

TRENDY TIMES

171 Central Street • Woodsville, NH 03785
Phone: 603-747-2887 • Fax: 603-747-2889

Email: gary@trendytimes.com
Website: www.trendytimes.com

DECEMBER 25, 2012 VOLUME 4 NUMBER 6

Nothing I Can Do About It Again Except Maybe Sing “Jingle Bells”

By Robert Roudebush

It's that time again and what to write about it that has not been written before?

Could talk about music of the season.

I doubt anyone much shares my peculiar love of certain kinds of this music anymore. Partly because of my age. I've forgotten what that is, but I'm convinced I'm probably 40 or 50 or 60 something by now. Few people these days have even heard of a powerful-voiced gospel goddess from the middle part of the last century - Mahalia Jackson. The album is SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT. It cost me less than five dollars ordered off the internet a couple of weeks ago. It's not really an "album" anymore of course, but a CD and I had it cranked up and delivering joyous treasure from my Subaru display in less than a week.

This unvarnished recording from the mid 1950s sounds like it might have been recorded in a church basement, the kind of poor small place no one ever attends anymore except the full-fledged faithful. No fancy technology, no multi-track playback units, no studio fine-tuning. Only raw natural talent from a middle-aged southern woman. Right on the outside of the plastic cover it warns me, "EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE ORIGINAL RECORDING. BE AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT THESE TRANSFERS

CONTAIN IMPERFECTIONS WHICH WERE INHERENT IN THE RECORD EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES OF THAT TIME.

So this latest rendering was first pressed onto a black vinyl 33 & 1/3 LP - that means "long playing"- album I'd fallen in love with when I was a dopey kid of around 10 or 12 in Kansas City. That dopey eye-glass wearing kid is still in me, I discovered, when it comes to gut-wrenching God-given singing power. The "orchestration" backing Ms. Jackson's unforgettable voice is pretty basic - you can hear a deep-lunged, big-bellied organ - there's a rickety piano, tickled and pounded in turn according to the mood in the old-fashioned church choir style - there is a bass, and you know it's the unfashionable kind that someone has to stand up and wrestle with - some drums, a xylophone and some bells and a few back-up singers. Mostly there's Miss Jackson's uplifting belief and strength. Could make you a believer and I don't even pretend to be especially religious.

Remind yourself just how manufactured and shallow are most of the new young so-called "singers" you see and

hear today on The Voice, or American Idol - how they are, with few exceptions, all show and no go. Listen to Ms. Jackson deliver NO ROOM AT THE INN, or SWEET LITTLE JESUS BOY, or GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN. Makes you WANT to go climb one right around here. No one groomed or mentored Mahalia Jackson into superlative singing. She always had it big-time, deep inside, born with it. She does not sing those songs I mentioned, she prays them, reverently, and I'd bet a case or two of very good wine that God hears those prayers. I hope so.

Anybody remember genius actor/comedian JACKIE GLEASON, a long-time ago TV star - he was Ralph Cramden on THE HONEYMOONERS - and also known as the goofy sheriff in a bunch of Burt Reynolds trucking movies? Orson Welles called him THE GREAT ONE. One of the reasons is Gleason's musical acumen. Did you know he conducted orchestras too? Sure did. I recently bought another pretty inexpensive CD - TIS THE SEASON - that combines two of his 1950's and 1960's Christmas Albums, including one I grew attached to as a kid called MERRY

CHRISTMAS. It was in the upper rungs of the album charts in 1956. I play that sound today and I'm rushed right back into the happy times of candlelit Christmas at the Roudebushes in Gladstone Missouri in our 11,000 dollar house on the opposite side of the road from where the money lived - they had 30,000 dollar homes. The percussive instrumentation and lush orchestration are just as matchless now as I thought they were then. How many things beloved from our childhoods hold up that well?

You've never heard JINGLE BELLS until you've heard Gleason's take on it. Here is warming, fireside music of a kind that is meant for those precious hours when evening reaches toward dawn and thoughts drift into dreams of holidays gone by and of those yet to come. The mood is soft with the glow of Christmas lights seen through a snowfall and gay with the stir of a tree-trimming party. JINGLE BELLS emerges as a lovely, almost haunting thing.

In case you think I'm stuck in the past, the six-disc changer in the Forester also contains sounds from JOSH GROBAN, IL

DIVO, BARBRA STRIESAND, and SUSAN BOYL as well as a talented young fella who nearly won one of those TV talent shows, DAVID ARCHULETA. He looks about 14 and sings like an angel. Just about knocked out America when he delivered IMAGINE. He sings in sweet soaring light tenor which amazes and the only word for his gift is preternatural. Go ahead and look that one up - I had to and it is worth the effort. His Christmas album is called CHRISTMAS FROM THE HEART. Archuleta is so good on O HOLY NIGHT and AVE MARIA and RIU RIU CHIU that I hope that if I'm still around in 50 years, there will be a new way to hear this album again in 2063.

So we covered some exceptionally good music, some from a long-gone black woman, some from a deceased white man and some from a very alive young Latino. What else? Santa's gotta worry now about who's naughty and who's nice. I wonder just how many cubic tons of coal he can haul up to the roof and then shovel down the chimney into the long black mesh stockings of Lindsey Lohan.

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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 ~

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Hold Them Close

By Sheila Asselin

Last Sunday I went to my daughter Sharon's house for our annual session of organized chaos (aka the Christmas get together). If anyone has a new boyfriend/girlfriend who has not met the family we bring them to one of these. If they do not run screaming in the opposite direction we figure they are

good sports and keepers. I counted nine children under the age of 10. Eli, Seamus, Charlie, Ayden, Lily, Lyla, Maebel, Ellie, and Macy. This is the Christmas Henry, Noah, and Quin, teenagers, graduated to adult status and joined in the Yankee swap. Everyone soon started having fun. Lily

and Macy, who were rumored to be shy, joined right with in Maebel in turning Grandma Sharon's couch into a trampoline, leap frogging and somersaulting and laughing uproariously. Eli and Seamus, same age cousins and inseparable, had a wrestling match on the carpet. Baby sister Lyla just

sat in the corner watching the action and stuffing her face -- a true Asselin! The noise level was roughly that of a jet plane taking off! Just when everything kicked into high gear there was a knock on the door. Santa had arrived in an SUV, which was strange because Ayden swore he heard boots

stomping on the roof. The house has no chimney so I guess Santa just had to improvise. There stood Santa with a bag of gifts. Do not tell this to the children but Santa was a drama teacher at the school where Sharon teaches. He turned in an Oscar winning performance. Looking at all these beautiful happy faces I wonder how anyone could want to harm them. So sweet, so innocent. I count my blessings every time I think of them. If you are lucky enough to have a small child in your life hold them extra close this Christmas. Time flies by so fast. Tell all the special people in your life how much you love and cherish them. Do it for those children who can no longer feel a hug or hear the words "I love you".

Groton Library News

Friday, Dec. 28, 3:00-4:00pm -- Fri-Li Drop-In. School is closed for the holidays, but the library is open! Children ages 8 and up are invited to explore open-ended activities of Legos, snowflake-making, tangram puzzles, and play-dough -- to name a few!

Sunday, Jan. 6, 2:00-4:00pm -- Quilt Trunk Show and Thread Painting Workshop. Mary Schilke, local master quilter and founder of Machine Quilters Exposition, will share a wide variety of quilts and quilting techniques -- with special focus on thread painting. Join us for quilting inspiration and light refreshments!

Saturday, Jan. 12, 10:30-11:30am -- S.A.M: Arctic Adventure! SAM (Stories And More) takes place on the second Saturday of every month at 10:30am. Pre-school-ers and elementary school-ers are invited to enjoy read-aloud stories along with a craft and a snack.

Sunday, Jan. 13, 2:00-4:00pm -- Family Program: Wood Turning and Folk Toys. Local artist Dick Montague offers a demonstration and hands-on instruction on making old-fashioned wooden toys. Great for all ages!

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

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Area Blood Donors Needed

Blood donors are needed to make sure patients in area hospitals have the blood they will need to survive.

Blood donors will have an opportunity to help avert a blood shortage on Thursday, December 27th. An American Red Cross blood drive will be held at the Morrill building in North Haverhill,

NH from 12-6pm and donors of all blood types are needed.

Blood is used for many surgical procedures, bone marrow transplants, trauma and chemotherapy. For some patients, such as the victim of an automobile accident, the need for blood is sudden. For others, ongoing transfusions are needed to sustain lifesav-

ing medical treatment.

Potential donors must be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 lbs. and be in good health.

For more information or to make an appointment, call the Red Cross Blood Services at 1-800-RED CROSS or visit us online at www.redcrossblood.org

Winter Care For Your Dog

It is very important that a dog owner is aware of the many facets of care for their 'best friend'. The weather of the four seasons does create different needs for your dog and each dog does have certain specific care requirements in order for them to remain healthy and alert during each of those seasons.

Here comes winter! Snow and freezing temperatures do arrive and with it, certain things that need to be addressed where your dog's good health is concerned.

If your dog is an outside dog and has a long coat, it is imperative to make sure that he has adequate shelter (example: dog house) from the cold. It is recommended that the shelter be off of the ground with insulation on all sides. A swinging door for easy access is important to keep them warm during the coldest part of this season. Animals with long coats do need to be brushed often to allow their fur to keep their body well insulated. If your dog does get wet, it is recommended to dry them off in a warmer location so they don't get chilled. Fresh (un-frozen) water is important as well as making sure they consume enough extra calories (food) during this time. Extra en-

ergy is needed in the cold weather to keep the temperature of their body regulated and healthy.

Dogs with shorter coats should not be left out for long periods of time and should have a coat that will keep them warm during short walks. If it is too cold for you to stand outside in a sweater, it is a good indicator that your (short-haired) dog will be just as cold. It is recommended if the dogs are left out in the cold for periods of time, you would want to monitor them for frostbite which in its early stages might show up as a discoloration on the tips of their ears, feet and tail. Once the short-haired breeds return indoors from the cold, they will seek out and instinctually find the warmest place in the house. If this is in front of a space heater or fireplace, make sure they do not get too close to that heating source to keep from getting burned.

Both long haired and short haired breeds do need to have their paws tended to on a regular basis especially when they are out walking in the snow. The snow can accumulate into ice between their toes and cause discomfort and it is important to wipe them down with a soft, dry

cloth. It is also recommended to trim excess fur on their lower legs and feet to keep any snow and ice from this area as well. Another important point is to check the pads of their feet. Snow and ice tend to make the pads crack and cause open sores. A small amount of petroleum jelly rubbed on them will keep them protected and soft.

One of the most important things to be aware of is any of the dangerous winter chemicals that may accumulate in your driveway or the street. Road melting agents and antifreeze are deadly to your pets and can cause extreme illness or death. If you need to put down a melting agent, there are some out there that are pet friendly and it is recommended to read the labels before purchase.

Just as leaving your dog in a closed car in the summer is dangerous, it is just as dangerous in the winter time. People tend to leave their cars running in the cold weather to keep the inside warm, especially if their dog is inside. However, an enclosed car with the engine running can emit carbon monoxide fumes on the inside which are deadly. Leaving your dog for periods of time in a cold car will also be just as dangerous.

Winter brings the holiday season and those known pet poisons: Holly Berry, Mistletoe and Poinsettia. If you keep them in your house, please make sure they are out of reach of your dog.

Last but not least, holiday gift-giving should not include buying a puppy or adopting a dog for an unsuspecting gift recipient unless it has been pre-discussed and accepted. For a loving dog owner, dogs are a lifetime commitment to the animal. If you are thinking of giving a dog as a gift, perhaps a dog collar or leash as a symbolic (dog) gift might be a better approach rather than bringing a new dog into a brand new life situation during this noisy and festive time of year. It would be much better for a new dog to have a quiet period of adjustment for it to acclimate to new surroundings with as little stress as possible.

Dogs are great to have as pets, and if we follow these recommendations, winter can and will be a fun time to spend with Man's Best Friend!

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From The Desk Of NH State Senator

Jeanie
FORRESTER


Dear Constituents,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to represent District 2 in the 2013-2014 session. As in the past, the hallmark of my service to the citizens of District 2 will be active communication and constituent service. I will continue to write a monthly news column about activities in Concord and the District and provide e-newsletter updates as well. (If you are interested in subscribing to the e-newsletter, visit my website at www.jeanieforrester.com and complete the form in the lower right-hand corner.) Beyond the written word, I will continue to meet with various constituency groups, attend meetings and events upon request, and advocate for you in Concord.

So what's been happening since the election? In Concord, we've begun preparation for the new term. This election saw a shift in party affiliation in the Executive Council, House, and Senate. The Executive Council has three Democrats and 2 Republicans. In the House, there are 221 Democrats and 179 Republicans. In the Senate, 13 Republicans and 11 Democrats.

December 5th was Organization Day for both the NH Senate and House. I, along with 23 other Senators-elect were officially sworn in by Governor Lynch and the Executive Council. Next, we unanimously voted for Senator Peter Bragdon (R-Milford) as our Senate President, followed by a unanimous vote for Tammy Wright as the Senate Clerk. Finally, the Senators had the opportunity to introduce their guests. I was pleased to

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have constituents from Tilton, Meredith, Campton, and Orford join me that day. After our swearing in, we joined with the House of Representatives to elect Secretary of State Bill Gardner and State Treasurer Catherine Provencher.

Committee assignments have been designated and I will be serving as Vice Chair of Senate Finance and Vice Chair of Public & Municipal Affairs (I served on both these committees in the 2011-2012 Session). New this session, I will also be serving on the Fiscal Committee. This committee consults with, assists, advises, and supervises the work of the legislative budget assistant, and may at its discretion investigate and consider any matter relative to the appropriations, expenditures, finances, revenues or any of the fiscal matters of the state.

Another item of interest is legislation. The deadline to file bills for Senators is December 20th and if you go to the NH General Court website, www.gencourt.state.nh.us you can see there are already over 700 bills introduced for the 2013 session. To see a list of the bills, click on the State Legislative Dash Board, 2013 Bill Requests, then "Click Here to See Bill Requests."

For the 2013 legislative session, the Senate Republicans have set an agenda that will guide us in creating a responsible budget while con-

sidering competing needs and wants. We will once again be faced with challenges in building a budget with limited resources.

We will encourage job growth and improve our economy by working with citizens, employers, and state agencies to encourage government to act as a partner with our state's job creators so that together we may foster an environment that encourages investment and the creation of good paying Granite State jobs.

We will responsibly manage state government & taxpayer dollars. Once again, we will produce a balanced budget without new or increased taxes and fees, or accounting gimmicks. We will promote a streamlined, efficient, and responsive state government that cost-effectively meets the needs of our citizens, rewards performance and combats waste.

We will work to lower health care costs and increase access through free market reforms by advocating for market-based health care reforms that will lower costs and increase access while giving patients more information, control, and responsibility for their health care decisions. We will closely monitor the implementation of the Affordable Care Act to ensure patients and taxpayers are protected.

We will work to expand opportunity and improve results in education by advocating for access to top quality education for students of all income levels and geographic locations. We will work to ensure equitable education funding and seek to target aid to communities that need it most.

With redistricting, Senate District 2 has changed and

now serves 27 communities in the counties of Merrimack, Belknap, and Grafton. While I was disappointed to lose communities I had developed relationships with, I was very pleased to add the five towns of Tilton, Wilnot, Danbury, Grafton, and Hill. During the campaign, I visited these communities often—to learn about the issues that are important to them. I am pleased to say that since the election, I've already been back to Tilton and Danbury, and plan to visit with all the

remaining communities in the coming months.

As we did in our campaign, the next two years will be a grassroots effort—focusing on outreach and active communication with you. I look forward to keeping you informed and encourage you to call, write, or email me (279.1459 (h), 271.2609 (o); 78 Tracy Way, Meredith, NH 03253; or jeanie@jeanieforrester.com respectively).

Your Senator from District 2,
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Calendar of Events

This is a full page of Calendar of Events for local non-profits. Courtesy of Trendy Times.
Put **YOUR FREE** listing here!

SUNDAYS

SOFTBALL CLINIC

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Elementary aged girls
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM High School girls
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill

CRIBBAGE

1:00 PM
American Legion Post #83, Lincoln

LINE DANCING

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Starr King Fellowship
101 Fairgrounds Road, Plymouth

MONDAY/THURSDAY

NCYMCA INTERVAL AEROBICS CLASS

Winter Session Through April 6th
6:30 PM
Woodsville Elementary School

TUESDAYS

BREAKFAST BY DONATION

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM
Horse Meadow Senior Center, North Haverhill

UCC EMERGENCY FOOD SHELF

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM 802-584-3857
Wells River Congregational Church

PLYMOUTH AREA CHESS CLUB

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Pease Public Library, Plymouth, NH

WEDNESDAYS

BINGO - NO BINGO DECEMBER 26TH

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

THURSDAYS

ONE-ON-ONE CRIBBAGE ROUND ROBIN

12:45 PM
Horse Meadow Senior Center, North Haverhill

PLYMOUTH AREA CHESS CLUB

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Starr King Fellowship,
101 Fairgrounds Road, Plymouth

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN

10:30 AM
Tenney Library, Rt. 5, Newbury

BOOK LAUNCH PARTY & READING

11:00 AM - The Cow Pasture Golf Course &
Other Stores from Vermont's East Coast
Baldwin Memorial Library, Wells River

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

10:00 AM
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Woodsville

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

6:00 PM
Presbyterian Church, East Topsham, VT

WOODSVILLE & NORTH HAVERHILL UMC

7:00 PM
North Haverhill United Methodist Church

CHRISTMAS EVE FESTIVAL SERVICE

7:00 PM
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Woodsville

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS COMMUNION SERVICE

10:00 AM
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Woodsville

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

12:00 Noon – 6:00 PM
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill
See article on page 4

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28

FRI-LI DROP-IN

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Groton Free Public Library
See article on page 2

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS AND CANDLES

10:00 AM
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Woodsville

MONDAY, DECEMBER 31

HAVERHILL SELECTBOARD MEETING

2:00 PM (Change In Time Due To Holiday)
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill

NEW YEAR'S EVE BALL

6:00 PM Doors Open
7:00 PM Buffet
9:00 PM Dancing Begins
Robert E. Clifford Building
South Court St, Woodsville

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

7:00 PM – 1:00 AM
American Legion Post #83, Main Street, Lincoln

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2

WOODSVILLE/WELLS RIVER 4TH OF JULY COMMITTEE MEETING

7:00 PM
Woodsville Emergency Services Building

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5

FOOD CHEF CHALLENGE

10:00 AM
Horse Meadow Senior Center, North Haverhill

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

10:00 AM
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Woodsville

QUILT TRUNK SHOW & THREAD PAINTING WORKSHOP

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Groton Free Public Library
See article on page 2

MONDAY, JANUARY 7

GOOD OLE BOYS MEETING

12:00 Noon
Happy Hour Restaurant, Wells River
Public is invited.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9

3 RIVERS BUSINESS ASSOCIATION MONTHLY MEETING

8:00 AM
Wells River Savings Bank, Wells River

MONTHLY MEETING - ROSS-WOOD POST #20 AMERICAN LEGION

6:00 PM
American Legion Home, Woodsville

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12

STORIES AND MORE (S.A.M.)

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM
Groton Free Public Library
See article on page 2

HOMEMADE BEEF STEW SUPPER

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM 603-745-2579
Unite 83 American Legion, Main St., Lincoln

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13

FAMILY PROGRAM: WOOD TURNING & FOLK TOYS

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Groton Free Public Library
See article on page 2

MONDAY, JANUARY 14

ROSS-WOOD AUXILIARY UNIT 20 MONTHLY MEETING

6:00 PM
American Legion Home, Woodsville

HAVERHILL SELECTBOARD MEETING

6:00 PM
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill

TUESDAY, JANUARY 15

NH STATE VETERANS COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

8:30 AM – 12:00 Noon
Woodsville American Legion Post #20

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16

HAVERHILL/NEWBURY 250TH MEETING

7:00 PM
Morrill Municipal Building, North Haverhill

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, January 3rd for our January 8th issue.

Slime, Green Fuzz, And Other Refrigerator Surprises

By Deb Maes, Extension Regional Specialist, Food Safety

Imagine the scene. You open the refrigerator at 5 PM and look for something to put on the dinner table. In front of you are various containers filled with who knows what? You pick up a few of them, open them up, give them a sniff and think "That might work." Why not? You don't see anything growing on the food, it doesn't smell funny and didn't you eat that a couple of nights ago?

We're entering into one of the year's prime eating seasons. We entertain friends and family. We have holiday parties. We bake foods to share. All this food means that we can't eat everything and we must depend on our trusty refrigerator to store food until we're ready to eat it.

However, if you are like me, some foods remain in the fridge way too long. Sometimes we forget what's there. Other times we just aren't in the mood to eat something. Some people have an aversion to eating any kind of leftovers and suddenly your

fridge is full and you can't remember what is in all those containers on the shelves. When you get brave enough to open the containers or packages you are suddenly looking at green fuzzy objects, slime collecting at the bottom of the container or food that is totally unrecognizable from its previous form.

Here are some basic rules for food safety that can help insure that the food you cook and then refrigerate will be safe to eat again.

Cook food to correct temperatures. Buy a food thermometer and learn to use it. The only way to tell if food is cooked is to use a clean, calibrated thermometer. Red meats and fish should be cooked to at least 145°F. Ground meats need to reach 160°F. All poultry products, casseroles, stuffing and food cooked in a microwave must reach 165°F. You can always choose to cook food to a higher temperature if that's what you prefer.

Once food is cooked or

prepared, the old adage "Keep hot foods hot, keep cold food cold" still applies. If you make a salad before the meal, keep it in the fridge until you are ready to serve. Cover hot foods to keep them warm. If you hold a lot of parties, consider investing in warming equipment. Use large bowls full of ice to put cold ingredients on.

Food should be stored within two hours of cooking. Bacteria can multiply rapidly on food as it cools and you want to take steps to avoid this. When putting food in the fridge, divide food into smaller portions, place food in shallow pans and make sure that there is room for air to circulate around the foods. Cover your containers loosely until the food has cooled completely. One comment that I hear is that people are afraid to put hot food in the fridge because it will make the refrigerator work too hard. Today's appliances are designed to cool food quickly, unlike the era when an icebox

kept foods cold using a block of ice.

Most food safety experts, including the United States Department of Agriculture, suggest that you eat or throw-away leftovers within four days. Remember you can always freeze the food to make it last longer and be safer to eat, but plan on eating the frozen food within three or four months to preserve the quality of food.

If you are using food from the freezer, make sure you plan ahead for slow, safe thawing. Never, never, never use the counter to thaw foods. There are two safe ways to thaw food. Plan ahead and put food in the fridge the night before. If time is a factor, consider thawing foods in the microwave. Most new models have settings to help you thaw food safely.

When reheating food use your food thermometer, and make sure that food reaches 165°F. If you cover food when reheating it, it will keep in the heat and moisture mak-

ing it taste better and be safer for you.

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service has dozens of on-line publications on handling food safely from eggs, to turkey to cooking for groups. A list of their fact sheets can be found at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp. If you have specific food handling questions, I recommend that you use the USDA's call in line at 1-888-674-6854 or send them an email to tomphotline.fsis@usda.gov. You can even download an app on your smart phone—look under "Ask Karen" in your apps offerings.

Keep all of these tips in mind to make sure you are able to enjoy the season instead of dealing with a food borne illness from poor food handling practices. So...open your fridge, check the contents, clean out food that is questionable, wash down the shelves and make room for all the holiday treats. Happy, safe eating!

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

December 25, 2012 Volume 4 Number 6

www.open-doors.biz

To Launch January 1, 2013

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Launching January 1, 2013

8 **Kimball Union Academy Announces First Trimester Academic Honors**

Morgan Sebor, class of 2015, daughter of Michael Sebor of Woodsville, has achieved Academic Honors for the Spring Trimester at Kimball Union Academy in Meriden, New Hampshire.

Founded in 1813, Kimball Union Academy is an independent boarding and day school for students in grades 9-12 and post-graduate in Meriden, NH.

From time to time folks will ask me what is a day like in the Capitol City of Concord where I serve as Executive Councilor going into my 35-36 years on the Council. This report is an hour by

Executive Report #10

By Ray Burton, Councilor District One

hour account of what my day December 5, 2012 was:

8 AM: Governor and Council Breakfast at NH Fish and Game Department hosted by Director Glenn Normandeau and NH Fish and Game Commission. Topics of discussion included deer harvest for this year, status of bears in NH, coyote control issues and turkey counts.

9:30 AM: The Governor and Council received the NH Attorney General's Report on the year long investigation on the possible loss of 300 cases of wine in the sea-coast area stores. It turns out it was an accounting error.

10 AM: Governor and Council Meeting at the State House Prayer and Pledge by Councilor Wheeler. Rundlett Middle School Chamber Orchestra plays holiday music.

10:30 AM: Governor and Council recess to NH House to swear in 400 Members of the House. They take the oath in one joint statement.

10:40 AM: Governor and Council go to NH Senate to swear in 24 State Senators. Governor Lynch and Council personally congratulate each Senator.

11 AM: We then reconvene to accept the Henry W. Keyes Official Portrait painted by Craig Pursley, Artist of Bath, NH. Governor Keyes' term was during World War I and he also served as US Senator from

Haverhill, NH. If anyone would like a brochure on this portrait of Senator and Governor Keyes please contact my office.

11:15 AM: Governor and Council discuss and vote on some 150 agenda items from NH state agencies.

12:30 PM: Councilors enjoy a lunch in the State House Café

1 PM: I make a brief stop at NH Secretary of State, Bill Gardner's Open House in his office. He was elected to another 2 year term as NH Secretary of State. He is the longest serving Secretary of State in all of the 50 States.

2 PM: I attend the Ski Area Association Directors Meeting in Concord

2:30 PM: I attend the Welcome back Legislators Social in Concord

3:30 PM: At the invitation of Lt. James Brown at the NH State prison I tour South Unit pod at the NH State Prison in Concord.

5 PM: I attend the NH State Employees Association Social at their Offices

6 PM: I head for my home - 338 River Road, Bath, NH and take the rest of the day off!

Contact my office anytime.

Ray Burton
747-3662

338 River Road
Bath NH 03740

ray.burton@myfairpoint.net

December 25, 2012 Volume 4 Number 6

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

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The Lisbon Regional Middle School has been named a Blue Ribbon School at the 2012 11th Annual Celebrating leadership in Education Awards Ceremony. Their greatest achievement is moving students upward in the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) which results in students performing at the proficient level or above on the NECAPS.

Show at the ceremony is l-r Steve Morrison, Chair Lisbon School Board, Councilor Ray Burton, Steve Sexton Principal Lisbon Schools, Paul McMillan, Superintendent of Schools

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Local Agency Joins National Effort To Prevent The Financial Abuse Of Seniors

Holiday Campaign Encourages Families to Spend Time Discussing Strategies to Address Financial Exploitation with Older Family Members

The Area Agency on Aging for Northeastern Vermont has joined a national campaign to encourage older adults and their families to learn how they can protect themselves from fi-

financial exploitation. Research suggests that as many as five million older adults in this country are victims of elder abuse each year and that financial exploitation costs seniors an estimated \$3 billion annually.

The Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging, is encouraging older adults, caregivers and their families

to use a few moments of their time together this holiday season to discuss this important topic.

The Area Agency on Aging for Northeastern Vermont is supporting the campaign by raising awareness of the issue and encouraging families to take steps to prevent financial exploitation this holiday season.

"The holiday season is an ideal time for families to discuss these issues with the seniors in their lives," said Kimberly Rivard, the Agency's Elder Justice Specialist. "We strongly encourage seniors and their families to become familiar with the "warning signs" that may indicate a problem, and to learn the simple precautions that can be taken to ensure financial security."

There are several signs of financial exploitation for families to look out for including financial activity that is inconsistent with an older adult's past financial history; confusion about recent financial arrangements; changes to key documents that have not been authorized; a caregiver or beneficiary who refuses to use designated funds for necessary care and treatment of an older adult; and an older adult who feels threatened by a caregiver or another individual who is

seeking to control their finances.

"Financial exploitation is a threat to the health, safety, dignity and independence of vulnerable older adults," said Kathy Greenlee, Administrator, Administration for Community Living and Assistant Secretary for Aging. "This holiday season, we encourage families to spend some time asking older family members some basic questions to ensure that their finances are in good hands and that if there are signs of abuse, that the right steps are taken to stop it."

"Unfortunately, financial exploitation is often committed by a person you know and trust, which makes it even more difficult," said Sandy Markwood, CEO, n4a. "There are steps older adults and their families can take and resources available to help identify and remedy this serious problem. To ensure your safety and the safety and security of your finances, it is critical for you to assess your financial situation on a regular basis."

Families that are concerned about financial exploitation should report the issue to state agencies that deal with protecting the safety and well-being of older adults. In Vermont, concerns should be reported to Adult Protective Services at 1-800-564-1612.

The campaign, which encourages older adults and their families to plan and be cautious, released tips to help prevent financial exploitation, some of which include:

- Get an estate plan in place. Talk with an attorney about creating a durable power of attorney for asset management; a living will; a revocable, or living, trust; and

health care advance directives.

- Learn how to avoid fraud and scams at www.stopfraud.gov/protect.html.
- Consult with a trusted person before making any large purchases or investments.
- Do not provide personal information (i.e. Social Security number, credit card, ATM PIN number) over the phone unless you placed the call and know with whom you are speaking.
- If you hire someone to help you in your home, ensure that they have been properly screened with criminal background checks completed. Ask for certifications when appropriate.

"Financial exploitation can be prevented if people know the right questions to ask and where to turn for help," said Mary Twomey, MSW, Co-Director, National Center on Elder Abuse. "Although it is a sensitive issue and one that can be difficult to broach, it is critical for families to address it, and there are many useful resources available to guide them through the process."

The National Center on Elder Abuse has partnered with the Eldercare Locator to produce a consumer guide that is now available to help inform this discussion with seniors during the holiday season. To download a copy of the financial exploitation brochure, visit: <http://www.n4a.org/pdf/protectyourpocketbook.pdf>.

For more information about the services available to older adults and family caregivers in this region, contact the Agency on Aging via the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-642-5119 or www.nevaaa.org

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Housewright Construction, Inc. Joins Green Mt. Sandy Relief Team

Craig Hervey Housewright Construction, Inc. of Newbury, VT has joined the Green Mountain Sandy Relief Team in collecting donations from individuals and businesses to assist the New York area victims of Hurricane Sandy. Donations are being accepted at Housewright Construction's facility at 5365 Main Street, Newbury, VT until January 15, 2013. Drop-offs can be made between the hours of 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday or by appointment (802-866-5520).

Housewright is collecting new or nearly-new furniture, space heaters, bedding (except blankets), large and small kitchen appliances, pots and pans, dishes, utensils, bathroom supplies, linens and towels, car seats and strollers. Gift cards from big box stores will also be accepted.

To make a tax-deductible financial donation, checks

can be written to Lukana's Dream Company and mailed separately to P.O. Box 17, Bethel, VT 05032. Please write "Sandy Relief" in the memo line.

The Green Mountain Sandy Relief Team was formed in response to the generous relief received by the central Vermont region following tropical storm Irene. That much-needed assistance inspired a group of activists, who felt a responsibility to give back to other states who suffer natural disasters, to get organized. Led by Erik and Laurel Tobiason of Barnard, VT, this group hopes that their plans will motivate the whole community to respond with generosity. Thus, the Green Mountain Sandy Relief Team includes anyone who is willing to donate his or her time. Individuals, businesses, churches, schools, and colleges are all invited to participate in some way. Joanne

Boyle of Woodstock, who worked closely with the Irene relief efforts, is coordinating communication. She can be reached at 802-457-7057 or jm.boyle57@gmail.com.

Craig Hervey Housewright Construction, Inc. is a residential general contractor firm that serves Vermont and New Hampshire. It offers design-build, new construction, remodeling, architectural millwork and historic preservation and restoration services. More information can be found at www.housewright.net or by calling 802-866-5520.



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WOODSVILLE, NH - Cute efficient Chatelet within short walk of Lakes, beach, basketball court, pool. This open concept home offers central heat, vaulted ceilings, nice wooded lot on paved road, well maintained with 2 bedrooms. Nice porch right off the kitchen / dining area and fully furnished. Basement partial with storage. Snow machine from property. Many updates and easy maintenance. \$96,500.

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New York Journal of Books

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Whisker's Christmas Surprise

By Ronda Marsh

Christmases in the early 1960's were memorable ones for my family. Having survived a devastating fire where literally all of our worldly possessions were lost, we did not have a lot of money to spend on gifts or decorations, but we nonetheless managed to have large holiday family gatherings with lots of food and fun. The tree was decorated with mostly handmade ornaments, and because we had no angel for the top, my Barbie doll was transformed into a makeshift sort of seraphim, utilizing scraps from my mother's sewing table. There were countless entertaining and whimsical incidents, but the most frequently recounted one has got to be about the Christmas when Santa tangled with our dog.

Doc Hill was a local vet and family friend. Doc was at our house one day just before Christmas, pulling porcupine quills from "Whiskers" our collie-mix dog, who was a repeat customer. Whiskers seemed to operate under the false belief that he could outsmart the porcupines, but of course he always ended up on the losing end of the bargain. Doc mentioned the fact that the local Rotary Club (of which he was a member) was sponsoring visits from "Santa" for local children on

Christmas Eve. All one had to do was have a child call Santa during a prescribed time period and ask to be put on the list. Santa would show, with some candy for all the children in the household and the promise of his return during the night with presents. My family had always celebrated Christmas on the Eve, and figured the addition of Santa would be a plus. Being about age 6 at the time, I was elected to make the Santa call, and did so with pleasure. I was not yet old enough to doubt the existence of the man from the North Pole, and I could hardly contain my excitement at the notion of a personal visit.

At last, a very snowy Christmas Eve arrived. None of the children ate much supper...we were too keyed up with anticipation. As relatives came in the door, I greeted them and managed to inform all who would listen about the prospect of Santa's appearance. My father, who had worked all the previous night and day driving truck for an oil company, dozed in his chair sleep deprived, but trying to feign interest in the festivities around him. Finally, a car appeared and we heard the loud "ho-ho-hoing" of that unmistakable guest of honor as he exited the vehicle. Now, our house

had a well-lit front door, but it was rarely used in the winter months; most people opted to enter through the basement garage door, which proved quite a bit easier to navigate in the heavy snows of the season. Santa made an initial stab at coming to the front door, but his footing was rather unsure in the knee-deep white stuff. As we ran to let him in, we realized he'd disappeared. Obviously, he had thought better of this first choice and had opted for the cellar entrance. What Santa didn't know, was that we had put Whiskers in the basement for the evening, where he was sleeping blissfully oblivious to the goings-on above him. What the snoozing Whiskers didn't know, was that the approaching Santa was none other than Doc Hill, for whom the dog had no great love, since most of their meetings usually ended up with Whiskers being in some kind of discomfort. Roused rudely from his nap, Whiskers had little appreciation for the loud proclamations of the entering Santa, who was by now fumbling for the light fixture, which he could not seem to locate. The dog started to bark. Then, no doubt recognizing the scent of the man who had recently been on the business end of pliers pulling quills, changed to a low, rumbling warning growl. Santa, blindly navigating his way across the basement in the dark, had finally made it to the bottom of the stairway. Meanwhile, in the living room, there was much confusion as to where the bearded one had gone. Dashing to the cellar door,



someone turned on the lights, but hearing the dog and not seeing Claus, the lights were flicked off and a trip back to the front door was made, to see if he had showed up there. By now, my father was totally awake, albeit drowsy and confused by all the commotion around and below him. "I think someone's in the cellar!" he shouted above the noise. My mother responded, "I think he's headed back to the front door!!" Concerned that Santa was going to escape before ever actually making it into the house, I yelled "DON'T LET HIM LEAVE!!!" Apparently Whiskers felt the same way,

because when my sleepy father finally got to the cellar door and opened it, into the hallway tumbled Santa Claus, landing on all fours, with our dog firmly attached to his well-padded posterior. Bending over and rubbing his eyes, Dad looked the rather bewildered Santa in the face. "Who the heck are you?!" he asked, no doubt thinking S. Claus would give up his true identity. It took a while before the winded Santa, who by now had managed to pry himself away from the grip of the dog, was able to readjust his beard and answer, "Why, I'm Santa Claus, of course!"

Finally catching on to what was happening, Dad mumbled, "Well, I guess the He** you are!!"

After that climax, things calmed down considerably. The dog, seemingly satisfied at having gotten the best of Doc, aka Santa, was happy to return to his bed in the basement. My father, still not quite sure of what had just transpired, returned to his chair and his previous state of semi-consciousness. My mother profusely thanked Santa for all his trouble and took many pictures with our Brownie camera. As for Santa, he backed out of the house that night via the front door, in an effort to hide the rip in his britches, and was careful to always send one of his fellow Rotarians on future Christmas visits.

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OBITUARY – AMOS JOSEPH LOCKE



Lisbon, NH – Amos Joseph Locke, 78, of River Road, died on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at his home.

He was born in Benton, NH, January 2, 1934, the son of Tony and Ethel (Cote) Locke.

Amos served with the U. S. Marine Corps from 1952 to 1954. He married Thelma Whitcher on August 16, 1957. They owned and operated Locke Dairy Farm for many years. After selling off his herd of dairy cattle, he continued to buy, restore, and sell all types of farm machinery and equipment. He loved to go to farm equipment auctions and made a lot of friends attending these events. He loved to collect antiques, trains, and "stuff." He was a very patriotic man.

He loved spending time with his family and being a devoted grandfather to his grandchildren. He especially enjoyed making things.

For several years, Amos and Thelma wintered in Okeechobee, FL. While in Florida he loved fishing and spending time with friends out on Okeechobee Lake. They traveled around the United States and were able to see most of the country in their camper.

He was predeceased by his parents; a grandson, Erik Wright in 2004; a sister, Lorraine Breault; and two brothers, Patrick Boudreault and Russell Locke.

Survivors include his wife of 55 years, Thelma (Whitcher) Locke of Lisbon, NH; five children, Cindy Wright and husband Nigel of Littleton, NH, Laurie McCall of Dallas, TX, Randy Locke of Bethlehem, NH, Danny Locke of Bangkok, Thailand, and Delores Locke of Wirtz, VA; five grandchildren; two great grandchildren; six sisters, Eleanor Grimes of Mon-

roe, NH, Jeanette Meneguzzi of Palm Bay, FL, Adele Patch of Lebanon, NH, Marguerite Currier of Monroe, NH, June Lamonde of Ashland, NH, and Celia Chouinard of Manchester, NH; three brothers, Galand Locke of Woodsville, NH, David Locke of North Haverhill, NH, and Joseph Locke of Bath, NH; several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Calling hours were held on Tuesday, December 18 from 1:30 to 3:30 PM at Ricker Funeral Home, 1 Birch Street, Woodsville, NH, with a memorial service followed at 3:30 PM.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Childhood Cancer Lifeline of New Hampshire, P O Box 395, Hillsboro, NH 03244 or by visiting their website at <http://childhood-cancerlifeline.org>

Ricker Funeral Home, Woodsville, NH is in charge of arrangements.

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

Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor:

"Real violence has real consequences," I heard a mother of a Newtown, CT, child-victim tell a radio interviewer. As others have, I've heard Pres. Obama's cracking voice lament the loss of the twenty children in Connecticut. What about the as many as 168 children who have been killed by our drone strikes in Pakistan in the last seven years?

A news report as recent as last week, buried late in the pages of The New York Times, is about an alleged Al-Qaida leader whose wife and daughter were injured when he was killed by one of our drones. The mother then died. The daughter is now an orphan, as well as injured. That doesn't matter? Family life here is one sacred situation, but in another country where the names are foreign and the customs foreign and the skins are brown, indiscriminate death-by-our-drones so a family is destroyed is okay?

"Real violence has real consequences," and one of them is our leadership caught in hypocrisy, our leadership having to do the screwy thing of care about some child deaths but brush off others as "okay" policy.

Lord, give us change that matters. Please. End our drones-use that falls outside the law, targeting some and killing "extra" others, even children.

Sincerely,
Lynn Rudmin Chong

Lynn,

The concept of "Real violence has real consequences" is so very true. Whether it is war related or violence right here in our back yards. With very few exceptions we all wish that wars would end. The deaths of innocent bystanders, whether children or adults, is always sad. And it happens on both sides.

Violence here at home, like what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary School, is so often hard to even come close to understanding. This incident has gun makers, gun enthusiasts, and anti-gun believers all "up in arms". It also has those involved in mental health issues talking. This young man had been thru some tough years. Is that what brought him to the acts that he committed? There was also some reports that he and his mother had some issues with the school district. One thing that will probably be true is that no one will ever really know what went thru his mind to make him commit this crime. In the end his "real violence had real consequences."

Gary Scruton, Editor

Letter To The Editor

Call me mad... but I am!

This past fall I met some people I had been swearing I was going to contact. You may have seen their "Letters to the Editor" in the local papers and Littleton Courier. It is a couple, Roland and Nancy Leclerc, from N. Woodstock, NH, both in their 70's who try and serve to the needs of NH Homeless Veterans and Liberty House in Manchester, NH! They work very hard collecting any and all items that help the Veterans and their families! I finally met them when I took some bags of clothing from my late brother-in-law to them! What a delight Roland is! He is witty and funny and has a big loving, gracious, heart! He never called me back to help him truck all the bags and bags of clothing and shoes, boots, etc. he and his wife Nancy had collected for the fall and winter, I had told him I was more than willing to help and drive it to Manchester, but finally he called me today to say he was coming to Woodsville to pick-up the donation jar I had asked him for... to collect money for Liberty House, Inc! They had a goal of collecting in the areas that they place donation jars of sending a [total] check to Liberty House for \$1000.00 for this Christmas,

Well I called the RY to tell Jamie he was coming and to total our collection receipts, and it was \$31.33 and of that amount one generous soul had put in a

\$20 bill which WE remove daily [and store in a safer place!] so no one steals the jar as Roland has said... THAT has happened in other collection sites! Imagine stealing from Homeless Vets! Some other generous RY person gave a \$5, but most of the rest was small change... so you can maybe see where I am going with this!

WHEN YOU SAY/CLAIM YOU SUPPORT THE TROOPS...

I FLAT-OUT!!! say you don't and the small change proves it! [at the RY anyway!]

I donated \$25 and I know I will donate more in the future as Liberty House is expanding in to helping the families and will soon be excepting larger items of furniture and probably appliances!

I am sincerely hoping that there are lots of people who are remembering our veteran soldiers and are sending private donations... otherwise I am saddened at the lack of empathy everyone seems to have for these men and women who went and gave their all for you and all you have to give back is some small change!

I hope this gets some of you thinking and if everyone gave even \$5, that would mean a lot!

Send it to:
Liberty House, 75 West Baker Street
Manchester, NH or contact libertyhouse-org@aol.com

Thanks Stef Saffo

Stef,

I have also read several articles about Liberty House. By all accounts it is a worthwhile organization doing its best to help our veterans who have fallen on hard times. The expansion of the program is both good and bad. It is good they are finding enough donations to be able to expand. It is bad that there is such a need.

There are so many worthwhile organizations for all of us to contribute to that we simply can not donate to all. But if you have a desire to help out our veterans in need, than please consider Liberty House as a worthwhile organization.

Gary Scruton, Editor

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Should You Prepare For The “Fiscal Cliff?”

As an investor, you can sometimes feel you're at the mercy of forces beyond your control. This may be especially true today, when the entire country appears to be on edge about the approaching “fiscal cliff.” What can you do in the face of such a dire prediction?

First of all, you'll need to understand what initially led the Federal Reserve to issue the fiscal cliff warning. Here's the story: Some \$1.2 trillion in spending cuts are scheduled to begin in 2013, while, simultaneously, the Bush-era tax cuts — including the reduction in capital gains and dividend taxes — are set to expire. This combination of spending cuts and higher taxes could take some \$600 billion out of the economy, leading to a possible recession — and maybe something much worse, at least in the eyes of the Fed.

Still, there's no need for panic. Despite its political infighting, Congress is likely to reduce the “cliff” to a smaller bump. But as an investor, you may need to be prepared for

two significant events: market volatility, at least in the short term, and higher taxes, probably for the foreseeable future.

To combat market volatility, you may want to take these steps:

- **Rebalance.** You may need to rebalance your portfolio to ensure it still reflects your target mix of investments, based on your long-term goals and your risk tolerance.
- **Diversify.** A broadly diversified portfolio can help you nav-

igate “bumps,” “cliffs” and other rugged investment terrain. (Keep in mind, though, that while diversification can reduce the impact of market volatility, it can't guarantee profits or protect against all losses.)

- **Upgrade investment quality.** Generally speaking, higher-quality investments are better positioned to withstand the tempests of volatile financial markets. Consequently, when investing in stocks, look for companies with solid track records, strong management and competitive products. And when purchasing bonds, seek those that earn the highest grades from the independent rating agencies.

Now, let's turn to taxes. Even if taxes on income, capital gains and dividends do rise, they will still, in all likelihood, be much lower than they've been at various points in the past. Nonetheless, you may want to consider a variety of steps, including the following:

- **Take advantage of tax deferred vehicles.** Contribute as much as possible to your traditional IRA, 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan, and any education savings accounts you may

have, such as a 529 plan.

- **Convert your traditional IRA to a Roth IRA.** A Roth IRA provides tax-free earnings, provided you don't start taking withdrawals until you're 59½ and you've had your account for at least five years. (Be aware, though, that this conversion is taxable and may not be appropriate if you don't have money readily available in other accounts to pay the taxes.)

- **Consider municipal bonds.** If you're in one of the upper tax brackets, you could benefit from investing in “munis,” which pay interest that's free of federal taxes, and possibly state and local taxes as well.

Above all else, don't abandon your long-term plans due to short-term uncertainty — and avoid making unwarranted and extreme changes to your portfolio. By staying focused on your goals, and by making well-thought-out moves at the right time, you can help prevent your financial goals from going “over a cliff.”

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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“O Holy Night...”

I tried. I really tried. Each notion associated with seasonal sentimentality was present, I swear, right down to the donning of a winter hat, something I enjoy refusing to do. And for the same reasons I wear wood clogs when tiling bathrooms, I dressed the part when I went searching for this year's Christmas tree.

Work gloves limping out my back pocket and everything.

I was rolling solo, too. Not for any real reason. I just happened to get up late on a recent Saturday and the house was empty. I went to the kitchen and found a note that read: “Get tree. You're rolling solo.”

Fine, I thought. If the intimidator's intention was to shake me by assigning what I consider a significant task, well, she picked the wrong season to corner me. I'd been planning my Christmas Comeback for weeks now.

This year I vowed to enjoy the buildup to Christmas, actually feel it. Be gone with the cranky puss and wallet worn glares. I'd join the carolers, help old women string lights, maybe even crash midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

At least that was the plan. And now the day was mine. First things first, let's get the fur off from the night before. Hot shower, towel down, dab here, dab there. Closet full of club shirts. Head to the back. Boom, right there. A hot red and black checkered flannel shirt.

“You're coming with me,” I said, peeling it off the hook.

Step outside and yup, it was Christmas tree shopping weather. Just as hateful and gray as all late November days. I bombed to Pembroke to buy my tree because frugality is essential in the rebuilding of the Christmas spirit, and some cat was selling “All Trees” for \$30.

“Want me to cut the end off, sir?” an ambitious young kid asked.

“Nah, son.” I said. “I'll get the saw out when I get home.” I swear he winked.

As I prepared to haul the tree into the house and surprise the troops with it ready to be garnished, I noticed how barren the front of my house looked. Flat mulch, brown grass, slanted pee markings and dead leaves were the only things that adored my humble property.

I hurried to the basement in search of the outside Christmas lights. What a disaster! My boots got caught on a radio cord, a training bra, a snow shoe and a pink five pound dumbbell. Where are you! Oh, there you are.

I scampered outside and got to work.

Okay, where does this go? How do I...? Where the hell do I plug this into?

Steady, steady. I started to hum, “O holy night, the stars...”

An hour later, after netting the bushes, sinking the spotlight and reindeer, hanging two wreathes and uncoiling what seemed like a thousand extension cords, the family rolled into the drive.

I started dusting my thigh with my work gloves, Clint like.

But the look on their faces was of displeasure and contempt.

You have too many different styles going on.

Why is the spotlight shining into street?

You're not going to put garland around the doorway? “O holy night...”

I sat them all down and explained my Christmas Comeback. “I've been faking it all these years, kids. I've been grimmer than the Grinch on the inside, more hostile than the Heat Miser. I promise to rise like Ebenezer this Christmas. But I need your support.”

They only stared.

I went to steady the tree into the stand. “No, don't help. I have it,” I cried from under the tree. Tad cocked but once she drops, I told them, her consistency would follow.

“Now hurry up and get dark outside!” I barked at the dining room windows. I wanted to prove to my family that blinking blue lights works well with the near yellow bulbs draped over the evergreens.

The house was warm and finally night. Mathis crooned as my darlings pulled ornaments from the

boxes. Each placement swelled my heart. It was happening! I was refilling my trough with Christmas spirit, the joy, the “O holy night...”

Finally, the house was quiet and I noticed the tree still leaned a bit forward, but she was strong, a glorious sight, all sparkled and bright. The transformation was complete. I went to the basement to properly reflect on the day when I heard the spirit of Christmas die inside me. Boom! Something big fell upstairs.

“Daddy, the Christmas tree just did a face plant. Water's going everywhere.”

O screw this night.

Rob Azevedo can be reached at onemanmanch@gmail.com



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This Season Just Like Any Other Before? I Don't Think So Christmas 2012 – Birth Of A New Tradition

By Robert Roudebush

I won't pretend most of what's in this piece is my thinking. It's too good. It did come to me from a friend over the internet, and Annemarie Godston and I tried to discover its source. My words or another, it's a think and feel piece.

As the holidays approach, the giant Asian factories are kicking into high gear to provide Americans with monstrous piles of cheaply produced goods – merchandise that has been produced at the expense of American labor.

This year will be different, if you want. This year people, Americans, will give the gift of genuine concern for other Americans. There is no longer any excuse that, at gift giving time, nothing can be found that is produced by American hands. YES – there is.

It's time to think outside the box. Who says a gift needs to fit into a shirt box, wrapped in Chinese produced wrapping paper? Everyone – EVERYONE – gets their hair cut. How about gift certificates from your local barber or hair salon?

Gym membership? It's appropriate for all ages who are thinking about health improvement.

Who wouldn't appreciate getting their car detailed? Small American-owned detailers are right here in our area, I know for sure, and I'll bet there are gift certificates for that too.

Are you one of those extravagant givers who think nothing of plunking down the dollars on a Chinese made Flat screen? Perhaps

that grateful gift-receiver would like his driveway sealed, or lawn mowed for the summer, or that driveway plowed all winter, or games at our local golf club?

There are several owner-run restaurants – all offering gift certificates. And, if your intended bride or groom is not the fancy-eatery sort, what about a half-dozen breakfasts at the local breakfast joint. Remember folks, this isn't about big NATIONAL chains – this is about supporting your home town American with their financial lives on the line to keep their doors open.

Take a short drive down Central Street in Woodsville as you head for the two local bank branches or as you maybe head into Wells River – some of our most interesting shops are right there on either side of you.

How many people couldn't use an oil change for their car, truck or cycle, done at a shop run by our American working guy?

Thinking about a heartfelt gift for Mom? She would love the services of a local cleaning person for a day or several days over some time. You know it.

This computer I'm typing on now could use a tune-up and I KNOW I can find someone around here, maybe some younger person who is struggling to get his repair business up and running.

OK, looking for something more personal? Local crafts people spin their own wool and knit them into scarves. They make jewelry, and pottery and interesting wooden boxes.

Plan your holiday outings at local, owner operated restaurants and LEAVE YOUR SERVER A NICE TIP. And how about going out to see a play or music event right here in our area? We have lots of them you know.

Musicians need love – and employment – too. So find a venue showcasing local bands.

Honestly, do you really need to buy another ten thousand Chinese lights for the house? When you buy a five-dollar string of that kind of lighting, only about 50 cents stays in the community. You got that kind of big extra money to burn, leave the mail man, the man who takes your trash, or a dog or babysitter a nice BIG tip.

Christmas can no longer be about draining American pockets so that China can build another glittering city. This special time of year must now be about caring about US, encouraging American small businesses to keep on plugging away to follow their dreams. And caring about Americans means we care about our communities – all that care and all that money keeps floating around where we spend our lives, where our families live. That care and that money creates benefits that come back to us in ways we couldn't imagine.

Think it's too late this Christmas? How about next? Think I've left off some good ideas for local spending in our area? Good, that means you're thinking. Have a good Christmas.


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By Ronda Marsh

JOSIE'S CANADIAN TARTS

There are some foods that go so far back into your childhood, you can't ever remember NOT having them. That's the way it is with this particular item. Josie was my friend, Joy's, mom, and for many decades prior to her death a year ago, she faithfully made these every Christmas season. She knew I adored them, and she'd often make a big batch just for me. I always knew the holidays were upon us once the Canadian Tarts had arrived! After her death, I asked Joy for a few of Josie's recipes, and this one was at the top of my list. I have to admit, I had no idea how easy it is to make these, or without a doubt I'd have indulged in this sweet treat much more often than I should! I just recently resurrected this recipe and decided to incorporate baking and giving these tarts into my own holiday tradition. They're delicious,



good looking, and I'm pretty sure Josie would approve!

- 2 Pillsbury refrigerated rolled piecrusts (or make your own, if you're ambitious!)
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1 cup seedless raisins (any raisins will do; I prefer the Sultana's)

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon melted butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs

Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly spray or grease 2" (the average size) muffin pans. Unroll crusts and cut 18 discs from the dough (I find that my 1-cup dry measure is just the right size to use as a cutter), re-rolling scraps if necessary. Fit dough discs into the muffin cups, lining the bottom and about 3/4 way up the sides of each cup. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs then add the remaining ingredients, stirring to combine. Fill the unbaked tart shells, using care to not exceed the height of the dough lining. Bake for about 25 minutes, until crust is golden brown and filling is set. Remove from oven and allow to cool a bit in the muffin tins before removing the tarts to a rack to complete cooling. These may be made well in advance and then frozen in an airtight container for serving later, but they are so delicious that may not be an issue! Makes eighteen 2" tarts.

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