – I could feel it hammering inside me. And the whizzing ones near my head put something into my throat, making it hard to swallow, hard to breathe, everything trying to choke me. Those close rounds really did sound for all the world like fast angry wasps, close enough at times to create a tiny chill breeze on my sweaty neck. If you've ever heard that sound, you'll never forget it. Those close puffs of wind sent shivers up my spine. I wondered if this was how everybody else felt under fire, I wondered if this was how anybody else felt under fire. I found out that night for the first time in my young life that you can be scared and still get the job done. I didn't freeze, I didn't stop firing, didn't stop doing my job, but I wasn't happy and I was no camper.

All of us on guard duty wore flack-jackets, but they were not bullet-proof vests, not real body armor, not designed to stop a bullet, just to keep you from being sliced up too bad around exploding munitions. I had a helmet too, one of those old steel pots from the WW II or Korean War vintage – of course, mine was too big and flopped around my head at all the wrong times.

I was the wrong guy in the wrong place at the real wrong time. And when my mind was working, I spent considerable time cursing myself for ever

joining the Navy to start with, for volunteering for Vietnam, VOLUNTEERING!!!! – and then for agreeing to take this guard post duty at the last minute for a pal who'd wangled a hot date on the party street in this town, called Tu Do. It wasn't even my shift. What an idiot I was.

Santa kept twinkling at me from his hole, even his small round open mouth glimmering now, as the candle burned lower. The homemade eight-track played "Jingle Bell Rock" now. Locally produced and poorly recorded, it featured several young Vietnamese men singing in their own language, sounding for all the world like the singing Chipmunks back home with lead singer Albert or Allen or something like that. Suddenly it was funny and I heard some fool laughing out loud, it was me, could not stop, laughing hard enough I felt the tears, and I kept firing out into the night and then the shooting out there stopped and did not start again. No more thudding or whizzing.

The shooter silent out there now might have been a Catholic – I wasn't, but lots of Vietnamese, North and South, were – it was his Christmas Eve too. Maybe he even had a family, people who would miss him. The quiet was pretty loud now. Just yesterday, some South Vietnamese Navy friends and co-workers of mine had honored me with an invitation to a Christmas celebration. They had a Nativity Scene. Joseph and Mary were beat-up department store mannequins, Oriental and vacant faced, both dressed in standard working-class Vietnamese gear - he in black pants and a cheap white shirt, and Mary in the standard long slit skirt and long-sleeved top with black pajama bottoms called an Au Jai

Baby Jesus was the genuine article, a placid infant, bundled up and happy and making baby noises in a beer-crate manger. The snow around the manger was broken up small pieces of white Styrofoam from packing crates. The local beer, "33" flowed as freely as the laughter and good companionship and jokes in two languages. They were genuinely pleased by my company at their holiday affair. The good cheer and the good feelings were as warm as any I have known in the more than forty years since that night.

Two nights long ago and far away I'll never forget - and who is to say which is the most important?

December 21, 2010 Volume 2 Number 6  
Not all Times are Trendy but there will always be Trendy Times

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By Ronda Marsh

Now here's a very yummy little appetizer, perfect for any holiday get-together and reminiscent of those famous Chinese take-out favorites of the same name. Don't like crab, you say? Substitute chopped cooked chicken. Don't like chicken? Eliminate the mayonnaise and substitute browned ground turkey or beef or even sausage, and maybe a handful of shredded

cheese. You see, this is really a method more than a recipe. The star of the show is the beautiful, delicate little wonton cups that lovingly cradle whatever filling you wish to nestle inside. If you've never used them, wonton wrappers are available at the local grocery stores, and are actually very similar to fresh pasta. As a matter of fact, wonton wrappers can be used to make

ravioli's, but that's a subject for another Trendy Kitchen... stay tuned! This dish is fast to prepare, and despite its ease of preparation, looks pretty impressive. You might want to double or triple this recipe, since the only problem with these lovely little bites is that I find it very hard to keep from repeatedly sampling them prior to serving!

- 1 can (6 oz) white crabmeat, drained & flaked
- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup thinly sliced green onions
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 12 wonton wrappers

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Mix crab, cheese, onions & mayo.

Spray 12 mini to medium muffin cups with cooking

spray. (I used the mini.)

Gently place a wonton wrapper in each cup, allowing edges of wrappers to extend above the edges of the cups.

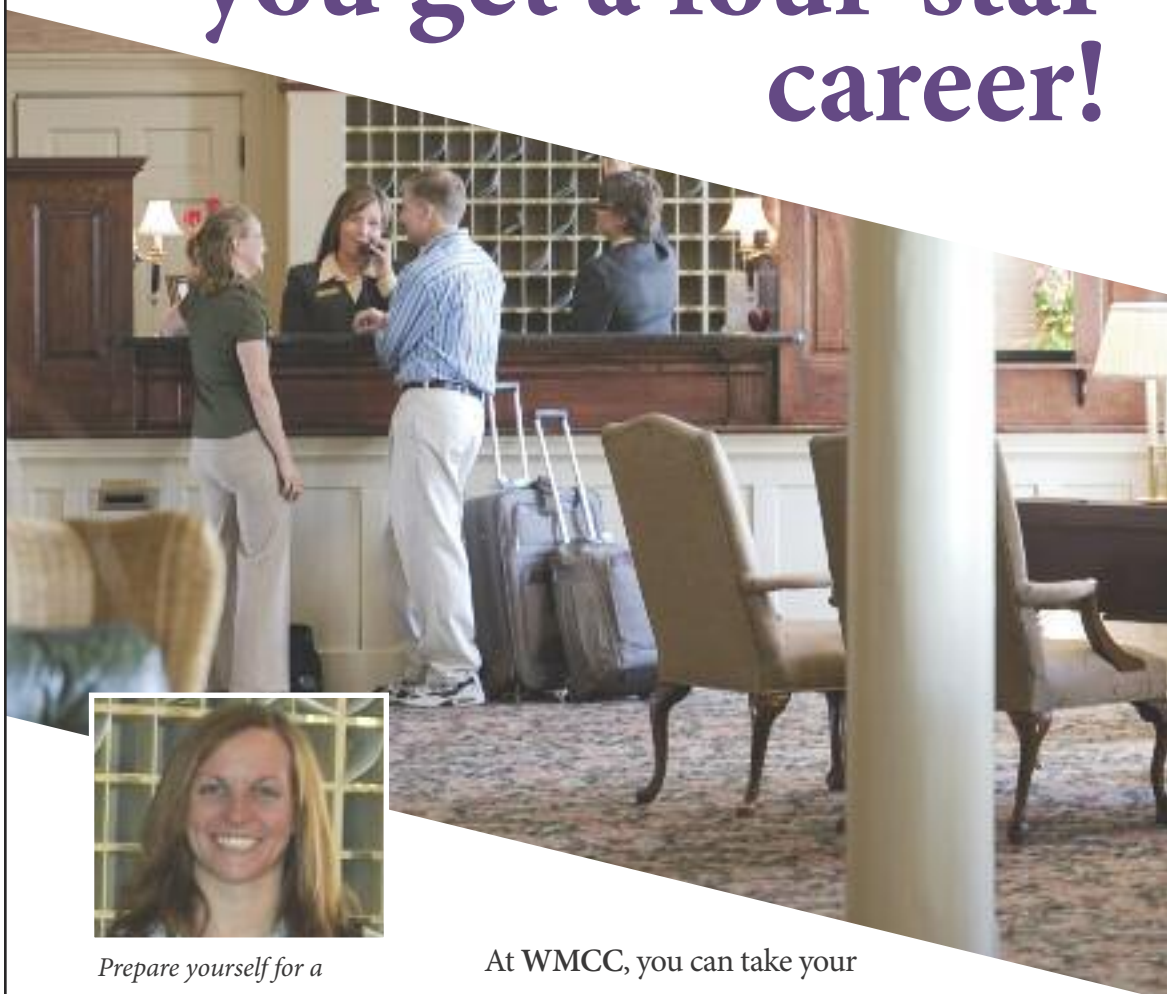
Fill evenly with crab mixture.

Bake 18-20 minutes, until edges are golden brown and filling is heated through.

Serve warm and garnish with chopped green onions, if desired.



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