

WRITE ON WRITERS' HISTORY

Compiled by Nonie Moody

Digitized by Bill Perry

WRITE ON WRITERS' HISTORY

January 2024

Nonie Moody

Facts about putting this together

This is not a collection of writings

This is not a craft

Items selected for the Write on Writers' History

- WOW published books
- WOW members and our editors, only
- Photos, especially group pictures
- Announcements such as Author Chats, etc.
- Personal WOW achievements, The Times Record, The Cryer, Member Moments in People Plus News
- Condolences
- People Plus News center folds: Corona Chronicles and Christmas. This gives a good example of all our writings.

Everything should be dated and in consecutive order going forward.

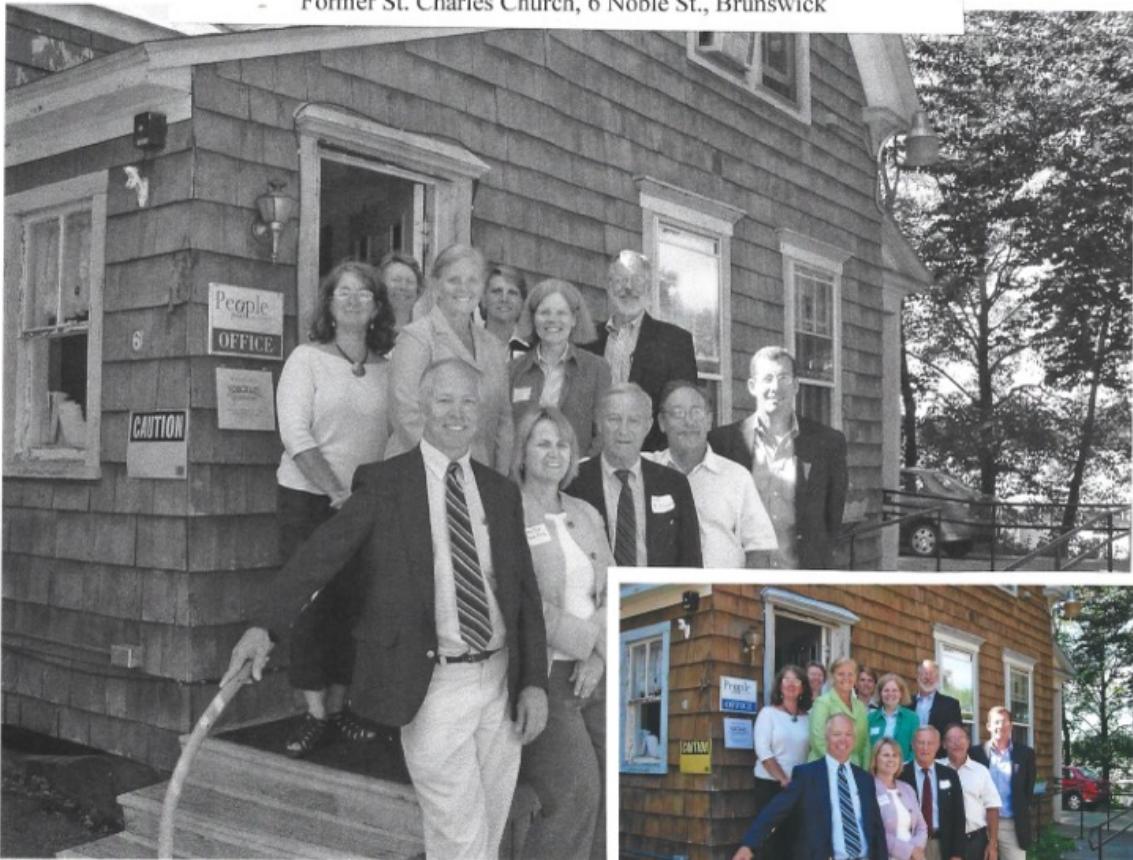
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INTRODUCTION

First Senior Center

Former St. Charles Church, 6 Noble St., Brunswick



Celebration photo 1-1-2004



HISTORY OF PEOPLE PLUS
AND
WRITE ON WRITERS

The "55 Plus Center" was the first name given for the Brunswick community center. The Brunswick Town Council put out a referendum question to Brunswick voters: Shall the Town of Brunswick purchase the former St. Charles Church at 6 Noble Street in Brunswick, to be used for a senior center? The vote in May 1976 was, "Yes."

The first center located on Noble St was used as a meal site for elderly individuals. The center also became known as a place for social and recreational activities and programs.

A new teen center was added in 2004 through parents, professionals and earnest young people looking to provide a safe place for the youth.

The 55 Plus Center name now didn't reflect who and what we were and the name was changed to People Plus, "The center to get more out of life."

Because the St. Charles Church at 6 Noble St. was deteriorating, lack of space plus our occupancy for 35 years, a new location was found. In June 2010 a move was completed to the current facility, which is the old Union Street School, located at 35 Union Street in Brunswick.

The first meetings of Write on Writers (**WOW**) commenced in 1995 while in the old building. Frank Connors was a great asset to this group after moving to the newer building on Union Street. The first WOW leader was Jean Martz and the group grew to about 12 in attendance. The first book published was *Poets and Storytellers, Writing for Fun*. This has been a nice tradition for WOW to publish a book every two years.

Through the years the leaders have been Bonnie Wheeler (14 y), Nancy Sohl (3), Ralph Laughlin (2), and other leaders for shorter times. Bonnie Wheeler is our senior member joining about 1999, Vince McDermott came in 2005, Gladys Szabo about 2010, Paul Karwowski 2011.



Photo 9-10-2023

Current Senior Center
Old Union Street School, 35 Union Street, Brunswick

The question has been asked many times, "What /Who are Write on Writers?" Here are some quotes from past leaders.

Write On! As I have come to know it, is more a social group bringing together people of diverse interests, backgrounds and talents to share their life experiences and thoughts with others through the written word. That's why we read aloud what we have written. If we wanted to just have our writing judged by others, we would not read our writing but just pass out the printed word and wait for comment. Write On's role and scope is much more valuable to the human spirit.

It is NOT a writers' Workshop where people sharpen their writing skills in order to get published and be an "accomplished author" – whatever that means. It IS a place for souls to mingle.

In my opinion it is a gem of a group that I was most fortunate in finding. Yes, at first, I thought it should emphasize the "Workshop" concept...but I took time to listen, feel its pulse and came to learn so much more than just how to improve this or that sentence.

Thus, I give you my proxy vote on keeping Write On! The way it is.

Ralph Laughlin

When you write from the heart, we needed a safe place. A group that has respect for each writer and appreciation for each one's talents. A group that encourages others to be THEIR best, where there is laughter, tears and a special bond together. That's our goal, a family.

Bonnie Wheeler

Along with Write on Writers publication of a book every two years, People Plus publishes a small monthly newspaper of current happenings. In this newspaper a page is designated for the Write on Writers to express their talents and abilities. Through the years, the editor-in-chiefs who have guided People Plus News have been; Frank Connors, Patrick Gabrion and Charmaine Daniels.

1999

Poets and Storytellers Writing for Fun



***The 55 Plus Center Writers Group
Brunswick, ME***

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Acknowledgments

Publication Coordinated by
Claude Bonang, Jim Haley, and Lynne Kresge

Text arranged and illustrated by
Claude Bonang

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Lynne Kresge

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Claude Bonang and Mary Strong

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Logo of 55 Plus Center by Carol Choate

The Writers Group wishes to thank the 55 Plus Center and its Director Sig Knudsen for providing facilities and financial support.

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July 1999

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55 Plus Center
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Brunswick, ME 04011

2000

**Poets and Storytellers
Writing for FUN**
(VOLUME II)



**The 55 Plus Center Writers Group
Brunswick, ME**

**Poets and Storytellers
Writing for Fun**
(Volume II)

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November 2000

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55 Plus Center
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Brunswick, ME 04011

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Logo of 55 Plus Center by Carol Choate

The Writers Group wishes to thank the 55 Plus Center and its Director Sig Knudsen for providing facilities and financial support. All proceeds go to the 55 Plus Center.

This book would not be possible without the generous gift of Claude Bonang's endless time and talent. His friends in the Writers Group extend their heartfelt thanks.

We will sadly miss Katharine Van Gelder and Frances (Pampy) Brown who have passed on.

WANTED

(ONCE AGAIN)



Effie Blackstone



Claude Bonang



Frances Brown



Jim Haley



Edith Hazard



Phyllis Keough



Lynne Kresge



Shirley LeMont



Catherine McIntyre



Jean Martz



Pat Ossenfort



Mary Strong



Bonnie Wheeler

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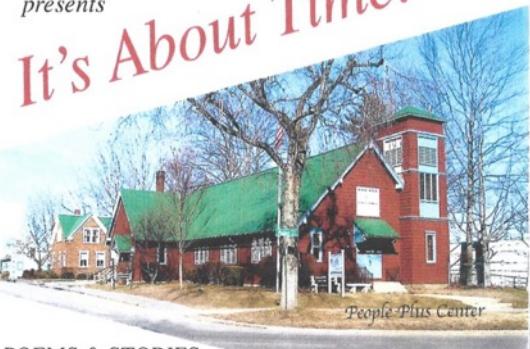
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2007

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Alex Baxter
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Eleanor Chaplin
Al Layton
Charlotte Hart
Bonnie Wheeler
Suzanne Rosoff

Write On!
presents
It's About Time!



People Plus Center

POEMS & STORIES
Read by the authors
The People Plus Writers Group

Photo by George Phipps



Write On! authors at the recording studio.
They meet every Wednesday
at the People Plus Center,
Brunswick, Maine





A celebration of the heart

'One exceptional group...'

Dear editor:

While my husband and I were visiting in Topsham recently it was my pleasure and good luck to attend a People Plus Write On! writer's group meeting. WOW! What an amazingly exceptional group of talented writers they are!

I SO enjoyed meeting them, and listening to them as they presented their writing projects. I was so impressed with all the differing styles of writing, and how much they supported each other. I hope your readers realize how lucky they are to have such talented writers in their midst.

— Rita Greer, Kansas City, Mo.

That's just natural

The last chore I'd been assigned as we vacated Noble Street was to get our big white front lawn sign off that corner and moved to the lawn across. Not until the afternoon I'd actually done the job was hot and sticky but I went at it anyway to take it as just the latest challenge to my masculinity. I used my best c遞tistry shovel to dig out the posts and offered a half grunt of a thank you when I discovered the base had never been cemented in place. I rocked that base back and forth till it came loose, put my back under it and gave it some more, till it almost jumped from the holes and landed flat on the lawn.

Only then did I accept that it was too heavy for me to move to the truck by myself.

Thirty seconds into my analysis of what to do next, this iPod-laden kid came bouncing down the street, jamming with his electric guitar completely unaware that I even existed, till I moved to the side walk in front of him, shoved it in hand, offering in sign language that he should pull the plug from his ears.

Guess I startled the fellow, but he did what I asked, stepping back several steps, eyeing me very suspiciously. "Yeah, I am. I'll give you what you'll have to pay that signs my teeth."

The manay got his attention. "Really dude?" he asked, "five bucks?"

I nodded and stepped away from him, clutching my side of the sign.

Together we hoisted the sign and moved it to my truck, only to realize it was several inches too long to fit in the truck. "Guess we'll have to go up the road," I said. "I want to see my five bucks," he decided, dropping his side of the sign to the ground. I reached in my wallet, retrieved my lunch money and snapped it in front of his dull eyes. His face remained, he nodded and dropped down for the sign.

We quickly settled that sign precariously on my truck's front rack, I moved on to thank him and was completely unaware that I even existed, till I moved to the side walk in front of him, shoved it in hand, offering in sign language that he should pull the plug from his ears.

toward Maine Street, I waved. "Dude," I added.

Today at 6 Noble St., the lights are off and the dust has settled. Classes are vacated, desks are moved, and the buzz that always surrounds People Plus has moved to Union Street. The old signs at Noble are suddenly silent and sad.

So I feel compelled to offer one last tribute to our little brown church, no matter that it was always cramped and crowded. It had to be hard to stand, hand in hand across the aisle and say, "out a little bit dark and dingy. And when I visited last, it was still hard to find a place to park."

When we were removing a decorative mantle in the old house, saving it for reuse at our new Union Street church, we found an elaborate greeting card pinned to the wall. It dated 1887, bearing only the wishes of all who might visit the place in the coming years. Certainly no common woodworker in 1887 could ever have guessed the modest Victorian cottage he was building would next become a church complex and later still, a center for senior citizens.

An impressive parade of myriad activity carried us through the 33 years we "lived" on Noble Street.

Classes, exercise, aerobics, dance, exercise classes, wellness programs, events, sales, trips, shows, service and social events. Six Noble was second home to thousands of seniors during the decades leading to this new century. Most of us still accepted the news with some misgiving when we learned we'd have to leave our old home and our little corner on Maine and Noble was destined to house a hotel.

Now here's the last thing. I took an evening walk around the old place last week and was delighted to find our old neighbor still wishes us all well, though the place is in the coming years. Certainly no common woodworker in 1887 could ever have guessed the modest Victorian cottage he was building would next become a church complex and later still, a center for senior citizens.

Speaking Frankly

FRANK CONNORS



for senior citizens.

New or renewing members — July

BRUNSWICK

BRUNSWICK	HARPSWELL	OTHER TOWNS
Ann M. Gossney	Sarah P. Holden	Linda Gardner, Falmouth
Shirley Irish	Nancy Wills	Estelle Wayteck, Bath
Priscilla P. Booth	Katherine Johnson	Betty King, Wiscasset
Darryl Wood	Patricia Craig	Jerry Hix, Lincoln Falls
Frank Wood	Patricia L. Lorraine	Pauline L. Johnson, Lincoln Falls
Judith Wilbur	Helen Norton	Jess McElroy, Wiscasset
Issue Daze	Hannah N. Dering	David Anderson, Damariscotta
Debra A. Gifford	Beverly Martin	Benjamin L. Johnson, Wiscasset
Lois Nelson	Joyce Rogers	Leahie Anderson, Wiscasset
Linda Arruda		
Baldur Zimmerman		
Shane Zimmerman		
Cita Levine		
Bob Smith		
Gregory Belis		
Sue Watson		
George Phillips		
Barbara Tool		

HOPSHAW

HOPSHAW		
Robert Beach		Susan Levandowski, Freeport
Robert Beach		Rose Cusano, Newcastle
Robert Beach		Lorraine Hayes, Damariscotta
Robert Beach		Sue Menseman, Damariscotta
Robert Beach		Gibbs
Priscilla H. Hall		Sally Fitch, Georgetown
John L. Kotter Jr.		Phyllis Smith, Wiscasset
Gillian Watt		

OTHER TOWNS

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Linda Gardner, Falmouth		
Estelle Wayteck, Bath		
Betty King, Wiscasset		
Jerry Hix, Lincoln Falls		
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July 13 at 11:30 a.m.



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That's just natural

The last chore I'd been assigned as we vacated Noble Street was to get our big white from lawn sign off that corner and moved to Union Street. ... Naturally the afternoon I'd selected to do the job was hot and sticky, but I went at it anyway. I took it as just the latest challenge to my masculinity. I used my best cemetery shovel to dig out the posts and offered a half grunt of a thank you when I discovered the base had never been cemented in place. I rocked that beast back and forth till it came loose, put my back under it and grunted some more, till it almost jumped from the holes and landed flat on the lawn.

Only then did I accept that it was too heavy for me to move to the truck by myself.

Thirty seconds into my analysis of what to do next, this iPod-laden kid came bouncing down the street, jamming with his electronic world, completely unaware that I even existed, till I jumped to the side walk in front of him, shovel in hand, offering in sign language that he should pull the plugs from his ears.

Guess I startled the fellow, but he did what I asked, stepping back several steps, eyeing me very suspiciously. "Hey," I said. "I'll give you \$5 if you'll help get that sign off my truck."

The money had his attention. "Really dude?" he asked. "Five bucks?"

I nodded and stepped away from him, claiming my side of the sign.

Together we hoisted the sign and moved it to my truck, only to realize that it was several inches too long to fit in the bed. "Guess we need to lift it up to the rack," I decided. "Guess I want to see my five bucks," he decided, dropping his side of the sign to the ground. I reached in my wallet, retrieved my lunch money and snapped it in front of his dull eyes. His faith renewed, he nodded and reached down for the sign.

We quickly settled that sign precariously on my weak wooden truck rack. I turned to thank him and was confronted by his out-stretched hand. I took the five from my pocket, dropped it in his hand and offered a quick, "thank you," but he was already plugging in his iPod, already walking off.

toward Maine Street. I waved. "Dude," I added.

Today at 6 Noble St., the lights are off and the dust has settled. Classes are relocated, desks are moved, and the buzz that always surrounds People Plus has moved to Union Street. The old digs at Noble are suddenly silent and sad.

So I feel compelled to offer one last tribute to our little brown church, no matter that it was always cramped and crowded, hard to heat, hard to cool, hard to get around in, and usually not a little bit dark and dingy. And when I visited last, it was still hard to find a place to park.

When we were removing a decorative mantele in the old house, saving it for re-use at our new Union Street center, we found an elaborate greeting card pinned to the wall and dated 1887, bearing only best wishes to all who might visit the place in the coming years. Certainly no common woodworker in 1887 could ever have guessed the modest Victorian cottage he was building would next become a church complex and later still, a center for senior citizens.

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CONNORS



ter for senior citizens

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Now, here's the last thing. I took an evening walk around the old place last week and was delighted to find our fine old cherry tree was once more loaded with fruit. I picked several and popped them in my mouth, tasting the tart and bitterness. No matter how nice and wonderful our new home is, there's always a little bitterness about leaving the old. That's just natural.

New or renewing members — July

BRUNSWICK
Ann M. Carter
Shirley Estes
Priscilla F. Booth
Doris F. Wood
Frances Wood
Judith Wilbur
Linda Dow
Dorothy Bufford
Lois Nelson
Linda Arris
Helena Zimmerman
Nancy Whitcombe
Cita Levine
Rudi Smith
Gertrude Bals
Sue Weissman
George Phillips
Barbara Tool

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Sandra Pothalm
Nancy White
Katherine Johnson
Patsela Craig
Marilyn Osterweis
Helen Norton
Hannah N. Dring
Beverly Martin
Joyce Rogers

OTHER TOWNS
Linda Gardner, Bath
Toniette Wayhead, Bath
Betty King, Wiscasset
Jerry His, Union Falls
Patricia His, Union Falls
Jane McEwan, Wiscasset
David Anderson,
Brewsterham
Leslie Anderson,
Brewsterham
Susan Lovendahl, Freeport
Rose Cramen, Newcastle
Laurie Dever, Bath
Sue Mazzurano, Damariscotta,
Maine
Sally Finch, Georgetown
Phyllis Smith, Buxton

Dues for a full year, still only \$25.

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Commercial Street, Bath

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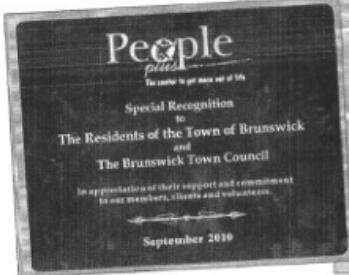
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What a week we had!



Ida Messerman leads a Zumba Gold demonstration on Wednesday. Below, the appreciation plaque that hangs in the lobby at People Plus. At right, teen center hostess Geraldine Feureau.



Teen Center groups cluster for a picture after their main room was named in honor of former executive director Sig Knudsen during a special ceremony on Tuesday. At left, visitors gather around tables of goodies supplied everyday by volunteers.

Season's Greetings

from "Write On"
The People Plus Writers

Dad! You missed him!

By CHARLOTTE HART

"Dad! You missed him!
He came while you were gone.
He stood right there in our back yard.
I was in the window with my new green housecoat
on."

Baby Bill was in his crib.
Mom said, "Let him snooze.
Santa's just checking our chimneys
To see which one he will use."

Gram smiled and kept on knitting.
Mittens! Socks! Wooly hats — she has made three!
They will be wrapped in shiny paper
Under the Christmas tree.

"Dad, I'm glad you went to the grange
To the party for friends who are poor.
But, Dad, you did miss Santa Claus!
I was scared! I was happy for sure.

He stood by the well and waved at me.
His beard is long and white.
His pants and his coat are all bright red.
His reindeer were — out of sight.



A Christmas blessing

By GLADIS SZABO

It was Dec. 23rd. My husband, Bob, was having very bad chest pain. Our doctor said he would meet us at the ER. Driving there my mind was projecting dreadful images. My daughter, Dawn, was 6 and my son, Robbie, was 10. Our Christmas could be disastrous. At the ER, Bob was rushed in, and after what seemed like forever, Dr. Sullivan came out. As he approached me, I was gripped with fear anticipating his news. "It is not a heart attack. He has a collapsed lung and can go home as long as he will rest. I want another X-ray in the morning to make sure it is not still deflating."

I should have been relieved with the good news, but memories flooded my mind, back to the week before our wedding. Scenes of Bob collapsing in a restaurant on our way to my cousin's wedding. He was rushed to the hospital where I was told it was a collapsed lung and he should be fine with a night in the hospital and rest. The following day, I was notified to get to the hospital immediately, but he was in surgery by the time I got there, being 5 minutes from dying. A week in intensive care, indefinitely postponed wedding, left me with terrifying memories.

Christmas Eve morning we returned to the hospital to have a follow up X-ray. When the nurse couldn't reach the doctor for further instructions, she told us we could go home but would most likely be back shortly. My legs turned to jelly, my stomach was in knots as we returned home. I knew I should be doing all the preparations for our Christmas Eve dinner but was not able to think or function. Within a few hours, the phone rang. "Hi this is Dr. Sullivan." My heart was racing, my hands sweating as I answered, "Hi, we have been waiting for your call. Do we have to return to the hospital?"

There was a pause, "No. Why would you think that?"
"Well after the X-ray, the nurse told us we would most likely be returning!"
Angrily, the doctor replied, "Everything is fine and with bed rest for a few days, Bob should be up and around. I will be speaking to that nurse as she should not have told you anything. Have a very Merry Christmas!" I dropped the phone, crying happy tears while hugging my husband.

We had just received the greatest Christmas blessing ever!!



The Dew of Heaven

By ADELAIDE GUERNELLI

The Dew of Heaven was beginning to fall on the trees
That were waiting for the doors of the magic ceiling,
To become the pleasant stage living in Maine.
But, really the three seasons of the weather:
Autumn, Winter and Spring need equal attention
And respect, because they consecrate us to the
Eternal decisions, and their colors define
Life, Respect and Love ... no matter what!
That triangle can't be rejected because it contributes
To our health, both physical and moral, and with
Happiness it can define our time on the earth.
It is also very beautiful in its intrinsic ways, so
Let us all get ready to salute the days of joy and,
Family togetherness, now that the calendar shows
The dates of Halloween, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day,
Ha'nukkah, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and,
New Year's Eve and New Year's Day with our food,
Ready to be shared not only with our relatives
But also with our perpetual friends!



Winter

By JUDITH ZORTOU

The downy woodpecker
beckons to me,
black upon white,
a drop of blood
crowns his head.
I look out my window
at the newly fallen snow,
white, fluffy, virgin.
The black trees,
tall and straight,
a microcosm of emerald
green hidden inside.
I am so weary of winter,
adding layer upon layer
to an already
frozen spirit.
I cry for my father reincarnated
and the hope and comfort he
brings.



Respect

By BONNIE WHEELER

A Season of Joy
Some try to destroy
Take Jesus from Christmas?
Not in my world.
It is your right to worship your way
My family fought for that right.
Would I steal your joy?
Never. So please respect mine.



Christmas Day

By BONNIE WHEELER

The winter wind howled through the night.
Snow piled high in the morning light.
Family arriving — hugs at the door —
Gifts beautifully wrapped placed on the floor
Christmas tree decorated, sparkling with light
Savory aromas from the kitchen, delight
Happy children's faces filled with glee
This is the way Christmas Day should be.
Cold wet clothing, boots dripping muddy clay,
Children running amuck, toys all astray
Infants crying, mothers' weary faces
Leftover food, no refrigerator spaces
Men asleep or watching TV.
Women vacuuming the debris
Discarded wrapping around a forlorn tree
This is my Christmas Day reality.



Christmas lobster dinner

By BONNIE WHEELER

A very dear friend of mine lives in a nursing facility. She is in her 90s and continues to be cheerful, helpful to others and a delight to be with. Peggy loves lobster so I invited her out for early Christmas dinner so she could enjoy her favorite food. I picked her up, put her walker in the trunk, and off we headed to Captain Mike's. She ordered lobster and black coffee and then asked me when I had been back to Vermont. I thought, "Why would I be going to Vermont?" Oh dear. I realized she had no idea who I was. I said, "Not for a long time. I have not been back to my home state of Oklahoma in a long time." She asked, "How is Russell?" Who was Russell? I said, "I haven't seen him in a while. Now my husband Garry is doing well, still driving a van service to Portland." Now she looked at me, "Who is Garry?"

I said, "I have seen my kids, Brad, Kevin, and Lonna this year. Our friends Carolyn and Don always ask about you." Finally we didn't continue the game of confused conversation. She enjoyed every bite of her lobster, and I enjoyed my haddock.

I drove her back and walked her through the hallway to her room. We hugged and she thanked me, never once saying my name. Did she know who I was? I don't think she ever did. Did it matter? No, not at all. When I got home, my husband said, "How was Peggy?" I said, "Just fine. She loved her lobster dinner, Russell!" He gave me the very same look I had given Peggy when she asked about Russell. The only Russell I knew was a handsome high school boyfriend. I do wonder, "How is Russell?"

The 'Hungry Moon'

By BETTY KING

Orange-round, then
banana yellow
you rise and float
in the winter sky
the very picture
of abundance.

Who is going hungry
tonight?



Angels

By GLADYS SZABO

Did you ever just meet someone
With whom you connected like no other one?
Angels come to us, I believe...
In more ways than we conceive.
Some see angels with flowing gowns
Floating above and all around.
Others enter our lives as a friend or a pet
Whom we will never forget.
A bird in the sky
Or a dainty butterfly.
Some angels come, just for a while
Others remain, for many a mile.
Blessed with angels from earth and above
Receiving their strength and endless love.
Each angel holds a special place
In my heart I will embrace.



My most memorable Christmas

By BETTY KING

..... was, for me, the archetypal Christmas — when my children were very small. In those days we decorated the tree on Christmas Eve, after the children were all in bed — and then wrapped and arranged the presents (some of them always had to be assembled first, puzzling over totally inadequate instructions) and stuffed the stockings. Then I went to church (the Vigil Mass was at midnight then, as it ought to be!)

When I got home I had every intention of going to bed, but the night was so beautiful — the air was mild, the moon was full, blue shadows were striping the snow — and I was already well muffled up and wide awake. I would go for just a little walk. I soon found myself down at the river and sat on a stone to watch the moonlight on the water. Before I knew it there was a pink glow on the eastern sky! I made it back up to the house before the first sleepy child came down the stairs.

We had breakfast all together of stollen, scrambled eggs, bacon and tangerines before attacking the Christmas stockings. Then the youngest child selected a present from under the tree and delivered it to the recipient, who opened it and then chose the next present and delivered it, and so on.... This took all morning. I meanwhile stuffed the goose with fruit and set it to roast.

The afternoon was so warm, as I remember, that we went for a walk on a beach where the fog was so thick that we kept losing sight of one another. It took some doing to gather everybody for the trip home.

I am now about twice as old as I was that snowy Christmas eve. There must have been frustration, anxiety and fatigue, but all that has long since faded from the picture leaving amazement! And gratitude.



A pretty good old fashioned Christmas

BY RUTH FOEHRING

A pretty good old fashioned Christmas

By Ruth Foehring

The Christmas of 1990 was almost upon us. I remembered a promise I made to myself a few years back that when we felt settled in our old farm house, I was going to have an old fashioned Christmas party. We had moved there in 1973 so I figured we were as settled as we ever would be. Moving out to the country in Vermont, and purchasing an old farm complete with barn, fields and meadows, and even a pond was a dream come true for me. I loved it. I still do even though I no longer live there. But, oh what memories I have stored up!

Tried and true friends would be invited, people that if the day was a disaster they would still love us. They would be the type of people that would not complain of the cold, love nature, and would eat all that was put before them! My guest list was complete, the phone calls were made. The instructions clearly stated that the Sunday before Christmas the party would occur and to wear warm clothes, especially, warm boots, gloves and hats. Bring snowshoes but if they did not have any plenty would be here to use.

The day before the big event, we set up card tables in various rooms in the house. Each table was set with a red tablecloth, white dishes and napkins and sprigs of holly were placed in the center of each table. Sunday morning the cooking was well on its way, and by noon we were ready. I walked around the house admiring what I saw. Cozy! Christmas! Nice! Right on schedule the cars began showing up. Snow shoes lay on the back deck. Boots lay by the back door. The glass front on the wood stove showed orange and yellow flames. This was an inviting sight in this ten degree day and soon we were all toasty warm.

People relaxed, and then the fun began. We were going off into the woods and decorate a pine tree. This tree would be our special gift to the birds for their Christmas. Bowls of popcorn and cranberries were handed out. Needles and thread and strong string came next and we began making chains with them. They were tied together and began to grow longer. A few of us took pine cones, added string to hang them, smeared peanut butter on them and rolled them in fine bird seed. Grapefruit halves were given hangers and suet balls place in their centers. Then we were ready.

Dressed warmly, snow shoes on, we trudged up the hill in the back and found the prettiest tree. We all decorated it and the smiles on our faces were a delight to behold. The house glowed with light as we approached it and was a very inviting sight. Rosy cheeks and smiling faces entered the back door once again. Drinks and snacks were served. The meal which had been cooking in the oven for a couple of hours was ready. Now came the next part of the day. Numbers were drawn from a hat, people found their matching numbers on the small tables and sat to eat their salads together.

The house was lighted now in every room. When the salads were finished, numbers were picked again, people changed to their new matching table where the main entrée was begun. Merry conversations and laughs were heard from every room. What fun! What joy! Then of course tables were changed again for dessert. Everyone met everyone that day and friendships were cemented that last to this day. The day ended in front of the wood stove where we all laughed and hugged. Everyone left with a calico ornament and a sprig of holly.

Tired but with a deep feeling of contentment we began the clean up. The people who spent this magic day with us are still our dearest friends. They have told us so many times how special this day was. Yes, the birds found their tree and enjoyed their treats for many weeks. We then cleaned up all the strings and empty holders. Whenever we would cross country ski, or walk by it on greener days, memories stirred up of that very old fashioned Christmas.



BY VINCE McDERMOTT

The tree was up
Straight and green
Presents galore
Santa wasn't mean



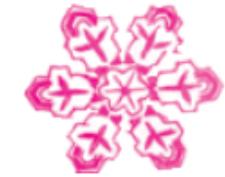
The boy was eager
To discover what was
there
But no matter how good
There was still a care



Five long years
Had gone past
A rare visit
Not long to last



But he was alive
The door flew open
Cold air poured through
A snow covered figure
Came into view



Company coming

By BONNIE WHEELER

"We are having company come, and we are cleaning house. You clean your room, Chris, and I want it to sparkle."

"Okay, Mommy"

"You have had time to get your room clean. Are you done?"

"Well, I still have some sparkle left. I put it on my floor, on my bed, on my dresser, and you are going to be so happy. My Room really sparkles."

"Oh, Christopher!"



Love at first sight

By Charlotte Hart

Pure joy! Anticipation! Sheer delight!
I feel a breathless thrill when you appear.
Will you come now and stay the long dark night?
Lovely, magical first snow of the year!
Tall skis, sleek sleds, strong snowshoes ready wait.
Moon and candles kindle your diamonds' gleam!
Towering blue spruce guard the front yard gate.
O deep-swirled snow, you frost a lovely scene.
In March, we'll end this torrid, iced affair.
Your frozen grip sweet April will undo.
Blue brilliant summer skies will banish care.
October frosts will whisper thoughts of you.
And then — come back, December blanket warm.
Love at first sight again! Wild, swirling, lovely storm!



The last months of 2010

By ADELAIDE GUERNELLI

I never celebrated Halloween when I was a child because my grandma never believed in attracting dead people to earth. But we know that this day is respected by many churches and is also devoted to good souls. So, I hope it will continue protecting the children that disguise and have fun. This way, the day could also be our fun to decorate our kitchens with all the delicious fruits and cookies. I respect the saying "Death, like harvest, are part of Life" as Dr. Jack Santino said in Ohio University.

On November 11 we dedicate our prayers to all our Veterans because they risk their lives to protect other countries as well as the USA. I wish I can do in the future, what I saw a lady doing in an airport: she was kissing and hugging all the men and ladies that had just arrived and she also prayed for them! Thank you, CNN! To come back alive from the war is a miracle!

On December 25th we remember the day Jesus was born and we spend time with our families praying and eating all those delicious pieces we bake with the fruits and vegetables of Maine's rich production. We venerate those pumpkins! Unfortunately, the year 2011 has to wait to say hello and be consecrated by our humble poems and prayers. May I add some of the words that are used and respected both in English and Spanish during all these days, to link all the countries of the new world? Some of them are:

1. Halloween = Vispera de todos los Santos (vispera means the day before).
2. Veterans Day = Día de todos los Veteranos
3. Thanksgiving Day = Día de Acción de Gracias
4. December 25 = Día del Nacimiento de Jesús
5. New Year's Day = Día del Año Nuevo
6. Hallow = Hola!
7. Hallowed = Sagrado, o Santo

And one advice to everyone in Maine, from this down to earth, lady: learn how almost everything used or eaten in the olden days was home-made, pure, clean and delicious, and the animals were treated like people. Winter days allowed families to gather, sing, dance and pray, in the evenings. And barns were used very well!



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The Writers of Write On!



At the food bank

By BETTY KING

I see courage
In the eyes of the children

How do they know?
Did you tell them?



Winter stays a long time it seems

By W. B. KINNEY

The winter stays a long time it seems
As the snow falls and drifts on the wind
And spring waits on the wings of dreams
While we define our lives to find.

Each winter seems longer than the last
For each year comes and goes
While life for some did live the past
These many a years have left us so.

How many more will this life give?
The many more do we so wish
For they have been wondrous to live
Full of all that is this.

Walking the dog on a winter evening

By BETTY KING

To the west, a stained glass sky
divided by black branches. To the East,
a warm glow where the moon will soon rise.
Under our careful feet, dim opalescent reflections
identify puddles which we artfully avoid.
In our faces a fresh night breeze, like
a splash of cold water. In our noses,
scents of lichen and resin. At the path's end,
warm fire, good food, and rest.



My favorite holidays

By ADELAIDE GUERNELLI

My verses will remember three holidays:
Thanksgiving, Christmas and Veterans Day.
Since these are the days we feel closer to God,
And, we can enjoy them with our families and friends.
Christmas is the day my soul prefers 'cause it means
Jesus' Birthday and He is our Great Brother
And Savior who will never neglect us while
We enjoy our lives, or suffer and learn!
Thanksgiving is a very special day 'cause it is
The creation of a church in our souls, when we
Gather together with our families and friends
To eat ... but also to pray and we thank God and Jesus, again!
Veterans' Day makes my heart remember one brother and
Two uncles that died, and the list of the names that are in the
Newspapers every week, honoring our Country and
Other lands, and I cry, pray and remember all of them for the USA!

Snowflakes by God, Sara King and Grandma Betty

2011

People News

plus

The Center to get more out of life

35 Union St., Brunswick, ME 04011

729-0757

www.peopleplusmaine.org

July 2011

Volume 11, No. 7

"People Plus supports an engaged, healthy and independent life for older adults, while joining others to build community for all ages."

Szabo, Welzel named Volunteers of the Year

Gladys Szabo was named People Plus Volunteer of the Year for 2011, and Hank Welzel was named Brunswick Teen Center Volunteer of the Year at the annual volunteer appreciation program held June 9.

Both are longtime members of People Plus, and both are involved in several very different activities at the Center.

Szabo is "chief volunteer and bottle washer" of the monthly Lunch and Connection dinners. She coordinates the volunteer work crews and tabulates all the monthly reports. She has been a long-time contributor to the WriteOn! writers group. When the Spectrum Generations/People Plus cooperation evolved for the Brunswick Area Respite Center's Carefree Café, it was Szabo who stepped

up and made the program work.

Welzel is a retired engineer and a woodworking hobbyist. Several of his creations grace the public spaces at People Plus, including our new suggestion box. He volunteers regularly at the Teen Center. His smiling face and regular bag of food donations is a known and welcome fixture at the Center.

Welzel's volunteer award was the first given by the Teen Center.

Pat Longworth, Ann Frey, Alvina Menard, Vince McDermott and Judy Wilbur were also recognized for continuing service to the Center.

Longworth has been the Monday morning front desk receptionist for a number of years, and is the "secret caller" of the dozens of men who attend



HANK WELZEL

GLADYS SZABO

the regular monthly men's breakfast.

Frey, a member of the Center's Board of Trustees, has been instrumental in upgrading and maintaining the Center's website.

For longer than anyone can remem-

ber, Alvina Menard has been coordinating the distribution of the People Plus News.

Wilbur coordinates the volunteers for the front desk and is a "secret dessert maker" for many of the Lunch & Connection meals.

McDermott is a leader of the center's WriteOn! group, coordinates the ping pong events for the Center and, "just pops up, almost everywhere he's needed."

According to Frank Connors, who awarded the prizes to the seven, "Volunteers make this Center work. This group may bubble to the top this month, but there is no doubt in anyone's mind that we wouldn't be here without the efforts of hundreds of volunteers."

Lunch & Connections

July cookout moving to beach



Big winners. Christian Potts and his mother, Anna Potts, together won last month's Lunch & Connections' record-setting 50-50 raffle and a door prize.

for our vegetarian friends.

Focus of this monthly Lunch & Connections program, underwritten by Spectrum Generations, is nutrition, information and variety. Each meal must include regu-

lar and vegetarian options, a salad, fruit and whole-grain breads. A CHANS Home health care professional is always on hand in the cafe area to offer a free blood pressure check to lunch.

Come to the beach early enough to kick some sand around — we start registering folks at 11 a.m. — pick up your 50/50 raffle ticket and register for one of several door prizes. If the weather is questionable, the cookout will be served inside at People Plus, 35 Union St. There will not be a storm-related rescheduling.

All guests must check in at the Thomas Point beach gate house. Reservations for seating are necessary and obtained by calling the People Plus Information desk at 729-0757. A limited number of rides to dinner can be provided, on a first call, first served basis. We NOT accept walk-ins for this event.

Suggested donation is \$7 for adults 60 and older and children 12 and under, and \$7.50 for all others. Lunch is served at noon.

Some of the themes that emerged (in no particular order) were:

— Focus on seniors but don't eliminate programming for others.

— People Plus is a good name.

— Consider a mission statement that better explains what we do.

— People Plus provides seniors in the Brunswick area with a great place to socialize, learn, serve, be served, and interact with community members of all ages.

— The Union Street facility is really

Please see REPORT, Page 2

TRIAD: New look, same mission

Merrymeeting Bay TRIAD has a new look, but its mission remains the same.

The "new look" is a new brochure that explains what TRIAD is and does. The mission is two-fold:

— TRIAD is a coalition of senior citizens, law enforcement officials and community service providers working together to enhance and ensure the safety of older adults in the community, and to reduce crimes targeting the senior population.

How does TRIAD accomplish this? One way is to sponsor and coordinate educational programs on crime prevention, that provide information about current

scams, and how to avoid becoming a victim of these and other criminal activities that might be in the area.

— TRIAD also provides information about who to contact if you have a concern or question about a transaction that just doesn't seem right. For example: Is that person knocking on your door legitimate or might he be an unscrupulous salesperson or home repair fraud? Does that investment promising financial security right for me? It might not be. Is it too good to be true? It might be — check

it out. TRIAD can refer you to the proper service provider resources.

Do you live alone without family living nearby? Have you signed up for the TRIAD Good Morning Program which establishes a daily telephone contact to ensure your well-being?

Do you want to be a safer driver? Watch for upcoming TRIAD/AARP safe driver courses in the area.

These are but a few TRIAD initiatives which help to ensure the well-being of older residents in the community and address issues that can adverse-

ly affect our physical or financial security. To learn more, pick up a TRIAD brochure at People Plus. They will also be available at other community organizations, town offices, hospitals and other public places in the area soon.

For more information about Merrymeeting Bay TRIAD call 725-4736, or send questions to the address on the brochure. We welcome your input. If you have a question or concern about someone's safety, contact the law enforcement office in your area listed in the brochure.

Are you interested in a

TRIAD program at People Plus? Call Frank Connors at the Center, 729-0757.

Teen Center Summer Schedule

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday

1:30-4:30 p.m.

July 2011



Bob Dow holds a sample of his unique creations.

Art show features Dow's dioramas

Bob Dow, a multitalented regular at People Plus, will exhibit a collection of his unique "dioramas" in the People Plus Café for the months of July and August.

Dow grew up in Melrose, Mass., during the depression years, and was exposed to photography at a very early age. His grandfather had a wooden box camera from the 1890s that allowed him to make 4x5 inch glass negatives, and his father built a darkroom in the family basement, using an old folding camera as an enlarger.

Retired in Brunswick, Dow still boasts photography as a hobby, and

says his computer has become the color darkroom that he never had. His photography work has appeared in several issues of the People Plus News, and most members will recognize his name from writings on the members page.

Dow said this exhibit, his first public solo show, "is not about my photographic ability, but rather a demonstration of an idea," that he has been working on for a while, namely, "a technique that adds depth to a print with out the use of special glasses or other accessories."

This show may be viewed at People

People News

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The Center to get more out of life

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October 2011 Volume 11, No. 10

"People Plus supports an engaged, healthy and independent life for older adults, while joining others to build community for all ages."

Frizzle named to lead People Plus

By FRANK CONNORS

Stacy Frizzle, most recently the marketing and communications coordinator for the Brunswick Downtown Association (BDA), has been hired to be the new executive director of People Plus.

Center trustees unanimously accepted the nomination from its search committee on Sept. 22. She begins her new duties on Oct. 11.

"Stacy's appointment begins a new era for People Plus," Board of Trustees chair Gregory J. Shear predicted. "We look forward to working with Stacy, who has the skills and the drive to lead us forward."

Ms. Frizzle, a Topsham resident, "in her mid-40s," has 20 years of executive experi-

Meet the new director

Join staff and trustees for cider, cookies and conversation with new Executive Director Stacy Frizzle on Thursday, Oct. 20, from 2 to 3:30 p.m., in the Center's Union Street Cafe following the monthly Lunch & Connections. Frizzle will be introduced, will offer brief remarks, and then join in an informal discussion of future plans for the center.

ence in public relations, marketing and market development. She has been active in the greater Brunswick area's business community since 2002, and the marketing specialist for the BDA for nearly a year.

Earlier in her career, she was director of global media systems and advertising for the Coca-Cola Co. in Atlanta, Ga. She holds a degree in communications, with minors in psychology and nutrition, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Frizzle is the mother of three pre-teenaged daughters and has been restoring her River View Farm in Topsham for nearly nine years. She is very quick to tell everyone of her love for and interest in the Brunswick area.

"I'm a big promoter," she said.

Frizzle is a former trustee of the Topsham Public Library and worked on its development campaign. She has worked on

Please see **FRIZZLE**, Page 2



Stacy Frizzle and her dog, Gertie.

Eatin' what they cook



Eric Thoreson, a nutritionist with the Cooperative Extension Service and leader of our Cooking for One series last month, serves up applesauce to some of his students during a recent class. Thoreson will lead a series on menus and budget shopping on Wednesdays in October.

Lunch & Connections

September luncheon features local harvest

The Lunch & Connections on Oct. 20 will be our annual Harvest Celebration, featuring heaps of local vegetables, flavorful boiled ham and homemade desserts.

"This is one everyone should be watching for," chef Frank Connors said. "It's going to be a great one."

Potatoes, cabbage, carrots, turnip and beets are all coming from Six River Farms over in Bowdoinham, and there will be squash from area gardens. Dessert will be fresh baked cookies, produced in our new convection oven, and you'll be encouraged to take an orchard fresh apple home with you.

Of course there will be a fresh, lightly-dressed green garden salad for everyone, and the featured drink will be fresh cider or apple juice. Tea, coffee and milk are always available. A meatless casserole will be waiting for our vegetarian

guests.

Focus of this monthly Lunch & Connections program, underwritten by Spectrum Generations, is nutrition, information and variety. A CHANS Home-health care professional is always on hand in the craft area to offer a free blood pressure check prior to lunch and this month, a CHANS team will be available to offer flu shots; no appointment necessary.

Come to the Center early pick up your 50/50 raffle ticket and register for one of several door prizes. Reservations for seating are necessary and obtained by calling the People Plus information desk at 729-0757. A limited number of rides to dinner can be provided, on a first call, first served basis. Suggested donation is only \$5 for adults 60 and older and children 12 and under, and \$7.50 for all others. Lunch is served at noon.

From yoga to ancestry.com

Plenty to do this fall

People Plus has a number of programs and activities planned for October. Among them:

Gentle Yoga

Gentle Yoga with Dennis Kimmage is ideal for anyone seeking a mild form of exercise and especially beneficial to seniors or people recovering from illness or injury. Classic yoga postures that stretch, tone and improve joint flexibility are modified in a gentle class to make them more accessible. It is an excellent way to start yoga or deepen on an existing practice.

When: Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Cost: \$60 per 6 week class,
Oct. 11 to Nov. 15

Beginning Mat Pilates

Plates with Ann Kimmage can benefit many people at many levels. It can improve range of motion, flexibility, circulation, posture and abdominal strength. Strong abdominal muscles increase your control and precision of movement. Improve posture, and contribute to a healthy spine and back.

When: Thursdays, 4:15-5 p.m.
Cost: \$60 per 6 week class,
Oct. 13 to Nov. 17

All-Levels Yoga

Yoga with Ann Kimmage Improves flexibility, strength, range of motion, balance and reduces stress. This class consists of classic yoga postures and breathing techniques designed to help you unwind and re-energize after a busy day.

When: Thursdays, 5-6 p.m.
Cost: \$60 per 6 week class,
Oct. 13 to Nov. 17

Volunteer Opportunity Fair

People Plus, Curtis Memorial Library and the United Way are bringing together more than 25 local, art, environmental, community service, education and support groups needing your help. Learn more about the generous people in our community and become a volunteer.

When: Thursday, Oct. 27 In the Morrell Meeting Room at the Curtis Memorial Library, from 2-7 p.m.

Ancestry.com

Come to the Curtis Memorial Library on Thursday, Oct. 6, from 1-2 p.m. when library director Liz Doucett will guide us through "The Ins and Outs of Ancestry.com Genealogy Software."

Please see **PLENTY**, Page 8

Magazine features

Write On!

The members of Write On!, the creative Wednesday afternoon writer's group at People Plus, gained at least a moment of national notoriety last month when they became one of two such groups profiled in IdeaGems Magazine.

The lead story in the fall quarterly edition is titled, "A Tale of Two Writers' Groups," and the article profiles the members of Write On! and the



Please see **MAGAZINE**, Page 2

People Plus News

The official monthly newspaper of People Plus, serving residents of the Brunswick area. Editorial submissions and advertising queries should be e-mailed to:

frank@peopleplusmaine.org

Questions, comments and written contributions should be sent by the 15th of the month to:

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Much more than 'filling in!'

By J. GREGORY SHEA

Jim Pierce is enjoying the sun and surf of Hawaii as I type this. That's where he was a year ago when People Plus Board President Ed Harris called to ask him to step in as the "interim executive director." Our previous executive director, Susan Cole, had resigned, giving relatively short notice.

He knew he would have to resign his People Plus Board seat to take this role. He thought about Ed's request for a bit and called back with an unequivocal "Yes!"

All of us who "are" People

Plus ... members, staff, communities, board ... knew we were blessed by Jim's answer. We knew that his 33+ years as CEO of Independence Association and active support for and knowledge about People Plus were a fortuitous "gift."

What we did not know was how hard Jim would work to not only keep People Plus functioning as it needed to, but to move us forward on several critical fronts to improve our operations and prepare us to better serve our members and communities.

There was no issue, task, challenge or difficulty Jim did not confront and address.

He has worked incredibly long hours. He has served for many more months than any of us expected would be necessary.

Jim does not know this column is being written. But, not to celebrate and appreciate his incredible devotion and success over the past year would be a major dereliction.

From the bottom of our collective heart, Jim, we THANK YOU for how hard you worked, how much you care, the courage you displayed, the accomplishments you achieved and, mostly, for being YOU!



Jim Pierce

And, because Jim is Jim, he will be working with the board to assist and support our new executive director, Stacy Frizzle, as she begins her tenure on Oct. 11.

Stove 'n Stuff raffle results offered

The first effort to raise money to pay for the new stove in the People Plus kitchen raised nearly \$650, and is being called a success by organizers.

"We sold 128 tickets for \$5 in less than a month," program manager Frank Connors explained, "and, thanks to the generosity of four area restaurants, our expenses were zero."

Alison Harris of Brunswick purchased the first ticket drawn at the September Lunch & Connections dinner and selected the gift certificate from Dolphin Marina and Restaurant in Harpswell. Brenton Zachau of Bowdoinham

selected the \$30 certificate from Richard's German Restaurant in Brunswick, and Joan Tarazewich of Brunswick took the certificate from Capt. Mike's seafood restaurant in Brunswick. The three gift dinners from Brunswick's Fat Boy Drive-In went to Ed Harris of Harpswell, Ruth Fehring of Phippsburg and David Barlag of Brunswick.

"We want to offer a special thank you to the restaurants who participated," Connors added. "Their generosity made the event possible."

**Memorial
Donation**
made to People Plus
In memory of
**Joe
Bryant**
"Counselor, principal,
neighbor and friend"

Lunch Out! will again benefit Center

The Oct. 11 Lunch Out! to Thai Paradise on Pleasant Street will once again be an opportunity to benefit the People Plus Center as you enjoy a noon time luncheon. Harpswell resident Al Moren, who has no affiliation with the restaurant, has agreed to pay the Center a cash donation of \$10 for each of the first 50 people who attend this Lunch Out!

Pre-registration at People Plus is essential. You may register over the phone by calling 729-0757.

Keep germs from spreading.
**Cover your
cough!**

FRIZZLE

From Page 1

fundraising for the Bath Area Family YMCA, the Brunswick Area Big Brothers Big Sisters, and has worked as a personal trainer. She encourages everyone to meet her "best friend" Gertie, a 1-year old, jet black, mixed breed retriever.

She called People Plus a wonderful and unique organization. "I can't wait to get in and get my feet wet," she said. "I'm excited to meet everyone and to learn how things work."

She looks forward to a "good transition and a continuing partnership" with the BDA and area merchants.

Shea added, "we remain grateful and indebted to Jim Pierce, our interim director since last November, whose hard and diligent work has put us on the right path."

Pierce, a former board member and director of Brunswick's Independence Association for 33 years, became interim director when Susan Cole left the job in October 2010.

MAGAZINE

From Page 1

Poway (Calif) Pen & Ink group.

Managing editor Laurie Notch focused on the importance of writers' groups as "engines" that provide training, inspiration and challenges for aspiring writers, and presented the 20-year-old Brunswick group as, "one of the best around."

Write On! members profiled in the magazine and contributing to the segment include Bob Dow, Bonnie Wheeler, Gladys Szabo, Vince McDermott, Ruth Fehring, Lynne Kresge, Charlotte Hart, Dotti Moody and Paul Karwowski.

A "sample" magazine is available for inspection on Frank Connors' desk. Electronic downloads are available at www.magcloud.com/browse/issue/272134

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Seasonal Flu Shots to be offered at People Plus Center this fall.

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Season's Greetings from "Write On!" The People Plus Writers

A snowflake

By P.K. ALLEN

A delicate design
formed by Jack Frost,
which after completion
the pattern is lost.

A one of a kind,
a trillion times deal,
to touch the warm ground,
only to melt.



Celebration

By BETTY KING

Resisting the confinement that comes with
Dark, cold, snow and ice, and all the
extra effort that the season demands,
we yet go forth to gatherings that celebrate
family and community. We need to know that we are
there for each other, no matter how hard the going.
In this search of warmth and light and ease
We are all the more moved to festivity, as though
in defiance of material limitations.
When all nature is tucked in, burrowed deep,
Waiting out the season, we flower into
unaccustomed extravagance in speech and action –
acts of faith in the new life that, being human,
we know is just around the corner



Christmas presents

By BONNIE WHEELER

Time for gift giving:
Keep your money in the bank.
The perfect gifts are free.
Tis the season to say thanks.
Thanks to my dear friends;
You have my deep respect.
Thanks to my enemies;
Tolerance is your bequest.
Thanks to the poor and hurting;
You give me the chance to give.
Thanks to the unlovable;
You push me to forgive.
Thanks to all my family;
You have my unconditional love.
Thanks to the Christ Child;
You gave me life and a home above.

An unforgettable Christmas Eve

By RUTH FOEHRING

The Christmas of 1996 was a white one and Christmas Eve was frigid. We were dressed warmly that evening but the cold seemed to go right through the warm sweaters and down coats we were wearing. Hoods and hats were on, gloves were secure and woolen socks and boots completed our outfits. We were visiting our son and his family in a small town in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, and wondering if where we were standing at the moment, was a wise choice for two people who had left the frozen north for the sunny shores of Florida.

We were standing on a shoveled section at the far end of the town square. Many churches stood on one side, lights were on and stained glass windows were reflected on the white snow that lay on the ground all around. Wreaths were on their doors, and their church bells pealed out "Silent Night." Across a wide road and directly adjacent to the churches were many old Victorian houses. They were large and their Christmas lights and decorations were so lovely that we just let our eye eyes roam up and down their inviting appearances. Small paper bags with sand to weigh them down, and candles inside, lit up the side walk that ran in front of the houses. The smoke rising from their chimneys let us sense the warmth that existed within them.

Precisely at 6:45 the church bells changed their tune and began ringing with a bong, bong, bong. We were alerted to the

feeling that something was about to happen. Then we heard another sound, that went clippety, clop, clippety, clop. Then, through the now gently falling snow, appeared a man dressed like Joseph of old and leading a donkey. Magic filled the air and people around us became silent. We were lined up behind the donkey and candles were distributed and lighted and a long procession began down one side of the square passed all the houses. We began singing, "Silent Night" and upon reaching the end of the square crossed the road to the other side. We approached the churches awaiting us and as the church of your choice came close, people walked up their freshly shoveled paths. The procession would stop, people would call out, "Merry Christmas" and they would turn and wave and enter their church.

We reached our destination and left the line and received the same farewell. Entering the church the organ was playing a choir was singing, and we knelt and bowed our heads. We finally felt warm and a feeling of peace and joy filled us and as we glanced around us we saw everyone present had the same look of contentment.

Those who participated in that evening would find the simplicity, beauty and grandeur instilled in them forever and brought to view again every Christmas Eve. I know, because it is with me once again this year.

Restore! Refresh! Renew!

By CHARLOTTE HART

Restore! Refresh! Renew! Then light bright lights!
One hundred tiny lights this night of nights.
This house was built sixteen decades ago.
She now rules this great orchard deep in snow.
For generations she graced a city street.
A busy household there found life complete.
A vibrant life in a bustling seaport town
Ended. Would the vacant beauty be torn down?
No! Willing hands worked, and brilliant eyes looked on.
This house was moved long miles in June's pre-dawn.
Repair! And scrape! And paint! Restore with care.
For winter's wind and snow this house prepare.
Put a wreath on her door. With lights each window fill
For her first season of wonder here on Orchard Hill.

What we can learn on Christmas Days

By ADELAIDE GUERNELL

I can be just a teacher that learns to fly with the stars, but ... I don't want to die before baby Jesus gets ready to shine our lives with his delicate eyes! With him on my side, all the sufferings of mankind will become poems to be recited, night after night, in the middle of the page that God wrote before his Son came to the Earth ... that wonderful night! But my hands will be the humble piano that I can use to teach the mystical songs of our human lives...! And I will be able to learn to fly with the children that are no longer restless or mischievous, 'cause the birds with their wings will allow them to slip out of the dream, and Christmas will really begin in our souls and hearts, and it will be not just a day but a long period of human life devoted to the Son of our Creator, and the crystal flowers, with the golden forgiveness will be dancing with the music of our hearts in our country, the USA, because it is the only place where we have peoples from around the world...!

Christmas

By P.K. ALLEN

Each Christmas brings a special warmth
To a winter that's long and cold.
That's shared together in close harmony
With those you love to hold.
It brings sounds of joy and laughter
That we'll remember through the years,
Along with a visit from carolers,
Bringing sweet music to our ears.

Success at last

By RUTH FOERING

Christmas morning, 2010, the phone kept ringing but one call really knocked my socks off, and kept me smiling for the rest of the day. Christen, our oldest grandchild, and born twenty-six years ago on Christmas day, was calling to wish us a Merry Christmas. She was entertaining her family and thrilled with the responsibility of being the one finally in charge of the festivities.

She said loudly and with gusto, "Guess what Mimi? I have your Christmas story taped to the refrigerator door and everyone loves it." Well, this had never happened to me before! I had Scotch taped my children's art and stories and my grandchildren's too, to our refrigerator door. Now, it finally had happened to me.

My Mother's refrigerator had lasted for fifty years, and in all those years I never had one thing taped to it. I doubt my children or grandkids ever appeared on its doors either. So, finally I was being recognized. Now that is significant!

My Mother may never have posted my work but when she died I found a big manila envelope and in it was art, Dear Mommy letters and stories, and cards, that she had saved and my name was on all of them. I smiled at that too.



A different Christmas

By GLADYS SZABO

It was the first Christmas without my dad.

Mom and I were feeling sad.

Christmas Day, we'd be apart.

Although, together in our hearts.

Mom announced, "No tree this year."

It was a shock to my ears!

Skipping our Christmas was not to be

It's not Christmas without a tree.

One night Mom would be out late

Now Christmas was to be my fate

The very first duty was to decorate

Decorations throughout the house

Even had the Christmas mouse

Off to the woods, ax in hand

Cut a tree on a farmers land

Over the fence, through the snow

No one would ever know

Tree dressed with shimmering lights

Brought that tree to brilliant life

Joyfully singing Christmas carols

Dimmed the lights and lit the candles

As I began to trim the tree

With each ornament I could see

Memories of my years with dad

Though only fourteen we did have.

Each one warmed me deep inside

Hanging some I even cried

Once all done, stood back to look

Was just like a storybook.

Wrapped the gifts, lit the tree

Gifts from "Santa" to mom and me

Hours grew late, I started to doze

Then I hear the back door close

The look of shock as she entered the room

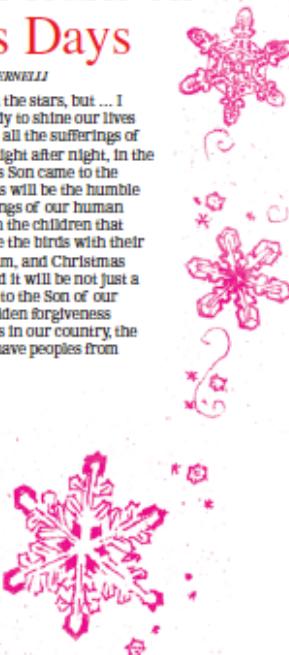
Immediately replaced any feelings of gloom

I shot off the couch,

Hugged mom, till she slouched

With teary eyes, we opened our gifts

Our little Christmas was the greatest gift!



Reflections

By GLADYS SZABO

December being the end of the year

A new beginning is very near.

People bustling in every direction

List upon list, too many to mention

Gifts to buy, parties to attend

Trees to trim, seems like no end.

It's time to reflect on the year just past

How can it be that it went so fast?

A time to reach out to family and friends

Possibly a chance to make some amends

Some are in touch only once a year

From those I anxiously wait to hear

Thoughts of those near and apart

All have left footprints on my heart!

Christmas 1940

By VINCE McDERMOTT

Very young was I
Memories fade
Some vivid, some not
Strong impressions made

Out for the best tree
My uncle, cousin and dad
Not me, you see
I was just a tad

They went in high spirits
With some in a flask
A great time was had
Not much more to last

Good times soon gone
For many a year
We went into darkness
Not much to cheer

Then came a day
Clouds were lifted
Fine times returned
We were all gifted

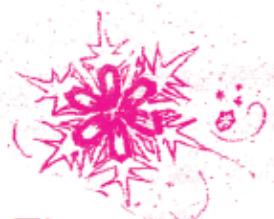
The men came home
Happy Christmas again
We celebrated a lot
To forget the pain



The little girl's Christmas

By BETH COMPTON

There once was a little girl. She liked Christmas very much. She went to the Mall with her mom. They were walking around and the little girl spotted Santa. "Mommy, Mommy, I see Santa. Can I please tell him what I want for Christmas?" Her mom walked her over to where Santa was. The little girl went up to Santa and said "Hi Santa." He said "Hi little girl, what's your name?" She said, "My name is Sue." Santa asked her what she wanted for Christmas. She whispered in Santa's ear, "I would like to have a cat." The little girl got off Santa's lap. He gave her a candy cane and said, "Merry Christmas!"



First snow

By BONNIE WHEELER

Early snowflakes drift softly to the ground.
Winter scenes glisten all around.
A cold pristine beautiful sight.
Only problem — it's Halloween night!

An outhouse bird house

By CHARLOTTE HART

It was Christmas Day 1996. Grandson Peter was twelve. "Merry Christmas, Gramp!"

"Thank you, Peter. Now what can this be? You wrapped it well. Peter! Did you make this? A bird house! It's beautiful!"

"I made it in IA at school."

"Great job! This is so neat! We can hang it from that low branch of the oak by the window."

"Turn it over, Gramp."

"Oh. Oh! Oh wow! This is really clever! An outhouse. Look at this, everybody. An outhouse bird house. Look at the half moon in the door! And the door opens. Look inside her! Okay. It's a one seater. Peter, your copy of the Portland Press Herald! Amazing! Great job! Thank you."

"You do know where I got the idea, don't you, Gramp?"

"You did a lot of meticulous work here. Where did you get the tiny tiny roll of bathroom tissue? And the mini mini ... Well no. No I don't. Let me think. Hold on. Oh! Yes I do know. That birthday card I got from Joe Bryant last August! You did like that card, didn't you, Peter?" On August 11, 1996, my husband, Bob, received from Joe Bryant a unique birthday card, a picture of a set of golf clubs beside the entrance to an outhouse. Inside the card was a three page yarn about the early morning routine of the foursome of Al, Joe, Geoff, and Bob. They always let Bob hit first off the fourth tee. He could then visit the outhouse

house in the woods near the fourth green; then he would rejoin the group on the green to play out the fourth hole.

Joe was widely known for his creative greeting cards and ingenious, carefully planned practical jokes. He also found time to be a long-time highly respected guidance counselor at Brunswick High School, then later Brunswick High School principal. To raise funds for scholarships, Joe wrote blockbuster sell-out faculty shows with large casts of Brunswick teachers. "Fun, Farces, and Foolishness" featured Assistant Principal Jack Caldwell as the whistling lawyer, and math teacher Barbara Leonard as the telephone operator who said, "Is this the party to whom I am speaking?" Math teacher George Millay was the Judge ("Six foot four! Stiff and Sore! Really something of a bore! Has anybody seen the Judge?")

After Joe retired from education, he worked as a customer service representative for L.L. Bean. This gave him more time for community service, golf, creative greeting cards and state-of-the-art practical jokes.

And now it is December 2011. I am sitting in my dining-kitchen area, gazing at the space above my cabinets where I display treasures, a Bowdoin punch bowl (a wedding gift), a University of Maine Stein (a graduation-from-Orono gift), a blue phoenix bird teapot that belonged to my grandmother, and a carefully crafted wooden outhouse bird house.

Snowflake art inspired by God; created by Sara King and Grandma Betty

The way I see it

BY BETTY KING

The Incarnation that we celebrate on Christmas Eve is emblematic of the incarnation of air and light and water onto the bodies of algae and lichens and mushrooms, frogs and salamanders and fish, mice and moose and deer, pines and firs and maples, daisies and roses and delphiniums, cows and pigs and chickens — and so into our own flesh. Each of these transformations is propelled by an energy we call Creation, and each of them is holy. The Event in the stable at Bethlehem was a lightning flash that telescoped this whole elaborate progression into one moment. The energy of Creation stepped briefly into the dimension of time in visible form, and this vision has illuminated our lives to this day.

All of this life is holy, and all the things we use and do to support these lives are sacramental — to be enjoyed and celebrated especially when their value is dramatized by scarcity. We are moved by this seasonal joy to distribute our gifts, whatever they may be, as broadly as possible, in decorating and feasting and music, but also more humbly in gifts of peanut butter and mac and cheese to the food banks — these are sacramental, too. We are reminded by this dark cold season how very much we need each other's blessings. A happy and blessed Solstice, Hannukah, Christmas and Kwanza to you!

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Winter starlight

BY BETTY KING

This frigid air holds no moisture to mask the Milky Way. Living at the end of a long dirt road has its drawbacks, but also its blessings, among them this miraculous clear night sky so thickly populated with legends — Orion, Cassiopeia, Virgo, Leo, Aquarius, Scorpio and Taurus, the Gemini, the Dog Stars, so bright. That we can take our evening walk in pure starlight. On a clear moonless night in December.

An angel

BY P.K. ALLEN

It's nigh on sixty years that I've known her
And whose company I treasure so dear.
Good feelings are spread by the glow from her head
Though she only comes by once a year.
She'll stay just a week and then leave us,
But the joy that she brings we all see.
For her we will save a place in our hearts,
And also on top of our tree.

The story of the turkey that didn't die

BY ADELAIDE GUERNELI

It was supposed to be easy to catch the beautiful turkey that my son bought last year to celebrate Christmas, but the bird decided to remain in good health, alive, when it smelled the good boiling water that had many ingredients besides salt! ... So he (and not I, because this bird was almost a person) decided to escape, with some pieces of food he found on the big table that was outside! They were supposed to be inside his belly! We saw him escaping into the woods near the house and the kids tried to follow him, but the turkey was very intelligent and fast! In ten minutes we couldn't see him! ... My son decided to use another kind of meat we had for tomorrow, and my mother made five focaccias! And would you believe that the next day when we were having our breakfasts, the turkey was inside the driveway and he was very happy! After this he began to eat some of the pieces we had saved the night before for the birds, which were on the table outside! This turkey became a member of the family! But we have not seen him since September 2011!

Early snow

BY BONNIE WHEELER

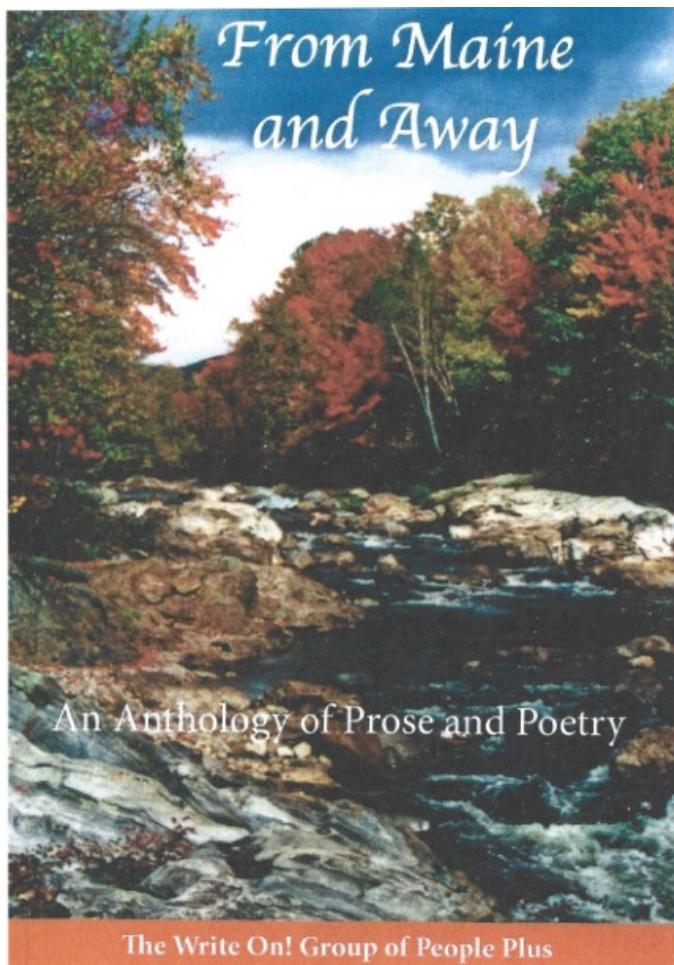
Is early snow bad news? Can mean a day of peace.
No one coming. No one going.
Soup simmering on the stove. Books waiting to be read.
Wait. A car stuck in the road.
Electricity has gone off.
Soup not cooking.
No candles. No flashlights. Getting cold.
No one coming. No one going.
Is early snowfall a bad thing? You tell me.

The spirit of Christmas

BY P.K. ALLEN

The socks were all hung
on the mantel with care,
Just so the kids would believe
Santa was there.
Of the cookies and sugar
we left on the sill,
Santa and his reindeer
had eaten their fill.
The presents were placed neatly
under the tree,
And at six in the morning
the kids shouted with glee.
One at a time
they opened each gift,
Which to their spirits
brought a great lift.
It's a time for joy
may it never cease,
And to the whole world
bring love and peace.

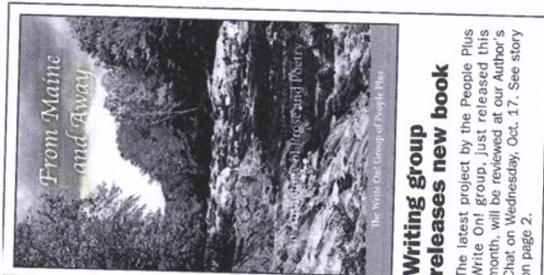
2012



From Maine and Away 2012

Adelaide Guernelli
Andrea Elise Jones
Elizabeth King
Bonnie Wheeler
David Stuntz
Charlotte Hart
Elaine Emily Varney
George Phipps
Gladys Szabo
Jim Friedlander
Sean Donovan
Bill Meroff
Judith Zottoli
Lynne Kresge
Wendall B. Kinney
Bob Dow
Vince McDermott
Ruth Foehring
Millie Ackley
Esther McCandless
Paul Karwowski (P.K. Allen)
Richard M. North

2012



10-2012

Writing group releases new book

The latest project by the People Plus Write On! group, just released this month, will be reviewed at our Author's Chat on Wednesday, Oct. 17. See story on page 2.



Hot off the presses!

Write On! editorial team members, from left, Vince McDermott, Charlotte Hart, Robert Dow and Paul Karwowski, show off copies of "From Maine and Away," the latest project from the writers group. The four joined several other members of the Write On! team with selected readings at last month's Author's Chat. The monthly Author's Chat sessions are held on the third Wednesday of the month and usually include a talk about the book and selected readings.

'From Maine and Away' is focus of Author's Chat

"From Maine and Away," the second anthology of prose and poetry written and produced by the Write On! Group of writers at People Plus, goes public this month at a very special Authors Chat on Wednesday, Oct. 17, beginning at 2 p.m. A wine and cheese reception will follow the discussion.

The 160 page soft-bound work, printed by High Point Graphics, features the work of Millie Ackley, Rae Bamberg, Eleanor Chaplin, Sean Donovan, Robert Dow, Ruth Foehring, Jim Friedlander, Adelaide Giauanelli, Charlotte Hart, Andrea E. Jones, Paul (P.K. Allen) Karwowski, Wendell B. Kimney, Elizabeth

10-2012

King, Lynne Kresge, Esther McCandless, Vince McDermott, Richard M. North, George Phillips, David Stuntz, Gladys Szabo, Elaine Emily Varney, Bonnie Wheeler, Kira Wolow and Judith Zoccoli.

Dedicated to William "Bill" Meroff, the book concludes with Betty North's treasure, "Why I Like Living in Brunswick, Maine." Copies of the work will be available for sale. Reserve your seat by calling 728-6757.

Other publications of the Write On! team include: "Muses and Memories," published in 2008, and two volumes of "Writing for Fun," the first published in 1999 and the second in November 2000.

10-2012

Season's Greetings from "Write On!"

The People Plus Writers

Spirit of Christmas

By ANNE ROBINSON

Dog had been chasing Squirrel's family for what seemed like forever. His first memory once he was old enough to go out on a limb, was looking down on his parent racing across the ground pursued by a large brown barking dog. This was now a familiar daily sight. Dog never gave up and never won either, except once. The Old One had fallen behind one day and was scooped up into the jaws of the beast. Miraculously he survived, spit out onto the ground with a loud dogful "BLECH." Apparently he was not the tasty morsel Dog had hoped for.

Even so, Dog returned day after day. And to what end, Squirrel thought. It was such a waste of time and effort. No other animal would spend so much energy for no gain. Not if they wanted to survive. Not smart, in Squirrel's opinion. But then, he thought, in this case it didn't matter. Dog did not need to forage for food. He lived in the human house

Squirrel could see from his tree, pampered, fed and sheltered. No effort required. So Squirrel supposed dog could afford to chase him and his kin. And, if he was honest, it did keep them on their toes and in shape. Others in the forest were not likely to spit out a slow squirrel. More likely it would be squirrel for lunch. So he supposed he should be grateful to Dog.

Squirrel heard a door open in the human house and saw Dog run out on yet another squirrel hunt. Squirrel picked up an acorn in his jaws and started down the tree just as Dog arrived. Squirrel paused as Dog sniffed round and round the tree as he always did, then looked up, spotting Squirrel. Dog stopped, still as a rock, tail erect, eyes locked on Squirrel. Squirrel slowly descended to the ground, dropped the acorn under Dog's nose, and then scampered back up the tree.

Merry Christmas, Dog.

Christmas Presents

By BONNIE WHEELER

Time for gift giving;
Keep your money in the bank
The perfect gifts are free.
Tis the season to say thanks,
Thanks to my dear friends
You have my deep respect.
Thanks to my enemies,
Tolerance is your
bequest.
Thanks to the poor and
hurting
You give me a chance to
give
Thanks to the unlovable;
You push me to forgive.

Thanks to all my family;
You have my unconditional love.
Thanks to the Christ Child.
You gave me life and a home
above.

Silent Journey

By BOB DOW

Like feathers from the sky they fall,
In no great rush to end it all,
They slowly twirl about, up
high.
Then silently they
pass me by
And vanish in the
snow below.



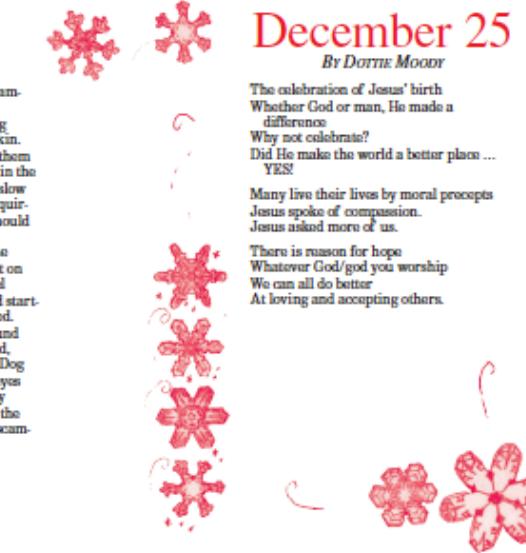
December 25

By DOTIE MOODY

The celebration of Jesus' birth
Whether God or man, He made a
difference
Why not celebrate?
Did He make the world a better place ...
YES!

Many live their lives by moral precepts
Jesus spoke of compassion.
Jesus asked more of us.

There is reason for hope
Whatever God/god you worship
We can all do better
At loving and accepting others.



A Christmas Memory

By GLADYS SZARO

Two huge blue spruce trees
Enclosed our front screen porch
My dad meticulously dressed them
With garlands of glowing lights
Blue, green, yellow, red and orange,
Each light had a special position
My job was to hold the strings of lights
Preventing any breakage
When dad finished
Mom would join us
To admire their beauty
Each branch glistened with candelabrum lights
In praise of our Lord's birth.



What we can learn on Christmas Day

By ADELAIDE GUERNELLI

I can be just a teacher that learns to fly with the stars, but ... I don't want to die before Baby Jesus gets ready to shine on our lives with his delicate eyes! With him on my side, all the sufferings of mankind will become poems to be recited, night after night, in the middle of the page that God wrote before his Son came to the earth ... that wonderful night! But my hands will be the humble piano that I can use to teach the mystical songs of our human lives...! And I will be able to learn to

fly with the children that are no longer restless or mischievous, 'cause the birds with their wings will allow them to slip out of the dream, and Christmas will really begin in our souls and hearts, and it will be not just a day but a long period of human life devoted to the Son of our Creator, and the crystal flowers, with the golden forgiveness will be dancing with the music of our hearts in our country, the USA, because it is the only place where we have peoples from around the world!

Christmas Day

By BOB DOW

Well, Christmas Day was bright and sunny
When I awoke my head felt funny,
I had a touch of vertigo
Which meant I did not dare to go
To visit with my kids in Mass.
This holiday I'd have to pass.
They did say they would come up here
But I said "no because I fear
The weather won't hold out for long."
So coming up I felt was wrong.
Without the family gathered round
It's just another day I've found.
So, while your day has gone away
I'll celebrate another day!

Christmas Day Sequel

By BOB DOW

As I explained before, my Christmas was delayed.
I got a call, therefore; another date was made.
Halfway we'd meet, you see. That's twenty miles for them
And eighty miles for me — their math's a little dim.
A bar in Portsmouth town, the Red Hook, it's called.
My father'd certainly frown. My mother'd be appalled.
A pleasant gathering spot, but if the music's loud
A quiet place it's not. That day? A peaceful crowd.
The kids came marching in with arms all full of bags.
Their faces all a grin; I thought: I'm in for gaga.
It wasn't long before I realized
That I'd be proven wrong; I really was surprised
A model whirlybird my daughter's engines use.
A laptop too — my word — and that I won't refuse!
A mess when we were done — remarks good for a luff,
It was a lot of fun for us — the bar room stuff?
It was a rainy night; I drove a slower clip.
I made it home all right, and it was worth the trip.
I will not soon forget my Christmas in a bar.
I think it's safe to bet, my most bizarre — so far!

Night of Nights — a Christmas hymn

By ELAINE VARNEY

This is the night of nights The night of Jesus' birth All men now shake with fright on this dark desert earth	Day after day He shows us the way If we but choose to pray He is the answer
How cold we've grown what hunger we have known but we are not alone Jesus is the answer	Now we must welcome him the babe that's smiling there He is a friend to us He hears our every prayer
He is the Son of God the torch that's burning bright He is the flesh of man He is our guiding light	Praise to the King To Mighty God we sing If we but welcome him He is the answer

**Snowflake
artwork by
Sara and
Grandma Betty**

A Christmas Tree

By P.K. ALLEN

Each year we buy a Christmas tree
To celebrate the season
And always get a real one
For this, there is a reason.

In this world of make-believe
there's too much artificial
So we've determined in our minds
real things are to our favor

When the season is over
to that thought we cling
By putting that tree on the back porch
and leaving it there 'til spring

A Little Boy's Special Christmas

By BETH COMPTON

There was a little boy who had always wanted a puppy. Then one Christmas morning he woke up and went downstairs to the Christmas tree and he found a puppy in a box. He yelled "Mommy and Daddy, I found a puppy in a box!" His mom and dad came downstairs to where the boy was. The little boy said, "Is this my puppy?" His mom and dad said "Yes." He was so happy! He gave his mom and dad a great big hug and said "Thank you very much. I have always wanted a puppy!"

He named his puppy "Rusty." He played with his puppy all day. His mom and dad said, "You have more presents to open!" The little boy was too interested in his puppy to want to open anything else. It was time for supper. The little boy ate and then he had his bath. Then it was time for him to go to bed. He went upstairs calling Rusty so Rusty went upstairs with the little boy and they both went to sleep and had sweet dreams.

The End

Christmas In Our Hearts...

By ADELAIDE GUERNELLI

On Christmas Eve this year my grandchildren will dance ... and they will do it with Nee Nee, their doggie, that also likes to sing and bark. They decided to celebrate Jesus' birthday with the arrival of the doggie in their hearts and in their homes. She will wear a simple disguise and a tiara, comfortable enough for her to be able to move all her muscles, while allowing the stars in the tiara to shine, shine, to remind all pet lovers that doggies are creatures that can make their owners laugh! And ... while the children and Nee Nee are singing and dancing, we are all sure that Jesus is watching from His modest manger, that we also treasure forever, and He will be praying and saying "thanks a lot to you and to all men, women and children around the USA and the rest of the world, for remembering my birthday in all of your hearts!"

A Snowflake

By P.K. ALLEN

A delicate design formed by Jack Frost, which after completion the pattern is lost.

A one of a kind, a trillion times dealt, to touch the warm ground, only to melt.



Memory of Christmas

By MARGE KIVEL

She shared her mother's love of the creative aspect of Christmas, creating a new birth experience for all who entered her house through the ambience of love.

Janice had her mom's recipes for potato doughnuts, and whenever she made them on a Christmas morning it would transport her to the kitchen of her childhood with its delicious smell of doughnuts.

"We would hover, my sisters and I, around the platter where the doughnuts would end up once they were lifted out of the bubbling fat, placed on brown paper bags to drain and then dusted with confectioner's sugar. We were like fledglings hovering around their mother in the chance she would give them a bug or worm. She would let us score a few doughnuts, then shoo us out of the kitchen," Janice fondly recalled.

Her mother, Elaine, made Christmas special in so many ways. Her homemade decorations which she brought out at Christmas, were beyond anything one could buy — folded ornaments, wreaths made of the traditional materials but always with some unexpected items like small birds which she sculpted out of clay, hand crafted candles with imbedded jewels from nature.

Janice still had some of her mother's Christmas decorations which she would hang on the tree or from window locks. But the one custom that only she and her mother shared on Christmas Eve was going to the midnight carillon service at the stone church in the country.

More often than not there would be a light dusting of snow falling and the swish swish sound of the tires rolling over the snow like skis. Once the carillon began Janice and Elaine were enveloped in mystery and awe as the peal of the bells drifted down from the balcony to ring in their hearts.

Their faith has continued to grow and expand, Janice on the earth plane and Elaine in the spirit realm, and it is the main tie that binds them together, because from that sprouts the vine of love.



By P.K. ALLEN

I think about moving to another climate
When I retire and start growing old,
For the winter wind goes right through me,
I shiver, my bones getting cold.

I look forward to spring and summer
When outside I can dance and play
They bring me such fond memories
I think, maybe I'll just stay

What to Love About Winter

By BETTY KING

The wind! Replacing tattered shade with clarity
Sweeping away the faded leaves, now tattered
By wormsholes and storm winds, bringer of sanity
After the orgy of color, sculptor of branches littered
Across the forest floor, finally relieving
The trees of useless number of dead weight.
They stand all freshly pruned, the surplus leaving
To rot back into earth. Soon now, or late
New growth will find on what's discarded here.
A few short months from now it will be ready
To nourish and protect the turning year
Towards freshness, greenness — cycling ever steady
Our gardens, too, are cleared and tucked in, for the winter.
We put away the tools that we took up so eagerly in April.
We also rest and change. Our houses, neglected
during the glorious outdoor summer, need to be cleaned
and ordered for indoor hospitality. We come home
by early moonlight and starlight, and set out
Christmas lights into the velvet darkness.



Christmas Memories

By DOTIE MOOR

Lying in bed with my four siblings around me
Listening for sleigh bells

We five waiting at the living room door
For the door to be opened and Christmas to be revealed.

Mom always reading the Christmas story from Luke
Wonderful Bowdoin frat parties that brought more gifts.

An adult Christmas with just Dad, Mom left us
Memories good and bad make up all of our lives

As long as hope endures for good memories
Life, good and bad, is affirmed.



Christmas Shopping in Maine

By VINCE McDERMOTT

Everyone knows that Maine is a wonderful place in which to live, raise a family, take a vacation, and retire.

But few realize that it is a swell place in which to go Christmas shopping. Consider the stores which abound in our area — Big Al's, Big Lots, Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, Rite Aid — the list is endless.

So many fine gifts are available
it is hard to select the perfect gift for a loved one.
Ah, Maine. Isn't it great?

Christmas Day, 2007

By BETTY KING

Always, on the day itself,
an expansion of time and space;
the doing is over and we can just be.
After all the long time of preparation,
We can stop thinking and planning and enjoy doing nothing.
We can wrap up expectations of every sort
and just coast for awhile — until the demands
of real life begin to reassert themselves, little by little.
In a week, or two weeks, or three...
there will be taxes to deal with and
budgets to be negotiated and
ends to make meet, but not today, or tomorrow,
or the day after that ... The long climb up the
mountain of the year to Christmas is over,
and we can start the easy downhill run
toward spring.

That Recycled Christmas Card

By RUTH FOEHRING

The first hint of the Christmas season was always the arrival of the first Christmas card sent by a person who liked to get things done early, and was very organized. That card would sit on the mantel piece, a reminder to all who looked its way that the most wonderful time of the year was truly coming.

I saw how pleased my parents were to hear from people who had crossed paths with them and learned early the value of these cards. We decorated the house with them, stringing up red ribbons and attaching the cards to them. They also overflowed the straw baskets that held them. The baskets had big red velvet bows attached to their handles and looked so pretty on the coffee table or on the top of bookshelves.

The happenings of what was going on in the lives of all the people who signed these cards were discussed at dinner time, and the joys, additions and sorrows of these people were recalled with great interest, and it was a way to keep meaningful memories alive.

Cards from neighbors were noticed but since they lived so close they were not as significant. But ... if a neighbor did not send a card that was noted with interest too. Except ... for the people who lived directly across the street from us. There seemed to be a new baby there by Christmas every year. They had eight of them when finally one year there was no mention of a new addition. The O'Houlihans will always be remembered by me for one special thing they did in the late 1940s. It was quite unusual, and they did it before anyone else ever thought of it in our neck of the woods. They were the very first card recyclers.

It all started when my Mother opened their card, stared at it, turned it over, then stared at it some more. The O'Houlihans had sent us back the card we had sent them the year before. My Mother put it aside and that night we were to discuss this unusu-

al card and I will never forget that discussion.

We ate supper and then my mother passed around the cards that had arrived that day, keeping the O'Houlihans card for last. Now, it was my Father's turn to stare and turn and stare again. He said, "Bessie, this card, says 'Merry Christmas to Alice and Leo and family.' and we signed it." What is it doing back here with their names with a line through it and our names in their place? By God, they have their names signed where ours were signed! Well, of all the cheap skates this beats all!"

This continued the next year and then my Father began to realize this was a pretty good idea and he decided to get on the bandwagon. So, the next year they received the same card from my parents that they had sent us the past year and the idea was now an established fact. Now, we began reaching out to neighbors the same way and they responded accordingly. We were receiving lots of recycled cards from the neighbors and what a history book we read each year. The same cards were filled with notes of interest and of gossip and looked forward to each year. When one was filled a new one was started.

I once went through my box of saved Christmas cards and picked out a few special ones and sent them back to some friends with another from us in the same envelope. Now, these were a hit because people called and thanked us for the joy of seeing the names on their cards that had not been there for quite some time. They saw absent members of their families who now were married and with babies of their own, along with cats and dogs so fondly remembered. The joy really hit home when they did the same for us. There were our old cards and signed, Bob and Ruth and Butch, Louise and Mary Beth and Tom, and Elsa (our cat), and Annie (our dog). How lovely to all be together once again, if only on an old forgotten Christmas card.

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It's Christmas Again

By LYNNE KRISKE

Santa, Santa's on his way,
Bringing to all a happy day.
A happy day to all, you say?
I think not, and I will pray
For those who long and pine and grieve,
Especially on Christmas Eve,
For those who suffer family rifts,
Neither wrapping nor receiving gifts,
While Hallmark cards in all their joy
And store displays of every toy
Seem meaningless and cruel
To those whose salty tears now pool.
Lonely children, crying wives,
Missing those who've lost their lives.
And those away from home and love,
Only sharing the stars above.
I'd like to hold you, kindred souls,
And carry away your Christmas woes...



Christmas, Past, Future & Presents

By P.K. ALLEN

When I was just a young lad
My Mother said to me
"If you are a good boy
There'll be presents under the tree"
So I took her advice to heart
and was as polite as I could be.
When Christmas came along,
Presents were there for me.
There were trucks, and cars, and
games.
It was such a sight to see,
All wrapped in colorful paper
With a tag that said for me.
Through the years the gifts have
changed
But the Spirit remains like a rock.
Now, instead of giving large presents,
We just fill each other's sock.
Each year the presents get smaller
Since there are fewer things we need
No TVs, computers or stereos,
just a good book or two to read.
What I see in the far future
As my time on this earth ends,
When asked if there's anything
I actually need,
I'll probably say, "That Depends."

Thoughts on Skating Once Upon a Time

By RUTH FOEHRING

The man walked across the flat field carrying a huge fire hose. Water poured from the hose and he let it soak into the ground and kept moving. He wore high, thick, rubber boots, and kicked and splashed through the water as it began to resemble a shallow pond.

I was delighted with the image presented to me and waved to the man. He returned the wave and I drove on, but memories were beginning to emerge and I was reminded of a time gone by for me but not forgotten.

I liked seeing them as they appeared on a cold imaginary canvas and I saw myself skating across the ice. I could feel the warmth of the bonfire that I spied and so I swished over and stood and watched the sparks that flew up in the air and flickered, and lit up the snow around the edge of the town pond. I opened the door of a for-

gotten shed and requested a cup of hot cocoa. I warmed up pretty fast from that moment on.

I noticed the rosy faces of people and the misty smoke that encircled their heads with every breath. Smiles were on every face as I hurried and swished across the ice. I could see a conga line forming. I closed my eyes as I really had no intention of grabbing on and skating with them in a terrifying pattern. I instead wanted to remember a peaceful sight, so I speeded up my memories and skated in another direction as fast as I could! I found a friend and skated hand in hand in perfect peace.

The skating field would be ready soon and this winter is still young enough to provide many skating days. I hope they provide some great colorful pictures and sounds. Thanks to the man I spied today who provided me with some nice memories of my own.

The Final Bow BY EFFIE BLACKSTONE

We stand alone, one by one,
waiting for our King-dom to come.
We linger here, we hurry there,
and all the time we are aware
that somehow, sometime down that road we'll go.



(Editor's note: Effie Blackstone was a "pioneer" member of the People Plus Write On! Writers. It saddens us all to record her passing on Dec. 21, 2012.)

When it will be not ours to see,
so sing that song and dance that dance.

Walking the Dog on a Winter Evening

By BETTY KING

To the west, a stained glass sky divided by black branches. To the east, a warm glow where the moon will soon rise, under our careful feet, dim opalescent reflections

identify puddles which we artfully avoid, in our faces a fresh night breeze, like a splash of cold water, in our noses, scents of lichen and resin, at the path's end, warm fire, good food, and rest.

Letting the Scarecrow Go BY ROBERT DOW

During the holidays, I watched a rerun of "The Wizard of Oz," for the umpteenth time. It reminded me of something I had at least temporarily forgotten. Ray Bolger was the actor who portrayed the "Scarecrow" in this movie. Many years ago, this same Ray worked for my "very proper, Boston banker grandfather!" Guess who was fired for dancing down the hallowed halls of the First National Bank of Boston? YES, my grandfather had to "let go" the, "later to be famous," Scarecrow of "The Wizard of Oz!"



METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER STUDIO

On a Clear Day

By MARGIE KIVEL

Look to the tree tops against pale blue, a band of goldfinch flittering one by one, from tree to tree, edging always toward the

feeder, reforming as a group to drop like a falling scale, one golden movement towards food.

Lee jeans were a big seller when Lawrence Pennell took this picture in 1938. Pennell's Clothing has been a landmark on Main Street in Brunswick since 1889 and has sold quality clothing from its present site since 1929. The store has been owned and managed by David Girardin since 1971. If you have old area photos to share with readers of the People Plus News, Please contact Frank Connors at 729-0757.



Fondly recalled ...

Battling Winter BY BETTY KING

Beware! The snow banners are flying!
A declaration of war with all those warm blooded who haven't been wise enough to run away.

Let them band together with gestures of solidarity, sharing hoarded sustenance from the gifts of summer, seeds for the bird feeders and

bales left out for hungry deer. Season of frozen pipes when our common need for moisture may be met by the blessed snow, eaten directly or melted on the stove. Snow seals the cold wind out of our leaky cellar walls. One moment the air is thick with blizzard,

next the white crystals rest from filling the air with sparkles and settle into a blanket. The shortness of the day makes up in brilliance for what it lacks in length. And every dawn comes earlier. We are under siege here, but relief is at hand.

Sunny & Noel

By GLADYS SZABO

"Hey I think we need to have a chat."
"Not Me!"
"Why Not?"
"I am not sure about you."
"Why not?"
"You are always sneaking around me, sniffing and you look scary."
"I'm just trying to get to know you."

"Why do you need to get to know me? Can't you just leave me alone and go your own way?"
"Well I was lonely and like having you here. We can be good pals, stick together."
"Well maybe but it is going to take time — so take it slowly."
"OK, well thanks for letting me get a little closer for now."

Master Birder



Bird carver and painter Ed Cardoll, who over his career has produced thousands of unique bird statues, last month donated a dozen to the Center to be used each month as a door prize during the Lunch & Connections meal.

Where were you when J.F.K. was assassinated?

By RALPH LAUGHLIN

No doubt you are part of the last generation that lived on the day when President John F. Kennedy was shot. We all heard the news, we watched in stunned disbelief. We wept, we cursed the travesty, then we pledged again to keep his, and our, vision of America alive.

I am gathering material for a book to mark the 50th anniversary of President Kennedy's assassination. Its purpose will be to paint a picture, for future generations, of how the events of Nov. 22, 1963, affected us all. I would like you to write down your thoughts of that day and the surrounding events, and how you and others reacted. Whether you have only a few words to say, or many pages, the length does not matter, what's important is that your words express your feeling about that day and that place.

When completed, copies of our work will be sent to the Kennedy Library in Massachusetts, the Sixth Story Museum in Dallas, the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Museum for Preservation. The book will also be made available through Amazon and other sites.

Net proceeds from sales will be distributed to one or more of the organizations serving wounded veterans. Publication is planned for this summer. Please send your thoughts electronically to lepapa@aol.com. For more information, contact Ralph Laughlin at 17 Emmanuel Drive, Brunswick, ME 04011.

Editors note: Ralph Laughlin is a member of the People Plus Write On! group.

Changes to Women's Breakfast

After canceling the February Women's breakfast to avoid a snowstorm, we have decided to move that popular early morning event to the first Wednesday of the month, rather than the last Wednesday.

The next Women's Breakfast will be April 3, at 8:30 a.m., and we're sure it will be worth the wait.



Lunch Out!

March 12, at 11:30 a.m.

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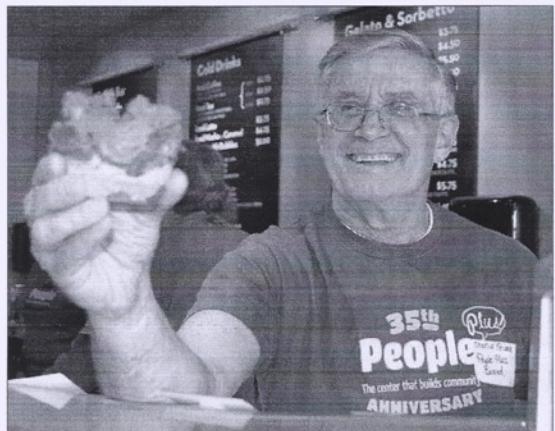
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Serving up gelato

People Plus board member Charles Frizzle serves up a dish of gelato and a smile during the fifth annual Gelato Fiasco Scoop-a-thon to benefit the Brunswick Teen Center. Business and entertainment was brisk all day long on April 24. Last year's event raised \$3,600, an amount expected to be exceeded this year.

MIA sets new record

Preliminary reports are in and it is apparent that the 11th annual Music in April gala held April 11 was a "huge success."

"I can't imagine how we could have done better," offered People Plus Executive Director Stacy V. Frizzle. "What a great return for a great effort."

With some bills left to be paid, and just a few auction items yet to be picked up and paid for, office manager Betsy White said net income from the one-night event would exceed \$34,000, and, "it appears we made nearly \$5,000 more than last year."

She added that income from both the live and silent auctions and the five-item raffle were better than they had ever been. Pledged donations to support

purchase of gas cards for drivers in the center's Volunteer Transportation Network were also near record levels, she added.

The 2013 event drew 23 table sponsors, and the massive buffet featured 23 area restaurants and food vendors. Musical entertainment again featured jazz guitarists Neil Lamb and David Lawlor, with a guest appearance by the Bowdoin College Community Gospel Choir.

"Once again," observed Frizzle, "volunteers came together in what has become a Brunswick tradition, and the People Plus Center has been richly supported."

Turn to page 6 for pictures of this event.

Volunteer salute planned

"Volunteers, volunteers, volunteers," cries Program and Outreach Coordinator Rebecca Banks enthusiastically. "Where would we be without them?"

June has traditionally been the month when People Plus salutes its volunteers, and each May, we ask for nominations from membership for Volunteer of the Year, and other member salutations.

"This Center is built on volunteers," Banks said. "... Cooks, cleaners, drivers, receptionists,

clerks, mailers, snow shovels, gardeners, sales people, walkers, leaders, followers, artists ... the worry is we might always forget someone, each time we build a list."

Banks estimated there are at least 300 to 350 members and friends of the Center who provide unduplicated volunteer tasks at People Plus. "That becomes thousands of hours donated, every year, just to make our Center, and our com-

munities, better places where we can all live."

Nomination forms for volunteer of the year are available at the People Plus information desk, or may be clipped from this paper. You may offer more than one name, with a brief reason for your nomination. You do not need to identify yourself. Nominations will cease on Friday, May 31, at 5 p.m., our formal reception will follow in June.

Don't forget to vote.

Chat looks at Wheeler's novellas

Two novellas by Topsail author Bonnie Wheeler are the subject for our May Author's Chat. "Without My Toothbrush" and "Mama's Pies" were recently published together in an inspirational little volume that will be featured at the Center on Wednesday, May 22, beginning at 2 p.m.

Wheeler is a staple in the Write On! writers group of People Plus. Born into a large country family in Hollis, Okla., her marriage to a Navy man caused her to travel over the United States and to "land" in Brunswick. She is the mother of three children, who she calls, "near perfect," and is the grandmother of eight children who "are perfect."

"Without My Toothbrush" and "Mama's Pies" will "make you laugh, and cry, make you angry and leave you inspired and happy," offered one recent reviewer.

"This is a book about us all, written by one among us," suggested Frank Connors, People Plus member services coordinator. "This is a Chat you won't want to miss."

Copies of the book will be available for sale, and Wheeler, who "loves a good show," will offer readings, advice and signings.

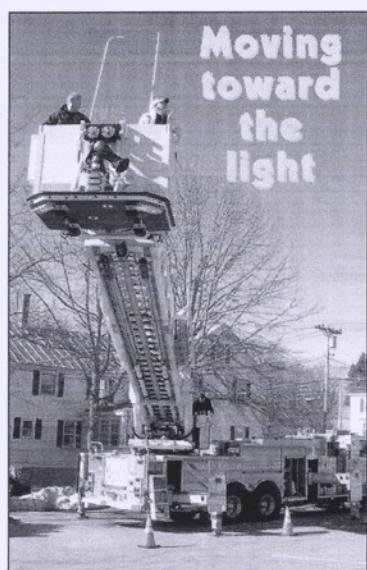
Come early for a good seat, this one will be hosted in the main hall. Thank you for calling 729-0757 to let us know you are attending.



What's Silas doing?

Find out on page 11.

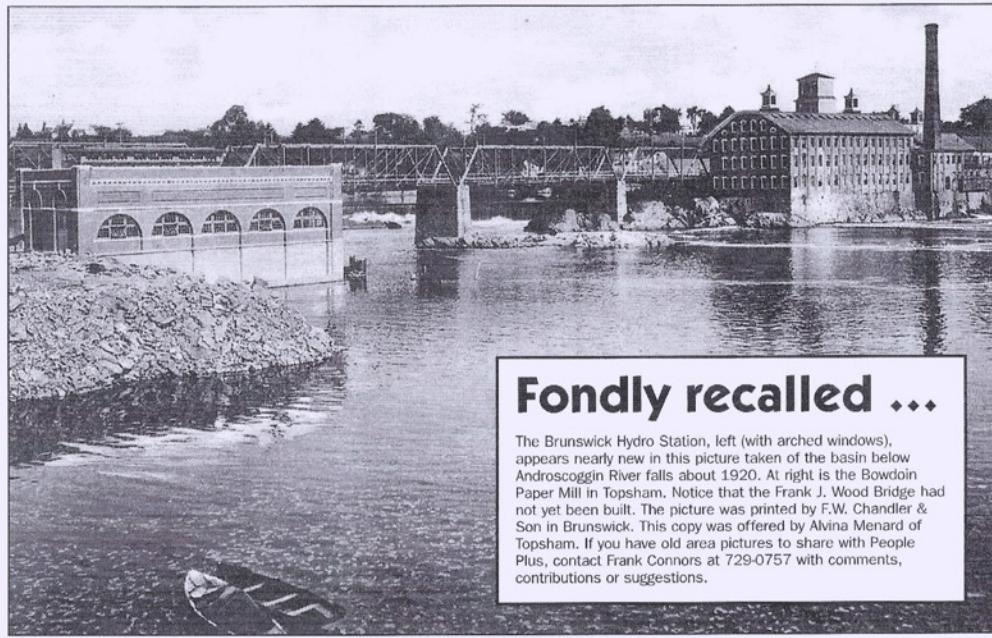
Moving toward the light



Electrician Frank Hilton of WIRENUTS Inc. of Harpswell, right, gets a boost from Brunswick Fire Department's Tower One truck last month to finally install a light to illuminate the center's flagpole. More details, page 2.

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

See page 7 to find out.



Fondly recalled ...

The Brunswick Hydro Station, left (with arched windows), appears nearly new in this picture taken of the basin below Androscoggin River falls about 1920. At right is the Bowdoin Paper Mill in Topsham. Notice that the Frank J. Wood Bridge had not yet been built. The picture was printed by F.W. Chandler & Son in Brunswick. This copy was offered by Alvina Menard of Topsham. If you have old area pictures to share with People Plus, contact Frank Connors at 729-0757 with comments, contributions or suggestions.

Where Has America Gone?

BY RALPH LAUGHJN

Where has America gone...
Kids playing outside on their own
Doors left unlocked all day
Open time to do whatever
People looking out for each other
Neighbors talking to neighbors.
Public officers held in esteem
Politicians being civil servants
Public events joyful celebrations
Issues placed ahead of personalities
The Common Good, the common thread.

Where has America gone...
and will we ever get it back?
The embers still linger
but must be fanned and flamed
to rekindle and rebuild our core
of Truth, Caring and the Common Good
for every citizen, rich or poor.

A Different View

BY GLADYS SZABO

A trip to the store
I often thought of as a chore.
Today I took a different view
I needed things, this I knew.
Off to Walmart I did go
Had a little extra dough.
Took my time to walk around
Unexpected things I found,
End to end and back again
I walked but little did I spend.
Chatted with friends and others
were new.
Interesting conversations did pursue.
On to get the items needed

Left the store, to my car proceeded.
Driving home I realized
I felt more vitalized.
I walked an hour at different paces
Conversed with people, wearing happy faces.
Got my chores done
Had some fun.
Now this did prove to me
Chores don't always have to be
Boring things we have to do
But something vitalizing and good for you.

Goodbye to Old Friends?

BY VINCE McDERMOTT

There comes a time in every man's life when he must face the inevitable. The clothes closet has to be cleaned out and old friends have to go.

The first choices are easy — two short sleeve shirts, one from Montgomery Ward and the other from Woodward and Lothrop. They were getting a bit snug. I thought they were shrink resistant — shoddy merchandise.

Then it got tougher — T-

shirts. What to do about a 1991 Washington Redskins Championship shirt, a 1987 "Say No" to drugs tee. They still fit. OK, put them into the "maybe" pile.

Pants. A pair from Porteus and one from Senter's. Hey, they are not that old. A bit snug, perhaps, but I can live with that.

Then, last but certainly not least, from the deepest, darkest corner of the closet, my oldest friend — a Robert Hall suit! Goodbye, old buddy.

The Load

Wherever I go, there I am...
When we boarded, they asked what I was carrying and I told them.

I carry the pain of rejection by my emotionally absent father;
I carry the same pain I see reflected in my husband's eyes.
I carry the desperate need of my mother, who threw her anger at me,
I carry the death of my sister's dreams in pointless memories she doesn't remember,
I carry the rigidity of my

aunt, who challenged me to intellectual combat,
I carry the longevity of my grandmother's cold unconcern behind eyes that never saw me,

I carry the defeat of my uncle, who drowned in a bottle of wishes that were always denied him,

I carry the heavy cross of Saint Grandfather around my neck.

I told them I carry no more and no less than the other travelers aboard this ship.

Summer in Maine

BY ADELAIDE GUERNELLI
about the flowers that grow at their own wish, and seem to be back to play
With the pieces of nature that man can only help to create.
I wish that summer days will be, who knows when...
The description of the Earth with a special grace that will Enroll in the schools beyond the sun, and the stars...
And we, of today's experience, will not be dust in the sky!

A Perfect Day

BY BOB DOW

Define a perfect day
"In terms of what?" I ask
The weather is one way,
Or else a well-done task.
There are no bills to pay
Or maybe how we feel?
The joints all work today
No pain with which to deal.
A sense of having done
All that I'd planned to do.
A day of work or fun
That may be over due.
Some days create some frowns.
We wish that were not so.
With ups we must have downs,
'Cause that's the life we know.
Be positive; don't pout.
And if the day's not great,
Just pick a high point out?
And blame the rest on fate.

Morning at Camp Grandpa

BY BETTY KING

Three dark heads, intent,
admiring
the rainbow flow and smooth
roundness
of sunfish in a bucket, just lately
flopping at the end of a line,
destined for the lunchtime fry-pan.
Behind them the forest descends
Graciously, abundantly, to the water's edge.
A warm steady breeze ruffles
the pond,
Shifts the pools of sunlight on the shady rock.
In the sheltered pool below us minnow mouths make shiny
spreading rings
and dragonflies gyrate. Grandpa helps
to bait the hooks just one more time!

Sept. Last Issue Posted for 2013

2014

Times and Seasons

*Writings from the Heart
of Maine*



Write On! of People Plus

Authors

Charlotte Hart
Ruth Foehring
Bob Dow
Bonnie Wheeler
Elizabeth King
Dottie Moody
Wendell Kinney
Gladys Szabo
Adelaide Guernelli
Ann Robinson
Ralph Laughlin
Nancy Sohl
Winnie Silverman
Karen Schneider
Vince McDermott
Karen Johnson
Margie Kivel
Beth Compton
Paul Karwowski
Julia Garbowski
Patty Sparks





9-2014
Bonnie Wheeler and Winnie Silverman

Times and Seasons

Author's Chat features
Write On! book

Members of the Purple Pines Write On! group gathered at their studio during a very special Author's Chat at the Center on Sept. 17, beginning at 2 p.m. The 174-page book, titled, "Times and Seasons," is a unique collection of 20 short stories and 20 photographs featuring the work of 21 local writers and artists. The book has been "in the works" for more than a year and is being sold for the last eight years, compiled by the group.

The book includes work by P.W. Allen, Beth Cumpston, Robert

Doug Roth, Pauline Hart, Charlotte E. Hart, Julia Gorbunski, Anna Gorbunski, Karen Johnson, Paul Karamoski, Wendall Keeney, Maggie Khol, Elizabeth "Betty" King Rakich, Loughlin, Vivian McDermott, Eddie Moody, Ann Robinson, Karen Schaeffer, Winnie Silverman, Nancy Schild, Patty Spangler, Adelys Sizler and Bonnie Wheeler.

The book has been delivered and is available for purchase at the Center.

Cost is only \$14.95, and all proceeds, after costs, benefit the Purple Pines Center.

9-2014

Author's Chat features P.K. Allen

Join us on Wednesday, Oct. 8, at 7 p.m. for an Author's Chat. Allen reflects on his 45 years of married life with Fink in his book, "The Sands of Time: The First 45 Years and Life After."

There love, life, joys and sorrows are woven through the warming stories and verse. Allen then shares his feelings as to what it means to have lost the love of his life.



In 2011, he self-published three other books: "In Memoriam: Some Thoughts on Life and Love"; "A Journey"; and "Impressions: From the Eyes of a Man and Famous People I've Never Met." All books will be available for sale for 20 percent of profits to the Purple Pines Center.

The talk is free and open to the public. Registration is appreciated.

10-2014

Volunteers feted for service



**O. JEANNE d'ARC
MAYO**



**RALPH
LAUGHLIN**

Nearly two dozen People Plus and Spectrum Generations volunteers were singled out for outstanding service to the Center during a spirited, well-attended program on June 12. O. Jeanne d'Arc Mayo, whose service to the Center plus her service to the People Plus Center is legendary, was feted a second time; and Ralph Laughlin, whose talents carry him from the Center's White ON! Grounds to its kitchen, were both singled out as Volunteers of the Year.

Mayo was first named Volunteer of the Year in 2010. Well-known around the Brunswick Center for her volunteer efforts, she has served three terms on the People Plus Center board of Trustees, and almost singlehandedly maneuvered the Center into "the hottest ticket in town." This year's event raised nearly \$45,000 for the Center.

Laughlin, by comparison, is a newcomer to the Center. Retired to Brunswick and a accomplished writer, he came to the Center first as a member of the writer's group. His publishing skills made the Center's recently published book,

"Speaking Frankly" possible, and his leadership is helping to deliver the fourth collection of Write ON! Essays. In the past several months, his efforts to "streamline" the Center's popular Lunch & Connections meals have proved very fruitful.

Shannon Hall cited three volunteers drivers for their efforts — Hollis McBride, Su Olds and Steve Onder — and asked for special notice for George Moore of Topsism, who has transported from center to center for "as long as we can remember."

She said in the past year, 17,000 meals have been delivered from the People Plus Center and in April, a record number of individuals — 90 people — were served.

Other "superstar" volunteers cited include: Berrie Breitbart, for editing The Center's News & Views TV show; Madeline Ashe, for organizing Cafe en Francais, and the center's Good Morning program; Margaret Marchand, helping to maintain the Center's gardens; Ed Cardall, donating antique hand-crafted birds as door-prizes; Dr. Richard Glastra, who was introduced as "instructor of the year"; Dottie Moody, working with the Center's membership files; Josh Taylor, super Center helper; Gladys Szabo, working

to organize volunteers, and Beth Compston, for outstanding work in the kitchen.

Executive Director Stacy Frizzelle acknowledged the efforts of these and a hundred others whose selfless efforts as volunteers make the Center and our community better places ... we would not be here without you," she said.

Topsism Musician Mike McCarthy offered music at the event, and program director Jill Ellis noted that local businesses like Mechanic Savings Bank, Fairwind Farms, Atlantic Regional Credit Union, Brunswick Downtown Association, Mid Coast Health Services and Bar Harbor Bank & Trust all contributed items to "celebration bags" offered to each volunteer.

VOLUNTEERS

From Page 1

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Memorial Day Thoughts

By BONNIE WHEELER

The sweet scent of roses filled my car as I drove through the cemetery gates. I am grateful that I have only my law's grave to decorate. He died too young of a brain tumor, leaving my daughter and two young children.

I look at the sea captain's new graves. Suddenly I look at this cemetery in a completely different way ... I think of the sea captains, who navigated all ships to this new land and the settlers who dwelled the harsh elements to begin new life in America. The men and women who built the settlements, fought Indians, cold winters, disease, loneliness, starvation, disappointment and poverty many came only to face death, their dreams ended right here. Without their sacrifice, I wouldn't be living the good life I live today — the teachers, builders, preachers, farmers, lawmakers, they worked hard and endured, used their hands to build towns and roads and bridges, we still use today without thought. Their talent, wisdom, perseverance made this possi-

wind and shadow of winter. There it stood catching the sun as it whirled and I had to smile, knowing she would be pleased.

I glanced around at so many tombstones, some very old 1800 dates of sea captains, some new graves. Suddenly I look at this cemetery in a completely different way ... I think of the sea captains, who navigated all ships to this new land and the settlers who dwelled the harsh elements to begin new life in America. The men and women who built the settlements, fought Indians, cold winters, disease, loneliness, starvation, disappointment and poverty many came only to face death, their dreams ended right here. Without their sacrifice, I wouldn't be living the good life I live today — the teachers, builders, preachers, farmers, lawmakers, they worked hard and endured, used their hands to build towns and roads and bridges, we still use today without thought. Their talent, wisdom, perseverance made this possi-

ble for me to be standing here in a strong country, where everyone has a chance to live free and prosper.

I feel such a connection to everyone who lies under this hallowed ground. Tears came to my eyes as the connection deepened and I thought how can I repay this debt? Love? Do I go buy a car full of flowers and dress each grave? I think they would expect more. I listen — I hear their whispers, appreciate all we did for you — cherish the earth, appreciate the beauty, live your dreams — leave the world a better place — work hard, time is fleeting — we did it for you — it's your turn now — remember where we all came from and return to.

I look over the sea of cold stones — and say — I will remember — thanks you — thank you and thank GOD for you.

Kinney offers author's chat

By BONNIE WHEELER

Wendall B. Kinney, a fifth-generation native Mainer with a short, stories based largely on his family history, has published a book and an audio CD about



Wendall B. Kinney

OVERHOMME

And Other Kitchen Tales

The program is free and open to the public. Please register with the front desk. 726-0757, if you plan to attend.

7-2014

5-2014

Season's Greetings

from "WRITE ON!"

The People Plus Writers

Candlemas

By ROSE MARIE MAYER

To be in the exact middle of the seasons on this amazing day, is to be in the middle of a quiet stillness filled with the lush and ever intensifying power of the winter sun.

I was held by the miraculous beauty of the moon several nights ago, and this morning by the deep and serene and sleeping might of the river. Pure white peaks of ice surrounded by the reflected golden light from the sun.

The sky, the most powerful and comforting blue, beckoning the soul to soar off into its glory to be held by and to be able to be an observer of all the fullness of the universe and to have the wondrous light fill my spirit to an overflowing and thirst quenching, life-giving fulfillment.

Wishing you peace and love during this holy season, and throughout the New Year.

Cold

By BETTY KING

Rhododendron leaves tell me how to dress. Rolled up tight means hat, scarf, gloves; Relaxed and open means my defenses can come down. Clouds, too, inform me, scooting across the sky or Blown out into long banners, they mean — a trench coat, or at least a sweater and wind breaker. This is a battle of wits in which I need to watch for clues and pick up my cues. If I can laugh at my mistakes, All these small victories are, as always, sweeter.

Free Gift

By BONNIE WHEELER

He came to save us His gift was free Forgiveness is more important Than presents under a tree

Christmas Program

By BONNIE WHEELER

Silent Night playing Candles glowing bright Children's choir singing What a glorious night

His Birthday

By BONNIE WHEELER

Goodwill to all Celebrate the news Shepherds and Kings led the way To a Jerusalem Baby's birthday

Winter Memories of Melrose, Mass.

By BOB DOW

Just now I heard on the news that we are getting snow on November first. A bit early I thought, but it brought to mind my childhood winters. When I was a child, a long time ago, it seems the snow banks were a lot higher than they are today. My best friend, Harold, who lived across the street, and I would build really big snow forts. My brother, who was four years younger, was sometimes allowed to help. We had snowball fights. Harold and I had fun fights with the kids in the neighborhood. We also liked to slide, but as we lived on a very busy street, we had to go to side streets that were safe for coasting. A park in Melrose called Mount Hood had some nice hills for skating. It was a pretty long walk; we needed transportation to get there. Because of gas rationing, that did not happen often. We walked a lot! We walked to school. No matter what the weather! The best time was when the fire whistle blew. That meant, "No School!" So let it snow! I am retired. No more school. Let it snow!



A Christmas Story

(after Philip Yancey)

By BETTY KING

In ancient days God lived with us like any parent, teaching, leading, admonishing, rewarding, punishing. Like teenagers we sulked and disobeyed, grumbled, made faces and complained. Manna, though free for the taking, was boring — and what's the glory in conquering, with God behind us in heavenly fire and floods and thunderbolts?

This wasn't working, so God tried the most contrary task — gifted himself to us in the most vulnerable creature on the planet, and the easiest to love. The King put out a contract on him when he was just a few days old. Born a refugee, you might say, the gold and frankincense and myrrh just so much excess baggage for the road.

He obeyed mortal parents, so they say and when he found his public voice, it wasn't to scold or threaten, He told us plainly never to fear; angels are also at our side. Made himself powerless on behalf of the powerless. Doing no harm except to astound the powerful, totally misunderstood by those who loved him best. They could not save him from a fate he chose himself, and for their sake.

How fair was that? And yet we say "God is unfair" What do we know of "fair"? We also choose our fates by every daily choice. We are lonely; so was he. We are tempted, insulted, frustrated, cold, in pain — tortured and killed. He shared all of that, and, very near the end, even, for a moment, lost that sense of mission which carried him so far. How to come closer to us than that? On Christmas Eve, we put aside our grievances with God,

and for a sparkling moment understand how gracious and mysterious is that love.

Winter

By BONNIE WHEELER

Winter has arrived
Close the windows and door
Sit by the warm fire
Then fall asleep and snore



The Spell of Christmas

By P.K. ALLEN

C is for **CHRISTMAS TREE**, all lit up at night
H is for **HAPPINESS**, brought on by such a sight
R is for **REINDEER**, harnessed and ready to leave
I is for **ICICLES**, hanging from the eave
S is for **SANTA**, all dressed for the flight
T is for **TOYS**, that he'll deliver tonight
M is for **MANGER**, as peaceful as can be
A is for **ANGEL**, placed atop of the tree, and
S is for **SAVIOR**, who saved both you and me



The Stable Boy

By VINCE McDERMOTT

What a time. I have never seen this town so crowded. People have been coming from all over. I work for the innkeeper, in his stable. I have been very busy, tending to the animals and helping out around the inn, but I can keep an eye on what's going on.

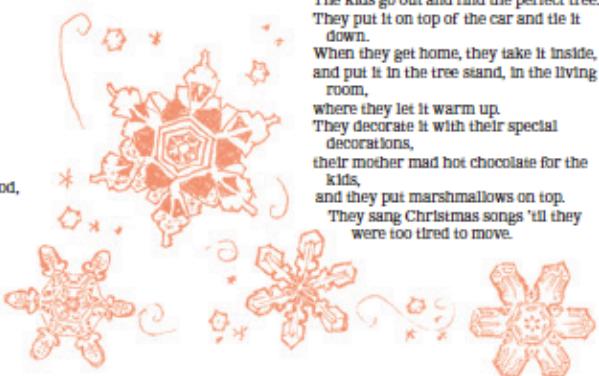
The innkeeper cannot believe his good fortune. He has filled his rooms and has put visitors into his own home and even into the houses of relatives. I have seen him smile for the first time in ages, thinking of all the coins he is gathering in. This is usually a slow time of the year. So he was probably in a good mood when the couple arrived.

The man and woman looked very tired. The woman is with child. It looks like the birth could happen at any time. They really needed a place to stay. All the owner could do was offer them a place in the stable. They were lucky to get that. I don't mind. It gets lonely out here. They seem like very nice people. But, after being around them for a while, I just have the feeling that something tremendous is going to happen — and soon.

The Christmas Tree

By BETH COMPTON

It's time to get the tree, mom and dad! The kids go out and find the perfect tree. They put it on top of the car and tie it down. When they get home, they take it inside, and put it in the tree stand, in the living room, where they let it warm up. They decorate it with their special decorations, their mother mad hot chocolate for the kids, and they put marshmallows on top. They sang Christmas songs 'till they were too tired to move.



The Best Gift of All

By NANCY SOHL

Once upon a time, deep in the snowy woods, stood a very sad pine tree. Now this pine tree wasn't always sad. Most of the year it loved this quiet spot in the woods, but it was winter again and the short cold days meant just one thing — Christmas was coming.

Christmas was a sad time for the little tree because it meant that once again he would be left standing in the cold instead of standing proudly in the window of a nice warm house decorated with beautiful ornaments and topped with a star. The birds had told him stories of the Christmas trees they had seen, but the little pine tree was just too far from town. No one would ever find him here. It would be another sad and lonely Christmas.

Now the little pine tree had many friends in the forest. He was loved by the birds that lived in his branches and the forest creatures that he sheltered from the wind and snow. They hated to see him so sad. So that Christmas Eve night, while the rest of the world slept, the forest animals worked hard to make this Christmas very special for their friend.

The birds gathered berries and pine cones to scatter on the branches of the little pine tree. The deer dipped vines in the pond so they would freeze and sparkle in the moonlight. They draped these icy garlands over his branches. A shooting star completed the effect.

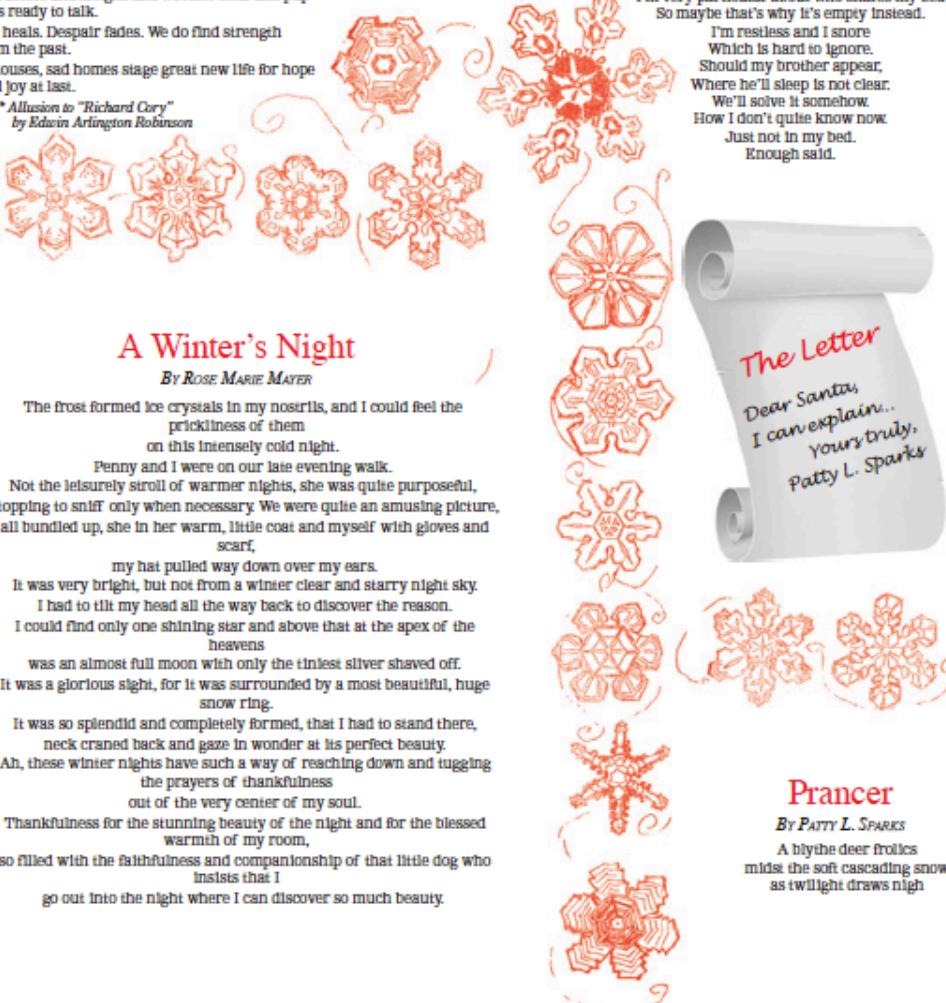
That Christmas morning the little pine tree stood tall and proud, for his friends had transformed him. Thanks to their gifts, he was truly a Christmas tree. He was beautiful because he was loved, and love is the best gift of all.

Cory House on Whitney Hill

BY CHARLOTTE HART

Let's walk this cold December night on moonlit glistening snow.
Let's climb up Whitney Road where we once loved to go.
To the Cory farm! The Cory boys used to say,
"You all come to the farm; we'll coast the hills today!"
We have sleds to loan and skis for a long fast run,
Then hot chocolate in the game room after outdoor fun."
For long years now, that farm alone on the hill has stood.
Empty. Silent. The fields are gone, overgrown by creeping wood.
Mysterious Cory tragedy hit the village with terrible shock.
For years, in that great old showplace, nary a soul would walk.
The walk tonight is lovely, but the house is a sight I dread.
But look! Soft light now fills the house. Look up there ahead.
Candles fill the windows. From the barn there's a steady glow.
The front door opens and here is a man with hair as white as snow.
"Welcome you folks from the village! Come see our workshop new."
He led us and opened the wide barn door to show a lovely view.
"My friends find this old farm a place of inspiration."
Four white haired gentlemen sawed and carved and sanded with concentration.
Skis and snowboards with winter design line walls — with every kind of sled.
Wooden trains, wooden boats, wooden ships and planes and wagons painted red.
Rocking horses sizes 2 to 8, baby doll cradles to rock.
Toy tractors and sleighs and wooden dolls and pup-
pets ready to talk.
Time heals. Despair fades. We do find strength
from the past.
Old houses, sad homes stage great new life for hope
and joy at last.

*Allusion to "Richard Cory"
by Edwin Arlington Robinson



A Winter's Night

BY ROSE MARIE MAYER

The frost formed ice crystals in my nostrils, and I could feel the
prickliness of them
on this intensely cold night.
Penny and I were on our late evening walk.
Not the leisurely stroll of warmer nights, she was quite purposeful,
stopping to sniff only when necessary. We were quite an amusing picture,
all bundled up, she in her warm, little coat and myself with gloves and
scarf,
my hat pulled way down over my ears.
It was very bright, but not from a winter clear and starry night sky.
I had to tilt my head all the way back to discover the reason.
I could find only one shining star and above that at the apex of the
heavens
was an almost full moon with only the tiniest silver shaved off.
It was a glorious sight, for it was surrounded by a most beautiful, huge
snow ring.
It was so splendid and completely formed, that I had to stand there,
neck craned back and gaze in wonder at its perfect beauty.
Ah, these winter nights have such a way of reaching down and tugging
the prayers of thankfulness
out of the very center of my soul.
Thankfulness for the stunning beauty of the night and for the blessed
warmth of my room,
so filled with the faithfulness and companionship of that little dog who
insists that I
go out into the night where I can discover so much beauty.

Christmastime Haiku

BY PK ALLEN

A Christmas Wish
Merry Christmas all
May your New Year be
happy
And wishes come true

A Christmas Carol
Ebenezer Scrooge
The Spirits of Christmas
Past
Present and Future

Christmas Morning
On Christmas morning
Presents placed under the
tree
Signed: For You and Me

New Year's Eve
The Times Square ball
drops
People give hugs and kisses
Bands play "Auld Lang
Syne"

Holidays Approaching, Families Encroaching

BY BOB DOW

With holidays now fast approaching
Starts the stream of the family encroaching.
I'm very particular about who shares my bed
So maybe that's why it's empty instead.

I'm restless and I snore
Which is hard to ignore.
Should my brother appear,
Where he'll sleep is not clear.
We'll solve it somehow.
How I don't quite know now.
Just not in my bed.
Enough said.



Prancer

BY PATTY L. SPARKS

A blythe deer frolics
midst the soft cascading snow
as twilight draws nigh

On Christmas

BY ROSE MARIE MAYER

red
green, gold,
silver hanging lights
decorating trees, star on top,
tinsel, lists, shopping, wrapping packages
writing cards, rushing, baking cookies, singing, laughter,
friends, family gathering, cheer, ice, candles, kitchen perfume,
egg nog, aromas, biting ice, snow, full moon, carols, aromas, candles,
creches, thankfulness,
hopefulness
happiness
peace
love
joy

Christmas
in Germany

BY RUTH FOEHRING

Christmas in Germany holds special memories of a bitter cold winter, a black coal stove that had to be fed constantly with coal wrapped in newspaper, and my son's first Christmas. We were so far away from loving grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends, and familiar sights.

I arrived in Karlsruhe in October with a 3-month-old baby to find a new life style, a strange language and the realization that I had the biggest responsibility of my life and had to cope, bend and learn quickly.

My first break was finding the right apartment, in a nice building. There were four floors in this narrow brick building with two apartments on each floor. The next miracle was to meet the German couple, and their young son, who were to become our next door neighbors and dearest friends. They saw a young woman, felt her need for a safe harbor, and gave us the love and kindness we so needed. These people remained our dearest friends until they died just a few years ago. We learned the secrets of living well, where language and customs were learned with few difficulties and a young American family felt only kindness and acceptance.

That cold Christmas was probably the coldest on record in Europe. We knew we wanted to celebrate Christmas but planning led to costs and the problem of how to accomplish it all on a tiny budget. A tree, ornaments, some German delicacies, and inexpensive gifts were all on that list.

But then another miracle occurred! Our spare cold bedroom had a gold mine in the form of empty beer bottles. There were hundreds of them and all nicely left by the former tenants. Each bottle was so pretty. They had ceramic tops with metal hinges and rubber gaskets. They could be used over and over again. Each was worth 10 pfennigs and at that time 10 of them equaled one mark. Christmas was looking up!

My husband brought them all back and returned with a small tree, a cast iron tree stand, two boxes of ornaments, which contained glass birds, golden acorns, silver walnuts, and glass spheres. All super pretty and now treasured because of the memories connected to them. He even brought home a Christmas gift wrapped in pretty colored tissue paper with a ribbon tied around it. This had been given to him by a grocery shop keeper where he had bought some delicious German food.

We spent a cozy Christmas Eve with our neighbors, drank German wine and munched on huge pretzels. Later there was delicious strudel and tea and coffee.

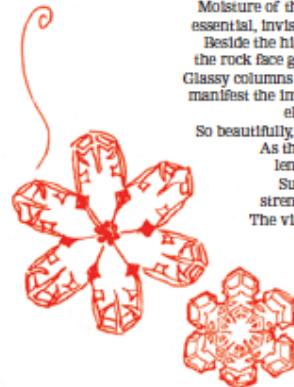
It snowed on Christmas Day and we went to Saint Bernhardt's Church. They had a full brass band in the choir loft with 20 to 30 musicians. They played Christmas carols all through the service. We sang the carols in English while the German words floated and blended with ours and the time spent there felt enchanting and magical.

So every Christmas that special Christmas is renewed and we relive the memories of golden acorns and silver walnuts, colored tissue paper, coal wrapped in newspaper and the memories of friends who made that Christmas so special.

Becoming Invisible

BY BETTY KING

A crystal of ice,
fragile, ephemeral —
Moisture of the soil,
essential, invisible —
Beside the highway
the rock face gathers
Glassy columns which
manifest the invisible
element
So beautifully, in ice.
As the days
lengthen,
Sun rays
strengthen.
The vision is
gone.



Snowfall

BY ELIZABETH B. BATES

Just such a day as this I spent when I was young,
and watched the drifting snowflakes hit the
ground
and mold the stones and gullies to their taste.
But then, I watched with glee, and soon flew out
to snatch the rusted sled from its old place
and fling myself upon it down the hill.
Now, I sit and feel no eagerness in me
to bundle up and lose myself in drifts on frosty
slopes,
and come up, cheek-red, foggy-breathed, but
laughing still.

The pattern is the same, but I have
changed.

I only watch the snowflakes fall
and think of
Spring.

New
Wonderland

BY PATTY L. SPARKS

Take a winter walk
down a familiar old path
dusted with fresh snow

An early
Christmas
Gift

from your
friends at
WRITE ON!

Ode to Charlie On his 90th Birthday

By SALLY HARTKEA



Charlie Payne, you've seen a lot
In your 90 years on earth.
Here's a list of some of them
Just for what it's worth.
The first among them is
nuclear power
Used both in peace and war.
More recently there's development
Of a complete driverless car.

Something we simply can't do
without
Is our big screen TV set.
And don't forget the computer
age
With Facebook and Internet.

Rockets sent our men to space
And allowed them a moon

Submarines took them under
the sea
And went to the North Pole.

Cell phones let people talk on
and on:

Microwaves cook your food fast.
Robots vacuum your floor nice
and clean.

Even though the area's vast,
Let's not neglect the antibiotics
And especially childhood vaccines.

Equipment for SRIs, MRIs,
ultrasounds,
And research dealing with

Charlie Payne

genes.

So Charlie, here's to you and
longevity:
May you live to see many new
Inventions and gadgets to help
mankind, and especially you.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

5-2015

An Interesting Occurrence Passover begins on Good Friday; eat up!

By WINNIE SILVERMAN

On April 3 this year two important religious events coincide: Good Friday and the first night of Passover. I could write about how the two religions are linked, but those observations are best left to religious scholars or Google. Rather, what I am going to write about is traditional food.

The celebration of Easter Sunday which follows two days after Good Friday features eggs, which are sometimes dyed in bright colors and hidden for children to find. There are Easter baskets loaded with chocolate Easter bunnies and yellow marshmallow "peeps."

There are jelly beans. It's a sweet celebration.

Passover celebrates the Jewish people's deliverance from slavery. Hard-boiled eggs, which symbolize life, are also part of the traditional Passover meal. The most significant food on Passover, however, is

Matzo

for a journey in the desert that last years. During this celebration of freedom instead of any foods made with yeast, which causes them to rise, there are no breads, no muffins, no cereals — not even noodles. No morning toast or lunchtime sandwiches, just matzo crackers. They are sometimes called the Bread of Affliction.

I agree. They are tasteless and crumbly. However, during the eight days of celebrating Passover they are a small daily reminder of the price paid for freedom.

A more delicious part of the traditional foods are chicken soup with matzo balls and yummy matzocrons, which do not contain flour. Sweet wine is part of the Seder service preceding the Passover dinner. As a kid I was allowed small sips.

Matzo

Since the Jews had to get out of

town before Pharaoh changed his mind, there was no time to allow

them to rise to make bread, so

instead of bread, in all the glasses on the table and

gut tips.

5-2015

WHEN LOBSTER IS INVOLVED, MAKE STEW, NOT WAR

By ELIZABETH B. BATES

Not being a native Mainer back in the '70s, when we moved to Maine, I knew nothing about how lobsters were caught and processed. I just knew they were delicious.

A lobsterman friend of my husband invited us to go on his boat early in the morning for a day on the water while he pulled his traps.

I was 4 and before we climbed into his boat, the pre-dawn light on the horizon was encouraging, but there was a chill in the air. I was glad I had brought a sweater. I was excited to be able to witness just how those tasty creatures arrived on the dinner plate.

We chugged out into the harbor and then turned, following the nearly by-shore, through quite a few lobster traps spread around us. Eventually we stopped where the lobsterman knew he had his traps. These particular traps had his markings, so no mistake. He caught hold of a buoy with his hand and pulled up his first trap over the edge of the boat, water spilling everywhere. His yellow oilskin apron protected him from getting wet.

The trap had three lobsters in it, together with a couple of crabs and small fish. Those went overboard, making gulls appear out of nowhere, crying and diving for what must have been their breakfast. One lobster he bent into the waiting bucket. One was a short, too small, and went overboard, before the gulls could get it. The remaining lobster was a



Matzo

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5-2015



Writers bearing gifts

Bonnie Wheeler, center, of the Write On! group presents a can opener and electric knife. Gladys Szabo, front left, who coordinates volunteers in the kitchen.

WHEN LOBSTER IS INVOLVED,

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ELIZABETH KING 7-2015



Betty grew up on the North Chicago shore. She graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a degree in architecture and a major interest in solar and environmental design. She worked in Boston in the fifties, then moved back to the land to raise eight children on a hardscrabble saltwater farm in Woolwich. Betty's brilliant poems and insightful essays and stories appear in Write On!'s books, "Muses and Memories," "From Maine and Away" and "Times and Seasons," as well as the writer's group CD, "It's About Time." She also had many editorials printed in local newspapers. Betty enjoyed writing, painting, gardening, singing, playing with her grandchildren, enjoying her many friends, and doing lots of community volunteer work. He crovets the waters from Nova Scotia to Key West in Florida.

Two of several Russell Kinne photos that will be on exhibit during July and August at the Union Street Gallery of People Plus Center.

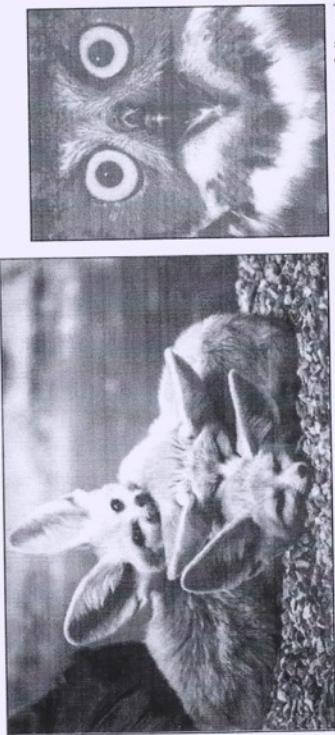
Kinne photographs are featured in gallery

A remarkable group of photographs from the natural world, are truly impressive.

"Early on I decided I wanted to travel the world," Kinne said. "I knew I never had enough money so I developed trials and talents what would get me where I wanted to go, with someone else paying the bill." He described himself as, "about 500 miles of tristinating a circumnavigation (at various times) of the world. He said he has had a boat since the age of 9. "He's become pretty good at it!" His collection of photographs, mostly

collected by Russell Kinne will be exhibited in The Union Street Gallery of People Plus during the months of July and August. A Rhode Island native who describes himself as, "self-employed my whole life," says he got into photography because, "you put a camera in your hand, you can get into odd places, do odd things at odd times and not attract lots of attention." To that, we'd have to add, "he's become pretty good at it!"

His collection of photographs, mostly



Our Betty King
By BONNIE WHEELER

There's an empty chair at our table.
One of our family is gone.
Our season with Betty was sweet,
But much too soon was complete.

Betty had a joy for life and also a gift with words.
We miss her, and the community misses her.
Passion to make life easier for others.
She left the world a better place.

Elizabeth King and her granddaughter, Sara King, collaborated on snowflake decorations featured for many years in the Write On! group's annual Christmas supplement insert.

No movement anywhere

For the dog's casuallope. He doesn't stop except for his family, friends and community, but also those of us at Write On! who enjoyed her readings and her delightful company.

The following are two of her nature poems:

Hard Freeze
For once the woods are completely silent.

Little waterfall, like a chattering child

Encased in ice - but for one mud-bubble.

Irrepressible harmony.

By the stone wall. Red maple flowers

Dust the hillsides. Pools in the wet woods

With shiny green. We look for shady places

To park the car. Dogs lie panting in the sun.

The annual resurrection, annually departed of. Has just astonished me again.

Memorial Donation in Memory of Elizabeth 'Betty' King
from her friends in the Write On! group

PEOPLE PLUS NEWS

8-2015



Surprise guest: Bob Dow (third from left) made a surprise appearance at the People Plus Write On! group on July 22. Dow, now living in Niantic, Mass., is well known to the group. With him, from left, is Steven Smith also Bonnie Wheeler, current president of the writer's group and Charlotte Hart, group member. Smith brought a basket of Swedish buns to the well attended meeting.



"Write On" Blessings BY JONI LAREE

In August of 2014 I joined People Plus, because I had been coming here as a healing practitioner with the physical therapists from GBP for their Free Clinics. I had read about a writers group at People Plus, but for some reason I put it in the back of my mind and thought nothing of it until Saturday, June 6th of this year.

It just so happened that I was teaching a class that day and at the end of the class one of the ladies came up to me and handed me her card. I looked at it and saw that she was a writer and that she had published a couple of books, so I told her that I had been thinking about joining a group at People Plus in Brunswick, but that I hadn't followed through yet, and did she know anything about it. So she said, "Oh, we'd love to have you, so you'll have to come and join us and I conduct the group!" This lady just happened to be Bonnie Wheeler. By Wednesday I attended my first Write On meeting. I know in my heart that nothing happens by chance, and I even wrote a song about that by the way. Coincidence? No, serendipity is what this was!

I've had no formal training as a writer, (except for an 8 week memoir class that I loved), but I can't remember when I didn't write. I poured my heart out on paper for as long as I can remember, and most of the time through poetry, or when I felt inspired, I'd write what ever felt right for me at the time. As a child I won many spelling Bees and wondered, how did I know how to spell those words? I didn't know about Intuition then, I just knew how to use it.

I know now that there is One Writer, one Source, one Energy that writes uniquely through all

Nancy's Story

BY BONNIE WHEELER

My sister, Nancy, is fighting through the disease, Lupus. The doctors encourage her to go on disability, yet she goes to work every day. She gets out of bed, works very hard, and falls into bed again when she gets home. On most Saturdays, she stays in bed. Come Sunday morning, she pushes herself out of bed to teach Sunday school and sing in the choir. Though sometimes she needs to sit, her voice still rings out to praise God. There is a lesson in this for me as I try to push through uncontrolled Type II Diabetes. If Nancy can do it, I too can stand or sit and sing God's praises, and I do.

ANY DAY BUT WEDNESDAY!

BY CHARLOTTE HART

On Wednesday, January 10, 2007, I walked in to a meeting of WRITE ON! Since that day, I have written poems, serious poems, silly poems, occasional poems. I have written memoir pieces, childhood memories, family memories, descriptive pieces of places like Crystal Spring Farm and Mount Chocorua. I have heard poems—poems expressing deep feelings, light and fanciful poems, free verse, blank verse, carefully rhymed and precisely

constructed verse. I have heard unique memoirs. I have heard convincing fiction. I have heard clever satire—the writings of Jane Exhaustion! I have heard well researched essays which have become Letters to the Editor.

If a Brunswick Snow Day has cancelled a Wednesday WRITE ON! meeting, I make every effort to attend the make-up day on Thursday. If I need a doctor's appointment, I say, "Any day but Wednesday." If I need

a dental check-up, I say, "Any day but Wednesday." A close friend passed on, and his family scheduled memorial services on a Wednesday. I wrote sincere condolence messages. I visited family members to share memories and to tell them I was sorry to miss the memorial service.

You ask why I must be at WRITE ON! on Wednesday. To quote Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, "Well, I'll tell you. I don't know."

WHY WRITE ON! BY GLADIS SZABO

An Essay For the 20th Reunion of the Write On! Group

BY BOB DOW

To delve into my 20 years of actively participating in the Write On! group...

What did the group do for me? It gave me a chance to perform. It gave me inspiration to some writing. It gave me new friends and friendships still going strong today. There was a social aspect. It gave me a reason to get up and out and socialize. The suggested assignments gave me something to do, a goal to meet.

To belong to a group of peers who all like to write inspires one to reach for the performer we all have inside of us, wanting to be in the spotlight... to meet other performers, many more talented than oneself.

The strength of this group is the camaraderie and good spirit and for one person to always step up to assume leadership as another steps down.

May we all meet again to celebrate the next milestone where ever we may be on that day.

Marsha said,
"Burn something"
BY BONNIE WHEELER

I could burn bacon, eggs or toast. Nope, not food. I certainly could burn paper. I have over 20 years of stories, poems, plays, and books. Some of them should be burned, but I can't do it.

I have a closet filled with clothes, all sizes. Some I will never wear again, or maybe I will burn them. Nope. Okay, burn something. I took my curtains. Nope. My carpet. Nope. My furniture? Nope. What do I burn? The last time I burned something was on July 4th when I was about 10 years old. Mom told me to be careful with my firecrackers and not to light them in my hand. Did I listen? Nope. I was lighting them in my hand and throwing them up in the air to watch them explode. I was having so much fun until one went off in my hand. Did I run crying to Mother? Nope. She had warned me. So I ran to the bathroom, got a cold washcloth, wrapped it around my blood, blistered hand, and ran to my bedroom to cry in pain.

Oh, yes, I burnt something, me. Did I learn my lesson? I think so because I'm having a really hard time burning something today. So sorry, Marsha, I can't seem to do this assignment. Oh, dear, there is an ongoing assignment, the dozen rhyming words of aardvarks. Good grief, there must be something I can burn? Do candles count?

How I Found Write On Group And Why I Like It

BY ELIZABETH B. BATES

I had to leave Scarborough. Me, after 15 years to live in Brunswick because I had to be nearer my two daughters. I found an "independently living" apartment that is great, and then I needed to find something creative to do. I heard that there was a "People Plus" place that had many Senior activities. I found their free newsletter in the grocery store.

I was overjoyed when I looked at it and saw how many activities they offered, many of them free. I had to choose one of them! After much deliberation, I came to the room in which the Writers Group was meeting. I had done some writing in the past.

It was like coming home! Everyone was so welcoming! I read some of my old work to them, and they had helpful comments, followed by appreciation of my work.

I had found just what I needed. The group has much versatility. We not only help each other, but we enjoy each other. What more could we ask for?

20 YEARS AGO BY BONNIE WHEELER

The only thing constant is change. 20 years ago, I walked into People Plus on Maine Street to join the writers group. Twelve men and women sat around a table in a dark, back room behind the church. I was eager and scared and wondered if I would fit in. They were kind and encouraging. I watched and listened in awe at the wisdom they shared around the table. Jim Haley became my mentor. He taught me that our outer core grows old but our inner core remains young. He said that when an older person dies, it's as if a library burns down. I learned so much around that first table.

Change again—we lost members to death and many life changes. One day, when I was alone at the table, Ruth walked in. She assured me she was not a writer. I assured her she was. Her first story was published. More changes—we moved to our new and better location. We had a large room, tables, a bulletin board, and thanks to Frank, a full writer's page in the People Plus paper. We

What Write On Means to Me

BY DOTTIE MOODY

As a family
Who share a common goal
The written word
Who come weekly together
To offer up
These words
Words that make us laugh
Make us cry
Make us sing

It is almost always good
Not perfect
Ours would be
A lesser life
Without what we share
We feel safe here
We feel valued here
We feel joy here

Congratulations Write On Writers on your first 20 years!

Season's Greetings

from the **People** Plus! Write On Writers

Childhood's Wonderful Winter Storms

BY CHARLOTTE HART

Winter storms of childhood brought marvelous things. Days of snow covered hills for sliding, and then Sun softened white magic so we could make Snow forts! Snow women! Snow dragons! Snow Men! Storms of childhood brought us long snowy days. Beans baked in the woodstove on slow steady heat. Then the fire revved hot to bake crusty bread While windows were tapped by fingers of sleet. Blizzards of childhood held no fear at all. We'd watch through windows snow swirling in drifts. No plough could get through. No school! Days to play! Snow castles, snow tunnels, winter wonders! What gifts! Sun-warmed maples filled shiny buckets all day. Sap vats in the sugarhouse simmered on low. A late winter storm gave us just what we needed—A smooth, sweet taste. Maple candy on snow.

MY FIRST SNOW

BY ELIZABETH B. BATES

Having been born in the no-snow zone, I was so excited when I saw it building up on the outside window sill of our Boston apartment. I had to open the window, which was difficult, because of the build-up of snow and ice. Open at last, I stuck my finger into the soft snow, and put a small bit into my mouth. It melted instantly so I tried another. There was no taste, and so I was going to try again, but my mother told me to shut the window at once, because of the cold air coming in. I went outside as soon as I put on the warm coat a friend of my mother's had given me. It was a couple of sizes too big for me, and it had a fur collar that tickled my nose. It had belonged to the daughter of my mother's friend. It was originally very expensive, so my mother was glad I had it. I was only 9 years old, so I wasn't impressed. I picked up some snow with my mittened hands and made a snowball. There was no one to throw it to. It was not a neighborhood for children. I saw the milkman coming down the street, moving slowly on the icy road. His horse was covered with powdery snow. I threw the snowball at the horse. He ignored me, but I was happy to have had a target. I went back to our apartment because I was getting cold. My mother asked me how I liked the snow. I replied I liked it, but there was no one to play with. I wanted to make a snowman, but it couldn't be done on the sidewalk. My mother told me we would be visiting a friend of hers who lived in the country and who had children I could play with. We would be with them for a couple of days. When we got there, there was much more snow and it was very cold. They had wood stoves downstairs burning brightly. There was no heat upstairs. That's where the children slept at night. When we went upstairs to go to bed, I was afraid it was too cold for me to sleep. I found heating pads under the blankets and I did sleep after all. In the morning, we did have a good breakfast before we went out to play. There was a pond, completely iced up nearby. There was a small hill we could slide down on sleds to the pond. I really liked that until I heard some very loud cracking sounds from the ice. I ran back from the ice because I was afraid it would open under me. The other children laughed, but I didn't think it was funny. When we got back to our apartment in Boston, it was warm and cozy. It felt good. I was glad the snow was outside.

HAIKU

BY PATRICK L. SPARKS

Fields glisten with frost a blithe deer frolics in the soft cascading snow

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

BY PAUL KARWOWSKI

A Christmas of white
A child's delight
O' Holy Night
A caroler sings
A church bell rings
We Three Kings
A heavenly birth
A life of worth
Peace On Earth

THE CHRISTMAS THAT ALMOST WASN'T

BY GLADYS SZABO

It was December 1955. I dreaded this first Christmas without my dad. He had died in April. It would be mom and I alone for the holiday. My heart ached remembering all our memories and traditions. Dad climbing the tall ladder tometiculously place multi colored lights on the beautiful full blue Spruce tree in the front of the house and outlining the porch with blue lights. He never let mom or I help with the lights on the Christmas tree as each one had to be placed in a certain spot. So who would do all these things now? I would miss my dad's infectious laughter. It felt like the bottom dropped out of the Holidays. Surprise! I was invited to spend Christmas in Florida with my best friend's family. My mom really felt I should go. I was caught between a rock and a hard place. I wanted to go but how could I leave my mother alone on the first Christmas. Aunt Janet, mom's best friend, assured me my mom would spend the holiday with her family. They convinced me it would be best for all of us to do something different. Mom decided we would not put a tree up or decorate the house since neither of us would be home. Again, my stomach churned. I was in an agitated emotional state. I had no one with whom I could share my uneasy feelings. None of this felt right no matter how much sense it made to others. The weekend previous to my leaving for Florida, mom had plans to go out that Saturday evening after work.

December Song

BY CHARLOTTE HART

In every window shines soft candle glow.
Moonglight sparkles on bright glistening snow.
Bonfire roars with cheerful crackling sound.
Flashing skate blades circle round and round.
Silent sleighs race miles through deep smooth snow
Home to hearth fire's comforting warm glow.
Overhead—gigantic star-filled sky
Celebrates a Newborn's gentle waking cry.
Morning sun gleams on the white church spire.
Joyful voices rise. The village choir!
Ornaments crafted by grandchildren three
Cover a floor-to-ceiling fragrant tree.
Circling the tree are gifts home made with care—
Hand knit mittens, a quilt, home baker's fare.
Door bells chime. Family arrives. Loud cheer.
Sweet joy and hope for peace throughout the year.

The goat who wanted our Christmas tree

BY BETTY BAUER

A generous farmer in our community invited families to come to his pastures to select and cut a Christmas tree. Before this annual trip we, with our children, deliberated where our tree would be in our home, what kind, how big, slim, round, open or closed branches, and then we were off with our saw to find that perfect tree.

This was a working farm with animals wandering freely around the yard, so a large sign reminded everyone to close the gate after entering. Trees were

helter-skelter and natural so we scrutinized each one as we enjoyed hiking through the pastureland on this crisp December day. It was always hard for the four of us to agree, although for me, the first would have been just fine, however, we needed to check that one over there and children needed to have a choice in the final decision.

We were distracted by a goat that took a fancy to our daughter's jacket, biting at the stripes on the sleeve. I

shooed it away, and we continued on our quest, finally agreeing on the right tree. The goat stood close by as we put our saw to the trunk, dad made the initial groove and then everyone took their turns to saw away until the tree became free of its roots. Dad carried it back to the farmer as the goat followed close at our heels, jumping and biting the branches of our tree, as if to say, "that is my tree!" The kids laughed with glee at this frisky goat!

Back at the gate, the farmer gently kicked the goat away from us, and with a "Ba-a-a-a," he took off after another family. The farmer seemed pleased we had stayed calm, that we children were not scared, and we had endured, not harming this special goat. After our donation, he wished us a Merry Christmas and we loaded our Christmas tree to the top of our car. By the way, the eaten branches fit well against the wall as we decorated our Christmas tree which we shared with the goat. Happy memories and to all a good night!



Remembering The Essence of Christmas

BY JONI LARLEE

Christmas has always been meaningful for me, in different ways and at different times in my life. As a child I loved spending

Christmas at Nanny Larlee's house in New Brunswick Canada, on the borders of Maine and the Province of Quebec. It snowed every Christmas Eve without fail, and large snow flakes fell gently like diamonds from the sky. Everything sparkled, from the blanket of snow on the ground outside, to the colorful lights, ornaments, and tinsel on the beautiful trees inside.

The excitement and anticipation grew as my brother Bob and I waited for Christmas morning, because we knew that Santa Claus would be bringing some of the toys that we had asked for on our

Christmas list. After all we had been good and deserving of all that we had asked for. What I looked forward to most of all was to see the beautiful doll that would be waiting for me under the tree, and without fail there she was every year throughout my early childhood!

It was a happy time indeed, when we all sat around the dining room table and enjoyed Nanny's wonderful Christmas meal as a family. We had a great view of the tree in the

living room as we looked through the French doors from the dining room, and after dinner we would all sit around the tree, not only to open gifts, but to sing Christmas Carols and make music around the piano. I realize now that we were a family of multi-talented musicians and I am so grateful to have been a part of it.

Those were unforgettable times, and these awesome memories come to life again every Christmas. It helps, especially in moments when I feel alone and feelings of sadness have somehow

crept in, because many of the people I loved are no longer here and I miss them. As I reminisce, warm memories sneak into my heart and they bring back feelings of love and belonging as time stands still for just a little while longer. I can still hear the sound of the church bells that rang out every Christmas Eve for midnight mass in honor of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Today I see life through different eyes, as I remember the past with love and appreciation for all that I was blessed to have. These memories warm the heart of my inner child, the feeling part of me and a part of me that will live on forever.

Christmas has a different meaning for many people and for some it can be a sad time and for others, it may not have existed at all. I can only speak of my life's experience, although I respect and honor another's journey, whatever it might be.

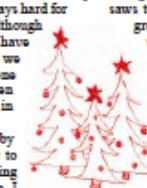
The Essence of Christmas for me at this time of my life is about honoring and giving birth to the

Christ Consciousness within. Symbolically, it is a time of renewal and letting go of an old state of being so that we may be reborn into a new state of Being. By doing so we birth into our hearts and souls the qualities of our Divine Nature, which are the qualities of Love, Life, Light, Power, Peace, Beauty and Joy.

Christmas is a time to be with the people we love and who love and respect us unconditionally.

Christmas is a time to be with the people we love and who love and respect us unconditionally. The energy of unconditional love is empowering, joyful, and beautiful, and it is one of life's most precious gifts. Remembering the Essence of Christmas brings us back to Source, to our True Nature where all things are possible, including Peace on Earth.

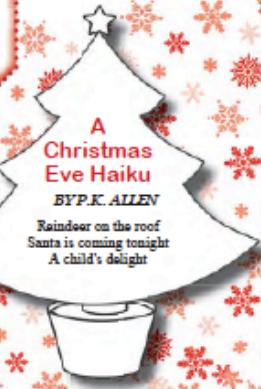
Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays everyone!



Winter Follows

BY GLADYS SZABO

Brisk sunny clear fall day
Eagle soars awesome sight
Winter follows snow falls



A Christmas Eve Haiku

BY P.K. ALLEN

Reindeer on the roof
Santa is coming tonight
A child's delight





Chanukah Menorahs

BY WINNIE SILVERMAN

My kids still have the same menorahs they had as a child. They traveled with them wherever they lived. A few years ago my son had a fire that destroyed the inside of his house and he and his wife had to move into a rented house for over a year. I asked him what happened to the four menorahs. I had given each of my three grandchildren their own menorahs plus there was his. He said they had been in the garage and were OK.

Every year since they were little my grandkids looked forward to the eighth night of Chanukah when all eight candles plus the "Shamash" head candle were lit. Each child lit his and her own

candles after reciting a blessing. They stared in wonder at the night, and especially after we turned off the other lights in the room. Yes, they each got a gift or two for Chanukah, but not one for each night.

When my kids were young and I was a single parent, I gave them small presents each night for seven nights, things like socks and bubble gum, but the eighth night was the big gift. One year my daughter wanted an 8 track player. For the eighth night gift I gave her a bathrobe. Needless to say she was disappointed. She weakly said "Thanks Mom". I told her to put it in her room and when she turned the light on, there was the radio 8 track player.

I now have a great-grandchild. It's time to get her a menorah.



HAIKU/IMAGE

BY PAITYL SPARKS

Sheets of winter light
spiky shadows of birch trees
snowy owls in flight...



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The Visitor

BY VINCE McDERMOTT

I had come to the village to take care of some business. It was not a good choice. The village was very crowded. People had arrived from all regions for the census. I was very fortunate to get a very small, uncomfortable space at a poor inn.

I encountered a boy when I put my wagon in the stable yard at the inn. He worked there, tending to the animals. He said that the innkeeper was making a fortune. I understood that. I could not believe what I had to pay - but I had no choice.

The boy was very excited. He said that something wonderful was going to happen. A man and a woman with child had asked for room at the inn, but there was none. The innkeeper had offered them space in the stable. Like me, they had no choice. I had no idea what he was talking about. But, as long as I was there, I thought that I may as well wait to see what would happen. I am very glad I did.



Reindeer on the Roof

BY BONNIE WHEELER

"Mama, Brad said Santa likes chocolate chip cookies the best."

"No, Kevin said he likes peanut butter."

"Please, Mama, leave those for Santa."

"Okay, boys, Santa gets 2 of each. Now go to bed."

"Did you remember Rudolf's carrot, Mama?"

"Yes, and also the glass of milk. Now go to sleep."

"Mama, where do you think Santa is right now?"

"Well, he is about to fly over Texas and Oklahoma on his way to Maine. All the boys and girls there are all asleep. Now go to sleep!"

"Mama, my eyes won't stay closed. Do you think he got me a GI Joe and a bicycle?"

"Brad, I said go to sleep, you're keeping Kevin awake."

"No, Mama my eyes won't stay closed either. Mama, how will Santa get in our house? We don't have a chimney. Oh, no, we won't get any presents."

"Kevin, I left the front door open and told Santa to come in that way and he said, "Fine." NOW GO TO SLEEP!"

Brad whispers, "I think I hear reindeer hoofs on the roof. Kevin, hurry and close your eyes." "I'm trying to."

At last, the Santa toys are under the tree, the stockings stuffed full of goodies. I ate all 4 cookies, and poured the milk down the drain. I will only do so much for Santa. I even ate 2 of the carrots but left the greens. Now this Santa will not have any trouble closing her eyes because she has had a long day and tomorrow the excited voices of 2 little boys will of joy that indeed Santa left all the right toys. Santa had better lock the door when he leaves. You never know on Christmas.





DECEMBER SONG

BY CHARLOTTE HART

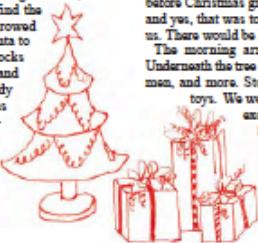
In every window shines soft candle glow.
Moonlight sparkles on bright glistening snow.
Bonfire roars with cheerful crackling sound.
Flashing skates blades circle 'round and 'round.
Silent sleighs race miles through deep smooth snow.
Home to hearth fire's comforting warm glow.
Overhead—gigantic star-filled sky
Celebrates a Newborn's gentle waking cry.

Morning sun gleams on the white church spire.
Joyful voices rise. The village choir!
Ornaments crafted by grandchildren three
Cover a floor-to-ceiling fragrant tree.
Circling the tree are gifts home made with care—
Hand knit mittens, a quilt, home baked's fare.
Door bells chime. Family arrives. Loud cheer.
Sweet joy and hope for peace throughout the year.

Grandpa's Christmas

BY BONNIE WHEELER

Christmas Eve was the time the family gathered to celebrate Grandpa's Christmas. We enjoyed a potluck supper, Mama's cornbread dressing and Aunt Jewels yeast rolls - my favorites. After supper, we grandkids sat around Grandpa's chair and handed him his present. We knew what to hand him first - a box of chocolate covered cherries. He grimed at all of us and then opened the box to pass around. Next might be shirts socks or pajamas. We watched with excitement as he opened his gifts. No one else had gifts, they were just for Grandpa. Our Christmas came on Christmas morning with one toy under the small tree and our stockings. Well, it really wasn't a stocking or even ours. The night before, we tore through Daddy's sock drawer to find the biggest sock without holes and borrowed it to lay out on the old sofa for Santa to fill. Each of the different colored socks held one apple, one orange, nuts, and hopefully a red and white candy cane. It was a time when a little was a lot. Christmas Eve was the highlight of the season. It wasn't what was under the tree, but who was around the tree. It was one very happy Grandpa looking around the room at his family. Indeed, it was a very merry Christmas.



CHRISTMAS PAST

BY BONNIE WHEELER

Growing up in a family of 9 kids I learned early if I wanted things, I did not ask for them. I got a job and earned the money to take care of myself. I picked cotton on my uncle's farms, babysat, and did whatever jobs I was lucky enough to get. When I was younger, I wondered why Santa was so stingy. If he had all those toys in his sled, why didn't he leave me more than one present at Christmas? Later, of course, I understood he was doing his best. Yet, I always dreamed that one Christmas morning I would wake up and find lots of presents under the tree.

Life moved on, and I married. Garry and I had 2 little boys with their own Santa dreams. Military pay did not leave much money for Christmas presents, so I took a job for 3 months before Christmas giving toy parties. I could keep the samples, and yes, that was to be both the dream Christmas for both of us. There would be lots of presents under our tree.

The morning arrived and excitement filled our home. Underneath the tree were trains, trucks, riding toys, balls, army men, and more. Stockings were filled with candy and small toys. We were filled with joy seeing the happiness and excitement on the boy's faces. Oh, yes, our Santa was very generous. My dreams came true. Only it took another generation for it to happen. And now, it was much more fun to give it than to have received it. I hope the boys still remember our first year of abundance.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

BY VIRGINIA SABIN

We met when you were brand new
And I was needing a new beginning
You were the first
On my list to view
Built on ledge
In the soil of a rotting forest
Swarming with mosquitoes
Blocking a view
Of The New Meadows River
There could be no cellar here

In its own little place
Cleared away from towering pine
The sky was let in
This little house appeared to be growing
Right out of the ground
I never looked at another

It's been a win win I didn't know about
I didn't know that a fallen pine tree
Made room for dormant roots of maple and birch
Waiting so long to have their place in the sun
And what a glorious autumn it is

What I learned
From a dark dense screen of pine
From this house lacking history before now
Is all I need to know



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Santa's Real!

BY BETTY BAVOR

It's Christmas Sunday. The children have been practicing for the pageant, and we are getting into costumes for the big event. The focus is on the birth of Jesus, and the performance was superb. After refreshments, fellowship and Christmas wishes, we all headed home. Not much mention of Santa until we rounded the corner of our street to see Santa entering the house of a neighbor! What a joy to hear the children all say, look, there is a Santa!"

ANOTHER NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

BY R. LAUGHIN

*Twas the night before Christmas and all thro' the house
not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
while visions of sugar plums danced in their heads.
And Mama in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap
when out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
tore open the shutters, and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow
gave the luster of mid-day to objects below.*

There lying on the ground in a huge snow bank
was a total stranger, a personage of no rank.
He had fallen whilst dragging a large heavy log,
all the time being "yipped" at by a mangy old dog.
I looked down on him and he up at me,
he was a lost soul if ever one be.
It was then I knew what I had urgently to do,
I put on my robe and slipped into each shoe.
I ran down the stairs and through the front room
almost tripping over some chairs and a broom.
I opened the front door and motioned to him;
he hesitated but I insisted until he finally came in.

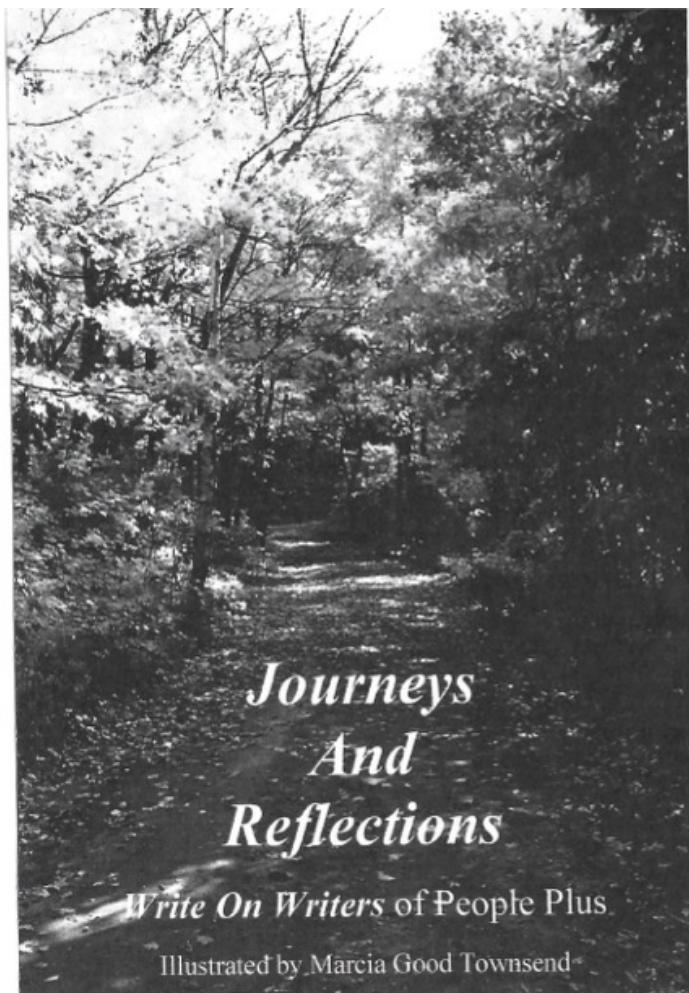
The clothes on his back were tattered and torn,
the shoes on his feet were nearly through worn.
He was lean as a rail if the truth was to speak,
he looked like he had barely eaten in over a week.
I stoked up the fire and set him quits near;
it clearly showed he was frozen from foot to ear.
I brought him some drink and food and set on his lap.
He glared back at me as if I was setting a trap.
He sat all in silence never saying one word.
Satisfaction returned; I swear he nearly purred.
When he had finished he turned and he said,
"Why have you done what others might dread,
to take in a stranger all tattered and torn?
Most would see danger and look on with scorn."
I replied, "We are not rich nor are we poor.
To a person in need we must always open our door.
Whether at Christmas, Summer, Spring or Fall
is not sharing with others our Father's supreme call?"
He rose from the chair and headed towards the door,
about to go out in the blustery cold once more.
Not fully knowing why, I wished him to stay yet more,
but he said "No," he had found what he came for.
As he departed he looked back at me,
his face now shinnying with a look of near glee.

"You're a bearer of the true spirit of living,
helping others in need with unreserved giving.
Your sharing of meat, drink and bread unreserved
has earned you one day a high place in Heaven.
Thank you my friend for the hospitality and drink.
I'll see you again" he said, then disappeared in a blink.
I stood in awe, my mind and body rather shook,
then I dashed to the door to have one last look.
There was no man to be seen, only a heavenly beam,
one bright ascending star trailing a gold stream.
Now when I look to the sky and see a shooting star
I wonder who's been visited by that person from afar.

*May the star of your God bring you
Peace, Prosperity, Hope and Fulfillment
this Holiday Season; and for many more to come!*

*(The first twelve lines are from the poem by
Clement Clarke Moore, "A Visit from St. Nicolas"
first published in 1823.)*

2016



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Gladys Szabo
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Karen Schneider
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PEOPLE PLUS PIC OF THE WEEK



PEOPLE PLUS PHOTO

THE WRITE ON WRITERS GROUP of People Plus debuted their seventh collaboration, "Journeys and Reflections," at an Author's Chat this week at People Plus at 35 Union St. in Brunswick. The book is a collection of stories and poetry created by 24 authors from the group, reflecting on their journey as writers as well as life experiences. The Write On Writers, who celebrated their 20th anniversary last fall, meet weekly at the People Plus Center to share their own works, host guest authors, critique works in progress, discuss the process of writing and support each other's creativity. The writers have published more than 20 individual works. They welcome members of all writing levels and skills and are always looking for new participants. For more information on this group and other activities at the People Plus Center, visit peopleplusmaine.org. *2014*

Season's Greetings



from the **People** ^{Plus} Write On Writers

SHOPPING FOR CHRISTMAS

by Elizabeth B. Bates

I've got my bag and my coat,
my wool hat and my notes,
as I go out the door
to the big dollar store.
Find the toys for the kids,
big pots with tight lids
and six pie plates for Mom.
Now for Dad, what is new?
One ice skate or two?
An axe to cut wood
to keep us warm!
And for me, a box of chocolate candy
smelling just dandy
will do me no harm!

A TIME FOR FAMILY

by R. Neil Laughlin

Holiday times are of beginnings and endings,
time of outward celebration, and inward reflection.
We marvel at the past, wishing somehow it would last.
The light of the world recedes then begins to ascend again.
So in this festive season, let us apply some additional reason
by reaching out beyond ourselves, to those that are less fortunate:
to those displaced of home and/or country through no fault of their own,
to those whose worldly possessions are but the clothes on their back,
to those who may worship differently, but whose desires are the same;
A world free of wars filled with Peace in which to live, love and know.
An existence that is free of hunger in which lives can grow.

Christmas Gold

by Nonie Moody

There is a gold mine in our thoughts
To be expressed at Christmas time.
Of clever ways of showing love
Without the clinking of a dime.

Big smiles may seem a small gesture
But smiles can make one's day brighter
Snapping a weary soul alive
Makes his world a little lighter.

Delightful encouraging words
Can demonstrate how much you care
Not making it look obvious
But assuring words that are rare.

A simple note to an old friend.
This year been treating you okay?
The weather here has been pleasant.
How was your special birthday?

The art of giving from the heart
Has been destroyed year after year.
The joy of giving something made
Is offering gold of Christmas cheer.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

by Gladys Szabo

My Christmas presents
These gifts not to be wrapped
Peace love caring hugs

MY HOUSE

by Bonnie Wheeler

Come to my house on Christmas Eve
The smell of cinnamon cake fills the air
A sparkling tree with gifts galore
Grandchildren sitting around it on the floor
Who could ask for anything more?

CHRISTMAS: IT MUST BE MAGICAL

by Ruth Foehring

It is November. The days are shorter and light fades early. The leaves hang on the trees with a quiet desperation for all too well they know what is in store for them. There will be no time to run around accomplishing the gigantic list of things one must do before Christmas, so we must start preparing NOW!!

My husband and I have been Christmas shopping for weeks and now the stack of presents must be wrapped and some made ready for mailing. Christmas cards must be written, almost two hundred of them, and a nice, newsy little letter must be enclosed, so that those who live far away will know what has been happening this past year in our busy world. Panic has hit me and I must talk to myself and convince myself that all will be fine and somehow it will all get done.

THEN, I remembered a Christmas past where doing everything seemed quite impossible too. I had begun my teaching career much later than most graduates. I had four young children, a big house and now a career and it was my first Christmas working.

Now, Christmas in my house was a magical occasion. It

could not be otherwise just because I was working! The day after Thanksgiving the children and I would always start our Christmas baking and so we began according to plan. Everything was going fine and we were right on schedule. Decorations began appearing in the house as well as in my classroom. There was no stress...yet. Excitement hung in the air and grew with each passing December day. Then it happened. Time was short and the list of to do things seemed much longer than usual. The road ahead looked very rocky indeed.

How was I to help make red and green paper chains and hang them all over the house? I couldn't paint the windows with poster paints as I did every year. Santa and his little elves and all those cute reindeer would not be looking at us and cheering us on. The baking list seemed unusually long as there was no time to even light the oven. Cards could be scribbled but what about the newsy little letters!! It was all overwhelming! What about the magic!

It just so happened that I had a student teacher. She was so competent and so organized that a great idea hit me and I found my solution to the whole dilemma. I marched into the principal's office ready to propose my ideal plan.

Nelson, sat behind his desk and listened quietly while I told

him my wonderful plan. Susan, my outstanding student teacher, could teach my class while I stayed home and did what I must do. I would pay her right out of my salary. She would have a wonderful teaching experience and I would return after Christmas and really no one would even miss me. I could not possibly work before Christmas because Christmas must be magical at my house.

There was a cough and then the chair he was sitting on revolved around three times. I got dizzy just watching it whirl. Then with a strange expression on his face he said, "You have got to be joking. One look at my face told him the opposite was true. Then very, very softly he said, "Get out of here!" While the chair began revolving again, I made my fast get away.

I somehow got through that first Christmas. My family rallied around me and we carried it off in spite of all the difficulties. When I retired twenty-one years later Nelson told that story and everyone laughed and I did too. So, now having remembered this time in my past this Christmas seems like a nit. Have a nice, peaceful holiday season! Make it magical too!



LATKES

by Winice Silverman

The traditional food for Chanukah is Latkes (lalt-kah). Why? As Tanya proclaimed in "Fiddler on the Roof", TRADITION! The exact reason for this tradition is that these latkes (potato pancakes) are fried in oil. Potatoes are shredded and mixed with egg and matzo meal to make the batter and dropped by spoonfuls into hot oil. I don't know what they use in other cultures where there aren't any potatoes, but frying in oil is probably observed by frying another ingredient. As we stuff ourselves with these delicious pancakes, we are to be reminded of the reason for the Chanukah celebration. Briefly, over 2,000 years ago when the Jews entered the destroyed holy temple, it was discovered that there was only enough oil to keep the eternal light burning for one day. The miracle is that this oil kept the flame burning for eight days until more oil could be made. Therefore, we indulge in yummy fried potato pancakes to symbolize the miracle of the oil. With us, there's always certain food connected to any holiday celebration. That's our tradition.

HAIKU

by Patty L. Sparks

first snowflake
falling out of
no-where

Winter Overture

by Charlie Payne

Soon Jack Frost will be nipping at your nose.
You might even feel a tingling in your toes.
The cornstalks shiver with a clatter.
The barred owl says you make my beak chatter.
The red fox gives a cough and covers its nose with its bushy tail.
Hens on their roosts put their heads under their wings.
They dream of summer things.
The cat and the dog are toasty warm stretched out on the hearth.
Bring Winter on us Mainers are tough.
We survived "The Great Ice storm".
The moon slides down to I'll go to rest.



WINTER SOLSTICE

by Patty L. Sparks

Nature
dreams
in shades of grey
...resting...
neath drifts
of unspoken
white



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Pearl

by P.K. Allen

It was on a peaceful Sunday morning
just 75 years ago,
when war came to our doorstep
and changed the world we had come to
know.

It started with the bombing
and sinking of our ships
And the loss of many lives
as prayers rose up from our lips.

It ended four years later
with two blasts from the sky
That killed one-hundred thousand
people
and left a mourning nation to cry.

It was a hard fought conflict
for the victory that we earned,
But I wonder if in all the wars since,
Are there any lessons that we learned?

DECEMBER 7, 1941 -

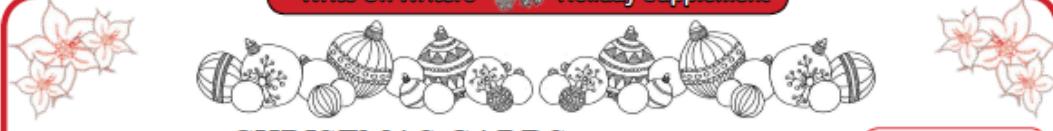
A Day of Infamy

by Elizabeth B. Bates

It was a Sunday afternoon in Boston, Massachusetts. My sister had the radio turned on because she liked the popular music all the time. My mother was in the living room writing letters. I had just finished my homework for the next school day at my High School, where I was a sophomore.

When the music suddenly stopped playing, and a voice started talking to us, I was surprised to find that it was the voice of our President Roosevelt. He was telling us, his fellow Americans, that we had just been attacked by Japan in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The Japanese planes had sunk ships and killed many of our people there. They had not declared war on us, so it was a total surprise. The President was asking Congress to declare war on Japan. The American people had been following news of the war between Germany and England for a long time. There were many Isolationists in our country who were loudly proclaiming that we should stay away from joining the battle against them, let them solve their own problems, they said. Now they were silenced. We had been attacked from the other side of our country. A Japanese military man said that they had awakened a "sleeping giant". He was correct.

Drafting men into the armed forces took place. They had no choice. We were at war with both Germany and Japan. Everyone had to be careful not to let the wrong person know something that could further imperil us. "Close your lips or sink our ships". It was all very frightening!



CHRISTMAS CARDS

In 1843 Sir Henry Cole, a civil servant in the UK working as an Assistant Keeper at the new 'Public Record' later called the 'Post Office' wanted more ordinary people to use this facility. His idea of a Christmas card became a reality with his artist friend John Collett Horsley as they designed the first Christmas Card. It sold for one shilling - 8 cents and had three panels - the center panel showed three generations raising a toast to the card's recipient and on either side were scenes of charity with food and clothing being given to the poor. 1000 cards were printed and only the wealthy could afford them. When cards became more popular and more efficient printing production developed, postage dropped to a half penny. By the 1900's the custom had spread to Germany. In the late 1900's cards began to appear in America and were very expensive. Louis Prang, a printer from Germany who formerly worked with the UK card makers, began mass producing more affordable cards with pictures of flowers, plants and children. In 1915 Joyce C. Hall

and two of his brothers created Hallmark Cards. This company is still in business today after 100 plus years with grand children now in charge innovating the latest technology and new ways to celebrate all occasions and holidays with a card! Now

"Firstchristmascards" Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons

you know the rest of the story.

Christmas time my mail box has a big red bow as I look forward to reaching for a precious Christmas card from family and friends. I have written a yearly letter for many years. Dear Abby frowns on this as it may seem boring and boastful. Many of us

live apart from each other and we welcome news of special happenings with an update of the year's events. I delight to read and re-read every letter I receive. Yet, I know what you are thinking, it's a digital age, the younger generation embraces speed and efficiency. The Christmas card process is time consuming: purchasing, signing, addressing and stamping to say nothing of the cost. A mouse click and the holiday greeting finds its way to the computer!

I hang four foot X six inch wide felt streamers to attach my cards to so I can enjoy them throughout the season. People have family & personal pictures, meaningful cards and some have designed their own card which need to be seen and cherished. I feel their spirit with me. I guess I am old-fashioned - times goes so fast, people go in and out of our life, never miss the opportunity to tell them how much they mean to you. As long as I am able, a Christmas letter will be enclosed in my Christmas card and I'll happily thank the US postal service for its safe delivery.

The Shepherd

by Vince McDermott

I do not go into town much. I get very lonely up here in the hills with nobody to talk to but sheep. The sheep know a few words, mostly those I use to tell them what to do. If they get nervous I talk in a low voice to calm them down. I have had to do that a lot lately because there has been a big increase in the number of people going to town for the census. We have to cross the main road to get from the grass to the water. The sheep do not like all the activity. I will be glad when the census is finished.

There isn't enough room for all the travelers in town. But there is something else. A bright star is located right over the town. It must be some kind of omen. People say that royal travelers have come from very far away searching for some people who are staying in a stable owned by the innkeeper. I will go to see what is happening when I sign for the census. I hope the omen of the star is a good one.

The Wonder of Christmas

by Nonie Moody

On the road Mary and Joseph came. Caesar Augustus called a decree. To register in his first census. Their journey long with seldom a tree.

Mary gave birth to her first son With straw in a manger for His bed. The family had found the safest place. Wrapped Him in cloths and kept Him fed.

Some shepherds keeping watch by night Saw the angel of the Lord, how frightening? The Lord's glory shown all around them. They couldn't believe what was happening.

The angel brought good news of great joy A Savior who is Christ the Lord Born in the city of David. With angels singing in one accord.

The shepherds went to see the baby Quickly with haste they found their way To Bethlehem where the family stayed And the baby in the manger lay.

Shepherds the secret could not hold Of all they had seen and been told. Jesus the child was alive and well. Wonder of wonders the truth was bold.

The shepherds returned to their field Glorifying and praising God. Not quietly but with full voices Christ is the Lord singing it abroad.

CHRISTMASTIME

by P.K. Allen

Christmas is a special time that comes but once a year And brings us all together to share in joy and cheer. It brings friends and families who travel from far away

To visit and to celebrate on this very special day. A day over 2000 years ago when a baby boy was born In a stable in a manger to give the world a better morn.

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Christmas Dinner 1947 - Lowell

by Paul Roberts

Ma was getting ready to tackle the last project for our Christmas Dinner - baking pies. She knew that the relatives would all want to take a pie home and Uncle John would want two pies because he was a bachelor and this was his only chance to get them. I noticed that he was too cheap to buy my mother and Dad anything for Christmas but neither one complained. My brother Fred and I decided to hide the two pies he 'ordered' and hint to Ma and Dad that 'other relatives must have taken his pies by mistake! We hid the two pies under our bed and put on our most 'innocent' faces. When Uncle John was told by Brother Fred that there were no more pies to give any departing guests Uncle John went crying to Ma that someone too 'his pies' and could she replace them? - (The cheap son-of-a-sea-cook (Dad's saying) actually wanted our exhausted mother to bake two more pies. She had already baked twenty-five pies and the big meal and was quite tired. She asked Fred and me to go look up in our bedroom to see if anyone 'put' the pies there. We knew the jig was up so Fred and me stuck our thumbs into his two pies and brought them downstairs and said "We found them Ma!"

A Catholic Cousin Meets His Protestant Cousin Lowell, Massachusetts - 1954

by Paul Roberts

My Protestant cousin came to stay with us for Christmas and being good Irish-Catholics we took him to the Sacred Heart Church to the ten o'clock Mass.

Grandmother McAloon filled us in on our cousin's background. He was born a Catholic but was raised by his Protestant father. Cousin Billy was an athletic - good looking boy and was fun to be with. Being nine years old he was inquisitive and friendly so when Grandma suggested that he go to The Ten o'clock mass with me Billy said "Yes, Mam!"

When we returned home Grandma was eager to talk with Billy and me to see how Billy reacted to his first Catholic Christmas Mass. When Grandma asked "What was the best thing about the Mass for you Billy?" She was expecting to get into a "Good old Irish-Catholic discussion on the benefits of Holy Christmas Mass and was therefore shocked when Billy laughed and said "I liked it best when the man came around and gave us money - I took a big handful" (The collection!)

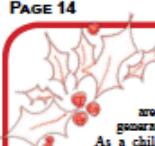
THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

by Bonnie Wheeler

It's time for a Christian celebration. The perfect gift from above. We joyously share with everyone. The holy spirit of love.

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CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS



Holiday traditions are carried on through generations.

As a child baking cookies was an important tradition. Mom and I would make several types of cookies but cookie cutter cookies were a must. We used imprinted cutters with many details. We would start early in the morning and spend the entire day baking and decorating. There were several cups of icings in red, green, white, yellow, blue and chocolate. We used paint brushes and toothpicks in order to create every detail. We would stop for dinner and hours later mom would be saying, "You need to get to bed now!"

"Just one more - I need to do this special one" I answered as I never wanted to stop.

When I married we continued my family traditions along with one of my husband's, which was "The visiting Elves". They would lurk around all day watching the children. In the morning they would receive a note with a treat if they were good. If they were not behaving they got a note saying "You better watch out!" The Elves would report to Santa. When children became 12 the Elves would stop coming.

The sugar cookie tradition continued but since my children were not as detail oriented as I, they would spread icing in appropriate colors and then put sprinkles on to create the details. This didn't take a whole day.

Now my grandchildren make these cookies with even less detail. Some are iced with sprinkles and some get sprinkles

before being baked. The important thing is the tradition continues with a few variances. On Christmas Eve in my childhood, we would invite friends and neighbors for an open house on Christmas Eve as I had no siblings and we had no other relatives in the area. Of course our beautiful cookies were displayed along with my mother's delicious cinnamon coffee cake and many more goodies.

My children were fortunate to have grandparents, aunts and uncles in the area giving us the opportunity for a festive and fun Christmas Eve dinner gathering and gift exchange.

My grandchildren have no relatives in the area other than myself. We continue to have our Christmas Eve dinner and added a Christmas story and opening one gift

each after dinner.

We sometimes invite friends who don't have family around.



Christmas Day through all the generations has been a family day. We open gifts while enjoying traditional blueberry muffins. (A tradition started with my children). We enjoy sharing our gifts, eating left over's and sometimes never getting out of night clothes.

The true meaning of Christmas and the magic of Santa has continued throughout our generations and I feel it will continue on as our family expands.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays have always been my favorite time of year. Many memories bring back all the excitement of my childhood.



LOOKING BACK

by Bonnie Wheeler

If I could go back this Christmas to a childhood Christmas Eve, I'd spend more time looking at my family around the tree. I'd see loved ones who cooked the dinner, and Mom and Dad wrapping gifts with glee. I'd say "Thank You" to them all for the love they gave to me.

BAKING MEMORIES

by Bonnie Wheeler

Alaina and Raylee, two beautiful great-granddaughters joyful memories to create helping your loving Mome bake a Jesus birthday cake

Dear Santa,
I've been "wicked"
selfish this year.
Please leave only
one gift...
a Winery!
Yours truly,
Patty L. Sparks

Christmas Cookies

by Sally Hartikka

What kind of cookie shall we first bake? There's molded, and crunchy, wafers and cake. Biscotti, and shortbread, delights and crisp, Or we could make drops, formed, squares, or strips, Macaroons, crinkles, kisses or wafer, Scones, cookies or refrigerator. Blintzchicken, chews, rolled, or hermits, Squares, snaps, chews, or biscuits. What shapes do you want, what is your wish? Wreaths, trees, bells, perhaps even fish? Stocking or snowman, nutcracker, doll, Circles, dreidel, snowflake or ball? Rudolf or Santa, a star or a garland, Circle, a bow, a cone, or a diamond, Pinwheel, heart, snowflake or bells, A sleigh, an elf, a present, angels. Now for the flavor, there's lots to choose from including almond, blueberry, anise or rum, Molasses, gumdrops, jimmies or citron, Coffee, cranberry, peppermint, lemon, Pineapple, peanut butter, raisins or cherry, Pumpkin, pistachio, plum or blueberry. The best parts of baking are wonderful scents And joy when I give cookies as presents.



THE CHRISTMAS LIST

by Bonnie Wheeler

Alaina's list was long. I don't know where more toys can go. I suggested only two toys this year. She thought for a while and said, "Santa, Bring a bigger house and toy box."



DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Marcia Good Townsend *

When we put tinsel on the Christmas tree, strand by strand
Carefully saved year to year?

DO YOU REMEMBER

Bubbles lights on the tree branches
Bubbles rising within the tubes when they warmed?

DO YOU REMEMBER

Watching the Lionel engine and cars
Racing round the track beneath the tree?

DO YOU REMEMBER

Checking the dish of cookies left the night before
To confirm it was truly Santa who left the presents gaily scattered
'round the tree and on the floor?

I REMEMBER WHEN

Santa found me even though
We'd moved and had no chimney!

I REMEMBER WHEN

Santa hid the big girl bike in shiny blue and sparkling chrome
Hidden behind the tree! *

I REMEMBER WHEN

"Santa" followed us to England and back again,
but this time to Arizona.

I REMEMBER WHEN

"Santa" left beautiful
Jade and gold earrings in my stocking

I REMEMBER WHEN

"Santa" mailed me a check before Christmas
So I could buy enough gas and a ferry ticket
To "go home" to spend Christmas with my family.

I REMEMBER WHEN

I was unable to drive "home for Christmas,"
So "Santa" wrapped my gifts and stocking and placed them in a box
For USPS to deliver to me.

I ALSO REMEMBER

The year "Santa" stopped bringing presents for beneath the tree
It was the year that Mom & Dad ceased to be.

I NOW CELEBRATE & PLAN

Each year, to "BE" Santa
For our little ones, with eyes so big with wonderment
For them to grow taller and wiser with each year blessed
And to spread more memories for them to recall
On these special days of love and remembrance.



AMAZING GIFTS

by Charlotte Hart

Dear Santa, I need cramp-ons sharp and fine.
My winter gift? A sheer, steep mountain pass.
A wondrous gift was mine when I was nine.
My birthday wish—to climb! And Dad said, "Yes!"
Chocorus's Mountain Trail. The summit in the sky!
Clear brooks soothed summer's heat, brooks cold and wild.
Six decades plus more years came, then did fly.
"Your birthday wish now?" asked a young grandchild.
"To climb! Up Province Mountain by the lake!"
Leaves lined that trail with autumn gold and red.
Now? Tuckerman Ravine. A winter climb to take.
"Too steep! Too icy! Treacherous," some have said.
Strap on sharp cramp-ons. Do not fear. Just dare.
I've passed the timberline. The summit is right there.

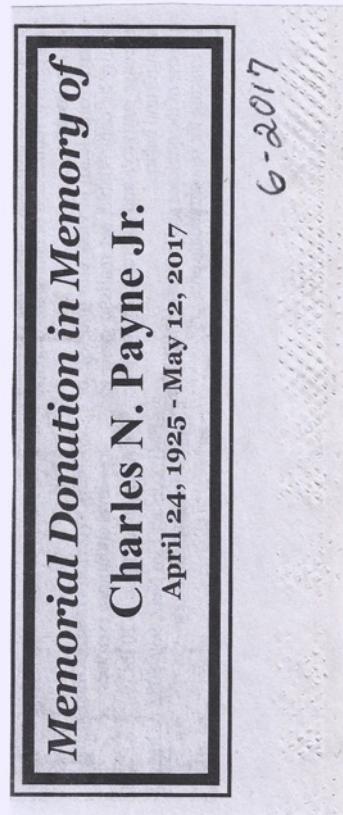


A CHRISTMAS WISH

by Bonnie Wheeler

When Santa asked Raylee what she wanted for Christmas, she answered, "A dog." I was shocked. I had already wrapped a baby doll and toy set for her. Later that same day, Raylee was looking out the front window waving goodbye to our neighbors as they followed the moving van in their car. They were moving away. She said, "Mommy, their dog, Lady, is running after their car." Raylee was crying and yelling, "Stop, stop. Let the dog in." I picked her up and promised her that Lady would be fine. I put her to bed with her favorite lullaby playing. That evening I watched the neighbor's dark empty house as a snow storm raged and saw Lady lying on the back porch waiting. "Okay, Santa, I guess you do have a dog for a very good little girl. I opened the door and whistled and Lady came running to her new home.





Ode to a seaman

by Charlie Payne

Today I forged a link in my chain of days
four fathoms deep, or more,
down where Jonah's Leviathan lies
caught in that hateful Sargasso Sea
where only eels can play
I have followed the course
true to my Captain's compass
and the stars like floatsam and jetsam.
I'm tossed about and I want out!

I've finished the course
now I want to reach that fabled Shangri -La.
No more rocks and shoals for this hardy soul
just a quiet cove in some fair land
where no razing sea nor northerly gales
shall reach the gunnels of my fair craft,
nor bend my topsails to the greedy deep.

Give me that slumber that I seek,
Amen and Amen.

Joy of the Pen 2017

The Verdi L. Tripp Fiction Award: **Cecelia Hitte**
for *My Palestine*

Fiction Honorable Mention: Margaret Elliott for *Magda's Wren*

Margaret F. Tripp Poetry Award: Stephen Bloom for *Bomb*

Poetry Honorable Mention: Nicole Jakubowski for *I am Vinalhaven*

Richard F. Snow Nonfiction Award: John Leggett for *James E. Strates and Pagan Jones*

Nonfiction Honorable Mention: Monica Kissane for *Redemption (The Funeral)*

TPL Teen Scene Award: Hannah Wilson for *Daddy Issues*

Teen Honorable Mention: Natalia Pinette for *Yellow Bird*

Just Write Maine-related Nonfiction Award: Robin Orm Hansen for *Meddling with the Children of Others*

Verdi L. Tripp Fiction Award

***My Palestine* by Cecelia Hitte**

The room at the Unitarian Center was packed. The American Friends Service Committee speaker, a well-known human rights activist, had just cleared his throat, and was about to begin. The door behind the podium burst open and a short, sturdily built woman with a bulging book satchel clutched under one arm darted in front of the podium.

What nerve! She came down the aisle and settled herself onto the one empty seat. Which happened to be next to me.

Well, I think one should do whatever one can. I know the rest of the world is in a sorry state. But this woman's fervor seemed rather overboard to me. Whenever the speaker made a particularly dramatic point, my neighbor nodded her head in agitation, turned toward me, grabbed my arm and said urgently, But what's to be done! What's to be done!

I studied her out of the corner of my eye. She was dressed in a long black coat that, in spite of the mild spring weather, trailed to her ankles, and her curly red hair bounced vigorously with every emphatic word. I realized I had seen her before, rapidly walking across downtown Bartonville's Court Street, black coattails sailing behind her. She seemed to wear that garment in even the most temperate weather, as though protecting herself from a moral chill.

The speaker wound up his talk and took questions from the audience. My impetuous seatmate leaped to her feet. A stack of pamphlets slid out of the satchel, onto my lap, then the floor. Yes! she said. Yes! Yes! That's

Joy of the Pen Reception 2017

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The Cryer - DECEMBER 2017



The winners, judges and presenters (from the left): Nicole Jakubowski, Stephen Bloom, Helene McGlaughlin, Peter Duder, Monica Kusano, Shannon Bowring, John Leggett, Linda Baker, Hannah Wilson, Robin Otto Horwitz, Cecilia Hilde and Neilia Pinette (not present: Margaret Elliott, Nancy Randolph and Laury). [Crosby Photo]

Season's Greetings



from the **People**  Write On Writers

Best Christmas Gifts

by Gladys Szabo

The best Christmas gifts are free.
Share them with everyone you see.

A smile or laughter given away
Can warm a heart or make someone's day!
May your holidays be smiles and laughter
Confirming all the years hereafter.



Christmas Thoughts

by Nonie Moody

There are warm thoughts of Christmas
Hiding in the small places
The scent of balsam fir trails
Brings memories of faces.

Many lowly Christmas mugs
Find their way to the front row
With memories of years past
Will be used often I know.

Baking the Christmas cookies
The ones flavored with nutmeg
With memories of mother
As the cracks a single egg.

Old ornament on the tree
Passed down many years ago
Shines with colored glass
While Christmas lights send a glow.

Christmas cards are small and thin
Thinking of those who are dear
Hand written notes tucked inside
Sent to loved ones far and near.

The Christmas Carolers

by Bonnie Wheeler

The time was 6:30 PM on the Sunday before Christmas. I had dressed in my nightie, put an audio book in my cassette player, and was resting in my bed. I heard singing and realize the church choir was on my porch. 'We wish you a Merry and Christmas,' drifted in. They are here! What a surprise. Flashbacks of the last 30 years went by. We would meet at church, choose our songbook, and gather the fruit baskets we had filled earlier. With much merriment, we would then make a parade in our car going to the elderly, shut-ins, and two nursing homes where some of our oldest church members lived.

We would begin our singing outside, and then continue inside for about eight Christmas carols. After that he would present the basket and give hugs. Climbing joyously back in our car, we would move on to the next stop. I loved being part of that. This year, after the car accident, problems with knees and diabetic woes, I couldn't be part of it.

I hurriedly grabbed a robe and went to the door to invite everyone in. About 12 church members, a boy of 10 to older families, were standing there. They made a circle in my living room, and I slipped into the circle. They stood in winter coats, hats, and scarves. I stood barefoot and robes.

Sylvia shared her songbook with me, but mostly it was unneeded as the familiar hymns surrounded and warmed my living room. All at once, I stopped singing. Was I supposed to sing with them, or just listen? After all, I wasn't the visitor, the caroler tonight. I was elderly shut-in. I was on the other side of the fence! What did this happen? How did this happen? I felt like someone had punched me in the stomach.

Daniel handed me the fruit basket, we hugged, and out the door they started their parade of cars to the next place. I stood holding the fruit basket wondering if I was on the other side of the fence for good. It didn't feel right! I wanted someone else to hold that fruit basket.

Christmas Coffee Cup

by Bonnie Wheeler

Thanks for the present of the red coffee cup for Christmas.
He loves it and uses it every day.
There is one problem though,
he forgets it in the microwave oven
and then hunts around for it for half a day.
He also leaves it in his van or on the garage shelf.
He frets and complains when he loses his cup,
So please, next year for his sake and mine,
give him a cup with a very long line.



Bad Santa

by Bonnie Wheeler

You took away Capt. Mike's
Our favorite seafood place
Their doors closed for good
So you can forget your Christmas snack
What we want is not in your pack



Christmas Excitement

by Nonie Moody

As little girls, my sister and I were playing nicely in the living room one December morning. The Christmas tree had been purchased at a local farm and was standing tall in the big living room window. We had so much fun the day before putting all the long icicles on the lower part of the tree while mother worked at the top part that we couldn't reach. The tree was beautiful and we were so excited that Christmas morning would soon be here.

While we played close to the Christmas tree, we noticed the mailman drive in our driveway. He never had done this before. Being inquisitive we ran to the kitchen to look out the window. Mother was looking



Gardens Aglow

by Sally Hartikka

The colorful lights
Cascading all around me
Dream world of childhood

Tidal housekeeping

by Cecelia Hitte

The house had filled
With leaves. Everywhere
I swept them out
Trying to push back
The rising tide
Of winter.

Christmas Gifts

by Sally Hartikka

As I've grown older, my tastes have changed;
The Christmas gift most pleasing to me
Is not something elegant and pricey
But time with my friends and family.
Under the tree what I hope to see
Is something made by hand for me...
No electronic gizmos or high-priced things.
But expenditure of time and the love it brings.

out the kitchen door window. We all watched the mailman walk up to the door carrying two very large boxes. We quickly moved closer to mother and watched as she opened the door for the mailman. The mailman had difficulty carrying two large boxes in his arms and as mother started to reach for the boxes, the mailman handed them over to her upside down. In the transfer, the boxes had two faint sounds. Waa! Waa! Baby dolls! We screamed and jumped up and down. We held hands and jumped some more. We were getting baby dolls for Christmas. Mother was most unhappy and told us to quiet down or she would be giving the boxes to the needy, as she insisted them to her bedroom.

**A Winter Song**

by Bonnie Wheeler

Standing at my door, looking out at the snow,
dreading the blast of cold air as I step out,
I stop to listen to a wee bird singing.
I smile, thinking of my warm clothes, house, car,
my pantry full of food –
and I'm complaining the bitter cold
while this tiny bird has none of these,
yet, it sings to the world.
How that humbles me as I walk outside
with a sudden feeling of abundance.

**Winter**

by Virginia Sabin

A time of looking forward to spring
Of remembering
A time of snow blanketing outside
Of down warming inside
A time of late dawn of earlier dusk
Of coveting in comfort and dark
A time of pondering
An end of time or a season

**First Snow**

by Bonnie Wheeler

Bathed in background fog –
I watch as the present appears –
Another scene unfolds, totally clear –
Winters for us snow storm says,
"Hello" –

**December**

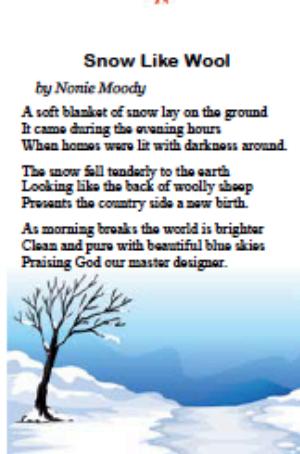
by Rose Marie Mayer

Last night the moon and stars shone clear and bright
Now the first snow is softly falling
and the world is winter white
Midst shopping, baking, wrapping, as the holidays draw near
Let's all find time to pause and listen
to spread love and cheer
And as the year draws to an end
My wish is for peace and joy to you, dear Friend.
Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**Images**

by Patty L. Sparks

fresh snow underfoot/
twilight and full solstice
moon/knowy owl in flight

**Snow Like Wool**

by Nomic Moody

A soft blanket of snow lay on the ground
It came during the evening hours
When homes were lit with darkness around.

The snow fall tenderly to the earth
Looking like the back of woolly sheep
Presents the country side a new birth.

As morning breaks the world is brighter
Clean and pure with beautiful blue skies
Praising God our master designer.

Thank you to our generous sponsors:**Gulf of Maine Bookstore****Lighthouse Deli & Market****Village Heritage Society of Brunswick****Sparks/Zeitler Endowment Fund****Poem In Your Pocket Program****The Hawks' Family****an Anonymous donor****Winter Solstice**

by P.L. Sparks

darkness
falls on darkness
refuge
without dreams
sounds
beyond the winter
calmness
Not felt... remembered

**Snowfall**

by Virginia Sabin

Even with a threat of being blown away
Of changing over to rain
Of freezing
I will remember this moment
Of snowfall
Words cannot describe its beauty
Its fluffy white comforting
Its covering all
Even the tiniest twig
Protecting it from an icy change

The Snowflake

by Sally Hartikka

Consider the lowly snowflake,
Each one a unique creation.
Though all are hexagonal,
Differ slightly in formation.
People are like snowflakes;
Each has no duplication.
Isn't it extraordinary
What exists in our creation!

**Winter Night**

by Rose Marie Mayer

Tan degrees below
Bright moon gleaming, stars shining
Snow all aglitter

December Again

by P.K. Allen

December is that festive month
That comes at the end of the year
Bringing Santa Clause with presents
Along with some holiday cheer.

But it starts the winter season
With days of sleet, hail, and snow
And nights that are long and cold
With blistery winds that blow.

Some people leave for the south
To enjoy that warm southern sun
With its mild and gentler climate
Where they can romp and have fun.

Leaving the rest of us to anxiously toil
Waiting for spring to come
Shoveling our sidewalks and driveways
While our fingers and feet go numb.



O Tannenbaum

by Betty Baxor

A live tree on Christmas Eve waiting
White candle sticks clipp'd on its
branches.
Family and friends gathered around
Sipping brandy with German sweet treats waiting.
The time has come for tradition
Strike a match, light each candle.
Sing Christmas carols to celebrate
The Heavenly Child born in a manger
True meaning of Christmas and a cherished tradition.

We Weep

by Bonnie Wheeler

We ride our bikes
We go to concerts
We worship in church
For happiness and peace
Than horrific evil disrupts
Innocent blood flows
And we weep

At Stevens Corner, Christmas Lights Will Glow

By Charlotte Hart

(Inspired by Holman Day's *Pine Tree Ballads*)

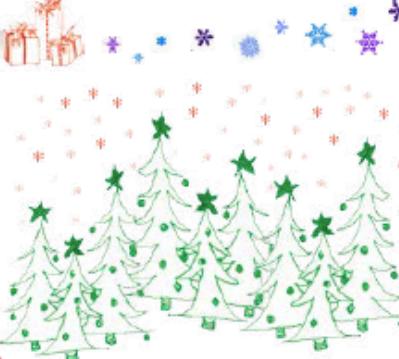
Snowbank: line every winding campus path.
She walks from class lab up hill to her dorm.
Two big exams tomorrow—French and math.
Relief from winter's blast—a friendly building warm.
Just in the entry hall, mail boxes line the wall.
Box 3047. A letter came today!
She hurried! Reach that treasure now! Stand tall.
From Mom! From home—which seems so far away.
Just now the dinner chime drifts through the air.
Young women's chatter fills the dining hall.
Before the meal—to soothes their every care,
They sing, "Land of the forest..." With thanks for blessings all.
She's thankful for the mail that came today.
From Mom—from home which seems so far away.
Some twenty calls to make! They'll take some time.
Remind the cast—rehearsals of the play.
Maine Masque will do that comedy subline
Love's Labour's Lost. Not long 'til opening day.
Before the evening's work—study and review—
She needs Mom's soothing words and thoughts, what's new....
Plans are taking place for family celebration
Christmas! Home at Stevens Corner! Sweet elation.
Mom's letter says, "Christmas! Three weeks more.
We'll place a candle on each window sill.
We'll fashion seven wreaths—one for each door.
Rum cakes? Sugar cookies? Bakes? We will!"
But back to papers on the desk piled high—
A history paper due. She breathes a sigh.
Mom's letter—plans from home the treasures to...
At Stevens Corner, Christmas lights will glow.

**Christmas**

by P.K. Allen

Each Christmas brings a special warmth
To a winter that's long and cold,
That's shared together in close harmony
With those you love to hold.

It brings sounds of joy and laughter
That we'll remember through the years,
Along with a visit from carolers,
Bringing sweet music to our ears.

**Christmas - Past, Future, And Presents**

by P.K. Allen

When I was just a young lad
my Mother said to me,
"If you are a good boy,
there'll be presents under the tree."

So I took her advice to heart,
and was polite as I could be.
When Christmas morning came along,
presents were there for me.

There were trucks, and cars, and games.
It was such a sight to see,
all wrapped in colorful paper
with a tag that said for me.

Through the years the gifts have changed,
but the Spirit remains like a rock.
Now, instead of giving large presents,
we just fill each other's sock.

Each year the presents get smaller
since there are fewer things we need.
No T.V.s, computers, or stereos,
just a good book or two to read.

What I see in the far future
as my time on this Earth ends,
when asked if there's anything I actually need,
I'll probably say, "That Depends."

**Sharing**

by Elizabeth B. Bates

The windows glisten
The children listen
As the sleigh bells sound
From the woods all around.
It is time for Christmas
It is time for sharing
All the good things coming
All the love and caring.

**Christmas Memories**

by Rose Marie Mayer

Where do my Christmas memories begin? Many years ago now and so many more have been added in between. But, let's just start back there. In those days, it didn't begin before Thanksgiving. There was always a quiet pause, a sense of anticipation that began to creep in, in early December. There was something wonderful about to happen. There were hushed whisperings. Why? What were they saying? In our house it would all have been in German. Again why?

Tempting aromas from the kitchen, cookies hidden away from little fingers, gifts, carefully and lovingly created in our school classrooms. The excitement was building: Dad was in the garage finishing a dollhouse for Ruth. Mom still knitting the socks that would be part of my eagerly awaited, longed for, pair of white figure skates. The special dolls would be brought out and dressed in their holiday finery. Richie's Lionel train would be set up with the amazing buildings that Dad had fashioned himself. And sometimes, if I were lucky I would get to play with them, too, maybe, even run them myself.

There would be tree lighting and caroling at the Town Hall, with hot chocolate and candies canes, and if it snowed, even better, no school. Sometimes, Dad would have to go out and run the snow plow crew. We always hoped that wouldn't happen on Christmas Day. I painted the porch windows with Christmas scenes. I loved the painting part but then afterwards, oh brother, the clean up! The church tree would go up and the choir would rehearse. Dad, Rich and I would hang the wreaths we had made in our basement, always making enough for me to put in my wagon and sell to our neighbors, "earning" enough money to buy some "real" presents. Mom would take us on the bus, two of them, shopping and to see all the sparkling, glittering

Power Outage

by Elizabeth B. Bates

The wind blow strong, while I had a dream
of sunny skies, the grass so green.
I woke in fear. A tree blew down,
a crash so near, I ran to see.

A pole had snapped, the wires were dangling.
The lights were out and something was banging.
I was getting fearful in the black so scary.
The cat was hiding, the dog not daring
to go out, just whining, his eyes staring.

I ran for the door to the stair-dark cellar
and held onto the rails as I crept there.
There was not so much noise as I sat on a chair.

The dog had come with me as we waited an hour.
Then we climbed to the kitchen, where the noise had abated
but the house was still dark. The dog did go out,
but the cat was still hiding. I found an old flashlight
and lit a candle. A truck soon went by, its lamps
brightly flashing. The dawn would soon be near
so the fear was passing into smiling and laughing.

The next-door neighbors came out and waved,
the storm was gone, and the world was saved.

Christmastime

by P.K. Allen

Twas the day before Christmas
People shopping around
For last minute Christmas presents
All over the town

While children wait impatiently
For morning to come
To open those presents
Marked - to who and who from

As nighttime approaches
Excitement is on the rise
Nearing the time
For Santa Clause to arrive

And when the morning sun rises
Faces light up with glee
To see all those presents
Wrapped under the tree

Christmas lights and, of course, Santa Claus. So much fun and so much a part of our celebration. Finally, always, after so long, Christmas morning would arrive. First, Dad had to go down in the cellar and shake down the furnace and put in some more coal so it would be warm and cozy. Then, he would light the Christmas tree. We wouldn't be able to see it from where we were waiting at the top of the stairs, but we could see the colors reflected in the windows. There had been no trace of it before this magical moment, where had they hidden it? Had Santa really brought it? I was allowed down before the others. I would sit at the piano and open the beautiful song book and play as we all would sing "Oh, come little children" or in our home, "In Kindersinn kommen". There would be delighted smiles and hugs and kisses all around. Presents would be opened, ah, but not the stockings, they would have to wait till after church. Dad made breakfast and we all got dressed in our finest clothes and off we would go in the old Ford. How beautiful our church always looked, greenery and garlands, bows, the tree, so bright and shining, children's faces glowing. The background of the sun, the sun always shining, in my memory at least, shining in through the wondrous stained glass windows. The chocolate stars, all the children got them, the beloved carols, the Christmas story, the man's choir, Dad sang in that. Back home, there would be our stockings, filled with all manner of treasure. It would continue for the rest of the day, aunts, uncles, cousins, more presents, given and received. Delicious food, yummy cookies. So much excitement and happiness. What fun we all had!!!

A Holiday symphony of hearts and home overflowing with love and joy. And these are only some of my memories of Christmas in Maplewood, NJ.



Christmas Wonderland

by Gladys Szabo

Driving up the narrow, winding, wooded back road we wonder if we are at the right place. When we suddenly see red-nosed reindeer in the woods and the sky lit up like day time, we are certain we have arrived at the magical world called Christmas Wonderland.

Approaching the entrance, holiday music surrounds us as Mr. Whipple, known as Mr. Christmas, greets everyone with a hearty hand shake. Little known to anyone, he holds a counter in his left hand, recording the number of visitors. He would later enter the total on his special calendar used to keep track of the thousands and thousands of visitors to his Christmas Wonderland.

We begin our journey down the hilly and winding paths through this magical wonderland. The inner child in each of us takes over. One hundred twelve thousand glittering, twinkling lights create a miraculous fantasy world. As we move along we are dazzled by three hundred-fifty sensational animated scenes; all moving to their own music. Nearing the end, we enter a building displaying an intriguing snow village complete with animated skaters, skiers coming down mountains, trains roaring through mountain tunnels and so much more.

There were shelves of dolls representing other countries displaying their holiday outifts.

At last we are greeted by Jolly Olde Santa, asking what we would like for, each of us a red-striped candy cane.

We, like the many surrounding giggling children, are once again

at the magical North Pole. It truly warms the heart, filling us with joyful expectations of a better future. Happy Holidays!

Christmas Wonderland began when Mr. Whipple and his stepson, Edmund, would lavishly decorate their home and business every year, each year adding something new.

On December 16, 1967, after finishing the decorations, Edmund went out to the garage to work on his dump truck. As he lay under the truck, adjusting the transmission, the body of the truck, along with its ton-ton payload, came crashing down on Edmund. He died instantly.

In the late sixties Mr. Whipple decided to honor Edmund by continuing the Christmas tradition they had done. Within a few years his spectacular displays gained national acclaim. Mr. Whipple said, "This was the most enjoyable part of my life." He never charged admission. Never a ticket booth. It was never about making money. He believed people would give what they could afford; that is why he only set out an unmanned donation jar at the end of one's Christmas Wonderland visit.

Our family made the journey for many years and always came away amazed and filled with holiday spirit and the goodness of people like Mr. Whipple.



Soul Flight

by Patty L. Sparks

Red tail hawk... in flight
Super moon... casting shadows
Upon white skin of winter's
beauty and decay

Time Passes

by Bonnie Wheeler

Days, days, days
Seasons, seasons, seasons
Years, years, years
And then they disappear
Perchance to dream
Called life -

Power Outage

by Virginia Sabin

Candlelight deepens playful
shadows
On walls and ceiling
With flickering light
Enhances color in wall paintings
Softens scarred tables
And aging faces
Summons closeness
To read by the light
And warm by the hearth

by Vince McDermott

The census came at a very bad time. Mary is with child and her time is very near. She had a difficult journey when we traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. When we arrived I was not able to find any room for us. We have to stay in a stable with animals. The owner and the stable boy are very kind and tried to make us as comfortable as possible. At least we are warm and protected from the elements.

I have been a poor husband - not being able to properly care for my wife and the child which will be with us very soon. I hope that the birth will be without problems and pray that we will be able to return to Nazareth and the quiet life we had there. But I am not depending on it. I have this very uneasy feeling that our lives will be far from normal in the future.

"Hello Cisco!"

"Hello Pancho!"

"Hi Ho Silver, Away!"

"Happy Trails To You!"

This is how every Saturday morning started in the 50's for me and my little brother. It was preceded by the black and white test pattern with an Indian chief in the center. While we waited for that pattern to dissolve on our television screen, as the older sibling, I'd scramble to the basement landing wherein the big tin of large hard pretzels resided. After scooping up a basket full, I'd stop in the kitchen to prepare two glasses of milk. NOW our Saturday morning was ready to commence. We'd watch our favorite westerns (also the only thing available to watch on the limited channels of the era) and munch along while being fully engrossed in all things "cowboy"....and "cowgirl!" How I wanted a cowboy hat, a bandana, a shirt with fringe...and especially...a pair of those wonderful boots. No amount of begging and pleading would overcome Mom's sound reasoning that these requests were not practical or affordable. Besides, to someone who bought fresh produce at the country auctions and literally canned almost everything we ate...it just wasn't necessary. My little brother didn't care...but then, what little brothers DID care about older sisters or "important" things in her mind?

Over the years I remember special Christmas presents that arrived via Santa's charity and later because of Mom & Dan. There was "Tiny Tears" when I was five,

It Only Took Sixty Years

by Murcia Good Townsend

"Patty Play Pal," a doll nearly as tall as me who had the same straight blonde hair and bangs, a beautiful blue Schwinn when I was six, and many, many items that were equally desired and loved along the way. Clothing always appeared and was less appreciated until my teen years, of course. One year, I opened a large box and within was a beautiful pair of mahogany brown leather boots that were oh, so stylish then! In later years a prized antique English copper coal scuttle arrived and each and every season brought treasures worth having and some more memorable than others. Thus...Christmases and birthdays came and went for sixty years and for many of them, the desires of the five year old were forgotten, even by her. In the summer and fall of 2017 I began to remember...eventually...even speaking it out loud.

In mid November we spent a week without electricity and running water. We had many, many hours to fill without benefit of distractions, so there was quite a bit of chatter between us while sitting in our candlelit living room. In one of those conversations I began to muse and tell some of my childhood memories and that lead to the tale of always having wanted cowboy boots. Now, my husband is a man who understands. His own devoted parents had succumbed to their needs when he and his own little brother were young. We have

several pictures in the Townsend Album of the pair, in full western gear, riding the front porch rails of their beloved Townsend Farm in Readfield. This picture always elicits an involuntary "sigh" from me.

When it was his turn to talk, I expected to hear one of his tales of Readfield, the Aunts and all things boyish that he and Rich got up to together. But...he surprised me with a question instead!

"Would you like to have cowboy boots for Christmas?"

Well, that knocked the breath out of me for a bit. But I wasn't so out of it to decline the offer!

He selected both the best and worst day of the week for us. Mind

you, ALL days were bad in that we were in the process of surviving a too long power outage that also took out the ability to pump water to our home. Trips to the Androscoggin River were daily chores of which he never complained and the result meant we had "fishing" privileges in our own home...a real treat during outages! No...a "bad" day for us was a rainy one. Rain and clouds meant the house was even darker and needed candles and flashlights during the day, too.

So Thursday it was. No ice left to pack the cooler meant room or porch temperature liquids for the journey...and off to Orono we went! The GPS was about 98% accurate in that it got us to the correct

road and in the vicinity, but Linwood's eyes honed in on the correct building and parking lot. The big sculpture of a horse on the roof might have been a dead give-away, but mine were taking in the loss of about 10 to 15 or so trees on the opposite side of the road. Like in our community, they had been uprooted and leaning along a now toppled wooden fence.

Inside, it was warm and their power had been restored the evening before. My eyes were wide and my heart was dancing around in my chest when I spied the racks of real western boots in the next room! For TWO HOURS I tried on boots and made decisions about heel types, then colors, then fancy or plain. I came away with a heart and soul that had been quieted. The little girl that I was, the grown lady that I've become...well...we were both very happy. Each of us got a pair of boots! The owners of the store even threw in "boot jewelry" which is comprised of long turquoise suede tassels and conchos that snap onto the tabs on the top of my boots.

The next day we were back to grazing for food at local grocery stores and acquiring electricity for phones, tablets, and chargers. The library and anywhere we could think of to go (People Plus included). But...it was a sunny day and when I looked to my side in a parking lot, I saw my shadow and that of those tassels, fluttering in the wind!

"Ahhhh"....sixty years WAS a long time, but certainly worth it!

Next?
Maybe I should do something more practical...like learn to spit!



Moments

by Ralph Laughlin

THANKSGIVING...

close the doors of the Past.
A celebration of the year last.
Of our triumphs and failures;
of friends, foes, and neighbors.

NEW YEAR'S...

open the doors of the Future;
Fresh starts, new beginnings.
Speculation of what is to come;
of friends, foes, and neighbors.

THE HOLIDAYS...

Time betwixt and between.
The presence of the Present
Where only "now" matters,
of friends, foes and neighbors.

THE PRESENT...

The partition between,
what was and what's to be,
of friends, foes and neighbors.

THUS...

Enjoy Every Moment,
for without it,
nothing would be,
of friends, foes and neighbors.

Joseph

by Vince McDermott

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2018

Poetry Fiction Comic Non-Fiction Art
Haikus Prose Easter Winter Fall
Sp. Sumr Sn Rain Windy
Ligh. use Gadees
Eagles OUT Puppies
Cars V
b. OF OUR Poetry
New Sing
Chirr MINDS
I Sweet
Musical Boots
Why Because Samo Moon Dad
Winter Sunny Fired Boys Girls
Baseball Soccer Basketball Football
Haiku Non-Fiction Comedy Memories

Write On Writers
of People Plus

illustrated by marcia good townsend

Authors

Bonnie Wheeler
Ruth Foehring
Vince McDermott
Charlotte Hart
Gladys Szabo
Paul Karwowski
Patty Sparks
Sally Hartikka
Ralph Laughlin
Eliabeth Bates
Marcia Townsend
Woody Townsend
Betty Bavor
Cecelia Hitte
Russ Kinne
Nonie Moody
Ginny Sabin
Thomas Hallenbeck
Rose Marie Mayer
Wayne Mogk



Ralph sighting. MOST members of the Write On Writers were delighted by the mid-winter visit of former member Ralph Laughlin, who claimed to be in the area, seeking ways to move back to Maine from Virginia. Ralph (center, seated) was also spotted at the January Men's Breakfast.

Write On Writers

“Out of Our Minds” debuts this month!

Out of Our Minds, the newest literary creation of the People Plus Center's Write On Writers, will be printed in early September and first released at the Senior Health Expo on Sept. 18.

“Within its covers you will meet twenty authors who have created stories and poems for your pleasure and enjoyment,” writes Paul Karwowski, who helped edit the project, which he said is the writer's group's eighth major project. “Diversity, talent, dedication and wisdom are some of the characteristics of these authors,” he added. “Their writings deal with a variety of subjects ranging from family, to animals, to life experiences, to holidays, to our times, our seasons and life in Maine.”

Writers included in the book are: Elizabeth

Bates, Betty Bavor, Ruth Foehring, Thomas Hallenbeck, Charlotte Hart, Sally Hartikka, Cecelia Hitte, Paul Karwowski, Russ Kinne, Ralph Laughlin, Rose Marie Mayer, Vince McDermott, Wayne Mogk, Nonie Moody, Ginny Sabin, Patty Sparks, Gladys Szabo, Marcia & Woody Townsend and Bonnie Wheeler. Marcia Townsend designed the book's cover and added illustrations throughout the 200-page volume. Charlotte Hart wrote the

introduction to the book, which is dedicated to former members Charles Payne and Adelaide Guernelli.

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Copies of *Out of Our Minds* will be available for purchase at the event for only \$14.95, and at the Center after that date.

10-2018

Author's Chat features “Out of Our Minds”

Wed, Oct 24, 2 pm. The 20-plus member writers of *Out of Our Minds*, the newest literary creation of the People Plus Center's Write On Writers will be hosted at the Center during an Author's Chat on Wednesday, Oct. 24, beginning at 2 p.m.

Writers included in the book are: Elizabeth Bates, Betty Bavor, Ruth Foehring, Thomas Hallenbeck, Charlotte Hart, Sally Hartikka, Cecelia Hitte, Paul Karwowski, Russ Kinne, Ralph Laughlin, Rose Marie Mayer, Vince McDermott, Wayne Mogk, Nonie Moody, Ginny Sabin, Patty Sparks, Gladys Szabo, Marcia & Woody Townsend and Bonnie Wheeler. Marcia Townsend designed the book's cover and added illustrations throughout the 200-page volume. Charlotte Hart wrote the

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10-2018

Friday, November 9, 2018 The Times Record A3

PEOPLE PLUS PIC OF THE WEEK



PEOPLE PLUS PHOTO

THE PEOPLE PLUS WRITE ON WRITERS group hold up copies of their newest literary creation, “Out of Our Minds,” which debuted last month. The book is a compilation of works of 20 authors. Their writings deal with a variety of subjects ranging from family, to animals, to life experiences. “Out of Our Minds” is the eighth publication from the writing group that meets every Wednesday at 1 p.m. at the People Plus Center. “Out of Our Minds” will be available for purchase at the center on Union Street. For more information on the writing group and other clubs at People Plus visit peopleplusmaine.org.

Season's Greetings from the *Write On! Writers*

Twelve Days of A Mainer's Christmas

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me a black bear in a pine tree.

On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me... two Bean Boots, and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the third day of Christmas my true love gave to me... three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots, and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me... four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the fifth day of Christmas my true love gave to me... five Chick-a-Dees, four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the sixth day of Christmas my true love gave to me... six clammers clamming, five Chick-a-Dees... four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me... seven lobsters boiling, six clammers clamming, five Chick-a-Dees... four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me... eight eagles soaring, seven lobsters boiling, six clammers clamming... five Chick-a-Dees... four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

© Lyrics by R. Neil Laughlin

On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me... nine guys a huffin', eight eagles soaring, seven lobsters boiling, six clammers clamming... five Chick-a-Dees... four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the tenth day of Christmas my true love gave to me... ten moose a mating, (MOOWWWWW!) nine guys a huffin', eight eagles soaring, seven lobsters boiling, six clammers clamming... five Chick-a-Dees... four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me... eleven ravens raving, ten moose a mating, nine guys a huffin', eight eagles soaring, seven lobsters boiling, six clammers clamming... five Chick-a-Dees... four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me... twelve bears a sleeping, eleven ravens raving, ten moose a mating, nine guys a huffin', eight eagles soaring, seven lobsters boiling, six clammers clamming... five Chick-a-Dees... four huffin' puffins, three stinky skunks, two Bean Boots and a black bear in a pine tree.

Write On! Writers



Foxboro December Night

by Charlotte Hart

In the 1940's, Foxboro, Massachusetts was a very small town. No shopping malls. No motels. No inns. Gillette Stadium, home of the New England Patriots, was unheard of. My dad was a teacher in Franklin, Massachusetts, just north of Foxboro. Dad liked to go to Cranston, Rhode Island to visit my Uncle Nelson and his family and also to take advantage of Rhode Island gas war. He would fill the tank of our 1940 Chevrolet with gas at 17 cents a gallon.

One cold, dark December night, Dad was driving Mom, my brother Bill, and me from Cranston, Rhode Island to Franklin, Mass. In Foxboro, in deep dark woods, we had "car trouble." The Chevy stopped and would not start. Dad popped the hood. "I am afraid the gas line is frozen."

"What will we do?"

"All we can do is hope someone drives out this way and offers to help." For a while we sat there in the freezing cold. I shivered even when Mom wrapped me up in an auto sheet. Finally headlights came through the woods, and a truck stopped. "Need some help, Mister?"

"I am afraid my gas line is frozen," Dad told the man.

"I'll take a look. I think you're right. First, let's get your wife and kiddos to a warm place." We piled into the truck and were driven a couple of miles to the man's home. A wood stove filled the place with warmth. "These people need some cocoa, Mother," the man told his wife. He told her he was going to take my dad and his car to Sam's Garage.

We sat near the wood stove, drinking hot chocolate and eating homemade frosted ginger cookies. We watched the lady work at her sewing machine, "I'm making these table cloths for the Christmas Fair," she told Mom. "Now you pick one out. A little Christmas gift from me."

We were full and warm and getting sleepy. Dad and our new friend arrived with our Chevrolet ready to go. As we drove home, Dad told Mom, "That man even asked if I had cash on hand. He would have given me money to pay for repairs." Mom used the red and green Christmas table cloth for years.



Christmas Tree

by Virginia Sabin

You fall into my lot
Trusted up with stone
Tethered with wire
Defying odds
Of remaining righted
This Christmas tree will stay
Bured deep in January snow
Boughs burdened with winter's sleet
Still you stay
Standing tall
A comfort to me



At Christmastime

by P.K. Allen

Winter is calling
The weather is appalling
Sleet and snow are falling
In this season of the year

Children are waking
Christmas pies are baking
Parents are making
Ready for Christmas cheer

Christmas balls are ringing
Carolers are singing
Santa clause is bringing
Bags filled with gifts and toys

Candles are gleaming
Children's faces are beaming
Christmas trees are teeming
With gifts for girls and boys



Angels

by Gladys Szabo

Angels we have heard on high
We often hear at Christmas time
Some people think of Angels with flowing gowns
Wings and halos rather than crowns
I see Angels all around
Take heed of surrounding circumstances
It may be the coincidence
Of an unsmirking angel.
A smile, a touch or just a hug
Nothing said, you just feel the touch
Angels work in mysterious ways
Through those on earth - night and day.



Christmas Wish

by Bonnie Wheeler

What would your perfect Christmas gift be?
Lots of money? A new car? A 50-inch TV?
I'm thinking my wish would be
Sitting safe and warm by my Christmas tree
Bevins family and friends singing Christmas
songs with me
With a grateful heart to be living free

A Christmas Letter From Cousin Joe

by Charlotte Hart

A letter and family photo from Joe! This one will be a bit different I know. My favorite kind of holiday cheer, BUT Joe's family does not look happy I fear. Joe writes, "Fifteen gathered on Thanksgiving Day. At our house, I knew they would stay, stay, stay. Little Nancy ate lots, kept asking for more. At family photo time, the threw up on the floor. Aunt May wonders why does OUR sink over flow. May does lousy work scraping dishes WE know! SO from US to YOU this fuzzy photo, sad letter. We DO have faith—Christmas just has to be better. While I am at it, dear Family and Friends, I'll tell you how the year 2018 ends. As you know, I teach music, have a great high school band. My band won great honor—the best in the land, Picked to represent the state. How cool! But then... my lead trumpet player threatened to blow up the school! Never mind! We'd play without him in the state band parade.... Trumpet Player Two would give commands. We had it made. Sad to say, we did have a problem—not small. Trumpet Player Two, with excitement, made the wrong call. 49 bands marched one way. What a sight! 49 bands marched left. Our band marched right. I do laugh. I don't cry. Friends and Family so dear, And hope that we all have a Happy New Year."



Remembering Our Childhood Christmas Tradition

by Betty Bavor

Christmas never entered our minds until after Thanksgiving which was a family celebration as there were no farm hands working in the winter. We lived with our maternal grandparents and my older brother and I learned our p's & q's growing up on a farm. That meant chores had to be routinely done every day. Our second brother was born ten years after me—a big surprise or should I say little surprise! I share this fact as the Christmas tradition I am remembering did not include my baby brother.

Returning to school after Thanksgiving, took on a glimmer of Christmas. We began making decorations for our classroom windows and believe it or not we had Christmas trees in our classrooms for students to decorate. We learned Christmas carols, the 7th, 8th and 9th graders put on a concert or Christmas play and it seemed forever to finally open the last Advent Calendar tab in Sunday school. The church Christmas fair was an annual event. The large blue spruce tree in front of the town's library was ceremoniously lighted for our town Christmas tree. Homes were adorning lights and decorations. We had selected a tree from the pasture and set it up in the parlor waiting for dad to bring the boxes of decorations from the attic. Our grandparents watched and we listened to Christmas music while decorating our tree with precious ornaments. Several days before Christmas Eve my brother and I selected a stocking to hang by the wood stove in the dining room hoping Santa would come to our house.

The Christmas story was performed by the Sunday school children on Christmas Eve followed by a candle light service. Santa did arrive at our house filling stockings to bulging and leaving presents under the tree. As mentioned earlier, chores needed to be done and our mom and mom were busy preparing a sumptuous Christmas dinner. Christmas morning my brother & I explored our stockings which always had a game, puzzle, coloring book, note paper and pencil for future thank yous. In the toe there was a tangerine or orange, several nuts, ribbon candy, a candy cane and a penny. The Christmas tree waited! Finally our family gathered for our Christmas celebration. No coal, as legend has it—we were good children all year! A meal fit for a king, a brightly lighted tree, excitement of gifts being opened and our family sharing the meaning of Jesus birth. Cherished memories of family celebration long ago warms my heart.

Goodwill to all people—peace, joy and love this 2018 holiday season

The Day After

by Bonnie Wheeler

A mess around the Christmas tree
The aftermath of wrapping gifts
Happy tired children
Too much excitement
Adults stuffed and sleepy
A successful Christmas day
Wouldn't you say?



Christmas Tree Lot

by Nannie Moody

Early days of December
Christmas Tree sale signs appear.
Several places are located
On city lots empty and clear.
With poles and hanging white lights
There are rows and rows of trees
Leaning upon a wooden frame
Nicely spaced with a gentle breeze.

There is a chill in the air
With a few snowflakes descending.
As we open the car door
A faint Christmas carol is ending.

I feel the Christmas spirit
As the scent of balsam fir drifts.
Which tree will we select this year
And will it be one I can lift?

We must make a choice and select.
The feet are getting cold and numb.
The long needle pine is not the one.
My hands need warming at the drum.

We linger a little longer at the spruce.
Their needles are short and dark green.
With visions of gifts under its branches.
The tall and lean is the best we've seen.

Shopping

by Bonnie Wheeler

Christmas Eve was freezing cold and icy—not a shopping day, but I could not disappoint my four-year-old grandson, Brandon. It was his day to buy his Christmas presents. He had his list and ten dollars. Since it was so bad outside and I had to go grocery shopping, I decided he could do his shopping at the base commissary while I picked up food, so off we went. I convinced him it would be better than Walmart, and it was. He chose a box of candy for his mother and me. Of course, I did not watch. He chose cans of nuts for his dad and pop. He chose holiday Life Savers and a favorite cereal for his brother and sister, cookies for Santa, and carrots for the reindeer—all good choices. All went well. Now, with five rolls of tape, he was wrapping his gifts.

We made it home safely and happy to be off the icy roads. Everything was wrapped and ready for placing under their tree. When his mom came to pick him up, he was so excited, he ran to tell her he had done all his Christmas shopping with Mamie at the commissary.

Walk Down Memory Lane

by Gladys Szabo

Needling props for an upcoming event
To the toy department I went.
Suddenly my mind drifted
To Christmas shopping it shifted.
What fun it used to be
Looking for toys to put under the tree
The years when my children were young
Then waited for grandchildren to come!
I stood in the aisle misplaced in thought
Pondering what should be bought.
Barbie dolls, baby dolls, so many kinds
Enough to put me out of my mind.
Games, books, cars and trucks
The right ones I would pick with luck.
I visualized the intoxicating excitement
Of my children bounding into the living room
Seeing piles of gifts under the tree.
Shredding my hours of wrapping in moments
A heartwarming sight.
I still can hear their laughter and joy.
Suddenly I was back to reality
My children all grown
My grandchildren grown
Life is now so different.
I picked up a doll with thoughts of buying it
For old times sake.
Now it's great grandchildren I await.



Christmas 2018

by Bonnie Wheeler

Time to bake a ham with sweet potatoes
Time to shop for coats and sweaters
Time to chop wood and uncover snow gear
SMILE—winter has arrived here
If you can't, you're in the wrong state
Head to the airport and make your escape

Barnyard Christmas (1950's)

by Party L. Sparks

Passerby's stop and stare
Children's eyes are wide with wonder while
barnyard puppets sing and twirl
behind the glass in Santa's storefront window
The tall and lean is the best we've seen.



Christmas Fair A Church Tradition

by Betty Bavor

Halloween is history, Thanksgiving is on the horizon and Christmas Church Fairs are taking place to surround us with the spirit of the Christmas Season. Church members have been busy creating handmade one of a kind crafts, knitting, sewing, baking cookies, making candy and jams, preserves, relish, pickles, chutney and canned pie fillings. All ingredients are from Maine's fall harvest. There are treasure tables, vintage tree ornaments and decorations, hand crafted wooden toys and trains, Christmas boutique tables, jewelry tables and more at these festive annual fairs. Some have music performances and entertainment. Each one has its own unique theme and all have the true meaning of Christmas as their focus.

Friendly Santa land is where children are invited to sit on Santa's lap to tell him what they would like to find in their Christmas stocking

Another Night Before Christmas

by R. Laughlin

(The first twelve lines are from "A Visit from St. Nicolas" by Clement Clarke Moore, first published in 1823.)
 T'was the night before Christmas and all thro' the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The children were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of sugar plums danced in their heads. And Mama in her kerchief, and I in my cap, had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap when out on the lawn there arose such a clatter, I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like a flash, tore open the shutter, and threw up the sash. The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow gave the luster of mid-day to objects below: There, lying on the ground in a huge snow bank was a total stranger, obviously a parsonage of no rank. He had fallen whilst dragging a large heavy log, all the time being "yapped" at by a mangy old dog. I looked down on him and he looked up at me, he was a lost soul if ever one could be. It was then I knew what I had urgently to do, I put on my robe and slipped into each shoe. I ran down the stairs and to the front room almost tripping over some chairs and a broom. I opened the front door and motioned to him; he hesitated, but I insisted until he finally came in. The clothes on his back were tattered and torn, the shoes on his feet were nearly through worn. He was lean as a rail, if the truth was to speak, he looked like he had barely eaten in over a week. I stoked up the fire and set him quite near; it clearly showed he was frozen from foot to ear. I brought him drink and food and set on his lap. He glared back at me as if I was setting a trap. He ate all in silence never saying one word. Satisfaction returned; I swear he nearly purred. When he had finished he turned and he said, "Why have you done what others might dread - to take in a stranger all tattered and torn?" Most would see danger and look on with scorn." I replied, "We are not rich nor are we poor. To a person in need we must always open our door, whether in Winter, Summer, Spring or Fall - is not sharing with others our Creator's call?" He rose from the chair and headed towards the door, about to go out in the blustery cold once more. Not fully knowing why, I wished him to stay; but he said "No." he had other places to go that day. As he was departing he glanced back at me, his face now shining with a look of new glee. "You're a bearer of the true spirit of living, helping others in need with unreserved giving. Your sharing of meat, drink and bread unreserved has earned you one day a high place in Heaven. Thankyou my friend for the hospitality and drink. I'll see you again" he said as he disappeared in a blink. I stood in awe, my mind and body rather shook, then I dashed to the door to have one last look. There was no man to be seen, only a heavenly beam, one bright ascending star trailing a gold stream. Now when I look to the sky and see a shooting star I wonder who's been visited by that stranger from afar.

May the star of your God bring you and yours
Peace, Prosperity, Hope and Fulfillment for
all seasons; and for many more years to come!

and under the Christmas tree on Christmas morning. There might even be a child's table or room for children only, where they can buy a gift for mom, dad, brother, sister, relatives and friends. After browsing and finding a perfect, one of a kind, gift for special people on your list, enjoy a delicious meal or snack featuring a variety of foods cooked to perfection. Strike up a conversation with other people at the table.

Church Fairs are festive traditions fostering faith, fellowship, mission, and fun in a twinkly goodtime atmosphere. Scented greens, the aroma of food, mulled cider, soft Christmas back ground music and happy people make these fairs a glorious place to celebrate Jesus' Birthday. May we keep the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts and let joy, love and peace surround us all, now and throughout the coming year.

The Day After

by P.K. Allen

Tis the day after Christmas
And all through the house
Parents are resting
And so is the mouse

Stockings are empty
All presents unwrapped
Paper and ribbons
And bows are all scrapped

Children are huddled
Playing games on TV
Cheering and shouting
And laughing with glee

Nighttime is meager
Stories are read
Then all of the children
Go happily to bed

Heirlooms on the Tree

by Charlene Hart

The sweetest task each winter—
Trimming the Yuletide tree
Unpacking precious heirlooms
Hanging them—carefully!

Near the top Grandmother's elves
Dance in suits of gold.
Grandfather's mini skates and sleds are
Wooden. Nostalgic to behold.

Our tree has grown in nearby woods,
Fresh cut. Christmas is due.
Evergreen scent fills the room
And drifts the whole house through.

This year we add ten snowflakes,
Oval, diamond, round.
Cut in intricate patterns
By children's hands with joy profound.

Joseph's Story

by Vince McDermott

I look down at the babe - and wonder. How did I come to be here? What am I here for? Yes, I am of royal lineage - but I am far from royal. I am a simple carpenter. When Mary said she was with child I did not know what to think - I was not part of it. I was prepared to cancel our marriage. But then I had this dream - a very powerful dream. I was to be part of something wonderful.

After an exhausting journey to Bethlehem in response to the census we are here in a stable. The town is very crowded and my relatives did not want to house us since Mary was about to give birth. We are fortunate to have a warm place in the stable. The birth went well and we are well cared for.

Shepherd came to visit to pay homage to my son. My son? I still am troubled by that. I do not know what to think. Just as I was beginning to come to accept it, these three strangers from the east arrived bearing very valuable gifts for the babe. It is beyond belief - what will happen next? I am very fearful - but hopeful.



The Day After Christmas

by Sally Hartikka

Twas the day after Christmas, and all through our place
The wrapping and bows were taking up space.
The presents were scattered all over the floor,
And someone's wet boots dripped next to the door.
Dirty pots and pans yet sat in the sink,
Along with some glasses still half-filled with drink.
Wine spilled on the carpet filled me with dread
At the thought of the labor that I had ahead.
If Santa really wanted to give me a gift
He'd have left me a cleaning elf to work the day shift.

Christmas Story A to Z

by Nonie Moody

A is for Angel	L is for Love	U is for Us The Shepherds
Who suddenly stood before the shepherds	Mary treasured up all these things; pondering them in her heart	Receiving the good news of Jesus birth
B is for Bethlehem	M is for Manger	V is for Visiting Angel of the Lord
Also called the City of David	Where Mary laid Jesus after she gave birth	Made announcement of good tidings of a great joy to the shepherds
C is for Christ the Lord	N is for Nazareth	W is for Wrapped Clothes
Born for you a Savior	The home of Joseph and Mary	Mary used to cover the baby Jesus
D is for Dove	O is for Own City	X is for eXalting
That a census be taken of the whole Roman Empire	Joseph traveled 65 miles to Bethlehem because he was a descendant of King David	Praising God saying Glory to God in the highest peace among men with whom He is pleased
E is for Engagement/Engaged	P is for Praising God	
Joseph and Mary	A multitude of heavenly hosts	
F is for First-born	Q is for Quirinius [Kwir-ee-nus-also called Cyrenius] Governor of Syria	
Son of Mary	R is for Rotured	
G is for Glory	The shepherds went back to the fields praising God for all they had heard and seen.	
To God in the highest [heaven] and on earth	S is for the Sign	
H is for Heavenly Host	The shepherds will recognize Him covered in swaddling clothes	
A multitude praising God	T is for Terrified	
I is for Inn	Of the sudden appearance to the shepherds by the angel of the Lord	
Where there was no room for Joseph and Mary		
J is for Jesus		
On the 6th day they called Him Jesus		
K is for Keeping Watch		
The shepherds maintained a watch over their flocks by night		

Snow, Snow, Go Away!

by Doris Weinberg

I just looked out my window
And it's doing it again!
The flakes are floating down
And will it stop? Who knows when?

It looked so very pretty
When I saw it just at first.
But after so very many days,
I think that we've been cursed!

The large tree branches have
much too much snow!
I fear that they will break
If the wind should really blow!

The parking lot has caused me fear
That I might fall in it very clear.
My car is buried under all that white.
To be stuck in the house just doesn't seem right!

I've missed my swim class for so many weeks.
Will I get back soon? It looks pretty bleak.
On the other hand staying home might be good.
I would have been shopping-spent money—that's understood.

Sometimes it's best to just slow down.
Curl up in pajamas and a warm dressing gown.
I've got a good book and some knitting too.
And probably a few bills that I know must be due.

I guess it's not so bad to see the snow through the glass.
I can stay where it's warm and dream of green grass.
So now, snow please go away!
I think we've had enough for many a day!!

I Picked up a Box of Christmas Cards

by Sally Hartikka

I picked up a box of Christmas cards
That contained scenes of our great state.
"Just the thing," is what I thought,
And then those were the ones I bought.
Not knowing how they would frustrate.
As I was writing out the cards.

I discovered something appalling:
Though the scenes were of Maine,
I decided to complain because
I'd discovered something galling.
The publisher, from a town nearby,
Had opted to have Chinese print it back.
"Printed in China," it said on the back.

To me, that was a real drawback,
Since "buy local" has been my habit.
Surely this must be a mistake, I surmised,
So I emailed and asked him why.
When he was featuring the State of Maine
Did he show to his home state disdain
By deciding out of the country to buy.
He said he had used a printer in Auburn.
But thought a better deal might lay abroad.
I checked on the Auburn printing firm,
And what I discovered made me squirm.
Out of business. Was it due to that tightwad?

Everygreen

by Virginia Sabot

I'm in a rush, late as usual, to get a Christmas tree after work. From the very few left in the lot, I chose one, it was not as tall as I wanted nor as green. One side could pass, looking better than the other having lost a limb or two. It was a close fit in the trunk of the car. I hoped there would be no more damage.

My 16 year old son carried the tree into the house, placing it in front of the sliding glass door that was in the front of the house. Oh Ma, it's always a crippled tree. Not always. Anyway, a Christmas tree deserves to be decorated regardless.

Remember the tree last year? So tall it touched the ceiling, it's generous arms thick with greenery, filling the house, smelling like Christmas. The tree was hung with dozens of gingerbread men my sister made from a 10 inch cookie cutter. She dressed each one with bright red and green shirts and trousers from a frosting sprinkled with glitter. A perfect tree!

The day after Christmas, the tree was leaning to one side. You came out of the shower, whistling, ready to go somewhere else. You found it in a lurry and left. You could be seen whistling up the walk as the tree toppled over. Now, all the gingerbread men were amputees! Another crippled tree.

BRR-R-R

by Doris Weinberg

The thermometer says it is ten below—
Too cold for dog or man.
Much easier to stay inside
And be toasty if you can.

Outside the snow is swirling
And icicles are beginning to form.
You'd be foolish to leave the house.
Stay in where it is warm.

Add another log to the roaring fire
And hear it crackle and snap.
And as the flames get bigger,
You can toss away your wrap.

A cup of hot chocolate would add to the mood.
Maybe with a marshmallow on top.
Put comfy pillows on the floor
For all of you to flop.

This is how I'd picture
A bitter night very long ago.
Maybe a book but no TV—
Life was much simpler you know.

So enjoy the snowflakes and icicles
From through the window pane.
Cuddle up with your dog and family.
The scene would be lovely to frame!

The Wishing Boy

by Elizabeth B. Bates

It was beautiful...it was shining from the store window. The store was all lit up for Christmas. It was so bright that the necklace looked like it was made with diamonds. It was placed around the neck of a mannequin that was staring out the window at the people rushing by during a snow squall.

Christmas was coming so soon, and there was so much still to do. The boy wanted his mother to have that necklace, but he had very little money to spend. He turned away and ran for the bus to take him home. He had no job. He was only 12 years old. He was not ready to buy expensive gifts. He was sure his mother would love that necklace. Maybe he could buy it tomorrow.

When he got home, he took out his shovel to clear the snow off the front steps, which were many because the apartment was higher up than the sidewalk. It was his job but no pay. His mother told him he had to do it so that the old people in the other apartments would be safe using the steps.

The sidewalk was shoveled by the city's uniformed workers. He worked on the steps and when he had finished, he took his shovel and cleaned it off with his gloved hands. When he took it into his apartment, he could smell something cooking in their small kitchen. It smelled like chicken soup. He was really hungry.

He didn't have any brothers or sisters. No father either. His father had gone to California to get a job. His mother told him he wasn't ever coming back. She didn't seem sad about it. Still, he missed him. He wished he could go to California, too. Was his Dad looking for gold there? He would love to do that! His mother told him he had to finish going to school first. That would be in four years...it sounded like forever.

The boy did have friends at school, but only two lived near him. He didn't like them much. His mother told him that they were always getting into trouble, so stay away from them. The next day was Saturday and he went back to the store to see if he could find his gift for his mother. He went all around the first floor and then up to the second floor. He saw a big sign that said "Santa's Village".

He went over there to see all the little children waiting in line to visit Santa. They were so cute! He was too old to visit Santa, so he was surprised when Santa got up and went over to him. Santa tapped him on the shoulder and smiled.

"Hello" he said. "I really need you...Please, the boy that was supposed to help me didn't come...could you help me? I will pay you!"

"What do I have to do?" the boy asked.
"Just keep order with the children, they are so excited to see me!"

He gave the boy an elf's costume and it fit! He went to work for Santa and the hours flew by. When the time for seeing Santa was over, Santa came over to the boy and thanked him and gave him an envelope with dollar bills showing. The boy was so happy! He went over to the first floor where the necklace was still hanging on the mannequin's neck with the For Sale sign. It was priced at \$15. The boy counted his dollar bills and had more than that! He bought it! He was so happy he laughed all the way home in the bus!

Join us for the new year!



2019



FRANK, an Ultimate Winner

The accumulation of wealth does not make a person a winner in life. The true winners in life are those people who commit themselves to fully participating in the family of man; the people who say "yes" to whatever circumstances they encounter on their journey through life.

We'll Miss You, Frank!



Speaking Frankly

Editor - Frank Connors
7-2019



Write On!
Writers

Speaking Fondly,

7-2019

Gabriion becomes Editor-in-Chief

7-2019

Patrick Gabrion, recently retired as an editor with the Brunswick Times Record, has been named editor of People Plus News. Gabrion, 66, who is a native of Michigan, compiled a 44-year career in journalism working at daily newspapers in Michigan, Florida, and Maine. He is a graduate of Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, with a degree in History. While at the Times Record for 16 years, Gabrion was responsible for designing and editing the front page, and had similar duties producing the Home, Business, and Science

sections of the newspaper.

"I look forward getting to know the people who utilize the wonderful facilities at People Plus," said Gabrion. "The publication is for them, to keep them and others informed as to what's going on, and hopefully tell their stories."

Gabrion and his wife, Vicki, live in Hallowell.



Season's Greetings from the *Write On! Writers*

Merry Christ Mass by Elizabeth B. Bates

The name used to mean something old. Santa was not YET born in the USA! Now it means shopping for everyone on a list that gets bigger every day! Trees are sought in the green woods and dragged screaming indoors, and ruined by the time "decorated" by those who love no green to show. I miss the olden days somehow when the child named Christ was here. Others have moved here, I know ... so HAVE A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

A Very Special Night by Gladys Szabo

Great anticipation on this very special night
Lights and decorations, all shining so bright!

My favorite of holidays, it's Christmas Eve
Santa is coming and I do believe!
The spirit of Christmas with many joyous sounds
Holiday songs being sung, heard all around.
Santa is coming with presents — such fun.
But the birth of Jesus is the one
Whose praises are being sung.
All faiths gather to honor in their ways
Making it the most wonderful of holidays!
Everyone's celebrating as we all gather
One day of the year our differences don't matter!

A Christmas House at Stevens Corner by Charlotte Hart

This farmhouse! Here two hundred years and more.
My family's house. Four generations born ...
Red bows on wreaths of green grace every door.
White window candles light snow-covered lawn.
Charles Stevens built eight rooms large and well.
Eight fireplaces the first century blessed.
My own grandparents then came here to dwell,
Built on an ell, a porch, made home a heavenly rest.
A generation traveled miles to school,
Established five new homes not far away.
The family gathers yearly — blessed Yule.
Great Grandma Margaret ten
decades did stay
Bright lights, a feast and
Christmas songs we'll bring!
My wedding will be here —
with lilacs — in the spring.

BRR-R-R by Doris Weinberg

The thermometer says it is ten below.
Too cold for dog or man.
Much easier to stay inside
And be toasty if you can.

Outside the snow is swirling
And icicles are beginning to form.
You'd be foolish to leave the house.
Stay in where it is warm.

Add another log to the roaring fire
And hear it crackle and snap.
And as the flames got bigger,
You can toss away your wrap.

A cup of hot chocolate would add to the mood.
Maybe with a marshmallow on top.
Put comfy pillows on the floor
For all of you to flop.

This is how I'd picture
A bitter night very long ago.
Maybe a book but no TV.
Life was much simpler you know.

So enjoy the snowflakes and icicles
From through the window pane.
Cuddle up with your dog and family.
The scene would be lovely to frame!

Advent Can Begin in October by Helen L. Walker

Ancient rhythms, ancient tempos can awaken you to wonders from beyond yourself: you begin the watching. Then the hope comes. Then the glory more worth the wait. Then finally the grieving, before the greatest gift, rebirth.

Like here in Maine, the drive to Popham Beach brings autumn ecstasy, unparalleled splendor, candy for your hungry eyes. Yet now you see that maple rods have shed, prepare their bare repose, their contribution to winter's cycle coming, dark branches exposed. You, leaving off with harvesting your daily bread, remember what is next.

You start to hear the text inside yourself, the message of a babe, a birth. A quickening occurs. You're not sure where or if you should take note, yet you set aside time to listen. As sure as heaven is our heritage, the song starts, the drums beat slowly, stirring you, inviting you.

You do what you can, what you know, what you are, to be awake to this Christmas mystery. This year, you begin to realize that Advent, the season of the Coming of the Christ Child, is as old and as new and as ever-present as your own expanding heart permits.

God Rest Ye Merry by Sally Hartikka with help from Vince McDermott

God rest ye merry, gentlemen
Let nothing ye dismay,
For all your work is now completed
On this Christmas day.

You've decked the halls with holly
And trimmed the tree with light.
Santa and Rudolf adorn the roof
Along with other sights.

You've bought the gifts with utmost care
And covered them with wrapping.
You did the Christmas cards and letter
And all the envelope lipping.

You've made the Christmas cookies,
Now resting in the freezer,
And the fruitcake has been baked,
Its aroma quite a teaser.

Today you roasted turkey
With stuffing on the side.
The gravy was delicious ...
Not lumpy, made with pride.

Creamed onions and mashed potatoes
Along with candied yam
And green beans in a casserole
Accompanied the spiral ham.

You did it all, my precious girl
And all without complaint.
No wonder you're so tired now
And feeling rather faint.

You've been hard at work for several weeks,
So God rest ye merry, now dear last.
You've earned some relaxation.
Put up your feet and have a glass.

Blessed at Christmas by Nomic Moody

One year as an early teen there was a major shortfall in our family's finances and Christmas looked bleak. The Christmas tree was decorated and only small packages with reused paper were under the tree. It would only be a few days before Christmas eve.

My older brother's best friend and his twin sister were working young adults. One evening there was noise coming from the back door of the farmhouse. Letting themselves in, they came through the kitchen straight to the living room tree, carrying wrapped colorful Christmas packages.

The whole family was in shock as we all watched. This was the year my sister and I received the latest fashion pop beads. These two young adults were giving, selfless and wonderful while lifting our family's Christmas spirit.

An Angel by P.K. Allen

It's nigh on sixty years that I've known her
And whose company I treasure so dear.
Good feelings are spread by the glow from her head
Though she only comes by once a year.

She'll stay just a week and then leave us,
But the joy that she brings: we all see.
For her we will save a place in our hearts,
And also on top of our tree.

You Wonder by Bonnie Wheeler

Why do folks live in Maine
Where snow flies all winter long
Why don't folks move away?
Maybe spring and fall is the answer
Living life the way it should be

Maine Nor'easter by S. Patty L. Sparks

Sea: rage, winds: pummel
shorelines of granite and pine,
as snow falls ... on snow.

Tiny Wishes by W.A. Mogk

I found a tiny bottle in the sand and picked it up to examine it. In so doing, I rubbed the surface and was greeted with a puff of smoke. There in front of me, now stood a genie — a tiny genie. He said, "I am the tiny genie of the tiny bottle. You are entitled to three tiny wishes." "What do you mean by tiny?" I asked. "I leave that up to you," he replied. "But be warned. If you are greedy and wish for too much, we will exchange places and you will become the genie of the bottle."

"How did you become the tiny genie?" I inquired.

"I wished for a pony," he responded.

With that, I knew asking for a small sports car was out of the question. This was going to be tricky. How can I gain something of value while still asking for something small?

"Maybe you could wish for a small wallet stuffed with one-hundred dollar bills," offered the genie. "Would that qualify as tiny?" I asked. "Maybe yes — maybe no; I don't make the rules."

Great, I thought to myself. This teeny-weeny-snakey-genie will be no help. So I pondered for awhile then said, "I wish to have only tiny amounts of doubt." "Granted," said the genie. "And I want my fears to be small." "Also granted." "Lastly, I wish for any feelings of malice I might have, to be brief." "Agreed," the genie replied.

Then, looking up at me, the tiny genie said, "I had hoped you would fall for that wallet gimmick, but you didn't take the bait. Instead of asking for riches, you asked for things that make you a richer person. I tip my tiny genie hat to you, and hope that the next stranger to rub the bottle is not as wise."

If I Were Planning Christmas

by Helen L. Walker

If I were the one in charge, I'd have the Christ child born on Halloween in a dress with satin bows, to set a precedent for clothes, so cross dressing now would be just fine, and gender problems would decline. That would lead to less divorce, less arguments, less pain, Less broken hearts, more love in general on the earthly plane, which is the point, in the longer view, of Jesus coming here for me and you. If I were planning, like I said, I wouldn't wait til Christmas Day, instead I'd make All Souls Day the baby Jesus holiday. That way ghosts could be our friends and teach us how to walk on air and zombies how to never die. And witches, they could start to fly their brooms by day, so we'd see them wave and be less scary, and gradually we'd lose our fears. We'd start to know that anywhere we'd go, we'd find a friend to help us out, invite us in; there'd no lose, only... win. If I planned how to celebrate this big event, it'd go like this: Churches painting altars orange, setting up pumpkins in a fine long line with candles inside and faces carved with mouths that smile and eyes that shine, and here is the big change not to miss: we could start to love more, and fear less. Instead of closing our minds and hearts out of fear of this and that, we'd embrace the new, try more things, talk to strangers on a train, or a bus, and a neighbor too who could decide to disagree with what we know is true. Refugees from Africa or Mexico or anyone who needs some hope, we'd invite into our homes, especially as friends, at family, and soon we'd have no enemies. War would stop of course, and then the lion really would lie down with lambs. Then maybe Jesus wouldn't have to die and change to spirit. Instead, we'd run into him at a farmer's market, church, or Popham Beach, see him with our natural eyes, inspired by every single speech. I say this sort of kidding, but sort of not. God's way is always best, but since I cannot ever understand, I like to imagine other plans that seem to serve us more efficiently, with more joy, more ease. So just perhaps a Halloween Christmas could bring a quicker kind of peace.

**Eight Little Lights**

by Doris Weinberg

Eight little candles lit up nice and bright. I wonder what my present will be that my Dad gives me tonight?

Way back when I was little, what did Chanukah mean to me? I knew a great big battle had been won, and my People were finally free.

We celebrated with a gift each night because a miracle had lasted eight days. And now after thousands of years it is a traditional Jewish holiday.

I did grow up and hear the story of how our People were constantly oppressed. On this occasion the Temple was ruined but our small army turned out the best!

The family of the Maccabees led us off to war. And I'm sure that God did help our tiny Army Corp. And I'm sure that God joined in to help our tiny Army corp.

The battle was won by the Jews of course, And they hurried to get the temple repaired. But during their effort only a tiny bit of oil was found and gave them a terrible scare.

The Holy Lamp needed to burn eternally and now it would go out. Someons would have to travel far for more. Of this there was no doubt.

The Miracle occurred when oil was found and brought back eight days later. But that one little original drop lasted that long! Another Miracle by our Creator.

Chanukah is one of our Joyous events. And besides the gifts of course there is food. So, join us at our Jewish home. Potato pancakes cooked in oil we include!!!

**Seasonal Goddess**

by S. Patty L. Sparks

... wisdom
... stillness
beauty and decay
etched upon her
white skin of winter

Winter Solstice by S. Patty L. Sparks

Walk her crackling, frosted fields under skies of washed out winter blue
Stand in her stillness where air holds its breath
Caught between the birth and death of time ... there, sleep, a promise of spring

Let it snow, Let it snow, Let it snow

by Sally Hartikka

Let's not get carried away;
A little snow is pretty and nice,
But one snowstorm will surely suffice ...
A few inches of fluffy white stuff,
And none of that horrid ice.

I'm dreaming of a white Christmas;
It helps show off the colored lights
And brightens up the darkening nights
As winter solstice comes along
And the bitter cold nips and bites.
But no blizzards, please,
And no back to back storms
When it's hard to get the house warm
And chilly drafts permeate all
So wrapping in blankets becomes the norm.

Everything in moderation, 'tis said,
And I couldn't agree with it more.
Let it snow once, but I abhor
The continuing storms this song's about
And the piles of snow it longs for.

Haiku by Betty Bavor

SNOWFLAKES
Snowflakes in winter
A hexagonal ice crystal
Each snowflake distinct

January Snow

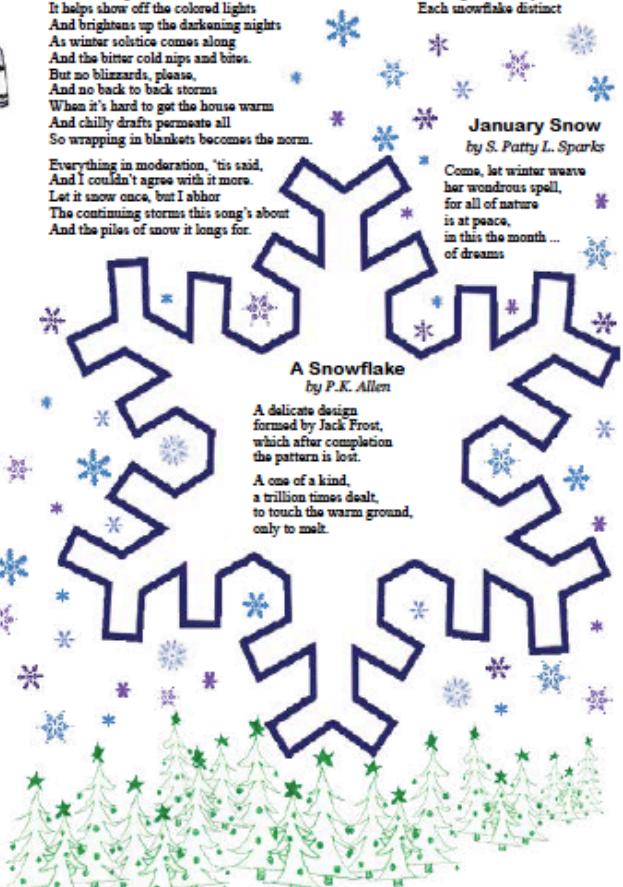
by S. Patty L. Sparks

Come, let winter weave
her wondrous spell,
for all of nature
is at peace,
in this the month ...
of dreams

A Snowflake

by P.K. Allen

A delicate design
formed by Jack Frost,
which after completion
the pattern is lost.
A one of a kind,
a trillion times dealt,
to touch the warm ground,
only to melt.



A Different Christmas

by Gladys Szabo

It was the first Christmas without my dad. Mom and I were feeling sad. Christmas Day, we'd be apart. Although, together in our hearts. Mom announced, "No tree this year." It was a shock to my ears! Skipping our Christmas was not to be. It's not Christmas without a tree. One night mom would be out late. Now Christmas was to be my fate. The very first duty was to decorate Decorations throughout the house. Even had the Christmas mouse Off to the woods, ax in hand Cut a tree on a farmer's land Over the fence, through the snow. No one would ever know Tree dressed with shimmering lights Brought that tree to brilliant life Joyfully singing Christmas carols. Dimmed the lights and lit the candles. As I began to trim the tree. With each ornament I could see Memories of my years with dad. Though only fourteen we did have. Each one warmed me deep inside. Hanging some I even cried Once all done, stood back to look Was just like a storybook. Wrapped the gifts, lit the tree. Gifts from "Santa" to mom and me. Hours grew late, I started to doze. Then I hear the back door close. The look of shock as she entered the room. Immediately replaced any feelings of gloom. I shot off the couch. Hugged mom, till she slouched With teary eyes, we opened our gifts. Our little Christmas was the greatest gift!

**Haiku**

by S. Patty L. Sparks

Tiny birds scurry
North boughs laden with snow
Grateful for berries.

**The Wise Men**

by Nomie Moody

Making a journey to an unknown place, They slowly bumped along on camel backs. Over mountains and through deserts, Following "His star" creating tracks. Astrologers and scholars were three Studying the vast heavens above. The Magi's caravan slowly moves on From Persia (Iran) to Nazareth. Gifts were packed securely in the saddle Gold for dairy, royalty and King Frankincense for fragrance and priesthood Myrrh for embalming, dying His mission to bring. The Magi followed the supernatural light To the Child's house and when they saw Mary They fell down and worshipped Him Giving Him treasures, they did not tarry.

**Gifts**

by Bonnie Wheeler

There are different kinds of gifts Two of the best, true friendship and kindness You don't need to unwrap

**Christmas Waiting**

by Bonnie Wheeler

The smell of cinnamon cookies
Christmas is coming
Bags filled with presents
Family coming for turkey dinner
Christmas tree lights burning
Excited sleepy children waiting
Christmas is almost here

Santa Gear

by Bonnie Wheeler

You could spend Christmas in Florida
Where warm winds blow and flowers bloom
You could eat Christmas dinner of barbecue
Or stay in Maine this year
Until Santa appears in L.L. Bean gear

Twenty Christmas Fruitcakes

by Charlotte Hart

"Nick, would you mind making twenty fruitcakes? I like to give them as Christmas gifts."

"No problem, Mrs. Parsons. I'll make them this afternoon."

It was early September 1952. Our boss, May Parsons, was owner of the Forest Hill House in Kennebunkport, Maine. Nick was the chef. I was a waitress. Most of the help had left on Labor Day to go back to high school. Because I was a sophomore at the University of Maine in Orono, which in those days opened in mid-September, I was still in Kennebunkport. Most of the hotel guests had gone home. It was quiet, and Nick was glad to have something to do.

May had soaked a huge bowl of fruit in dark rum for a couple of days. She gave Nick her recipe for fruitcake. Some of the ingredients were raisins, light raisins, dark raisins, glazed cherries, currants, pineapple, orange peel and apricots, Golden syrup, dark brown sugar, eggs, flour, butter, and "more" rum to drizzle over the cakes.

Now I have to tell you that on a busy day in August 1953, Nick had had a nasty little chef's accident. He had nearly cut off a finger

on his left hand. He had several stitches. A thick, skillfully applied bandage was to be worn for several weeks. That bandage stayed firmly in place but changed from white to dark, stained with various kitchen juices.

On the afternoon Nick made twenty fruitcakes, the hotel kitchen smelled heavenly. (I love good fruitcake!) After the cakes were baked, Nick drizzled dark rum over the tops. Then he flipped the cakes and drizzled dark rum over the bottoms. When the twenty cakes were cool, Nick wrapped them carefully in several layers of cheesecloth and then aluminum foil ready to season and then freeze until Christmastime.

I had been admiring Nick's work on those twenty beautiful fruitcakes, but then I noticed something was missing. "Nick," I said. "Where is your bandage? Your finger looks fine, but where is your bandage?"

"Oh—oh! Oh no! No! NO! NO! It has to be in one of those fruitcakes. Should I tell May?"

"Oh dear! I don't know. I really do not think so. What good would that do?"

"Some friend of May's is going to get a surprise for Christmas."

Red Truck

by Nomie Moody

It was the cutest red truck I had ever seen, Not the big one with the four-door double cab. This one was small with only two doors. Not a ton pickup with engine sounding so mad.

This red truck was an absolute dream vehicle, Not that monster pickup you would see at a show. The bed was just a normal size and looked perfect. Not that large truck bed you could haul a cow.

My red truck was shiny and perfect in snow, Not a large truck to hog the middle of the road. This red truck carried a beautiful evergreen tree Parked inside a very large Christmas snow globe.

Saga of the Three Caroleers

by Russ Kinne

As 13-year-old boys, we were always short of cash. And we knew a 15-year-old guy who went caroling with his very pretty girlfriend—and got good tips! Even a dollar, when Popo was cents a bottle and hamburgers (albeit small and maybe half smushed) we had to try it. But we couldn't sing at all well. So we decided to simply chant—

(first guy) Maemrrrrr Christmaaaaaaaa!

(next guy) Haaaaaaaay Nooo Yaaaaaaa!

(last guy) Periioddd!

Well, that didn't work; they wouldn't even open their doors

So we decided to sing a little. Bill knew what he called "close harmony" just singing three notes above the primary note. But we were tired of the same old carols, so we sang:

Happy Birthday to you, happy birthday to youuuuum,

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR JEE-ZUSS!

Happy birthday to youuuuum—oo—uum

We didn't get any tips than either.

Sigh

Dear Santa,

They say people my age should not **STILL** believe in you. ... Well, guess what, you'll find my homemade ginger molasses cookies and a nice Merlot next to the recliner — you know the drill.

Merry Christmas, Santa!

Yours truly,
S. Patty L. Sparks



Club Corner

Writers put into words why they enjoy writing

The Write on Writers, a very engaging group at People Plus, obviously enjoy what they do. So they were asked to put pen to paper on why they like to write and gather together at the Center. Here are their thoughts:

"I have to say I have a love-hate with writing. It is very hard to do, so much work. And there is the question in my mind, do I really have anything to say? Who will this benefit? And so on. But then something gets me to start writing and, hours later, it is still my 'life work' to say what I really mean. It is very nice to be in this (Write on Writers) group. It is a reason to need to write something every week. Everyone is so accepting and kind. There is no competition, and there is a great love of language and especially of storytelling."

— Helen Walker

"All my life I have enjoyed writing. Papers for school, letters home, you name it. In February 2007, I joined the writing group at People Plus. There I found encouragement, a diverse and interesting group of welcoming people and weekly inspiration to write. For me occasionally writing is therapy. Driving in South Freeport one morning I hit a deer, a fawn, (and) broke its leg. I wrote about the experience. Then I felt less devastated, less sad. Attempting to write helps me appreciate the great writers, the talent and effort necessary to produce significant work, that of William Shakespeare, Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson, J.K. Rowling, J.D. Vance, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and hosts of new giants."

— Charlotte Hart

"I learned of the writers' group as soon as I moved to Maine three years ago. However, I was a little intimidated when I realized the ability of the writers. Nevertheless, I made myself attend a session just over a year ago and I am so happy that I did. The group, a variety of different writing styles, welcomed me warmly and seemed to enjoy what I wrote. Now, after a whole year, I have many new friends and the challenges from the group have much improved my writing skills."

— Doris Weinberg

"During my senior year at Brunswick High School, I was able to take an advanced English course, one which required a great deal of composition. John Smith taught the course, and he was enthusiastic, full of ideas, and able to instill in us a love for writing. Since childhood, I had read and wondered about an event mentioned in my family's genealogy, leading to years of research on the subject and eventually a book, which I self-published. I joined Write on Writers for help with the book's production, but I stayed because I enjoyed the group's challenges and interaction with its people. Writing for me is a way of expressing myself, and thanks to my classes at Brunswick High School, it also comes quite easily."

— Sally Hartika



Photo by Patrick Gabrion

"Several years ago I moved to Maine. A college classmate introduced me to People Plus and gifted me with my first year's membership. I mentioned my goal of finding an activity I had never done and she suggested Write on Writers. Our Wednesday meetings are friendly, inspiring and social as we share our creative writing talent together. It is an opportunity and honor to be a member of this group exercising our minds, risking new writing styles, enjoying stories, poetry, essays, memoirs and more at our weekly storytelling meetings. Members have published books and I am delighted to open People Plus News and have my writing included with others on the Write on Writers monthly page."

— Betty Bavor

"Ten years ago I attended my first meeting with the writers. I enjoyed writing poems for family and journaling. I wanted to write memoirs and learn other types of writing. Write on Writers is a unique group. Many of us share memoirs, personal experiences, different types of writing. Through all our sharing we get to know one another much more than in most other groups. We have become a family. We care and help one another as needed. We celebrate birthdays once a month along with holidays throughout the year. I look forward to our

meetings every week. I know being there will make my day much brighter. Lots of laughs, great readings and I always seem to learn something new either about writing or from someone's reading."

— Gladys Szabo

"My grandmother and mother both wrote poetry and prose. But it wasn't until joining People Plus and Write on

Writers did I catch the excitement of sharing my thoughts in writing. Write on Writers has given me the venue to exercise my voice in a fun and friendly way."

— Nonie Moody

"I enjoy writing because it gives me the freedom to think about anything and everything. Inspiration may come from the news, a report or just looking out of the window. Science fiction is my main interest to the possibilities are endless, but I always try to add a dose of plausibility to pull the reader into the story. I try to make people imagine things they may never have thought of before. If my story makes people wonder, then I have been successful."

— WA Mook

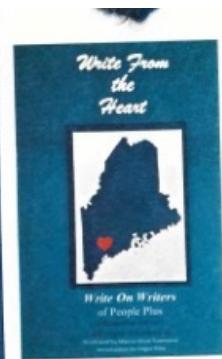
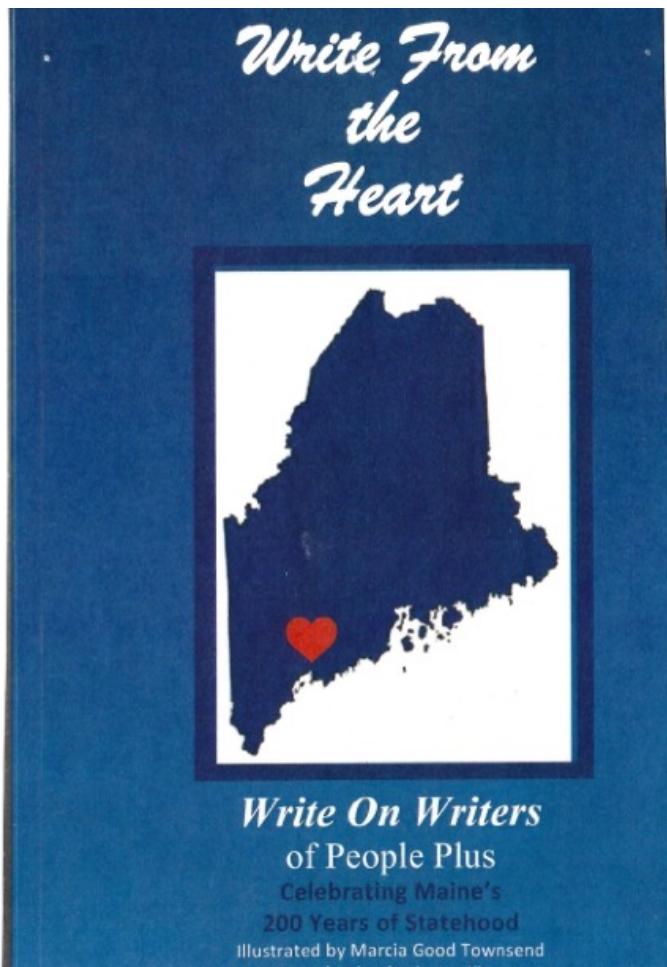
The Write on Writers group meets on Wednesdays at 1 pm at the Center. Their published works are available in two books, *Out of Our Minds and Journeys and Reflections*, which are available at People Plus. The cost per book is \$14.95, with proceeds going to the Center.



Join us for the new year!



2020



11-30-20

Authors

Paul Karwowski
Charlotte Hart
Vince McDermott
Gladys Szabo
Sally Hartikka
Elizabeth Bates
Ralph Laughlin
Marcia Townsend
Betty Bavor
Nonie Moody
Woody Townsend
Ginny Sabin
Doris Weinberg
Russ Kinne
Helen Walker
Lucy Derbyshire
Wayne Mogk

Do you like to write?
Fiction
Non-fiction
Poetry

Be Our Guest
Every Wednesday
at 2:00 PM
or on Zoom

Come to
Write On Writers
of

People
Plus!
The center that builds community

Member Moment

We are offering a new feature in the People Plus newspaper. It's called "Member Moment" and it gives people who participate in programs and activities at the Center a chance to tell us a little bit about themselves. Today, we are featuring Gladys Szabo, a longtime member involved in countless activities, including Lunch & Connections, and volunteer driver at People Plus. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.

Getting to know Gladys Szabo

My name is Gladys Szabo and I am 79 years young. I have lived in Brunswick since I moved here in November 2000, coming from Connecticut, where I lived since I was nine months old. I moved here to be near my daughter, Dawn Grimes, and her family.

Growing up, I was an only child and learned responsibility at an early age. My dad died when I was 14 and he took care of everything. My mom had to go to work, so I took on a lot of the household chores.

My dad was a very passionate man and I followed in his footprints. From the age of 10, I visited older neighbors, having tea, which I hated, or bringing them goodies my mom had baked. I would spend a lot of time just talking with them. At age five, I spent time with a boy next door when he broke his leg.

I had a happy childhood with the help of wonderful friends during tough times. My mom remarried when I was 16. This man was such an extraordinary addition to my life. He never replaced my dad, but became a great dad in his own way. I never referred to him as a stepdad. For several reasons, he adopted me at age 32 and you would think he won the lottery, when I and my children were the real winners.

My beginnings at People Plus started when I attended the Writers group, encouraged by Bonnie Wheeler. I enjoyed it and became a member in February 2010. I filled out the membership card which at that time listed all volunteer opportunities. I checked every one, figuring they would have something I could do. I chose Lunch & Connections, which was just making calls to be sure there were enough



STACY FRIZZLE, LEFT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE PLUS, is shown with Gladys Szabo after presenting her with Lifetime Membership and Volunteer of the Year certificates. Szabo, a longtime member and involved in many of the Center's activities, said, "People Plus means more to me than I can explain. I have opportunities to help others and have many friendships I will keep no matter where any of us go. People Plus is a second family to me."

volunteers to get everything done. Of course, I jumped in with both feet and have been coordinating it ever since.

I am not able to pick a favorite activity at People Plus since everything I do is my favorite. I guess I would have to say the people are my favorite thing. With everything I do I make more friends, so therefore no matter what I do or where I go someone I know is there. Each activity brings something different to my life. A favorite part of People Plus would be giving me the opportunity to give to others and make a difference in their lives one way or another. People Plus is a fantastic organization.

People Plus means more to me than I can explain. It has changed my life, giving me self-confidence to be who I really am. I have opportunities to help others and have many friendships I will keep no matter where any of us go. The staff have always been welcoming and encouraging. People Plus is a second family to me.

Things I would like people to know about me is I've learned to be accepting of changes, look for the upside early in life. I appreciate all I have been given in my life by wonderful people. I am honest and when I say something it comes from my heart.

Member Moment

"Member Moment" is a new feature in the People Plus newspaper and gives people who participate in programs & activities at the Center a chance to tell us a little bit about themselves. Today, we are featuring Betty Bavor, a longtime member involved in several activities. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.

Getting to know Betty Bavor

My name is Elizabeth "Betty" Bavor and I live in Topsham. I grew up in Sterling, Massachusetts, a small New England farming community where one day a lamb followed Mary to "The Little Red Schoolhouse." You know the poem; John Roulstone wrote "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

I learned my P's and Q's on the farm doing chores and enjoying life with freedom, adventure and exploration. Cows, chickens, gardens and orchards to care for kept us busy. We were a happy family of three generations being involved with town organizations and events. Everyone was always ready to lend a hand in an emergency at a moment's notice.

I entered first grade with 18 classmates. Second grade was with Miss Smith, who incidentally was also my mom's second-grade teacher. School was fun, as most of us were promoted yearly through ninth grade, then going out of town to high school.

Pearl Harbor and World War II happened during my elementary school years. Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, began as usual, with church Sunday school, dinner and radio news before chore time. My mother always played the piano on Sunday afternoons. My brother and I would "secretly" hide under the piano to listen as she played our favorite tunes.

On this particular afternoon, my dad burst into the parlor coming from the barn to tell us of the attack. We all gathered to listen on the radio, even though we kids did not totally understand the graveness of this event. My dad was a Merchant Seaman in World War I and he knew what might be in our future. Things changed as we adjusted to wartime. At school, we practiced safety drills, evacuation procedures, had free food snacks and we purchased war bond savings stamps. Life changed, hanging blackout curtains, gas and food rationing, and young men off to war — many never to return.



PEOPLE PLUS MEMBER BETTY BAVOR is shown participating in strawberry picking on a Frank's Field Trip. She said, "At People Plus, I found comfort with friends, educational, cultural, fun, games and the privilege to volunteer with others who share my values. ... I enjoy and appreciate participation in every program and event I attend."

High school and college became my future with success and cherished memories. I enjoyed teaching physical education in Connecticut where I met my husband and after our wedding in 1956, we drove to the Dutch Village Motel in Freeport, Maine, for our first night as Mr. and Mrs. Our honeymoon to Prince Edward Island is another joyous story.

We had 55 years of marriage, with a stepdaughter, our son and daughter, three step-grand and three step-great-grandchildren. Years of happiness traveling life's journey of parenting, family celebrations, community involvement, vacations, camping and boating with treasured friends and memories.

All of us experience some valleys in our lives with faith as our helpline. In 2015, I had one of those years. My "Mainer" daughter saw a perfect house for me to come and live closer to her and

here I am, not only close to her but also nearby to a couple of college classmates.

My welcome to the community gift was my first year's People Plus membership which opened the gates to opportunity. I made a goal that I would seek new activities, make new friends and do things I had never done before. People Plus provided the perfect place and more for fulfillment of this goal.

At People Plus, I found comfort with friends, educational, cultural, fun, games and the privilege to volunteer with others who share my values. I do not have a favorite activity — I enjoy and appreciate participation in every program and event I attend.

I am an optimistic, positive being, having a spur of the moment mindset and never saying "no" to an opportunity or adventure. Life has been good. I count my blessings in this latest chapter of my life, living in Maine.



In Memory

Ruth Foehring

The Pros

Two young girls went out to play.
They looked so perfect in every way!
Tennis was their goal that day
What are the rules one did say?
The other looked at her in dismay!

They truly did look like pros.
Everyone they met that day said so!
Dressed in white they looked so neat.
Notice loafers on their feet,
This would only cause early defeat

Days earlier two boys they had spied,
Let's go meet them they had cried!
Those boys playing on that court
Influenced their need to learn that sport!

Racquets slung on their shoulders,
Sure helped to make them a lot bolder.
Clothes and racquets were only fixtures,
But, who do you think took those pictures?

5-2020

MORE CORONA CHRONICLES

The Corona Legacy

Coronavirus is indiscriminate.
It doesn't care what you have.
It doesn't care who you are.
Nothing matters to it.

Houses don't matter.
Bank accounts don't matter.
Titles don't matter.
They are all immaterial.

Reaching out to help others.
Looking out for each other,
whether family, friends
neighbors, or strangers,
That's what matters!

Let the legacy of corona be
a re-awaking in everyone
that the way to a truly rewarding life
is through helping each other.

—Ralph Laughlin

Enough Already!

After six weeks of staying put,
my mood is not so happy.
In fact, to be very honest with you,
I am feeling pretty crappy!

My hair's too long and my face is pale,
and my energy seems gone for good.
I've nothing to show for all this time,
Weeks lost — that's understood.

If this forced time at home had been by choice,
I would have relished every hour.
But having to spend all this time in my room,
By now I have no willpower!

I am very bored. I keep looking for snacks,
and my waistband feels very tight.
By the time this quarantine is over,
I will be larger and not a pretty sight!

I know everyone else is in the same boat,
but that doesn't change my mood.
How many more weeks of this,
before we all come unglued!

I know there's little I can do about it,
without creating some flack.
So, I guess I will head to my pantry,
And see what's there for a snack.

—Doris Weinberg 6-2020

Member Moment

"Member Moment" gives people who participate in programs and activities at People Plus a chance to tell us a little bit about themselves. Today, we are featuring Bonnie Wheeler. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions some day, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.

Getting to know Bonnie Wheeler

My name is Bonnie Wheeler and this is my story.

It was a dark and stormy night and a tornado was dancing around when a doctor was called. It was on June 7, 1941. Everyone rushed to the cellar for shelter except the doctor, my mother, and me, Bonnie Sue, her newborn baby girl.

I was the fourth child of an Oklahoma farmer and his wife, Ruby Lee. As the years passed, I was joined by five more siblings. We were brought up to believe in hard work and to share with others.

After graduating from high school, I worked as a telephone operator in Texas. I married Gary and began the adventure of Navy life. We raised two sons and a daughter while living in San Diego and then in Brunswick, Maine, in 1967. I served as a VP-23



I was the facilitator for the Write On Writers group for many years, and our goal was not just to create a group for writers but rather a writers' family. The door is always open. We welcome new writers to share their experiences with us through their writings.

Over the years, we have always had a great relationship with the staff of People Plus and especially with Frank Connors, who was always there to help writers. We made one CD and have published seven books. We promoted these books at Author's Chats at People Plus. Many of us have published our own books.

I am blessed to be part of the writers' family. It was a good day when I walked through the door and today, at age 79, it is still a good day when I walk through the doors at People Plus. We have created a family, and People Plus created a community family. We are all blessed.

Member Moment

"Member Moment" gives people who participate in programs and activities at People Plus a chance to tell us a little bit about themselves. Today, we are featuring Russ Kinne. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions some day, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.

Getting to know Russ Kinne

My name is Russ Kinne and this is my story.

I live in Topsham and I am 92 years old. I grew up in a small city in Rhode Island; a nice state, but with horrible politics. Kindergarten was declared a "luxury item" and was discontinued. I went into first grade instead; no problem, but all my school life my buds were in the class behind me. We went everywhere by bike — fishing, hunting, camping. Dad had a boat 15 miles away and we went down there regularly.

Public schools were OK, but nothing special. I joined the Drama Club, and started the Photography Club. My dad and older brothers would print photos on the kitchen table with blankets over the windows, and I wasn't about to be left out. So I developed and printed (enlarged) photos from age 8 onward, with quite a bit of help. Later, I was a professional photographer for 50-plus years.

When I was 9, dad and I built a 12-foot kayak, and the family had a small sailboat. I fell in love with



sailboats right then. Later, I was master of a 70-foot Bermuda-racing sailboat for two years, mostly in the Caribbean. I hold a USCG Master's license for 500-ton vessels — sail, steam, and power. We'd go duck

hunting on our bikes, with our shotguns across the handlebars (try that today!), riding 8-10 miles at 4 or 5 a.m., but never even got stopped. We would ride the bus to some areas, shotguns in hand.

I inherited dad and my brothers' cameras when they got new ones. I also got their sailboats when they got bigger ones; worked at the local boatyard and learned a lot. I got a .22

rifle for my 13th birthday and started to target shoot. Those were great years, but of course things changed a lot when World War II came along.

I moved to Maine in 2012 and dropped

into People Plus out of curiosity and liked

what I saw. Frank Connors and Stacy were running the outfit smoothly and efficiently. I was impressed and decided this was a great place to volunteer. I drove members around: to the doctor, dentist, Bingo, beauty parlor, shopping, whatever. I'd done this for six years in Connecticut, but this was more fun.

What's important to me about People Plus is the people! It's a great bunch, doing good things

with good leadership. And what a slew of activities! I was an assistant "cool" when Frank cooked the Men's Breakfasts every month; good fun. Haven't joined many groups yet, but

may when I grow up. People Plus does so much good for so many people, and I'm proud to be associated with it, even in a small way.

My favorite activity at the Center is the Write on Writers group, where we write

a page every week, read and critique them. This is a fab thing for a writer, as it keeps the creative juices flowing. The annual WOW-collection books are good Christmas presents, too. I've done a lot of writing, largely in conjunction with my photography. I was a contributing editor for Popular Photography magazine, had two small paperbacks published by Doubleday, wrote two hardcover "how-to" books on nature photography. I also did a lot of re-writing of "translation" Japanese, Spanish and German for Doubleday; 154,000 words one year — and my name was not under any of them.

As far as one thing from my life that I'd like to share, I guess it would be this. Since I've been self-employed all my adult life, if I don't work I don't eat; so I've done a lot of different things because I like to eat! And I'm willing to try just about anything. It's satisfying to me to help people, so that's a plus.

I have delivered (on the water) a lot of cruising boats, mostly 40-to-50-foot long, and a few small aircraft. I hold a commercial pilot's license. These licenses keep the owners and the insurance brokers happy!

I've now worked in 65 countries (never could've afforded that as a tourist). I have a BA degree in psychology, which is a huge help in foreign countries, especially the body-language courses. In recent years I was a consultant; it's easier and more profitable.

What I'd like people to know about me is that I'm available — and always need work. I'll try most anything, if it's mostly legal, interesting, and (hopefully) can show a small profit. If you have five minutes to spare/waste, look at Boatrelate.us; some nice

The Magic of Words

WOW members offer favorite words and phrases

Text & photos by Patrick Gabrion

While there are plenty of opportunities for involvement at People Plus, one of the more active groups is the Write On Writers. Meeting once a week, participants eagerly share their stories and poems, as well as provide praise and helpful feedback to those in attendance.

And every so often they present their wonderful creations to the Center's members and the general public, having published several books. In fact, WOW has just released a new title, *Write From the Heart*. Its 193 pages feature the works of 18 authors. Worth checking out, indeed.

Writers, whether here in Brunswick and anywhere else, love the magic of putting pen to paper — or the modern equivalent of tapping keys on a computer — to describe the world around them, such as events in their lives, a particular season that brings joy, the importance of certain holidays, the relationships with family and friends, and so much more.

Recently, members of the group were asked if they had a favorite word or phrase — or related thoughts — they would like to share. The following is what several of them had to say, or should we correctly say ... what they wrote:

"I don't think I really have one, but maybe 'nice or beautiful.' I usually try to make

someone feel good. Years ago in college down south, my roommate always said 'Hell's bells' and for a while I picked it up from her. But I haven't said that in years."

— Doris Weinberg

"How can a writer choose just one word that tends to be a favorite? One that you use so consistently that you learn to love and savor it? I love our native language that has such a rich vocabulary; I can use so many words and really be discretionary!"

— Sally Hartikka

"Hope means to wait with confidence." — taken from Warren W. Wiersbe (1929-2019), author. This is what I am doing during the current coronavirus pandemic. My own special phrase is 'Many things I did today didn't make my list.'"

— Nonie Moody

"Love you!" is probably my most used phrase. I use this every time I talk, text, email, or am leaving family or very close friends, and also my pets every time

I leave the house. The reason I say this is because I do love them and, in case of anything unknown happens, it would be the last thing they heard from me."

— Gladys Szabo

"Everyone has valleys in life's journey. Dwelling on the facts that cannot be changed will not help with recovery, resolve and the future. How frequently do we say, 'It could be worse!' When we look for the 'bright side,' it helps us realize better conditions and is optimistic. We need to remind ourselves of the power of science

and the healing of nature. The 'bright side' makes us feel happier and gives us faith. Let us help each other feel better, stay healthier and be focused on the 'bright side.'"

— Betty Bavor

"One of my favorite phrases comes from Robert F. Kennedy, who said, 'Some see things as they are and say why? I dream things that never were and say why not?' These inspiring words looked toward a future where all things are possible and can be made better. RFK was a visionary who

knew people had to grab the present if they wanted to change the future. Let his words guide and influence us every day in everything we do."

— W A Mogk

"My favorite phrase is 'Let's climb Mount Chocorua!' Why do I say that? Mount Chocorua was my ninth birthday present. I asked my dad for it. He took me and three friends up the Piper Trail and down the Weetamoo. I climbed Chocorua for my next 23 birthdays. Chocorua is in New Hampshire."

— Charlotte Josephine Bourret Hart

"Ever onward!"

— Cecelia Hitte

We thank those from WOW for their contributions to this story and the monthly offerings that appear in the People Plus newspaper. The photos accompanying today's presentation were taken in warmer weather, when the group met outside in the Center's parking lot. Again, thank you!



New book is here!

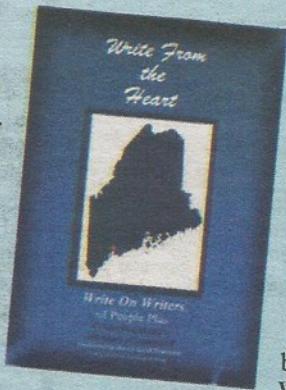
Come and get 'em!

Just in time for holiday giving — but actually good for any occasion — the new Write On Writers' book, *Write From the Heart*, is on sale now. Featuring the works of 18 dedicated authors, its 193 pages include countless stories and poems for hours and hours of reading.

Inside, you will find an introduction by U.S. Senator Angus King, a brief history of Maine, along with state symbols and facts. There are also historical notes on People Plus and Write On Writers.

In fact, the People Plus group is dedicating the book to the state of Maine on its 200th anniversary of statehood and to all those Mainers throughout history who made our state such a great place to live, work, and raise their families.

They also are dedicating *Write From the Heart* to People Plus, which in 2021 will be celebrating



45 years of service to the Brunswick area community and to all the board members, staff, volunteers, and members, past and present, who gave their time and effort to make it such a great success.

Other publications by the Write On Writers of People Plus include:

- Poets and Storytellers
- Poets and Storytellers; vol II
- It's about Time
- Muses and Memories
- From Maine and Away
- Times and Seasons
- Journeys and Reflections
- Out of Our Minds

Their new book is available at the People Plus Center or on Amazon. The cost is \$14.95. Most of their previous books are also available for purchase at the Center.

The original group of writers, which eventually became the Write On Writers, was formed at the 55 Plus Center in Brunswick in 1995. Its first leader was Jean Martz.

Lighting the Porch
By Nonie Moody

There is something about the entry porch
When December one comes around,
It must be decorated with lights
Making the sweet home brightly crowned.

The weather has turned a bitter cold
But with gloves the fingers are kept warm.
Attacking the pile of tangled lights
Making sure the strands all perform.

With step stool in tow the task begins
As previous nails are all in place.
Then stringing continues its line
Bringing sparkle to the front porch space.

The glow of the lights are for celebrating
The One who brings us this time of year
With extra love and care for everyone
Displaying the season with message clear.

Christmas Twenty Twenty
By Gladys Szabo

Christmas is approaching
It will be like no other.
Families having to make decisions
There will be very different visions.
How do we get together yet stay apart?
It is enough to tear at our hearts.
Who can come or do we Zoom?
How many can be in a room?
Each of us will make different plans
How we can gather all our clans.
My prayer is COVID-19 decreases
That each of us can find joy and peace.
Bringing merriment to our holidays!
In hopes the New Year brings better days!

2020 Christmas
By Bonnie Wheeler

Everyone facing the same problems
The world equally hurting
The same God rules over all
So keep standing tall
Our God is faithful
The best is yet to come
In the end, we win

Good Riddance, 2020

By Sally Hartikka

Good riddance, go away.
You had your chance with us,
You had a chance to have your say,
But now there's no more to discuss.

You gave us naught but discord,
Anger, fear and hatefulness.
You dispensed an epidemic
And created in us helplessness
As we dealt with this pandemic.

You made us fear each other
And caused much racial tension.
Riots and police brutality
Were brought to our attention ...
Gone our sense of normality.

All of this strain and stress
Caused businesses to close.
Many lost their positions
And lack of confidence arose.
With fear of bad fiscal conditions.

You're a bust, 2020
Give a new year your place.
People are ready for you to leave.
Go away, 'cause you've lost face.
Go away, we will not grieve.

We want the world to turn to peace,
To let love defeat the hate.
To let the virus be defeated.
And we simply cannot wait
For a brand-new year to soon be greeted.

Happy, peaceful, healthy, and less worrisome New Year to all!

At Last Hal-le-lu-jah!

By Elizabeth Bates

It's time for the birth
Of you know who
His mom knew it was time ...
But she had to "make do"
Like so many women
Since time was new.

The man she was with
Was not much help,
But he tried ...
He made sure there was plenty of straw
By her side.
The rest was up to her!

The stars were so bright!
They lit up the night
While everyone slept.
Only one heard the angels sing in the
Welcoming dawn ...
A little King who waited
For all to begin.



A Christmas Prayer

By Nonie Moody

Dear Heavenly Father,
I come to you this day
With heavy heavy heart
For many are not okay.

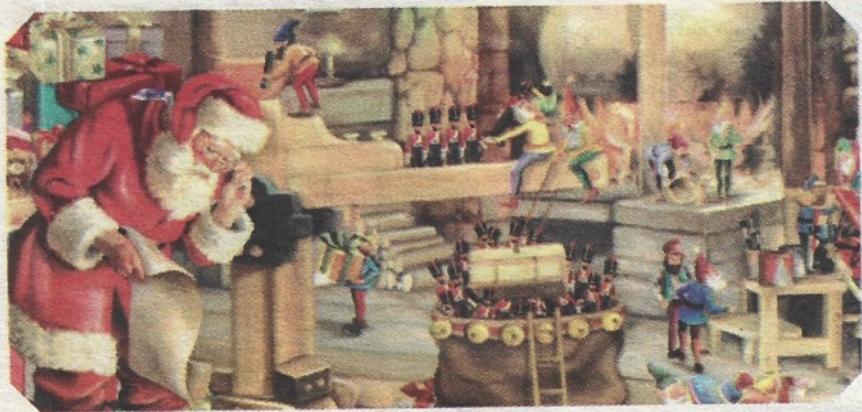
It's the Christmas season
A time for celebration
And pandemic of 2020
Has left us beaten and broken.



But daily looking upward
There's healing for the brokenhearted
Comfort for those who mourn
And peace for the wounded.

May we at Christmastime
Sing the songs slightly louder
And appreciate those close to us
Making our sphere a little lighter.

This celebration is about others
Help us to see through Your view
To lighten someone's heavy load,
Making this Christmas especially true.



Labor Relations *By W A Mogk*

All through the summer there had been unrest in Santa's workshop. By reading newspapers, such as the Wall Street Journal, the elves knew that there was a wider world out there with opportunities and better incomes. They had always suspected they were underpaid because Santa paid them "under-the-table." The meager pay was bad enough, but being required to parade under a table and reach up for their checks was humiliating. Things had been different in the past.

The elves were descended from children that Santa rescued from the sweat shops of Britain in the 1800s. He gave them clothes, good food, and accommodations. In return, the children were more than happy to make toys for Christmas. What they didn't know was that magnets had been sewn into their garments, and after a few generations, the downward pull of the magnetic North Pole caused their offspring to remain tiny. Once the effect was permanent, the magnets were removed and used to make refrigerator stick-ons. "Waste not, want not" was Santa's motto.

Santa was aware of the discontent among his height-challenged employees and he tried to meet their demands halfway. He started a retirement plan, increased medical benefits, and no longer required them to walk under the table. Even so, grumblings persisted, causing Santa much concern.

One day, the elves were putting the finishing touches on a very large, very ornate steeple bell that had been special ordered and taken weeks to create. In another part of the workroom, a careless elf had

dropped a lit cigar into a can of paint thinner, then knocked it over, spreading flaming liquid across the floor. Another elf, the smallest one with the biggest voice yelled, "Let's get the bell outta here!" Santa was nearby, but mistakenly heard a different word than "bell"; he thought the elves were "making a break for it."

Santa ran toward the commotion, wondering how he could stop a herd of stampeding elves. This had never happened before, so there were no contingency plans. He arrived at the scene as a dozen coughing workers dragged and pulled the bell to safety. It's no small feat to move a one-ton bell when you have small feet.

Santa was grateful beyond belief. If the bell had been ruined, or missed its delivery date, he would have to give back his commission, which had already been spent to pay gambling debts. (If only that little ball had stopped on 23 red!)

"You boys saved my butt," Santa told them. "What can I do for you?"

"Well, Santa," pronounced a still coughing quality control manager. "We need some changes around here, like better pay and more time off. A new break room with an eggnog dispenser, free candy canes, and chocolates anytime. Also, how about hiring a groundskeeper to clean up all that reindeer poop? Rudolph may be able to find his way in a fog, but he sure can't find the toilet!"

"I agree to your terms," responded Santa. He knew they weren't asking for too much. Besides, with all the extra sugar they'd be eating, he'd probably get more work out of them anyway!

The Innkeeper's Story *By Vince McDermott*

To call me an innkeeper is an exaggeration. I merely have some extra space in my house. Occasionally, a traveler stays there. When the man and woman came to my door seeking shelter, I had to tell them I had no room. My relatives were staying with me during the census.

I was very sorry for them. They were exhausted after a long trip. I could see that the woman, actually a young girl, was very

close to her time. I thought at first she was older, since the man was much older than she.

All I could do was invite them to stay in the shelter in which I kept my animals. At least they would be warm. It was the best I could do. I am so glad I did it. Something wonderful has been happening after the birth of the babe.

Christmas in the 1940s *By Charlotte Hart*

My absolutely favorite holiday memory is the Christmas Eve Candle Light Service at the West Newfield Congregational Church in the early 1940s. Every person held a lighted candle and sang "Silent Night."

In those days, preparation for Christmas began AFTER Thanksgiving. Christmas gifts were socks and mittens. My grandmother knit mittens for me and my brother and the neighborhood children. Other gifts were pencils and crayons, paper-doll books and storybooks. The year I was five, mom made me skis out of barrel staves. They had leather straps that fit over regular boots.

On Christmas Eve, we hung knee-high stockings from the mantle over the fireplace. On Christmas morning, they held cookies, candy, and an orange. That was the only orange we had all winter. (Usually we drank canned orange juice for breakfast.)

Sometimes dad brought Aunt Adrienne from Cranston, Rhode Island, to West Newfield, Maine, at Christmastime. Family and neighbors came to the house at Stevens Corner for

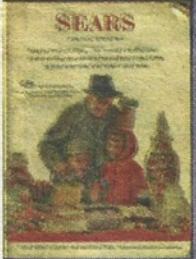
wassail, cookies, and caroling. Everyone knew many carols by heart.

The tree was from our own land. It was decorated with shiny objects and tinsel. No candles or lights. There was no electricity at Stevens Corner until 1957. Candles glowed in the front windows only when someone was in the room. (Fire law.) On the two front doors, mom and dad hung evergreen swags with red bows.

Many memories are pleasant, but without question my favorite — vivid — and most joyous was the Christmas Eve Candle Light Service at the church.



Christmas Catalogs *By Nonie Moody*


There was excitement with its arrival
And waiting my turn to browse with glee.
Three new beautiful catalogs
The Sears, Montgomery Ward and JC Penney.

Hours were spent looking at each page
Thoughtfully, picturing and dreaming
But knowing this would never be
As the supply of funds was shrinking.

Matching family outfits were the rage
From ladies and girls calico dresses
To the whole crew in lookalike pajamas
As well as the stripes and plaid blouses.

Many games were pictured for review
And we collected a new one each year
From Sorry, Monopoly and Carrom,
With many hours spent with cheer.



Christmas tree at our house was set up and decorated in the room was for company, piano practice, listening to 78 rpm records on the Victrola and special occasions. Morning we pulled surprises from our stockings. The left under the tree were opened in the afternoon, when done and everyone could enjoy our Christmas family. We wrote letters to Santa hoping he would leave the we wanted. Peeking at the tree, we could sometimes await us.

It was part of my life and I performed with the Chen Band. They were women who made instruments in utensils and sang using kazooos. My baton teacher red batons would be a classy addition to my performance. Santa heard about this and his helpers found if they went under the Christmas tree, the recipient binize them, so Santa decided to put them under the couch, mind you, was firm with carved wooden legs.

Santa's Dilemma

By Betty Bavor

and no skirt to the floor. Christmas gift-giving time finally arrived and here we were on Maine Street was packed. Standing room only. My son Larry and I arrived, and were greeted by Evelyn Bryant. This was a Memorial Service for Evelyn's husband, Joseph S. Bryant. "Our granddaughter is going to read your letter," Evelyn smiled at me. "About the outhouse birdhouse Peter made."

"That is awesome," I told Evelyn. Let me try to explain.

Joe Bryant had died at age 80. Born in Buckfield, he graduated from South Paris High School, a three-sports letterman. He graduated from Colby College. He taught English in Caribou. Then he was drafted into the Navy and did a tour of duty in the Pacific. Back home he became a guidance counselor, head of

the Guidance Department for 16 years at Brunswick High School. Next, principal at Brunswick, then many years at L.L. Bean.

Joe loved golf and music. Joe wrote and directed Brunswick H.S. talent shows, student aid fundraisers. Assistant Principal Jack Caldwell became the Whistling Lawyer. Math teacher Barbara Leonard delivered the Lily Tomlin line, "Is this the party to whom I am speaking?" Forgive these details, but you need to know, patient reader, I remember Joe BEST OF ALL as MASTER OF CREATIVE CARDS AND THE PRACTICAL JOKE.

On Aug. 11, 1996, my husband, Bob, received a unique birthday card — a photo of an outhouse with a set of golf clubs standing by the entrance. In the card? A Joe Bryant yarn about my husband's Brunswick

exchanging presents. A couple people sat on the couch, others on piano bench, chairs or floor as we shared gifts, thanking each other plus Santa. Then a couch sitter moved their legs, hitting a package underneath them. "What is this? The tag says Betty from Santa."

I opened it to find two lighted batons, batteries and a box with two each, red, green, blue, yellow and white tops. Such an unexpected gift, I could hardly wait to see how it felt to perform in the dark.

Santa's dilemma provided me with many memorable performances at summer concerts, in shows for celebrations and enjoyment. This was a Christmas gift I will always remember. These batons now reside in my hometown Sterling Historical Society Museum, along with memorabilia from days of yore.

Gifts are very special, with some more memorable than others. Have you received one that was unique for you? Merry Christmas.



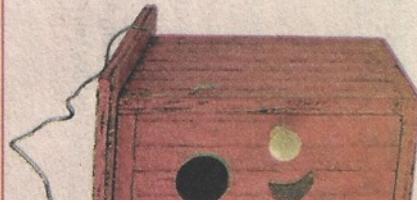
An Outhouse Birdhouse for Christmas

By Charlotte Hart

the Guidance Department for 16 years at Brunswick High School. Next, principal at Brunswick, then many years at L.L. Bean.

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Christ Child

By Bonnie Wheeler

Jesus was born and made something beautiful of my life
I was born into a Christian home
Who taught me right from wrong
Set me on God's path
Without the baby in the manger
My life would be empty
So I sing happy birthday and praise your name
Thank you for being so good Christmas child

A Perfect Tree

By Virginia Sabin



Evergreen
in winter
Starlit
in snowdrift
Branches
snow covered and icy
Winterberry and holly adorn
boughs heavy with fir
An empty nest, a robin's nest
a diamond studded snow covering all
wait another spring

Member Moment

"Member Moment" gives people who participate in programs and activities at People Plus a chance to tell us a little bit about themselves. Today, we are featuring Doris Weinberg. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions some day, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.

Getting to know Doris Weinberg

My name is Doris Weinberg and I was born in Toronto, Canada, where my parents had moved during the Depression. They returned to the states when I was two and I grew up in Plainfield, New Jersey. It was a perfect hometown where you rooted for the high school teams and you didn't have to lock your doors.

In 1950, I left to attend college in Richmond, Virginia, to study to become an occupational therapist.

Richmond is still my favorite city, but in those days it was still segregated and that was quite a learning experience.

My first job brought me to Hartford, Connecticut, and that became my home for the next 60 years, with marriage, children, and a good job.

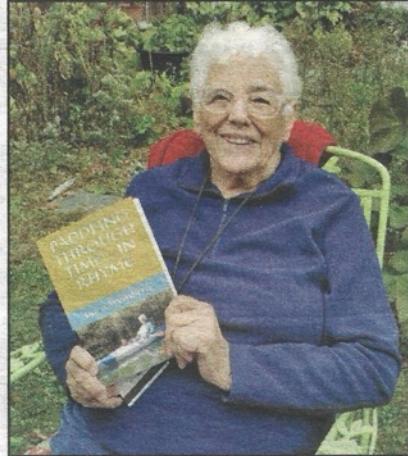
When my husband passed in 2014, I moved up here to Maine to be with my sister. We live at Coastal Landing on the old naval base and I now feel like a "native Mainer."

I started writing rhymes in college for the student newspaper and then continued them for all kinds of family occasions. I didn't take my poems seriously until I joined the Write On Writers group at

People Plus and now I have actually published a book!

This group has been a challenge for me as the members are all so talented. I also joined the Mah-Jongg group and I do hope it will resume someday soon.

People Plus has exposed me to a wonderful new circle of friends. It has added so much to my life, especially during this pandemic, and I strongly suggest that others come and try all that the Center has to offer.



My Hometown By Doris Weinberg

I moved several times before I was seven, and then we settled down. A small town in New Jersey finally became my "hometown."

I remember starting school and being very scared Of not knowing anyone. The teacher had a funny name but before I knew it, the day was done.

This would be my town for the next ten years and I soon loved all the space. Our house had a yard. I cut the grass, and I loved the stone fireplace.

I have wonderful memories of this little town, great neighbors and a best friend next door. There was high school, first dates and even a first job, and there is really so much more.

Those days in the '40s were different than now. Life has changed so much. It was much less stressful way back then, no locked doors or cars as such.

We had a wonderful downtown with no malls in sight. Movies only cost a dime. You did not have to spend much money in order to have a good time.

I graduated high school and went off to college and never returned there to live. My parents were disappointed, of course. I moved north and they did forgive.

50 years later, I did go back And sat in my car and stared. I would have liked to knock on the door, but I really didn't dare.

Lots of things remained the same, but times have changed, you know. You don't let strangers in your house, but I would have loved to go.

The trees were taller and the stucco was gone, but one big thing was the same. I looked at the brick front steps, and the big crack remained.

I have had other homes since then, but these memories are still with me. They bring back my youthful times, when life was so carefree.

My recollections make me smile, because that is what life's about. They made me who I am today, Of that there is no doubt.

1-2021

In Memory Ralph Neil Laughlin

By Paul Karwowski

Ralph was a University of Iowa graduate. Upon graduation, he joined General Electric's Marketing Communications Department (advertising group). After 12 years with GE, he went on to work for other industry leaders.

He authored seven books,

the latest being *Scribblings – The Brunswick Years*, a compendium of prose and poetry done while living in Brunswick.

He and Dianne, his wife of 55-plus years, resided in New Orleans, Louisiana, for the past year, yet retained strong ties to Maine. Their three grown

children live and work around the globe.

Other books include: *Beyond The Pool, The Day The World Cried As One, Random Thoughts Of A Wandering Mind, 1,001 Bites Of Chinese Fortune Cookie Wisdom, Food For Thought... In The Bed, and Tarzan: The Greystoke Legacy Under Siege*. All available on Amazon books.

Ralph was a member of People Plus for

eight years. He volunteered in the kitchen for the men's and ladies' breakfasts, monthly lunches, Thanksgiving dinner,

sent his writings to be read at the group's meetings. He will be sincerely missed at our table.



Time

By Ralph Langlin

The Past is Memory.

Don't let it haunt you.

The Future is speculation.

Don't let it scare you.

The Present is now.

Live it. Embrace it.

Life is too short

To do anything else.

3-2021

Condolence

By Nonie Moody

The loss of three members of our Write On Writers club/family at People Plus has left me remembering them sitting around the table laughing, talking, and giving encouraging words. Charlotte Hart, Ralph Laughlin, and Nancy Sohl, three outstanding writers, will truly be missed. 2-2021

In Memory of Charlotte Bourret Hart

By the Write On Writers

Charlotte grew up at Stevens Corner in West Newfield, Maine. She graduated from

Dean Academy in Franklin, Massachusetts, and the University of Maine in Orono from 1957 through 2008, she lived and worked in Brunswick, Maine (Brunswick High School, Brunswick Junior High School, and part-time at Bowdoin College). She recently resided on Orchard Hill in Cumberland, Maine.

Charlotte wrote personal narrative, character studies, light and personal rhymed verse, and poetry inspired by life experiences, her late husband, her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and various and sundry friends.

Charlotte was a member of Write On Writers for more than 13 years. She was a valued contributor to the group and its last six publications, as well as writing the book introductions and the forward for the most recent, *Write From the Heart*. She will not only be missed by her friends and family, but also by those of us who enjoyed listening to her readings.

Stevens Corner in June

By Charlotte Hart

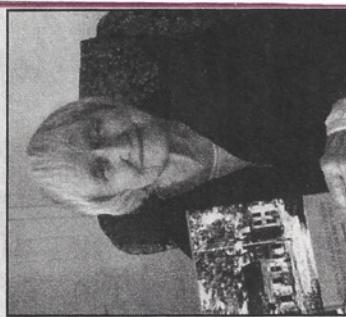
I'll take time to go home, to savor the past,
To remember early years that went by so fast.
To the Stevens Corner House, I will see it soon!
It was always loveliest there in June.

Half-way up Province Mountain, Eighty acres of wood.
Stone-walled yards. Gardens. A joyful childhood.
Eleven rooms and a barn. I will go back soon.
It was always loveliest there in June.

I'll drive by. I'll remember Family Giving Thanks there,
Our farm produce and turkey wood stove-roasted with care.
Homemade wreaths at each door. Christmas spirits were high.
Christmas lights? Oil lamps glowing and a great star-filled sky.

A price for that house? Not a worry at all!
Priceless winters, springs, summers, harvest moon in the fall.
I will go there this month. I will see it soon.
But Stevens Corner is always most lovely in June.

2-2021



In Memory Nancy Sohl

By Paul Karwowski

Nancy was born in St. Louis, but spent her early childhood in a small town in Massachusetts. When she was 10, her family moved back to the Midwest where she grew up in the suburbs of Chicago.

She graduated from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, with a degree in elementary education in 1972 and her master's in teaching degree from National Lewis University, Evanston, Illinois. She came back to the Chicago area to teach, mostly 4th and 5th grade, for 33 years. She and her husband, Ray, moved to Maine in 2012.



They loved the quiet, peaceful beauty of their home in Harpswell and happily shared it with their golden retriever named Sally. Due to her failing health, they moved to Indiana to be near her family. Nancy and Ray were married for 47 years.

Nancy was an active member of Write On Writers for five years and acted as facilitator for one year. While writing was always a hobby of hers, the beauty of Maine gave her added inspiration. She will be remembered for her positive spirit and leadership by all of us at Write On Writers.

The Little Things in Life

By Nancy Sohl

I've learned from my dog, a sweet golden retriever named Sally, to celebrate the little joys of life. Sally gets excited about belly rubs and the forgotten tennis ball rediscovered in the corner. She barks in eager anticipation of dinner, even though it's the same food she gets every night. She wiggles and wags in delight when someone says, "Want to go for a ride in the car?" Sally's days are filled with little celebrations.

We moved from the Chicago suburbs to Harpswell two years ago. Since moving here, I've come to understand Sally's

celebrations. The hummingbirds at my feeder and the bull frogs in the pond make me smile. I am awed by the beauty of the star-filled night skies, the picturesque bays and coves around every corner, and the snow that blankets the trees. Here the seasons are marked by the new lambs born at the farm, the lady slippers that bloom in the woods, the reopening of the lobster pounds, and the amazing colors of fall.

Life here is good. Sally and I both know

now it's the little things in life that are worth celebrating.

3-20-21

Remembering Elizabeth Bates



Elizabeth and her husband moved to Maine from Massachusetts in the early 1970s after their three children had left for lives of their own. Before that, she was able to go back for her BA degree in the tempestuous 1960s through the Harvard University Extension Program, where she fell in love with words.

Elizabeth had some writings published, but life got busy. She was a travel agent, but left that to open a small B&B in her home, which she loved doing.

Elizabeth only went back to writing when she joined the Writers On Writers group at People Plus. She also liked to paint on canvas. She was a valued member of Write On Writers since 2014. Elizabeth also loved doing our Lunch Out gatherings at People Plus, especially when we took side trips to parks or rides to see fall leaves. Elizabeth was a delightful friend and loved her cat who struggled with her.

We will not only miss her poetry readings, but also her cheerful smile.

Song of the Damarisotta

By Nancy Sohl

Ice breaks like an unwanted gift over the rocks on the shore, while stacks of lobster traps spell out their long winter lessons: a slow geometry of lines and half-curves indifferent to weather. The river lies sleeping.

Breathless, we watch as the gray immense, immobile skin is cut by the surgical hand of a passing shrimp boat trailing a net of gulls in the air. Now the wake leaps to break her sleep, like a rough dream welling over.

She turns on her bed of rockweed and kelp and sings crows, where green at the edge spruce and fir root down...cries golden-eyes into her mirror, combing with barnacle shells her green curls of waves, and pins sunlight into her hair. 7-20-21

Remembering *James M. Friedlander*

Jim Friedlander was an only child who, barely post-adolescence, spent two WWII years in the U.S. Navy earning four ribbons. He had two wives, one divorce, one daughter, three stepdaughters, one grandson, and one great-granddaughter. He also inhabited nine states, voyaged on 14 ships, and visited 41 countries on four continents.

His interests included politics, railroading, sustainable resource technology, and veteran affairs. He was founder of the Veterans Housing Coalition, served as commander of Chapter 15 of the Disabled American Veterans for several years, and also commander of the Jewish War Veterans of the USA until his death.

Jim earned three college degrees and endured five career changes, some pleasant, some not so. He asked, "Will writing be his sixth?" Jim was a longtime member of Write On Writers until 2013. He was a man of ideas until the very end.

8-2021



PEOPLE PLUS PIC OF THE WEEK: WRITE ON WRITERS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO VIA PEOPLE PLUS

After having to meet online during the COVID-19 pandemic, the People Plus Write On Writers club met in person for the first time in over a year this week. The group was formed in 1995 and has published nine books including their newest, released October 2020, "Write from the Heart," which features the works of 18 authors and includes an introduction by Sen. Angus King. Books by the Writers' group and other members are available for sale at the People Plus Center on Union Street in Brunswick. Visit peopleplusmaine.org for more information.

6-25-2021

Member Moment

"Member Moment" gives people who participate in programs and activities at People Plus a chance to tell a little bit about themselves. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions some day, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.



Getting to know Alene Staley

My name is Alene Staley. I live in Lisbon Falls and I'm 76 years of age. I grew up on the South Side of Chicago, initially in the city itself and then later in the suburbs. I first lived near Midway Airport, when it was busy. There were the sounds of airplanes and it was noisy, but as a child that did not bother me. At that time, my dad worked at the airport.

Although Chicago is a huge city, it is organized by neighborhoods and neighborhoods are like small towns. We did have a yard to play in, and we played on the sidewalks up and down the street. There were lots of kids and we had much fun.

At age 7, my family moved to the suburbs when subdivisions were first being developed. There was open space everywhere with room to explore and be outside. I have always loved being outdoors. I spent my childhood riding a bike, ice skating, and playing tennis.

I joined People Plus in the summer of 2020. I was looking for a social place that was open where I could find

people and companionship. I found People Plus by searching online.

The exercise classes and other activities were held outdoors, which worked fine for me. I started with the Gentle Barre class, where I met Betty Ilavoc. I also went to social events where I made new friends.

When the Gentle Barre class moved indoors, I became curious about the bulletin board in the room which has all the pictures of people in Write On Writers. Betty told me that she belonged, it was great group of people, and I should join. I took her advice. Write On Writers is a perfect activity for me. I find the stories fascinating, the people so interesting, and, best of all, the whole group is positive and encouraging. I really love it.

In addition to what I said previously about People Plus, what I also love is the chance to try new things. For example, I am planning to eventually try Mah-Jongg, since I understand they do give lessons. And the table tennis seems to be calling me. There are so many possibilities; I'm sure I won't be bored.

I have had an interesting life with friends and experiences I cherish. I have lived in Chicago, Arlington, Virginia, and Maine. My career involved professional accounting, government service, and teaching.

I have met a few celebrities and the stories of how I met them may show up someday in stories I write with Write On Writers. I was in a room on Rush Street in Chicago where the center of attention of everyone in the room was Cassius Clay, later known as Muhammad Ali. I once rode in an elevator in the Plaza Hotel in New York City with Eartha Kitt. I sat in a cafe in Philadelphia one night in a booth next to another booth, where Betty Friedan was dining with friends. I shook Nelson Rockefeller's hand during the 1968 presidential election. I'm thinking there are a few stories there worth writing about.

Season's Greetings from the *Write On!* Writers



A Tale of Freedom — Chanukah *By Doris Weinberg*

Chanukah comes early this year. It begins at the end of November and because it lasts for eight happy days, it doesn't end until December. This holiday follows the phases of the moon and is usually later in the year. But it doesn't matter when it arrives, children are joyous when it is here. Chanukah tells the story of great Jewish men, who won a hard battle and felt great! And then they had a miracle when one day's lamp oil lasted for eight! So, over the centuries this memory has been kept alive.

By eight days of lighting candles, and all the family would arrive! Special foods are served, cooked in oil as a condition. And gifts are exchanged as part of the tradition. Though the years Chanukah has become an important holiday full of joy. Especially for the children, who look forward to a new toy! But like any kind of tradition, the one thing for which we strive. Is to keep this Tale of Freedom very much alive!

What Jesus Means to Me *By Lucy Derbyshire*

- C** Constant Companion
- H** Hopeful Helper
- R** Resting Place
- I** Inspiration Giver
- S** Sincere Pal
- T** True Friend
- M** Mountain Mover
- A** Attitude Lifter
- S** Soul Healer



My Maine Winter *By W.A. Mogk*

Every year people come plain about winter weather in Maine. You people don't know how lucky you have it today.

When I was a kid growing up, we used to get 10-foot snowfalls that went up to the roof. If we kids wanted to go out and play, we had to climb out the second-floor window on ropes!

Our mothers would bundle us up, and made sure we had our snowshoes and pickle jars. We used the snowshoes to breath under the snow, and used empty five-gallon pickle jars like driving masks. Usually we played hide and seek with the neighbor kids. Some of them were so good at it that we didn't see them again until the spring thaw.

One winter my older brother went to visit his girlfriend with his snowshoes, Jr., and 30 feet of rope. She climbed down, but later couldn't get back up, so they decided to slope.

That's where the expression comes from: "If you can't climb the rope, you might as well slope."

Jobs were scarce in the winter, except for cutting ice out of the lakes. This was hard work for everyone, including us kids. After the adults hauled out huge ice blocks, we had to chip them into tiny cubes so they would fit in the trays.

That's where you get the expression: "A chip off the old block."

Kids today also have all kinds of toys and video games to play with. In my day, we got excitement by sitting around watching maple sap drip into buckets.

That was just a little more fun than watching the tide come in and go out.

So if you find yourself complaining about the weather this winter, just remember the old days with pickle jars, ropes, and sap staring. You've got it easy!

I can clearly remember the first words Nikos spoke to me. "Where know?" My teacher, Mr. Miles, had told us that our new classmate was from Greece, and we should help him get used to his new home. It seemed that the first thing he had to understand was that we didn't get snow in mid-September.

As far as getting used to things, Nikos did most of that himself. He became a star on our soccer team. He picked up English quickly. He watched the World Series with us and cheered right along for the Sox.

Nikos showed us on the map where he had lived in the southern tip of Greece. He told about the hot weather there and the beautiful blue of the sea. But every so often through the fall, he'd ask again, "Where know?" It became a joke with us. Sometimes one of us would greet him with, "Hey Nikos, Where know?"

And wouldn't you know it? Winter was late that year. It got us all wondering, "Where snow?"

Then it came. It started on the Friday morning before Christmas break. Nikos couldn't stop looking out the window, while Mr. Miles was trying to explain something about the exports from Peru. Nikos was first out the door for recess.

"Snow here! Snow here!" Nikos shouted running across the playground. He caught flakes on his tongue and let them melt on his face.

He blew a thin layer of snow back into the air off the toaster. He stopped and looked closely at a bunch of flakes on his sleeve as they melted.

The rest of us who had grown up with snow were nowhere near as excited. Actually, as snow goes, this storm was a disappointment. It was dry and fluffly and only two inches.

We went in at the end of recess hoping the storm would keep going so we would get enough snow to do something with. But it didn't. The weather turned to rain, and by the time school let out, it was gone. Then it was winter break.

Nikos had actually gathered up snow from all over his lawn and made it into a track down the slope. He showed me how he'd gotten down on his hands and knees, and patted it down with his hands. I could see that it was solid and iced over just a bit. I had to admit that it might work.

We went in the cellar door, and I couldn't believe my eyes. He must have gotten a sled or sledge or tube every week since he arrived. He had everything you could move across snow with. He had round ones, rectangular ones, flexible ones, ones with runners, ones with skis, and ones with smooth, flat bottoms. We took them all to the top of the little slope.

I sat on the front of one of the long sleds. Nikos pulled me and then jumped on the back. We went down the 30 feet of hill at about walking speed. Nikos was hollering in my ear and laughing. When we stopped, he tipped us over, laughing still.

We spent the afternoon, hauling and packing more snow. We tried every combination of sled. It turned out to be the best sledging I ever had, but that was because of Nikos, not the puny little snowfall.

It was a holiday I'll always remember.

Childhood Memories *By Bonnie Wheeler*

As a child, Christmas Eve was special. My mom and her sister, two brothers, and their families gathered together for a big supper. After everyone ate, all the children would sit around grandpa and watch him unwrap his Christmas presents, most of which were clothes - warm PJs, socks, undershirts, and always a box of chocolates-covered cherries. He would grin and look at us circled around his chair and pretend to

down his box of candy. Then he would open it up and pass it around. Each of us carefully took only one piece. That was our gift. We were very happy.

Do you think I should suggest that celebration to any grandchildren today? Would they be happy with only one piece of candy? I don't think so. Those were the good old days on the old farm in Oklahoma, when being together was the gift.

The Bells of Bethlehem

By Nomic Moody

The Bells of Bethlehem are ringing Echoing loudly for the King of kings. The mood on Christmas Day is joyous As the parade moves on they sing.



Dressed in brilliant colors this day To celebrate the Blessed One's birth Trumpets sound following worshipers For the Christ child has come to Earth. Church bells are heard all over the city And Bethlehem is overwhelmed midday Praising the Messiah with joyous carols And the festivity continues straightaway.

Thoughts for All Seasons *By P.K. Allen*

May your Christmas be Merry and full of delight.

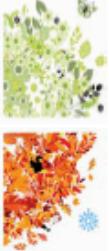
May your New Year be Happy with an outlook that's bright.

May your dreams of achievement always come true.

May your sorrows and disappointments be but a few.

May the days of hostility and violence cease.

May the world see the wisdom of an everlasting peace.



Where Snow? *By Fred Cheney*

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The morning of the 25th I got up to steady snow in the air. We did our family tree. The presents were good, both mine and the ones I'd given. Then the phone rang. It was Nikos. "Come over. We sled."

I didn't know if I had anything to do, so I asked my mom if it was alright. She said it was, so I went over. But I left my sled at home, looking at the puny amount of snow on the ground.

Along the sides of Nikos' house was a very slight hill. It just went from the front of the house to the back where the basement was level with the ground. "Slide here," Nikos said, pointing excitedly at the little slope. I couldn't believe my eyes. He had actually gathered up snow from all over his lawn and made it into a track down the slope. He showed me how he'd gotten down on his hands and knees, and patted it down with his hands. I could see that it was solid and iced over just a bit. I had to admit that it might work.

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It was a holiday I'll always remember.

And to the new year, two thousand twenty-two
Bring us peace on Earth and life renewed!



it on the roof. The top of the tree just hung over the windshield, and we winced every time mom went around a corner and we saw the tree sway ever so slightly.

Home safely, dad took the tree off the car and brought it inside to place in the stand. It was his only contribution as he was somewhat of a Scrooge. The ornaments and lights were carried down from the attic where they had been stored in the same boxes year after year. My older brother tested the lights.

Whether you buy some gifts or prepare special food, it's good to get an early start. The first step would be to make a list or even a calendar chart.

If these chores are done early, you will have more time and much less stress. The holiday will be enjoyed, and any mess will be so much less.

So, take my advice and get an early start on your list. And the fatigue and rush, certainly, won't be missed!

Goofy Gifts of Christmas

By Alene Staley

All of us have given and received hundreds of gifts over the years. Think about what gifts of the past holidays are most memorable. If you are like me, the goofy, puzzling, completely baffling ones are the most memorable of all. I have given and received goofy gifts. Based on my personal experience, I suggest that no one intentionally gives a goofy gift.

My first goofy gift was a present from a favorite but distant aunt and uncle who had a son but no daughters. I was about 11 and my sister 10. We did not normally receive gifts from these relatives, so interest that Christmas was focused on that one gift. It was the first box to be opened. Inside were two dolls made of straw. This happened in the mid 1950s, when girls did not generally play with dolls at age 10 and 11. We couldn't really figure out what to do with them, but I still remember them to this day and the mystery they presented.

Later in the 1950s, one Christmas our parents asked us what we would like for Christmas, which did not usually happen because times were tough. I knew what I wanted, a chemistry set and told them. Thinking ahead I made plans for all the experiments I could do.

Christmas in Africa

By Vince McDermott

In the mid-1960s, I was an Air Force officer serving in Germany. I lived in quarters with other officers, teachers, and nurses. One December, three teachers planned to go on a photo safari to Africa during the Christmas holidays. A short time prior to departure, one could not go. I volunteered to take her place.

We flew from Frankfurt to Nairobi via Zurich and Cairo. We met up with others in our party and set off in a zebra-striped Volkswagen van with an African guide. Some nights we slept in tents on bare ground. We zipped up our tents from the inside.

Overall, I felt safe, except for one day when

our guide apparently lost his way.

For most of

the day, we raced toward an unknown destination.

We finally reached a river with a ferry

to remember.

Wild animals on

the trip. Some were just a few feet away from the thin skin of the van. We were never seriously threatened, but there were a few nervous moments.

We ate our Christmas dinner in a

tent in the wild. It was a Christmas

to remember.



crossing just before dark. We caught the last trip. Later, while relaxing on our hotel's terrace, we saw the lights of a car frantically blinking. The occupants wanted to cross the river, but there was no ferry. We never learned what happened to the people in the car.

We saw many wild animals on

the trip. Some were just a few feet away from the thin skin of the van. We were never seriously threatened, but there were a few nervous moments.

We ate our Christmas dinner in a tent in the wild. It was a Christmas

to remember.

Frost

By W A Mogk

microscopes. Then I take my micrometer and measure the thickness of the frost (minus the thickness of the slide, of course). I repeat this on as many pumpkins as I can to get an overall average. After that, I refer to my pumpkin frost chart to see if my readings are normal for this time of year. A thick frost means it was very cold and humid overnight; a thin frost means the opposite.

With all this information at hand, I am ready to reply to anyone who asks, "Hey country bumpkin, how's the frost out on the pumpkin?" It's great feeling needed!



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With all this information at hand, I am ready to reply to anyone who asks, "Hey country bumpkin, how's the frost out on the pumpkin?" It's great feeling needed!



Since I am the local country bumpkin, it's up to me to check the frost on the pumpkins. That may seem easy, but actually, it's very complicated. To begin with, I have to get out of bed way before sunrise, in order to beat the sun to the pumpkin patch. Otherwise, its rays evaporate the frost in a matter of minutes. I have to get there first so I can take my measurements.

I have a thin piece of wire

— thinner than dental floss

— that I use to scrape off a

section of frost. I place it on a glass slide, like the ones

they use in laboratories with



Old Christmas Decorations

By P.K. Allen

Old Christmas decorations
Bring back memories from the past
Of those decades long gone by
Oh, how they went so fast

That little bell-shaped ornament
And the angel atop the tree
That I looked upon as a little boy
As excited as could be

Those huge dated Christmas tree balls
Received from mom each year
I spread them evenly around the tree
With a smile and tear

Then there are of the homemade ones
Adding to the Christmas cheer
Beautiful and elegant
Made by friends no longer here

And finally those of paper and yarn
Made by hands nimble and small
Now those very same grandchildren
Have grown to be straight and tall

These are just some of the memories
Old Christmas decorations bring to light
To help in our celebration
and to make our Christmas bright

Time is Flying!

By Doris Weinberg

If it's less than 20 days to the holidays,
then I guess we should get busy.
That means we've had 340 to plan already,
that thought makes me quite dizzy!

Time flies much too fast
and we waste so many days.
Suddenly the holiday is upon us,
and we rush like we're in a daze.

The trick is to prepare early,
as soon as the previous holiday is done!
Make your lists and buy some gifts,
and then relax with 350 days of fun.

This past year has been full of stress
and we all need some relief.
Preparing for a very good time,
will help, it's my belief.

Whether you buy some gifts or prepare special food,
it's good to get an early start.
The first step would be to make a list
or even a calendar chart.

If these chores are done early,
you will have more time and much less stress.
The holiday will be enjoyed,
and any mess will be so much less.

So, take my advice and get
an early start on your list.
And the fatigue and rush,
certainly, won't be missed!



The Honeymooners

By Nonie Moody

Growing up in the late 1950s and with our first television set, my father would watch "The Honeymooners."

This half-hour show was simple in props but hilarious in delivery. Sweet smiling Alice (Audrey Meadows) was a perfect wife to Ralph (Jackie Gleason), who was gruff and made poor choices. Ed Norton (Art Carney) was the talented absent-minded neighbor

with wife Trixie Norton (Joyce Randolph).



Together on a Christmas show hiding gifts became a problem when Ralph and Alice hid their gifts in the same place. Distrust appears and a mousetrap causes Ralph pain. Round after round, the absurd dilemmas occur and my dad would howl like a coyote with laughter.

Oh Christmas Tree

By Ellen Brown

Holidays and celebrations can conjure up vivid memories. Decorating the Christmas tree as a child was one I still carry. Christmas wasn't as chaotic in our house in the 1950s, but there was always great excitement and ritual around decorating the tree. It was the first sign that Christmas was coming.

It was mom who orchestrated the holiday preparations, including getting the tree. The four of us kids piled into the Buick and we headed across town, where every year she bought the tree at the same garden center, and every year she complained about the price. I still remember walking through the stands of trees and feeling as if I were walking in a forest and the smell of pine which always reminds me of the warmth of family. We didn't always agree on the perfect tree, but eventually consensus was reached, and with mom's approval, the attendant dragged the tree to the car and tied it on the roof. The top of the tree just hung over the windshield, and we winced every time mom went around a corner and we saw the tree sway ever so slightly.

Home safely, dad took the tree off the car and brought it inside to place in the stand. It was his only contribution as he was somewhat of a Scrooge. The ornaments and lights were carried down from the attic where they had been stored in the same boxes year after year. My older brother tested the lights

— the big, multi-colored ones and mom and my sister wrapped them around the tree, and when they were plugged in there was an elevation of excitement.

The ornaments were carefully released from their holding cells and placed on a table to examine for damage. The special ones were made of mercury glass, and we all knew how delicate they were. It was a rite of passage when we were deemed old enough to place one of those ornaments on the tree by ourselves.

The lights strung, the ornaments hung; it was time for tinsel! Lots and lots of tinsel. Every year we were reminded not to throw it on the tree but to neatly place the strands across the branches. It took forever, but the result was shimmer and shine and glow and magic and every year my sister and brothers and I stood back and declared it the most beautiful tree ever.

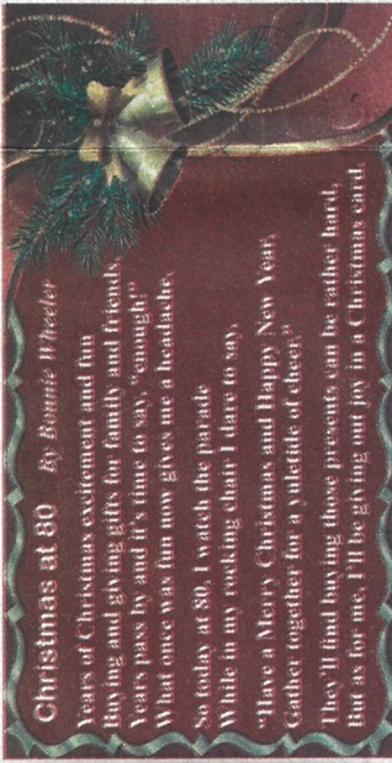


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Christmas at 80 *By Bonnie Wheeler*

Years of Christmas excitement and fun
Buying and giving gifts for family and friends,
Years pass by and it's time to say, "enough!"
What once was fun now gives me a headache,
So today at 80, I watch the parade
While in my rocking chair I dare to say,

"Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Gather together for a yuletide of cheer!"
They'll find buying those presents can be rather hard,
But as for me, I'll be giving out joy in a Christmas card.

**A Christmas Memory** *By Christa Kay*

There was snow that year
at Christmas. Lots and lots

of snow! Best of all, we were
spending the day at my aunt
and uncle's house which sat

at the top of a steeply sloped
hill, perfect for sledding. I
think we were more excited

about the snow than we were
about Christmas presents!

After the gifts were
exchanged and the dinner

consumed, my brothers and I
rushed outside bundled in one-

piece snowsuits that zipped up
the front and pinched our chins. We each had

received a new set of hats, mufflers and mittens,
hand-knit by my aunt, for Christmas. Since I

was still pretty young, my mittens came with a
knitted cord attached that was long enough to

go across the back of my neck and down both
sleeves of my snowsuit so if my mittens came

off while I was playing in the snow I wouldn't
lose them. They'd just dangle from my sleeve!

My older brother's mittens didn't have that
accessory, which was kind

of a right-of-passage in

those days suggesting they
possessed the necessary
amount of responsibility to
keep track of their mittens.

The air was cold but we

didn't feel it as we ran

straight to the barn where we

knew the sleds and toboggan

waited. We soon discovered

that the snow was too deep

for sleds with runners, but

conditions were perfect for the long, wooden,
flat-bottomed toboggan. My two older brothers
were the first ones to ride it down the hill while
my younger brother and I watched from the top

of the hill in excited anticipation. The toboggan, in its downward trajectory, plowed through the deep powdery snow sending a wave of the cold stuff up and over the curved front of the toboggan. I could hear my two brothers laughing as they rolled off the sled. Turning they looked back up the hill. Snow stuck to their eye lashes and brows and was even packed up their noses! It frosted their knit caps and scarves white and painted their cheeks pink!

Some of the adults had joined us at the top of the hill while others watched from a window. I could hear them laughing which made the sight even more comical. Grinning and wiping snow from their rosy faces, my brothers grabbed the toboggan rope and began the trek back up the hill, careful not to walk in the freshly blazed trail they had just made. When they reached the summit they repositioned the toboggan and we all piled on. Down we went again and again, always trying to get the toboggan to slide just a bit further than the last time. It was great fun and we kept at it until our toes went numb and our fingers ached from the cold.

Other than the mittens, hat, and scarf I have no memory of the other gifts Santa brought that year. All I recall is the fun we had sledding on that Christmas Day of the big snow!

**What Santa Wants
for Christmas** *By Sally Hartikka*

Poor Santa, he works so hard
On every Christmas Eve.

I wonder what's on his wish list ...
What he'd like the elves to leave?

I'll bet the chance to put his feet up
In a comfy new pair of slippers
Would be right at the top of his list
With a warm sweater with zippers.

Then some hot cocoa to warm up the insides
And some of the cookies he's gathered at homes.
Then, because of the heavy sack he carried,
A nice long back rub by some of his gnomes.

Once rested, he must then think of the children
That he's gifted along the way
And wish for them all to have
A very happy Christmas Day.

Happy Holidays *By Gladys Szabo*

The year two thousand twenty-one
Finally, you are almost done
Would like to say "COVID we have won!"

Christmas Frugality

By Betty Bavor

Christmas family traditions in my youth were special and it never entered my mind they would change. Holiday decorations appeared in stores around Thanksgiving Day. A Christmas tree was found in our pasture in Massachusetts, cut and brought home to be decorated on a Sunday afternoon. We exchanged gifts that were appropriate, appreciated, practical, and fun — sleds, dolls, skates and there was little or no commercialism in stores for the perfect toy. Sunday school classes produced the Story of Jesus Birth and we attended Christmas Eve Candle Light Church Service. We were a reverent happy grateful family.

The first year away from my hometown family at Christmas took place when my boyfriend invited me to meet his family in Ohio. We flew on a fancy airplane, the new mode of transportation and my first flight. It was exciting. His parents met us at the airport and we drove to my boyfriend's childhood home in Cleveland.

His dad was born in Vienna and his mom's family came from Germany, so they had German Christmas traditions. The Christmas tree was decorated by his parents with vintage ornaments, garland, colored lights, a bird's nest for good luck and an angel on top. His mother created a story scene under the tree. She made all the characters and landscape which was a work of art. Following

Christmas Eve

story of the scene under the tree. It was a nice experience and I married this boyfriend.

Our Christmas tradition became Ohio one year and Massachusetts the next year. New Year's became a second Christmas each year alternating with celebrations with both our families. One year I thought I would be frugal and wait to shop for gifts after

Christmas as we had several days between these family destinations. Yes, there were sales; however, things were shopworn and limited. As I said above, "One year," never again — it was a disappointing year with compromised gift choices.

The birth of Jesus is a symbol of joy, hope, love and peace. In this holy season, let us not be frugal with faith, prayer and the time we share with family and friends. Season's Greetings to you and yours. **Joe**



Winter's Prelude

By R. Mulligan

The Earth prepares its bed for the turning of the season
And long winter's sleep
Wind-borne leaves accumulate at the base of trees and shrubs
Insulation for the roots below
Pine trees deposit a thick soft blanket
on the floor beneath

Forest denizens have stocked their
shelters with seeds and nuts
Some will winter in trees and stumps
Others deep below Earth's frost
This is both a season of celebration and rest
Until the arrival of spring's dawn of awakening.



Well, they're both important — and usually differ quite a bit in their pleasure-level. But for importance; yield way to ambulances, fire engines, police cars with flashing lights — of course, all emergency vehicles — and yield even a few people carrying a stretcher with an injured person, perhaps a hiker or skier, onboard. Or even a distraught mother driving her injured child to the doctor.

All but the last one are readily identified by sirens and flashing lights. If the

mother is on the ball, she'll turn on her

four-way flashers to let everyone know

she's asking for the right-of-way. That's

better than nothing; it's always a good idea

to let people know there's an emergency

if only by flashing lights and leaning or

your horn. Try three beeps, repeated over and over.

Some Words for Thought in the New Year

By P.K. Allen

Resolutions and wishes are easy to make,
But it's hard to make them come true.

Here are some words to think about,
See what that they mean to you.

PEACE

LOVE

JOY



Yesterday is history, it can't be changed,
But we can celebrate today and tomorrow in such a way
That when they do become yesterday,
We will know we made a difference.

Many celebrations of Christmas

By Russ Kinne

Xmas has been around awhile! — and is celebrated all around the world, in one way or another. We're all familiar with the many rituals used in our country, and perhaps a few others, but there are more! Lots more. Many you may not even have heard of.

The four million Jews in the U.S., of course, do not celebrate Xmas, but do celebrate the major holiday named Hanukkah at about the same time. There will be a 30-foot-tall Menorah on the White House lawn!

In the Philippines — hardly the place you think of at Xmas — there is a friendly competition among 11 villages to build the biggest LANTERN! With, of course, singing and dancing. The winner now is about 20 feet in diameter; some wild kinda light, no? In Austria, children fear Krampus, a kind of demon who steals naughty kids away.

As you might expect, the Scandinavian countries are Xmas-files too. Sweden builds the GALVE GOAT — a huge 40-foot-tall wood-and-paper goat that some people traditionally try to burn down. They've been successful I think 29 times



since 1966, the last time in 2016.

Toronto has an impressive display of some 300,000 LED lights, with fireworks thrown in for good measure. Lots of people ice skate too.

Norway has an odd season where people try to steal each other's BROOMS to ride around on. In Iceland, you may find the "Yule Lads" who commit mild mischief for three days at Christmastime. Germany,

as you might expect, has some of the oldest traditions of all. Nikolaus (not Saint Nicholas) roams around the night of Dec. 6, leaving treats for the good children. But he's accompanied by Knecht (farmhand in English), who taps the bad kids with a stick or whip. In Venezuela, people go to church services — on roller skates.

And there are big Xmas markets in many major cities like Strasbourg, Dresden, Copenhagen, Moscow — that's a surprise! — Austria, Prague, Brussels, Madrid, Naples, Manchester, England, and — Chicago!

Merry Christmas, everyone!

New Year's Cheer

By P.K. Allen



Glass of wine
Auld Lang Syne

In good health
Sufficient wealth

May wars cease
Hope for peace

Midnight cheer
Happy New Year



Holiday Food

By Bonnie Wheeler

The ham is in the oven baking
Sweet potatoes and casserole all ready
While a pecan pie is waiting
The table is set with napkins folded
Time for a nap
Serve yourself!

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Eve the trols lon't all was Yes, there were sales; however, things were shopworn and limited. As I said above, "One year," never again — it was a disappointing year with compromised gift choices.

The birth of Jesus is a symbol of joy, hope, love and peace. In this holy season, let us not be frugal with faith, prayer and the time we share with family and friends. Season's Greetings to you and yours.

Well, they're both important — and usually differ quite a bit in their pleasure-level. But for importance; yield way to ambulances, fire engines, police cars with flashing lights — of course, all emergency vehicles — and yield even a few people carrying a stretcher with an injured person, perhaps a hiker or skier, onboard. Or even a distraught mother driving her injured child to the doctor.

All but the last one are readily identified by sirens and flashing lights. If the mother is on the ball, she'll turn on her four-way flashers to let everyone know she's asking for the right-of-way. That's better than nothing; it's always a good idea to let people know there's an emergency, if only by flashing lights and leaning on your horn. Try three beeps, repeated over and over.

Yesterday Christmas

serve yourself!

In yesteryears, our life was filled with the Christmas joy of our children and grandchildren and today, six great-grandchildren. Their excitement with opening gifts and a happy birthday Jesus cake was our gift. So, many years later, we relive our times together



watch as they make the birthday cake, "Silent Night" in church, raise their children, and make their own family traditions. As long as there is a birthday cake for Jesus on the table, I will feel blessed knowing they remember the true meaning of our special holiday.

Journey or Destination?

By Russ Kinne

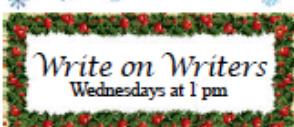
As for pleasure — there's a **HUGE** list of what's "pleasurable" for different folk. And for folk of different ages. A young child may love to ride in the car (pets, too) and don't much care where they go. Later on, when they start driving, it's the trip that counts the most; and with adults, what they drive may be paramount. Most men, and many women too, are "car nuts" and really groove on driving a Jag, or a Benz or a BMW or a Porsche. Or even some Detroit Iron; there's no accounting for tastes, especially here.

Bicyclists and motorcyclists have a very different driving experience, being out in the open where you really can "smell the roses." But, of course, your old bod is much less protected too. So though it's more fun, it's much more dangerous too — bone up on safety gear and procedures!

Boating is — usually! — great fun, whether you're zipping (or plodding) around in a power boat, or silently and smoothly gliding along in a sailboat. Either way, the trip is much more pleasant than the destination — where you're faced with tying up to a pier (or trying to find an empty spot), washing the boat down, cleaning up things in general and just being ashore again. The trip is way better.

And there's nothing to beat flying, preferably in a small plane at low altitudes, where you can see things. And pretty much go where you want and when you want, with no speed zones, radar guns, crazy drivers or complicated intersections. A vast improvement! — safer too, but be careful — it's addictive.

Ask me how I know that.



Write on Writers Wednesdays at 1 pm

What, No Christmas Gifts This Year? By Sally Harnika

It may be hard to get the gifts. You wished to give this year. Toys, electronics, and everything else Are held in ships still in port. I fear.

What to put under the Christmas tree? I've got some suggestions to try. Give gifts that the whole family can share And provide excitement for even small fry.

Dog sledding is one idea for the family. There are several places in Maine to see. Winter carnivals to watch ice carving Is another idea that comes to me.

Gardens Aglow's by car yet this year. Fill up the SUV with friends. To look at beautiful light displays ... Hurry, get tickets before it ends!

Take the kids to see the Nutcracker Or stage version of 'A Christmas Carol.' Then out to dinner at a nearby restaurant, One that's possibly near the Mall.

Not all gifts have to fit under the tree. And anticipation can be part of the fun. With gifts of adventure and entertainment, The gift giving may have just begun.



Snowy Mittens By Doris Weinberg

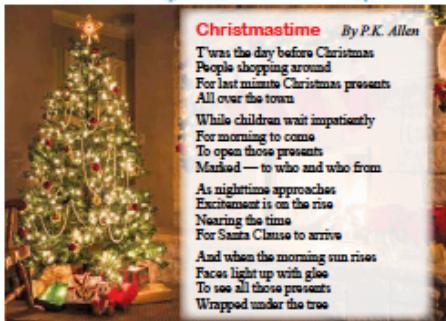
Although the winter is not my favorite season. I can think of all the many things good for many reasons.

A freezing cold day with lots of snow coming down. Snowsuits and mittens are needed outside to play around.

A fort or a snowman on the lawn must be made. It head with a scarf, coal and carrot, and a hat for some shade!

When feeling too cold, you come in with red cheeks. Hot chocolate is waiting and the fireplace speaks.

It draws you near with cup in hand, and you warm your fingers and feet. Yes, winter has many good points, in fact, it is pretty neat!



Christmastime By P.K. Allen

Twas the day before Christmas People shopping around For last minute Christmas presents All over the town While children wait impatiently For morning to come To open those presents Marked — to who and who from As nighttime approaches Excitement is on the rise Nearing the time For Santa Clause to arrive And when the morning sun rises Faces light up with glee To see all those presents Wrapped under the tree



He is Born By Bonnie Wheeler

The holiday spirit sings in the air Snow falling, trees glistening, children sledding We surround the nativity scene, our eyes glowing And welcome baby Jesus to comfort a world in need.

December By P.K. Allen

Batten down the hatches Winter is on the way Gone is summer sunshine Cold weather is here to stay Sleet and snow are coming Along with freezing rain Shovels on the ready With some aspirin for the pain I yearn for that summer sunshine Of which my heart holds dear But like so many others I'll just have to wait till next year

Come to Grandma's By Bonnie Wheeler

Come to grandma's house For lots of Christmas fun Bring your presents and your food. We will enjoy watching you celebrate But remember, we go to bed by 8

Magical Snowflakes By Betty Bavor

Are you ready to make a snowman, build a snow fort, make snow angels, slide down a hill on something, walk in snowshoes, explore the wilderness on a snowmobile, play fox and geese or maybe check out shapes of snowflakes on black velvet or glass? We will have a snowstorm or two creating a Maine winter wonderland. Trillions and trillions of snowflakes will make people happy, providing active winter sports experiences. Perhaps your family will share the joy of a favorite winter activity or try a new winter adventure.

Snowflakes start out as tiny crystal specks of ice that form when water in the air freezes and float on the wind. Specks bump and stick together predominately forming delicate hexagonal, six-sided shapes that change as they fall through colder air to Earth. You might measure the depth of snow by locating a sheltered place with less wind, no drifts or sparse spots. Push a ruler or yardstick straight down to the ground and write the inch level to be kept in a notebook or on your calendar after each storm. Add them up in the spring of 2022 to see who had, and where the most snow fall. Challenge a relative or friend in another state to compare snowfall depth with you. Snow surveyors on study and record snowfall around the world.

The mountains of Washington, Oregon, and California get more snow than anywhere else in the United States. Mt. Rainier

in Washington holds the seasonal record for the most snowfall with an average of 671 inches, nearly 65 feet per year. The highest ever recorded there was 1,224.5 inches in the winter of 1971-72. That is over 100 feet of snow, enough to cover a nine-story building.

As children, we collected snowflakes on chilled black velvet cloth and looked at them with a magnifying glass. We also folded paper carefully cutting snowflakes to hang in windows. Snow surveyors and scientists reproduce their shapes using a flat piece of glass and a plastic fixative artist use on chalk drawings, which can be purchased in an art supply store. Give it a try — store glass and can of fixative in the refrigerator keeping them cold and ready. Have an extra piece of cardboard ready to cover snowflakes. These items need to be carried carefully and quickly in a cardboard box outside to be kept cold when it snows. Once outside, spray the glass with a thin film of fixative and catch several snowflakes, covering them quickly with the extra piece of cardboard so they do not fall on top of each other.

Take your snowflakes in the glass inside. Don't touch the glass or snowflakes until the fixative is REALLY DRY, at least 20 minutes or more. The snowflakes will melt but their shapes will be fixed in plastic for as long as you want to keep them.

Maybe you are inspired to save a snowflake or two for holiday fun and pleasure. Every season brings new blessings. Silent snowflakes are magical and create a winter wonderland.

Unusual places for Christmas By Russ Kline

I've been so lucky it scares me. In all my life, I haven't missed Christmas at home more than a handful of times. But some were memorable.

I found myself at McMurdo Sound in Antarctica one Christmas, and thoroughly enjoyed it. You may know that all the U.S. bases there are Navy bases, and in my experience Navy chow is first-rate, and it was.

A few dozen roast turkeys, with "all the fixings" and soding with delicious mince pie. Truly delicious, a fine meal for most anywhere, let alone on an ice-covered island on the "South Ice." There were about 75 people at McMurdo (called McMindless) in warm weather when everything melted and a handful of Navy cooks turned out a gourmet holiday meal for everyone. Most impressive and highly welcomed! And a big Christmas tree, too.

Predictably, a week later it was time for New Year's Eve parties, and I was in Christchurch, New Zealand, on the way back to the USA. The New Zealanders — "Kiwis" — are marvelous

people, most friendly and most hospitable. A nice friendly party, no one overdid anything and all went beautifully.

The next morning I walked by the Officers' Club, to hear yelling and cheering: HAPPY NEW YEAR! — at 10 am on Jan.

17. Curious, I went in to find a happy group around a couple of polo-navigators and a big map of the world. On every hour it was New Year's in a different part of the world, and they were into having 24 NYE celebrations! — as the sun passed each line of longitude.

But another nice surprise awaited us — the O-Club had shown a nice profit, and all the drinks were free! So we had a leisurely, friendly time, enjoying each other's company and singing when we felt like it.

So we all cheered HAPPY NEW YEAR, VISHAKHAPATAM! — most of us wondering where it was. I guess it was karaoke, but that hadn't yet been invented.

The Christmas Blanket By Gladys Stabe

Working at Independence Association, my first job was caring for Chuck, who lived with his parents. Chuck was not verbal and confined to a wheelchair, but we learned to communicate very well. I would get him up, dressed, fed, and then take him to the LA day program. Years later as his parents aged, I became co-guardian with his dad.

One Christmas I gave Chuck a warm fuzzy throw with two large golden retrievers covering the whole blanket. Chuck loved dogs. When he would visit us he would sit with his hand on one of our golden retriever's heads and the dog never moved. The blanket became his favorite thing to always have with him. It went everywhere with him. When Chuck took his last breath, he had a hold of his blanket. I kept the blanket on my bedroom chair, reminding me of the 17 years we had together.

This past year, I had to have my 16-year-old dog put down. I then adopted Hunter who was a rescue from Alabama.

Preparing for his arrival I was cleaning the crate and looking for bedding when I noticed the blanket and thought, Chuck would love my dog having his blanket. I put it in the crate and fluffed it up.

Once Hunter was settled in, he would lay in the crate on his nice blanket while I made the bed and got dressed. When warmer weather came, I removed the blanket and put lighter bedding in the crate. I realized that Hunter would lay on the floor in front of the crate while I did my morning chores, not in the crate. Now that the weather has become cool again, I have returned the blanket and found Hunter laying in the crate this morning while I made the bed.

I like to think that maybe Hunter feels the love and connection Chuck and I had and hope Chuck is smiling down on us.



Poems & Prose

Write On Writers publish 10th book!

Save the Date –
Wed, Nov. 9 at 2 pm!

The Write On Writers of People Plus are proud to announce the upcoming release of their tenth publication titled *We Write*.

Contained within its 185 pages are poetry, humor, prose (fiction and non-fiction), memoirs, and other delightful wonders. The Write On Writers are especially pleased to have the People Plus Art Class join in this endeavor with their creative illustrations throughout the book.

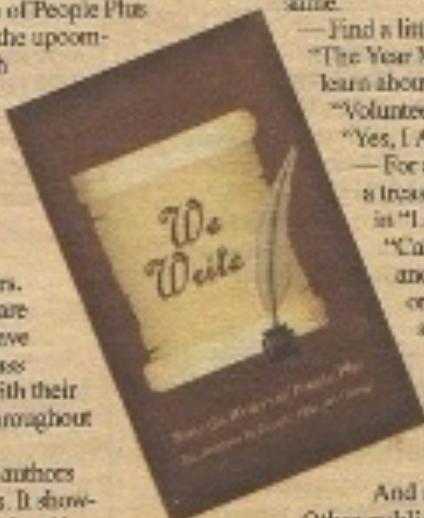
We Write features 17 authors and works by 12 artists. It showcases 77 poems, 76 stories, 11 pictures, and 69 illustrations, as well as the authors' photos and biographies. There also is an introduction by longtime member and former staffer Frank Connors.

An Author's Chat on the new publication has been scheduled at People Plus for Wednesday, Nov. 9 at 2 pm. Since no Author's Chat took place for the group's last book, *Write From the Heart*, because of the COVID pandemic, it also will be included in the presentation.

Inside *We Write* readers will find many wonderful writing examples, such as:

- Mysteries that will make you search for an answer in "The Harp" and "The Question."

- One will get an understanding of why the writers write in "Why I Write," "I Write," and "On Writing."
- Heart-felt memoirs like "Pooh Swing" and "My Favorite Teacher."



— Or "Lunch With A Seagull" may make you recall similar experiences in your own life, or maybe the thrill of a "Wednesday Afternoon Sled Ride" will do the same.

— Find a little state history in "The Year Maine Burned," or learn about volunteering in "Volunteers," or scouting in "Yes, I Am Still A Girl Scout."

— For animal lovers, there is a treasure trove of reading in "Life With Woody,"

"Calleigh," "My Grady," and "A Dog's Love,"

or for those into wild animals, there is

"Avian and Human Nesting Habits,"

"Chipmunks," and

"Here Come the Crows."

And so much more.

Other publications by the Write On Writers at People Plus include:

— *Poets and Storytellers: Writing for fun*

— *Poets and Storytellers: Writing for fun, volume II*

— *It's about Time: Poems & Stories read by the authors*

— *Moses and Memories: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry*

— *From Maine and Away: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry*

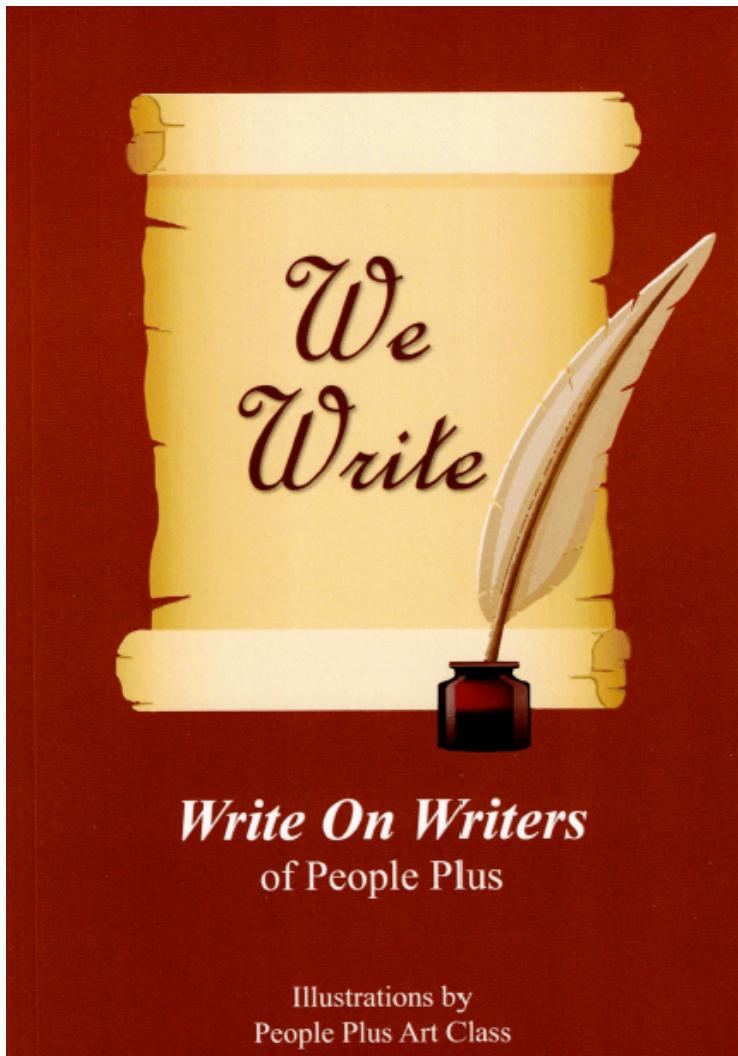
— *Times and Seasons: Writings from the Heart of Maine: An Anthology of Prose and Poetry*

— *Journeys and Reflections*

Out of Our Minds

Write From the Heart

We Write, along with many other Write On Writers books, can be purchased from amazon.com or at the Center.



We Write

An anthology of prose and poetry by the *Write On Writers*
of People Plus in Brunswick, Maine © 2022

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Write From the Heart

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Publication by People Plus

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January 2022

People Plus News – Building Community for 45 Years!

Poems and Prose



Farewell, Gladys! We'll miss you!

SAD
By Bonnie Wheeler

We had no idea
Gladys would light a fire at People Plus
She became the go-to person
Who got things done
The one who gave hugs with lunch
The one who solved your problems
A friend you were proud to have
Everyone's life she touched will agree
Gladys is Heaven's gift
We wish her a healthy, happy new home.

Dear Gladys,
You have been such a delight
to know at Write on Writers. You have
a great sense of humor. During the brief
time I was doing the prompts and leading
the meeting, when I really did not have a
clue as to what I was doing, you were so
kind and understanding.

I enjoy hearing your heartwarming
stories each week. How will we ever get
along without your keeping track of all the
comings and goings of the people, past and
present, in our group? We will have to find
a way to keep things going, but I am certain
it will take more than just one person.

I wish you the very best in your move.
I'm not sure what you will do once you
are there, but I am certain you will find a
community with interesting people who
will be delighted to have you join them.

Sincerely,
Alene Staley

Frank & Gladys ... the Hannaford 'couple'
By Frank Connors

It would take a better mind than mine to
boil down the many hours and the many
jobs that Gladys Szabo has contributed to
People Plus since she walked through our
doors, sometime in the last century, and
announced she was "new in town," and
was "wondering what we were all about." She
became an exceptional writer, driver,
director, coordinator, organizer, schemer ...
a legend in the hallowed halls of People Plus.

The story I always enjoy telling recalls
one day we were in Hannaford, shopping
for what might become the next Lunch
& Connections meal. This was a job we
guarded almost selfishly, piling into her
little black roadster, "got the shopping bags,
Frank?" and away we would go.

We filled a shopping cart (or two) full of
food, discussing quantities, arguing about
qualities, deciding often on the fly what to
buy, changing the menu as we bounced from
produce, to meat, to canned Harvard beets!
It became a monthly ritual, always a good
time, and there came the day when we rolled
up to the checkout, (Donna was our favorite)

and we were asked, "did you and your wife
find everything you needed?" Gladys' face got red, I smiled, and we both
told Donna that Gladys and I were friends,
shopping for People Plus. She rolled her eyes
in disbelief, laughed, and said, "I watch you
shop, you look and act like an old married
couple!"

The story could end there but it didn't.
Several months later, shopping again at
Hannaford with Gladys, my dear Jane met
us in the milk and cheeses and asked how
we were doing. She was after a salad, I'm
remembering, we three rolled up to checkout,
to Donna. Jane waited as Gladys and I
unloaded 78 pounds of food. "Donna," says
I, recalling, nodding toward Jane, "I want
you to meet my wife, Jane!" Gladys smiled
and nodded as well. Donna looked squarely at
Jane and said, "I understand why you
prefer to shop on your own!"

Gladys, you are one in a million, People
Plus is better because we met you, and
remember, you'll always have a home in
Brunswick (maybe just not a husband!).

A STAR
By Bonnie Wheeler

You moved here
Became a star

Gladys By P.K. Allen

A very special person
Who helps people with different needs
By doing special favors
And other helpful deeds.
Whether helping in the kitchen
Or taking someone for a ride

To Gladys:
Welcome to your new home in
Connecticut. May it be filled with
the love of your family, joy and
peace. Friendship is a privilege
and a rare jewel of life — difficult

50 wings to so many
You may move on
Will never be forgotten here
Your star will burn bright

Dear Gladys:

When I arrived in Maine, six years ago, you became my first friend. And since then, I have discovered that you are "everyone's friend!" You have never refused a request for anything asked of you and I think everyone will agree that you have touched many lives.

I am not the only one that is going to miss you when you leave. But please remember we will always be as close as the phone or the computer. You can even stay in the writing group!

I wish you the very best in your new home and please stay in touch.

Love, Doris Weinberg

To a doctor, dentist, just shopping
She does it with enjoyment and pride.
She helped so much at People Plus
That she was voted Volunteer of the Year
It's so sad that she is leaving
We'll see her off with a great big tear.

CALL GLADYS
IF YOU NEED HELP

By Bonnie Wheeler

If you need a ride
If you need a meal served
If you need a cane to walk
If you need People Plus advice
If you need uplifting
If you need a friend — call Gladys

GOODBYE
By Bonnie Wheeler

You need to go
We all know
You served your time
The loss is mine
Without you here
Will be hard to bear
We love you so — Gladys

Dear Gladys:

I've known you for
20-some years. We worked
together, attended the same
church for a time, and, because
of your efforts, are now connected
through People Plus.

I was always drawn to your sincerity
and warmth. You have an open heart,
and you are welcoming, gracious, and
supportive. It's little wonder you are
so loved and will be so missed. I
count it one of my greatest fortunes
to have you as a friend.

Ellen Brown

to find and impossible to replace.
The way you come to the aid of
others is amazing and I thank you
for all our shared activities here
in Maine — cherished memories
I will forever hold in my heart.

We will miss you and hope you
will return for a visit now and then.
Warm wishes, health, happiness and God's blessings to you
and yours.

Love, Betty Bavor

Write on Writers
Wednesdays at 1 pm

GLADYS By Bonnie Wheeler

She's the pretty blonde
With a touch of gray
Who blew into People Plus
One lucky day.
She welcomes you,
She serves you lunch,
She drives you to the store,
She has become everything
To everyone and more.
She hugs your neck,
Takes care of us all,
She sits with the Write On Writers
And puts pictures on the wall.
When you need to get a job done,
Gladys is the "go to one."
She is a gift to People Plus,
And she is my angel friend.



Leaving with mixed emotions

By Gladys Szabo

I am delighted, after ten years, to have our family reunited to living together. My son-in-law has traveled home every other weekend since the base closed and couldn't find a job. We stayed here so all their daughters could graduate with their friends with whom they started school.

I am extremely sad to leave my extraordinary life I have built here in Brunswick.

My emotions jump back and forth constantly. Life brings tough choices and this is one of the hardest, but in my heart, I know I am making the right one. Family is always the first choice.

My life has been touched by so many in an abundant amount of ways. I am so blessed to have so many caring and loving friends. I

wish I could hug and thank each of you personally, but it would take more time than I have left before moving.

I won't say goodbye as that is too final. I expect to come back to reunite with many as one of my granddaughters will be living here for another year.

I am actually returning to Connecticut where I came from 21 years ago and have many friends around the state that are excited at the chance to get together again. Still not in my everyday life.

My phone number will be the same and I would love to hear from you. I bid farewell until we meet again.

As Bob Hope sang,
"THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES"
HUGS - Gladys Szabo



BITTER SWEET WAS THE WORD OF THE DAY at the May lunch. No one wants to say goodbye to



Poems & Prose

People Plus News – Building Community for 45 Years!

October 2022



YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO BE CREATIVE! The Write On Writers group loves to celebrate during their meetings. Last month they celebrated all the writers who are in their 90s! (L-R: Russ Kinne, Betty Bavor, Doris Weinberg and Virginia Sabin) Want to join in the fun? Write On Writers meets at the Center on Wednesdays at 1 pm.

Don't miss this Author's Chat!

Write On Writers group launch 10th book on Nov. 9

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Contained amid its 185 pages are poetry, humor, prose (fiction and non-fiction),

11-2022

continued on page 6

Poems & Prose

11-2022



Author's Chat continued from page 1

memoirs, and other delightful wonders. The Write On Writers are especially pleased to have the People Plus Art Class join in this endeavor with their creative illustrations throughout the book.

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volunteering in "Volunteers," or scouting in "Yes, I Am Still A Girl Scout."

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- *Times and Seasons, Writings from the Heart of Maine; An Anthology of Prose and Poetry*
- *Journeys and Reflections*
- *Out of Our Minds*
- *Write From the Heart*

We Write, along with many other Write On Writers books, can be purchased from amazon.com or at the Center for \$14.95.



MOVING TO CONNECTICUT didn't keep Gladys Szabo from the writers' group! They love her and also new members, so come join the group if you're interested! And you just might get to meet Gladys too!

Aug 2022



DEB AND BETTY FROM THE WRITE ON WRITERS GROUP chat with participants at the 2022 Senior Health Expo last month.

Aug 2022

TOPSHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTS



JOY OF THE PEN

Annual Writing Competition for Maine Residents

Congratulations to the 2022 winners!

NOVEMBER 16, 2022 ~ EMMA ~ 0 COMMENTS

We're pleased to announce this year's winners! We will have a reception on November 29 at 6pm. Their winners will be announced and we will also reveal who our judges were this year.

The Verdi L. Tripp Fiction Award: **Jim Mentink**

Fiction Honorable Mention: **Lorelei Greenwood**

Margaret F. Tripp Poetry Award: **David Sloan**

Poetry Honorable Mention: **Cynthia Larson** for

Richard F. Snow Nonfiction Award: **Nancy Brown**

Nonfiction Honorable Mention: **John Reinhart**

The Crowbait Short Play Award: **Greg Simpson**

Short Play Honorable Mention: **Fred Cheney** for "Danced to the Fiddle"

TPL Teen Fiction Award: **Charlotte Schatz** for "To Lend a Hand"

TPL Kids Poetry Award: **Luisa Feliciano** for "Crow"



2022 Joy of the Pen winners and judges

This is Fred Cheney's short play "Dance to the Fiddle"

<https://joyofthepen.topshamlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/12/Danced-to-the-Fiddle.pdf>



Holiday Luncheon in December 2022



THE MEMBERS OF THE WRITE ON WRITERS group love to get together every Wednesday afternoon at the Center! This month Stacy got them all lined up for their annual holiday party photo! They are a fun group who love new members! Come join the fun! Dec 22

Season's Greetings from the *Write On! Writers*

Christmas Tidings *By Nonte Moody*

Here comes our faithful mailman
Driving his bright white new van.
He has a new arrival time
Of eleven fifteen this plan.

Rain or snow I will be watching
Anxiously waiting this December
For the first Christmas cards
And quickly checking for sender.

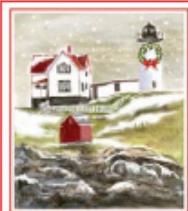
The cards come a few at a time
Some large, some small with yearly letters.
How you doing? The year been good?
I must answer with a tale that starts.

The cards are displayed on a wall:
Cards with masterful painting,
Cards with writings, cards of bells,
Cards with portraits, cards of a King.

It's Christmas time at the post office
Where stamps bought and packages sent.
They deliver cards to hill and dale
For Jesus' birth brings an exciting event.

Sparkles For All Seasons *By Deb Noone*

Sparkle can come in many forms. And at times of year:
Just goss shows you on a cold, moonless night. The stars
sparkle like muggles of gold nestled on a black velvet cloth.
After a heavy rain and the sun pours down, or on an
early morning walk, droplets of silvery dew sparkles on flower petals or on sunburnt, bright red maple leaves.
Eyes sparkle when a lover goss adoringly.
Squints sparkle as a woman in a blood red, swaying dress passes under a muted chandelier.
Fairy dust sparkles when Tinker Bell flies around.
Wendy and Peter Pan.
Fireworks sparkle and crack, filling the sky with bursts of color.
Engagement rings sparkle in candlelight.
Fireflies sparkle on a still spring night.
Vains of quartz sparkle in a found rock on a hike.
My heart sparkles and dances in a way no cardiogram
would register, when I hug my grandsons.
Christmas lights sparkle on a tree and firelight sparkles
from Hanukkah candles.
Glossy sparkles on tinsel holiday wrapping paper.
Champagne bubbles sparkle as they rise in a fluted glass.
What makes your heart sparkle?



A Christmas Greeting *By Vickie McDermott*

December in Maine
A look out the window
Is there snow?
Do we really need snow
To celebrate Christmas?

Just stop
Turn inward and enjoy
All the blessings
Of the holiday season
Trees, lights,
Friendship, and warmth



New Year's Cheer *By P.K. Allen*

Glass of wine May wars cease
Auld Lang Syne Hope for peace
In good health Midnight cheer
Sufficient wealth Happy New Year

Why *By Bonnie Wheeler*

Santa is puzzled this year
As he looks down from his sled.
Fewer Christmas lights — electricity hard to pay
Fewer cars on the road — gas
is sky high today.
Kids excited but confused
Fewer gifts under the tree
Yet the baby Jesus
is here to stay —
Hurry!
His birthday cake is
on the way.



A Remembered Miracle *By Doris Weinberg*

Another Chanukah will soon roll around.
The time is drawing near.
It always arrives in December,
close to the end of the year.

It is indeed a joyous holiday.
Often called "The Festival of Light,"
And the happy time is celebrated,
by lighting candles for eight nights.

It goes back to a long time ago
when the Jews were again at war.
Their very small army was losing.
But with great effort, they won once more.

However, their holy temple was ruined,
and the Eternal lamp had very little oil.
It would be a terrible thing if it ran out.
They would feel themselves disgraced.

A messenger was sent.
But it would take many days.
However, once again, the Lord showed his ways.
That tiny bit of oil, miraculously lasted eight days.

For all the years since, that miracle is remembered.
Children are told the story.
The courageous victory and the amazing drop of oil,
is retold in all its glory!

I will be setting my menorah
in the window for all to see.
And each night light another bulb
to show that we are all free.

The family will gather for a joyous meal,
saying prayers and sharing gifts.
We are reminded of our strong ancestors,
who provided this beautiful uplift!



Beauty of Spirit *By Bob Mulligan*

What then is impossible to see
That which we hear in our inner ear
Feel in the heart, know in our deepest soul
Beauty of spirit
Indescribable, glowing
Vaguely familiar yet ancient
Welcomes where accepted
Accepted where welcomed
Warmly



Snowflake *By Sally Hartika*

She watched the swirling snowflakes
Dancing as they fall.
When a large one landed on her glove
She studied it quite well.

"Look," she cried, "at the pretty shape.
Do they all look like this?" she asked.
Her mother explained all are different
Which left little Becky agitated.

Then, as she watched, the flake melted,

And the child began to cry.
"Why can't it stay with me," she said,
"Why does it have to die?"

"It doesn't die," her Mom replied.
"It just alters in current form."

It has now changed into water

And has other jobs to perform.

When it trickles to the ground
It'll make its way to the river
And then all the way to the sea,
Where it will become a life giver.

The sun will draw it up
into great big clouds in the sky.
Then it will come down as rain
Or even snow; it won't die.

When it soaks into the ground
It will give water to plants and trees
So they will drink it up and grow,
And we eat our food from these."

Little Becky thought for a moment,
And finally said she was pleased
That her snowflake would do some good
And her worries were now eased.

Christmas Trees *By Sue Luskel*

Early on that wondrous morn-
When that little babe was born.

The mighty oak was there to guard-
All night long in the manger yard.

Birch tree leaned in for a sight.
Aspen shivered with delight.

Balsam sniffed. Palm just sighed.
Maple blushed all o'er with pride.

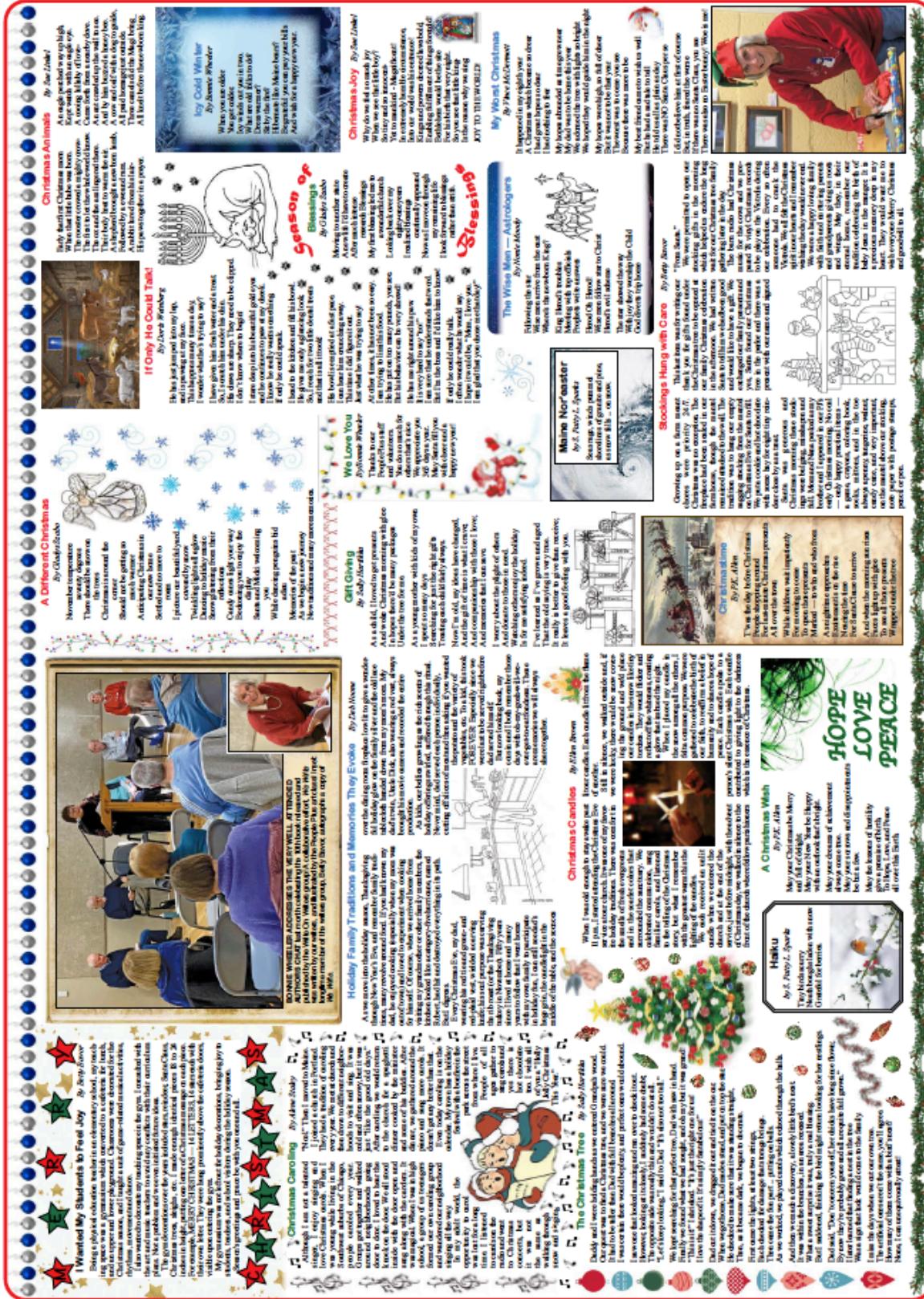
Elm hovered near the baby boy-
While Willow wept her tears of joy.

Happy Fir was all-aglow
As Apple merrily bowed down low.

White Pine, with all in accord-
Raised his arms to praise the Lord!

Write On! Write *1953-2022*





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I Wanted My Students to Feel Joy *By Betty Bavor*

Being a physical education teacher in an elementary school, my teaching space was a gymnasium which converted to a cafeteria for lunch, and an upper and lower playground. Classrooms were decorated for the Christmas season, and I taught a unit of game-related musical activities, rhythms, movement and dance.

I also wanted to decorate my teaching space in the gym. I consulted with the art and music teachers to avoid any conflicts with their curriculum plans. Not a problem and we even initiated future ideas.

The gym decorations over the years included stars, reindeer, Santa Claus, Christmas trees, sleighs, etc. I made enough identical pieces 18 to 24 inches in height, putting one letter of a Christmas message on each piece. For example, MERRY CHRISTMAS — 14 LETTERS, 14 stars each with their own letter. They were hung prominently above the cafeteria doors, visible upon entering the gym.

My gymnasium was not left out for holiday decorations, bringing joy to students, teachers, and school visitors during the holiday season.

Season's greetings and peace be with you one and all.

**Christmas Caroling***By Alene Staley*

Although I am not a talented singer, I enjoy singing and love Christmas carols. When I was young while living in the Southwest suburbs of Chicago, people caroled every year. Groups got together and walked around neighborhoods going door to door. I loved to hear the knock on the door. We all stood inside with the door open and sang along with the carolers. It was magical. When I was in high school, a group of us teenagers formed our own caroling group and wandered our neighborhood singing all the way.

In my adult world, the opportunity to carol was lost for a long time. I listened to carols on the radio and went to Christmas concerts, but it was not the same as walking through snow and singing

"Noel." Then I moved to Maine. I joined a church in Portland. They had a tradition of caroling every year. We met at church and then drove to different neighborhoods to visit and sing. It was cold and often snowy, but it was just "like the good old days." After caroling, we would return to the church for a spaghetti dinner cooked by the minister and some of his buddies. After dinner, we gathered around the piano and sang more carols. It doesn't get any better than that.

Even today caroling is on the calendar. My town has a holiday festival with a bonfire in the park across the street from where I live.

People of all ages gather to sing carols and yes there is hot chocolate too. I wish all of you a "Holly Jolly Christmas This Year."



“snow and singing” This year.”

The Christmas Tree

By Sally Hartikka

Daddy and I were holding hands as we entered Grandpa's wood. Our quest was to find a Christmas tree, and we were sure we could. It had to be taller than Dad with full branches all around.

I was certain there would be plenty, and perfect ones would abound. I saw one that looked amazing and ran over to check it out.

However, looking at it closely, I suddenly had some doubt; The opposite side was really thin and wouldn't do at all. “Let's keep looking,” I said to Dad. “It's also not too tall.”

We kept searching for that perfect tree. Dad with saw in hand. Finally we found what we had sought, and oh my, but it was grand!

“This is it!” I shrieked. “It's just the right one for us! I love the shape of it. It's simply fantabulous!”

Dad cut it down, we dragged it out and tied it on the car. When we got home, Dad made a stand, and put on top the star.

He checked to make sure that it was standing straight, Then, as it became dark, we began to decorate.

First came the lights, at least two strings, Each checked for damage that storage brings. Then came the fun part ... putting on balls.

As we worked, we played carols which echoed through the halls. And then we made a discovery, a lovely little bird's nest.

It was within the branches, in an area recessed. What a sweet surprise it was, truly a real blessing. But I saddened, thinking the bird might return looking for her nestlings.

Dad said, “Don't concern yourself, her chicks have long since flown.” By now they're probably gone and all are quite full grown.” I later learned that finding a nest in the tree

Was a sign that luck would come to the family. I miss the days when we cut our own tree.

The artificial ones aren't the same, you'll agree. How many of them come with a bird's nest? None, I can unequivocally attest!



Christmas Candles

By Ellen Brown

When I was old enough to stay awake past 11 p.m., I started attending the Christmas Eve service at our church. It was one of my favorite holiday traditions. There was comfort in

the smells of fresh evergreens and in the scarlet colors that surrounded the sanctuary. We celebrated communion, sang familiar carols, and listened to the telling of the Christmas story, but what I remember with the greatest warmth is the lighting of the candles.

We each received an unlit candle when we entered the church and at the end of the service, just before midnight, with the advent of Christmas day, we walked in silence to the front of the church where fellow parishioners which is the essence of Christmas.



A Christmas Wish

By P.K. Allen

May your Christmas be Merry and full of delight.

May your New Year be Happy with an outlook that's bright.

May your dreams of achievement always come true. May your sorrows and disappointments be but a few.

May the lessons of hostility give a promise of birth. To Hope, Love, and Peace all over this Earth.



HOPE LOVE PEACE



Haiku

by S. Patty L. Sparks

Tiny birds scurry
Neath boughs laden with snow
Grateful for berries.



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A Different Christmas

By Gladys Szabo

November temperature
seventy degrees
There should be snow on
the trees
Christmas is around the
corner
Should not be getting so
much warmer
Anticipating Christmas in
our new home
Settled and no more to
roam
I picture our beautiful yard
covered by snow
Twinkling lights all aglow
Dancing to holiday music
Snow glistening from their
reflections
Candy canes light your way
Beckoning you to enjoy the
display
Santa and Micki welcoming
you
While dancing penguins bid
adieu
Memories of the past
As we begin a new journey
New traditions and many more memories.



Gift Giving

By Sally Hartikka

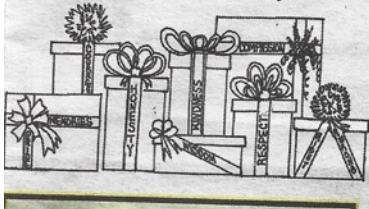
As a child, I loved to get presents
And woke Christmas morning with glee
In hopes there'd be many packages
Under the tree for me.

As a young mother with kids of my own
I spent so many days
Searching for just the right gifts
Treating each child fairly always.

Now I'm old, my ideas have changed,
And the gift of time is what I crave;
And companionship with those I love;
And memories that I can save.

I worry about the plight of others
And donate to those in need.
Watching others enjoy the holiday
Is for me satisfying indeed.

I've learned as I've grown and aged
That the old saying is very true.
It really is better to give than receive;
It leaves a good feeling with you.



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As a young mother with kids of my own
I spent so many days
Searching for just the right gifts
Treating each child fairly always.
Now I'm old, my ideas have changed,

We Love You

By Bonnie Wheeler

Thanks to our
People Plus staff
and volunteers.
You do so much for
others that's nice
We appreciate you
365 days a year.
May Santa fill you
with cheer and a
happy new year!

Season of Blessings

By Gladys Szabo

Moving to another state
After much intense
research Blessings
A new life I'd have to create
My first blessing led me to
a wonderful church
Looking back over my
eighty-one years
I realized blessings
Now as I move on through
my remaining life
I look forward to blessings
rather than strife.

Christmas Animals

By Sue Linkel

Early that first Christmas morn
When that little babe was born.
The rooster crowed a mighty crow-
The first to let the whole world know.
The ox and the ass lingered there.
Their body heat to warm the air.
A shepherd brought a newborn lamb,
Followed by a ewe and ram.
A rabbit huddled from his lair-
His paws together in a prayer.



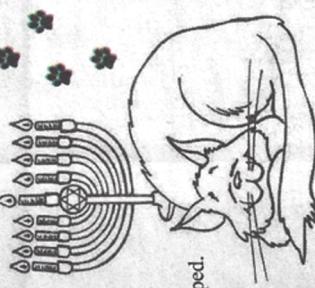
If Only He Could Talk!

By Doris Weinberg

He has just jumped into my lap,
and is pawing at my face.
This happens many times a day,
I wonder what he's trying to say?
I have given him fresh water and a treat.
So, I scratch him under his chin.
His claws are sharp. They need to be clipped.
I don't know where to begin!
I stare deep into his beautiful gold eyes
and he continues to paw at my cheek.
I know he really wants something.
If only he could speak.
I head to the kitchen and fill his bowl.
He gives me only a glancing look.
So, I reach for two little dental treats
and that is all it took!

His bowl is emptied at a fast pace.
I can hear him crunching away.
This time I did figure it out.
Just what he was trying to say!

At other times, it has not been so easy.
I am trying to limit his food.
He has put on too many pounds, you see.
But his behavior can be very shrewd!
He has me right around his paw.
It is very hard to say "no."
I am sure that he understands that word.
But I'm the boss and I'd like him to know!
If only he could really talk.
I often wonder what he would say.



Icy Cold Winter

By Bonnie Wheeler

An eagle perched way up high,
Kept watch with an eagle eye.
A cooing lullaby of love-
Came forth from a nearby dove.
An ant crawled up the wall to see.
And by him buzzed a honey bee.
A cow and calf with a dog to guide,
All paid homage just outside.
Three camels did the Magi bring.
All knelt before the newborn king.



Christmas Joy

By Sue Linkel

Why do we feel so much joy
When we see that little boy?
So tiny and so innocent-
Yet to mankind - Magnificent!
In extremely humble circumstance,
Into our world was his entrance!
Kings and powers decreed laws bold,
Enabling fulfillment of things foretold!
Bethlehem would be the site
For his birth that very night.
So you see that little king-
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We Love You *By Bonnie Wheeler*

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This time I did figure it out.
Just what he was trying to say!

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Blessing

Moving to another state
A new life I have to create
After much intense
research Blessings

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But his behavior can be very shrewd!
He has me right around his paw.
It is very hard to say "no!"

I am sure that he understands that word.
But I'm the boss and I'd like him to know!
If only he could really talk.
I often wonder what he would say.
I hope it would be, "Mom, I love you.
I am glad that you chose me that day!"

Christmas Joy *By Sue Linkel*

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When we see that little boy?
So tiny and so innocent.
Yet to mankind - Magnificent!

In extremely humble circumstance,
Into our world was his entrance!
Kings and powers decreed laws bold,
Enabling fulfillment of things foretold!

Bethlehem would be the site
For his birth that very night.
So you see that little king.
Is the reason why we sing:
JOY TO THE WORLD!

My Worst Christmas *By Vince McDermott*

It happened in my eighth year
A Christmas which became so drear
I had great hopes so dear
I had nothing to fear

My hopes abounded as time grew near
My dad was to be home this year
We adorned the tree with lights so bright
We hoped they would guide him in the night

My hopes were high, so full of cheer
But it was not to be that year
The worst was to come you see
Because there was more to be

My best friend came to wish us well
But he had a sad tale to tell
He told us all as plain as day
There was NO Santa Claus per se

I did not believe him at first of course
But, in truth, feared the worse
If there was no Santa Claus, you see
There was also no Easter bunny! Woe is me!

The Wise Men — Astrologers *By Nonie Moody*

Following the star
Wise men arrive from the east
Where's the new-born King?

King Herod's troubles
Meeting with top officials
Prophets write answers
Herod Oh Herod!

Wise men follow star to Christ
Herod's evil scheme

The star showed the way
With joy they worship the Child
God diverts trip home

Maine Nor'easter *By S. Party L. Sparks*

Seas rage, winds pummel
shorelines of granite and pine,
as snow falls ... on snow.

Stocklings Hung with Care *By Betty Bavor*

Growing up on a farm meant
chores were priority 24/7.
Christmas was no exception. The
fireplace had been sealed in our
farmhouse, though the mantel
remained attached to the wall. The
tradition was to hang our empty
sagging stocking from the mantel
on Christmas Eve for Santa to fill.
We put a cookie and hot chocolate
with some hay for eight tiny rein-
deer close by as a treat.

This last item was for writing our
thank you for gifts found under
the Christmas tree to be opened at
our family Christmas celebration
in the afternoon. We had written
Santa to tell him we had been good
and would like to have a gift. We
exchanged our family presents and
yes, Santa found our Christmas
tree in the parlor and there was a
present with our name and signed

"From Santa."

We were permitted to open our
stocking gifts in the morning
which helped us endure the long
wait for our Christmas tree family
gathering later in the day.

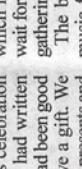
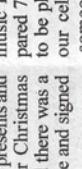
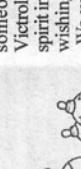
The barn radio had Christmas
music for the cows and we pre-
pared 78 vinyl Christmas records
to be played on the Victrola during
our celebration. Every so often
someone had to crank the
Victrola. We all felt the Christmas
spirit in our hearts and I remember
wishing the day would never end.

We were a happy, loving family
with faith and nurturing parents
and grandparents giving us roots
and wings. May they, in their
eternal home, remember our
tradition celebrating the birth of
baby Jesus in the manger. It is











<img alt="A black and white illustration of the three wise men following the star." data-bbox="13050 400

The Gift *By Ellen Brown*

When you're grown and perhaps have children of your own,
And they ask you what you recall of the time when you were small,
I wonder as I sit here today what you'll tell them, what you'll say.
Will you talk about the time you traveled here from palm to pine?
So excited to see snow, "Gave it time," we passed you though.
It was March, the fickle month.
There were challenges to confront,
A different life to begin,
But gradually you settled in.
What will you remember as you age
Of those early childhood days?
Will you remember read-a-louds each night before you slept?
And stories that from our shared imagination leapt?
Dancing in the kitchen waving scarves above our heads.
A kaleidoscope of colors: blues and greens and reds
Being able to explore
The natural world outside our door.
Helping light the fire under papa's watchful eye.
Playing UNO, hide and seek, I Spy.
Will you remember parties, each with its own theme,
And hot chocolates in tall mugs piled high with whipping cream?
Building forts of all sorts.
Pulling cushions, pillows, towels, sheets,
Where the line with class meets.
We potted flowers every spring
To place upon the deck.
A time of togetherness
I hope you'll recollect.
You're all still young for goodness sake,
We have more memories to make.
But when you are old enough
To view life in hindsight
Remember memories fade
Like sunset into night.
If you remember nothing else
I want you to know this
I can't imagine how I'd feel
If all of this I'd missed.
We're so happy you are here.
We can see you, touch you, hold you near.
You gift us every day anew,
The gift of memories we give to you.
Remember love, remember care
Remember we are always there.

Christmas Time
By P.K. Allen

Christmas bells are ringing
Carolers are singing
It's a time of peace
A time of love
A time to celebrate
The One above



Thank You
for sponsoring
the holiday
edition of
"Poems & Prose!"

Betty Bavor
John & Sue Linkel
Delsora Lowe, Author
Audrey McLaughlin
Naoma Moody
Helen Small
• Write On Writers

Member Moment

"Member Moment" gives people who participate in programs and activities at People Plus a chance to tell us a little bit about themselves. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions some day, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.

Getting to know Ellen Brown

Hello, my name is Ellen Brown and I just wanted to let you know I recently turned 70 years old. Quite honestly, my brain still has a hard time accepting that fact.

I have lived in this great town of Brunswick for 23 years, 20 of which I spent working for Independence Association — assisting with adults with developmental disabilities. As I was debating my departure date, the COVID pandemic made that decision easy for me.

It was Gladys, an already long-time People Plus member and someone I had worked with, who introduced me to the wonderful going-on at the Center and the Writers group. I started on Zoom and I was hooked. It was a perfect fit to minimize the isolation brought on during COVID and to my adjust to retirement.

Writing on Writers at People Plus introduced me to talented and creative writers, who are as diverse as their stories. It challenges me to think creatively. I look forward to each meeting. It's also an activity that continues beyond the time we're together. When I'm alone, I'm spending time thinking about and preparing my writing to bring to the group.

Being creative has always been important in my life. From planning themed parties to hand-made holiday decorations, and to sewing and writing, it is the part of me that is the greatest joy to share with others!

A Memorable Christmas *By Sue Linkel*

I came home from the hospital with a present
- a new baby brother.
The nurse put him in a large red stocking
for the trip home. He was number eleven.
You might think baby eleven would
be a ho-hum, but his siblings were excited. They all wanted to hold him.
In those days we weren't told ahead if it was a boy or girl - the boys won - Six to five!

A Lit Window *By Deb Noone*

Big, soft flakes swirled and drifted lazily
Some landed on her face, a touch of chill
Others hit the pavement and disappeared
Temps hovering at the juncture between frozen and wet
Through the window
A bright light, a beacon in the inky night
The figure bent over a chunk of wood
His dark hair flopping over his forehead
The steady rhythm of slide and flip, slide and flip, slide and flip
Each freed wooden sliver floating toward the floor, out of sight
She imagined a tiny pile of soft chips
Scattered about his feet
At the block of wood took shape
Would it be Santa, a bag of toys, slung across his shoulder
Maybe a reindeer to pull his sleigh
Or a tiny antique truck, soon painted red
Which lucky child would find such a treasure in a stocking
hung from a mantle
His head lifted from the intricate task
and turned
Gaze met through the frost-rimmed window
and held
The magic of the moment caught in her heart
before she turned and slipped into the dark
Her heart pounding
Her step hurried
Her head filled with fantasies

Dear Santa,

They say people my age
should not *STILL* believe
in you. ... Well, guess
what, you'll find my home-
made ginger molasses
cookies and a nice Merlot
next to the recliner — you
know the drill.

Merry Christmas, Santa!

Yours truly,
S. Patty L. Sparks

Winter
By Bonnie Wheeler

A cold blast of air
It's winter's dare
Ducks and geese fly south
Or buy long underwear



A Christmas Surprise *By Bill Perry*

Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house it was much too cold for any mouse to survive. My two sisters, one older and one younger, had arrived in southern Germany to spend the holidays with my wife and me. Snow lay on the ground throughout the city. Jack Frost was doing exactly what he should, and all was perfect for a wonderful German Christmas.

We had a freshly cut Christmas tree in the living room of our 200-year-old apartment in the center of town. We also had an Advent wreath, a requisite item for a perfect German Christmas. There was a goose in the oven, and we had prepared all of the appropriate dishes for the Christmas Eve meal.

We lit all four of the Advent candles on the wreath, which was perched behind my younger sister on the back of the sofa. The candles representing hope, love, joy, and peace were a perfect combination for this special Christmas season. We were all enjoying the candles and the aroma from the cooking goose wafting through the apartment as the wreath suddenly caught fire behind my younger sister's head.

The flames began to rise, and we knew that in a short time everything in the room would be on fire unless we acted quickly. My older sister, the scientist in the family, had decided that it would be best to smother the flames, while I, a practical technical type, had decided that dousing the flames in the kitchen sink would be best.

We were at a stalemate. My older sister reached a pillow from the sofa, while I grabbed the flaming wreath and ran toward the kitchen sink. My younger sister and wife sat in disbelief at our actions wondering what the fate of the burning wreath would be. As I hurried toward the kitchen sink, my older sister was making every effort to smother the flaming wreath in my arms.

As we reached the kitchen sink, I dropped the pillow on the flames at the same time that I turned on the water. My sister and I looked at each other in an understanding way, knowing that our learned life strategies had just been played out, and simply said "Merry Christmas." The goose was a very tasty reward for all of us.

Gabrion says he is retiring as PP editor!

(We'll believe it when we see it)

Patrick Gabrion has announced that he will be leaving his position as editor of the People Plus newspaper at the end of June, 2023. Thus, the July 2023 issue will be his last one after nearly four years on the job.

In his exit letter to Executive Director Stacy Frizzle-Edgerton, Patrick said, in part, "The end of my full-time journalism career at The (Brunswick) Times Record

Jan 2023

in 2018 and subsequent part-time hiring at People Plus a few months later have provided a smooth transition period, as I've attempted to adjust to the unknowns of retirement. And for that, I thank you."

"I'm not sure any of us thought we would survive the retirement of Frank Conners from the newspaper, but Patrick helped us through that transition and showed us the way forward. We have loved working with him for the last four years and we will miss him here at the Center, and as part of our People Plus family," said Frizzle-Edgerton.

"Also, I'm grateful for having had the opportunity to work for and represent such an outstanding organization as People Plus. It's too bad every community doesn't possess such a thriving gathering place for all ages," Patrick concluded.

So, for Patrick, it will be more free time for being retired ... and for riding bicycles. "We hope we haven't seen the last of Patrick as his monthly columns are so fun to read. I'm still working on him to provide a column here and there... Fingers crossed, folks!" said Frizzle-Edgerton.



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March 2023

HELP WANTED!



Join our fun team!

Since Patrick has decided to retire, the People Plus organization needs a staff copywriter to fill his shoes. The job entails an hourly pay rate for writing articles, doing an interview or two every month, editing when needed and reprising previous articles. The position averages about five hours a week, and the bulk of the work can be done from home. Computer skills are a necessity along with an interest in interacting with members at the Center, attending fun meals, social gatherings, and events; and generally becoming a part of the People Plus newspaper production team!



PEOPLE PLUS MEMBER, DEB NOONE, meets with Bowdoin student, Ayhorng, as part of the Midcoast Literacy "Elder Memoirs Project." These two will meet once a week for 8 weeks and Deb will share stories and memories from her life. Ayhorng will document Deb's personal history and create an original, short book that captures her special moments and memories.

Member Moment

"Member Moment" gives people who participate in programs and activities at People Plus a chance to tell us a little bit about themselves. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions some day, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.

Getting to know Bunny Carlisle

By Charmaine Daniels

"I love change," said Ruth Ann "Bunny" Carlisle, busting the myth that older people embrace routine. At 83, the former drama major continues to celebrate the spirit of adventure even as she has started to reflect on some of her memories during the weekly Write on Writers group at People Plus.

Those memories include working for American Airlines for 35 years, first as a stewardess and then as a training supervisor. Growing up near Philadelphia, Carlisle attended Catholic schools and after graduating from Marywood College, landed a summer job where she learned about openings for stewardesses. Feeling like she couldn't see herself going to New York City alone to seek an acting job, or more likely, waitressing for a long time before she did, she decided to apply.

"I was the spy in the sky," she said of her supervisor career, referring to making sure the airline crew members were serving the customers properly, looking professional, and mastering emergency landing procedures. Though she never experienced a crash landing or other crisis, she said she had traded out of a flight that ended up crashing into a mountain in the Caribbean. Although she didn't know that then, that flight she almost boarded was just the first of several incidents where she narrowly escaped death.

"I loved airplanes," she said, remembering how she even relished the smell of the jet fuel and the feel of the tarmac underfoot in the days before jetways made it easy to walk right on board. Because she had enough seniority, she managed to sign on for the inaugural flight of the Boeing 747, as well as the inaugural flight of the DC-10.

When she was flying, she felt like she was in step with what was going on in the world. And she met celebrities, even dating Gene Autry and Hoagy Carmichael.

She said she initially chose a career over marriage, but at the age of 38, married entrepreneur Bob Carlisle, a native Californian. She had moved to Los Angeles and was flying out of there as her base when a friend told her about a man he thought she should meet. She and Bob were married 41 years before he passed away several years ago. Because they both put a positive spin on life even in times of trouble, they were well-matched and weathered his company's bankruptcy as well as her subsequent serious illness together.

"I had an unusual and exciting life, and I married an unusual, exciting man," she said. "He was not afraid of taking risks, and neither was I," she added. Once she married, she gave up her supervisory role and returned to being a flight attendant so her schedule could be more flexible.

How did she get to Maine? Her younger brother had gone to Colby College and settled in Brunswick, so she had visited



often. Besides family, another thing that drew her to Maine was art, specifically the art of the Wyeths. "I love art, and I like creative people," she said. In Carmel, California, she and Bob ran an art gallery at one point and she sometimes flew to Europe to buy pieces there for the gallery. Several pieces still hang in her apartment.

Although she has acted in community theater and dinner theater ("I've always been comfortable talking in front of people"), she enjoys art now by attending plays, concerts and galleries. She also enjoys watching old movies for the production values in costumes, lighting, and make-up.

Still a practicing Catholic, she has kept her faith alive over the years and said that no matter where she has traveled in the world, the magnificence of creation is always present. She muses that her faith and being so trained in survival in the airlines helped her survive a serious car crash and an illness 10 years ago that put her on a ventilator for two weeks.

Of living at Thornton Oaks in Brunswick, she said, "This is home now and I've got my foothold here. But I'm always ready to go." One of the places she's going is back up in the air, in this case in a biplane ride she won at the People Plus auction in April. She will soar in an open-air cockpit over Penobscot Bay. "I like the magic of flying," she said, smiling.

What's to come in the future? "We don't know what's to come in the next years. It's the last adventure ... and there's still so much to learn."

In the meantime, she said she believes in being grateful. With her clear, bright blue eyes, she added a final nugget of wisdom: "Always go forward." Or in her case, forward and up!

We've Seen It All: lessons from six long lives

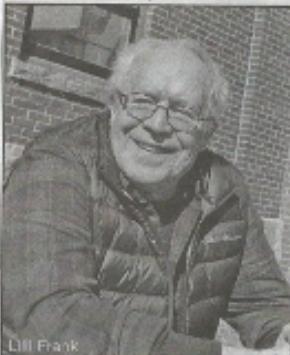
By Maya Lamm, The Bowdoin Orient
April 27, 2023

Frank, 77

Frank has lived in Maine his whole life. He has been the town manager of Bowdoinham, a paratrooper in the airborne infantry during the Vietnam War and a photographer.

Q: Would you have done anything differently in your twenties?

A: In my twenties? I had my 21st birthday in Vietnam. Yeah, we were young. I've always said that the last thing of value to my service is that none of my kids or grandchildren have had to serve in a war. I hope that stays. I wish I [had] finished school. I went back to school right after I came home from Vietnam, but it was a very unpleasant experience, so I never finished. My mother, God bless her, got her degree in English and history when she was 60. I have six brothers and sisters. She went nights and Saturdays and did all kinds of stuff to get that degree. She showed it to me and said, "Now you got to get yours."



Bill, 75 June 2023

Bill lived abroad for 35 years and developed a knack for languages while intercepting Russian transmissions during the Cold War. He then became an English as a Second Language professor. Bill was a spy, a teacher and a world traveler. But equally as important, Bill was a devoted father.

Q: What are you proudest of?

A: I just became a grandfather. I was home with my oldest daughter for the first two months of the baby's life. It was so wonderful to see the cycle of what I used to do with her. She's now doing it all to this little baby, and it's all new to her. I'm just there, smiling. When I changed the diaper, she was like, "How do you know how to do that?" And I said, "I used to change yours!"

Welcome Charmaine!



We'd like to welcome Charmaine Daniels of Brunswick, the new writer for the People Plus newspaper. Taking over for the retiring Patrick Gabriele, Charmaine is a longtime writer and editor, having previously worked at the Portland Press Herald as a copy editor, as well as at idexx. For many years, she was the editor of the Saint Joseph's College Magazine and the media relations point person there.

Charmaine has lived in Maine since 1974, except for several years in Madison, Wisconsin, where she attended graduate school. Originally from Williamsport, Pennsylvania, she is a graduate of Penn State and the University of Wisconsin. Her son, Jacob, lives in Portland and is a historian.

She looks forward to meeting our members and writing about their experiences. "Everyone has a story to tell, and people always want to know what other people have done in their life so far and what motivates them now," Charmaine says. "I believe we're hardwired for stories and I will enjoy highlighting our members, as well as all the great activities that go on here at People Plus."

An avid pickleball player, Charmaine also folk dances at People Plus every Friday and said she looks forward to it all week. "I like coming together in community, having fun, and learning new things. It makes all the difference," she notes.

If community, fun, and learning sounds familiar, it's because that's what happens here. "The energy in this building amazes me," Charmaine adds. "I look forward to sharing the stories of People Plus with all of you."

Note: If anyone has a story idea, you can email Charmaine at: news@peopleplusmaine.org

July 2023

September 2023

People Plus News – Building Community for 45 Years!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US! The People Plus writers group has a fun annual summer birthday celebration every year. And this year was no different with a group of around 20 folks gathering for a potluck luncheon complete with birthday cake! The Write On Writers have been sharing poetry and prose for 28 years. This welcoming group meets every Wednesday at 1 pm at the Center and encourages newcomers to come try it out!

undated

People Plus News – Building Community for 45 Years!

Member Moment

"Member Moment" gives people who participate in programs and activities at People Plus a chance to tell us a little bit about themselves. Don't be surprised if you might be asked a few questions some day, after all, everyone has a story to tell. Thank you.

Getting to know Claude Bonang

My name is Claude Bernard Bonang. I am a resident of Brunswick, and I am 91 years old.

I was born in a house at 9 Bowker Street in Brunswick, Maine, one of nine children — six girls and three boys, and I was the seventh born. The house is located adjacent to the entrance of Bowdoin's Whittier Field, where a great deal of my childhood took place doing a variety of things — playing baseball and football, climbing about in the grandstand, skating in the winter time. And after football games, looking for money and things under the bleachers dropped by spectators.

The main entrance to Whittier Field, with its brick structure and iron gates, and the surrounding wooded area of pine and maple trees provided the neighborhood boys with plenty of opportunities for climbing and playing "Cowboys and Indians." And in the

summer, when college was out, I spent time riding my bicycle about the various pathways on campus.

I graduated from St. John's Elementary School in 1944, Brunswick High School in 1948, and Bowdoin College in 1952.

How and when did I become a member of People Plus? In the 1990s, the organization was known as the 55 Plus Center and was located in the St. Charles rectory and church. I was a member of the writers' group and we published two books of our writings titled "Poets and Storytellers Writing for Fun" Volume I in July of 1999 and Volume II in November of 2000.

I continued to be a member when the name was changed to People Plus and the new location on Union Street. I think that People Plus is great, in that it provides the opportunity for people to participate in a variety of activities and interact with each other in a number of different ways.

The things I enjoy the most is attending the variety of guest appearances, as well as interacting with various People Plus members.

One thing about my life people might be interested to know about, is that in December of 1996 I self-published a book about my family and growing up in Brunswick. I did it in verse and illustrated with pen and ink sketches and photos; it was titled "Memories in Verse." I had two printings, the first of 300 copies and the second of 225, both of which sold out.

In November of 2006, I self-published a second edition, which included 28 new anecdotal stories in verse having to do with events and changes that the town of Brunswick has undergone over the years, as well as things that pertain to my siblings and me, and six stories in prose dealing primarily with some of my life experiences.

Because of the added prose, I titled the second edition "Memories in Verse and Prose." Of the printing of 1,000 copies, so far I've sold more than 900. The more than 100 letters that I have received from customers with complimentary comments about my books has been very heartwarming.



People Plus member Claude Bonang receives award



THE ROTARY CLUB OF BRUNSWICK SURPRISED AND HONORED longtime People Plus member, Claude Bonang, with a well-deserved service and community volunteerism award.

A well-deserved accolade for a marvel of a man

Longtime People Plus member Claude Bonang (inset photo) got a big surprise last month when he showed up to perform at a Brunswick Rotary lunchtime meeting. When he tried to take the stage to play music with his beloved spoons, rhythm bones and musical saw, he was asked to hold on for a minute. What followed was a standing ovation for Claude as he was given the club's Paul Harris

Award for community service and generosity. The 93-year-old teacher, historian, author, musician, artist, gelato scooper extraordinaire, and YouTube star admits he was stunned.

For 32 years, Claude taught biology at Brunswick High School, where his enthusiasm, creativity and class field-trips to Harpswell to collect sea life in the tide pools

continued on page 6

Claude Bonang award continued from page 1

motivated students. He also cooked – over Bunsen burners – a meal of locally harvested clams, mussels, and periwinkles for his AP Advanced Biology students after their unit on mollusks.

He was known as a kind and dedicated teacher. People Plus member Ruth Thibodeau had him for biology class and says he was always willing to give her extra help.

Outside of class, Claude took clam, mussel and scallop shells along with sea urchins and starfish to make whimsical sculptures sold at craft fairs or donated to good causes – including donating them for decades to the Music in April fundraiser for People Plus.

Born in Brunswick to a French-Canadian family of nine children, Claude graduated from Brunswick High in 1948 and from Bowdoin College in 1952. After teaching for two years at Lisbon High School, he went to teach in France, living on the Left Bank of Paris and later traveling all over Europe. After he returned, he spent three years back at Brunswick High before leaving to earn a master's degree from Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif.

Claude's journey as a musician started when he was given a ukulele as a child. He learned that along with the guitar. Later he mastered the harmonica, pan flute and melodica. Now he concentrates on the rhythm bones (he made them from cow ribs gotten from Bisson & Sons butcher shop in Topsham), spoons, harmonica and musical saw. He has played in nursing homes from Boothbay to Lewiston and he has been a consistent participant in Rotary's Maine's Got Talent variety show, along with MSMT's Footlight Follies. He has also performed on the bones with the Fiddle-icious orchestra.

And, of course, he has performed at People Plus; in fact, he was the first entertainer at the People Plus Center when it moved to Union Street. And he performs every year at the Gelato Fiasco Scoop-a-thon to benefit the Teen Center.

Obviously, retirement from teaching in 1987 didn't slow Claude down. He has authored several works of local history. First, he self-published a book of verse about his

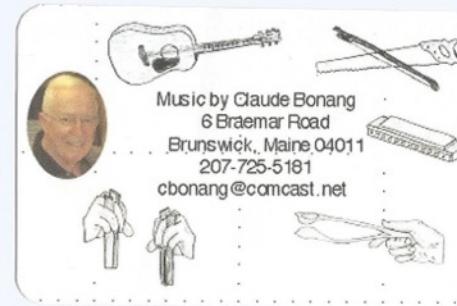
family and growing up in Brunswick. He illustrated it as well, titling it "Memories in Verse." In 2006, he self-published a second edition, "Memories in Verse and Prose," about events and changes in the town of Brunswick over the years, as well as some of his own life experiences.

Claude lives in Brunswick with his wife, Ann, a former math teacher whom he married 60 years ago. They have two sons and two granddaughters. He still corresponds with 300 people via e-mail, many of whom are former students. His legacy continues.

One more thing to know about Claude that you don't want to miss: He is on YouTube dressed as the Lone Ranger and playing the spoons to the tune of the William Tell Overture. That performance filmed in 2016 (when he was 86) has had 12,850 views! If you want to see it, type this in your web search engine: Claude Bonang plays the spoons.



THANKS TO CLAUDE BONANG for playing music at the Teen Center fundraiser at Gelato Fiasco on Maine Street in Brunswick every year for over a decade! It wouldn't be the same without you, Claude!



WOW History of Claude Bonang

1999 Poets and Story Tellers
Publication Coordinator, Text Arrangement and Illustrator, Photography

*An Unforgettable Visit
A Close Call*

2000 Poets and Story Tellers, Writing for Fun Vol II
Publication Coordinator, Text Arrangement and Illustrator

Note – This book would not be possible without the generous gift of Claude Bonang's endless time and talent. His friends in the Writers Group extend their heartfelt thanks.

*Mr. Racine – Our Grocery Man
Tree Climbing
Where's My Shirt*

CONGRATULATIONS WINNERS!

Journal

Joy of the Pen 2023

The Verdi L. Tripp Fiction Award: Juliana Delany for *Trespass Point*

Fiction Honorable Mention: Betty Culley for *Widow Maker*

Margaret F. Tripp Poetry Award: Ann Vanvolkenburgh Chang for *After*

Poetry Honorable Mention: Poetry Honorable Mention: Cora Kircher for *Ark*

Richard F. Snow Nonfiction Award: Jean Konzal for *Searching for Jenny*

Nonfiction Honorable Mention: Fred Cheney for *Brit*

Nonfiction Honorable Mention: Bonnie Wheeler for *Grandpa's Porch*

The Crowbait Short Play Award: Josh Gauthier for *Last Call*

The Crowbait Short Play Honorable Mention: Brian Daly for *I'm Leaving My Body*

to Science

To read the complete winning nonfiction works go to:

<https://joyofthepen.topshamlibrary.org/#nonfichm>

The Signs of Christmas *By P.K. Allen*

Fir trees all lit up
Candles at the door
Last minute shopping
In a department store
Scenes of the Nativity
Decorate the town
Cold winter wind
Snow falling down
Children sitting on Santa's lap
Excited and full of glee
Asking for toys and presents
Under their Christmas tree

But it has a deeper significance
More important than material things
You can feel it in your heart
By the warmth that it brings
So we gather at Christmas services
To celebrate the life
Of a man born 2,000 years ago
To relieve mankind of its strife

Shopping *By Bonnie Wheeler*

Christmas Eve was freezing cold and icy - not a shopping day, but I could not disappoint my 4-year-old grandson, Deanden. It was his day to buy his Christmas presents. He had his list and 10 dollars. Since it was so bad outside and I had to go grocery shopping, I decided he could do his shopping at the local commissary while I picked up food, so off we went. I convinced him it would be better than Wal-Mart, and it was. He chose a box of candy for his mother and me. Of course, I did not watch. He chose sets of mats for his dad and pop. He chose holiday LifeSavers and a favorite cereal for his brother and sister, cookies for Santa, and carrots for the reindeer - all good choices. All went well. Now, with five rolls of tape, he was wrapping his gifts.

We made it home safely and happy to be off the icy roads. Everything was wrapped and ready for placing under their tree. When his mom came to pick him up, he was so excited, he ran to tell her he had done all his Christmas shopping with Mom at the cemetery.

Season's Greetings from**Christmas Story Memories***By Betty Bauer*

Christmas decorations, planning, and holiday spirit began after Thanksgiving when I was growing up. Our Sunday school teachers directed the story of Jesus' birth for us to present at the family Christmas Eve afternoon service. We all looked forward to who the cast would be in the pageant. Our teachers must have made the selections; there were no auditions. Mary and Joseph, angels, wise men and animals, there was a part for everyone. Each year we experienced a new part in the performance. I remember how proud I was when my brother was Joseph. Years later, I was Mary. We girls enjoyed being angels with sparkling halos. The boys liked being animals with no verbal lines to learn.

Sunday school classes were on hold as we practiced for this annual pageant. Costumes, carefully stored from former

years, were retrieved from the closet and spruced up to fit the characters. We practiced singing related Christmas carols and memorized our speaking parts, "Away in the Manger," and "Silent Night," the finale with all the cast gathered before the congregation, were my favorites. The sanctuary was transformed with a manger, the Star of Bethlehem, and related scenery. Every pew in the church was filled on this glorious afternoon.

After refreshments and fellowship, Christmas wishes with family and friends, we departed. The Midnight Candlelight Service was for adults. We children were tucked snug in our beds waiting for Santa Claus to come down the chimney! Cherished memories.

May the magic and wonder of Christmas bless your home and bring you peace in the New Year. Merry Christmas, everyone.

**Christmas Shopping***By Sue Lickel*

It is always such a chore
When you shop at every store
To find a perfect gift for
The one you still adore
For which you will be kissed
So taking pencil in your fist
You attempt to make a list
And hope no name is missed
At last your chore is done
And now begins the fun
Of wrapping every one
Now you're under the gun
Of where to hide away
Everything till Christmas Day
And then to your dismay
Comes all the bills in pay!

Christmas Time*By P.K. Allen*

Twas the day before Christmas
People shopping around
For last-minute Christmas presents
All over the town
While children wait impatiently
For morning to come
To open these presents
Marked - to who and who from
As nighttime approaches
Excitement is on the rise
Nearing the time
For Santa Clause to arrive
And when the morning sun rises
Faces light up with glee
To see all those presents
Wrapped under the tree

**The Day After***By Bonnie Wheeler*

A mess around the Christmas tree
The aftermath of wrapping glee
Happy tired children
Too much excitement
Adults stuffed and sleepy
A successful Christmas day
Wouldn't you say?

**A winter song***By Bonnie Wheeler*

Standing at my door, looking out at the snow,
Drawing the heat of cold air as I step out.
I stop to listen to a wee bird singing.
I smile, thinking of my warm clothes, house, car,
my pantry full of food -
and I'm complaining of the bitter cold
while this tiny bird has none of these,
yet it sings to the world.
How that humbles me as I walk outside
with a sudden feeling of abundance.

**Christmas Coffee Cup***By Bonnie Wheeler*

Thanks for the present of the red coffee cup for Christmas.
He loves it and uses it every day.
There is one problem though,
he forgets it in the microwave oven
and then hunts around for it for half a day.
He also leaves it in his van or on the garage shelf.
He finds and complains when he loses his cup.
So please, next year for his sake and mine,
give him a cup with a beeper.

**Christmas Travel Problems***By Vickie McDermott*

I just watched the updated Christmas weather forecast. There will be snowstorms over much of the eastern United States.
I hate snow and ice. I can't tell you how many times my sleigh has almost slid off my roof. And it is almost impossible to climb down snow-clogged chimneys. But I'm just supposed to say "Ho, ho, ho," and carry on.
I'm getting much too old for this. I've been doing it for many, many years. I'd like to retire, but there is nobody to take my place. So I'll just have to keep on going.
"Ho, ho, ho!"
Right.



n the Write on Writers

The Spell of Christmas

By P.K. Allen

C is for Christmas tree, all lit up at night
 H is for Happiness, brought on by such a sight
 R is for Reindeer, harnessed and ready to leave
 I is for Icicles, hanging from the eave
 S is for Santa, all dressed for the flight
 T is for Toys, that he'll deliver tonight
 M is for Manger, as peaceful as can be
 A is for Angel, placed atop of the tree, and
 S is for Savior, who saved both you and me

Christmas Wish

By Bonnie Wheeler

What would your perfect Christmas gift be?
 Lots of money? A new car? A 50-inch TV?
 I'm thinking my wish would be
 Sitting safe and warm by my Christmas tree
 Beside family and friends singing Christmas songs with me
 With a grateful heart to be living free

Late December

By Vince McDermott

Bleak, cold, snowy
 Gray skies
 Little sun
 Depressing
 Counting days
 Until spring
 Too, too many
 Right now
 Sunshine needed
 Florida or Arizona?
 Should I pack?
 Grab a plane?
 Then at the worst
 Sleigh bells jingle
 Santa Claus arrives
 All is well

Christmas Eve

By Sue Linkel

When I was a child, on Christmas Eve there was no tree or decorations. We hung up our stockings and went to bed. The next morning it seemed that magically everything in all its glory appeared. The tree was all lit up, decorated, and surrounded by wrapped presents. That was the custom then. Of course that was 80 some years ago. But times have changed.

and trees, etc., begin to appear even before Halloween!
 We tried to keep the old tradition alive by waiting till Christmas Eve to put up our tree. One year with a new baby due any day and John away in Maine where he accepted a new job, he came home in time to spend the holiday with us. We were to move to Maine in a couple of weeks.



So we went shopping for a tree on Christmas Eve, but not one single tree lot was still open! One store had some trees piled up ready for disposal behind it. They said we could have anything we could find. The best we could find was not very pretty, so we took an extra tree for branches to fill in where needed. The kids were disappointed and complained.

One of them declared in a disapproving voice, "Charlie Brown would sure be proud of us!"

We began laughing and making jokes and had a lot of fun decorating that sad tree. It didn't look too bad all decorated, but it didn't look too good either.

Over the years memories of Christmases sort of blend together but that tree and year is remembered more vividly than any other. It is referred as the "Charlie Brown Christmas Tree Year!"

n the Write on Writers

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When I was a child, on Christmas Eve there was no tree or decorations. We hung up our stockings and went to bed. The next morning it seemed that magically everything in all its glory appeared. The tree was all lit up, decorated, and surrounded by wrapped presents. That was the custom then. Of course that was 80 some years ago. But times have changed.

and trees, etc., begin to appear even before Halloween!
 We tried to keep the old tradition alive by waiting till Christmas Eve to put up our tree. One year with a new baby due any day and John away in Maine where he accepted a new job, he came home in time to spend the holiday with us. We were to move to Maine in a couple of weeks.



So we went shopping for a tree on Christmas Eve, but not one single tree lot was still open! One store had some trees piled up ready for disposal behind it. They said we could have anything we could find. The best we could find was not very pretty, so we took an extra tree for branches to fill in where needed. The kids were disappointed and complained.

One of them declared in a disapproving voice, "Charlie Brown would sure be proud of us!" We began laughing and making jokes and had a lot of fun decorating that sad tree. It didn't look too bad all decorated, but it didn't look too good either.

Over the years memories of Christmases sort of blend together but that tree and year is remembered more vividly than any other. It is referred as the "Charlie Brown Christmas Tree Year!"

A Happy Jazzy Christmas

By Alene Staley

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along the unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound the carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The heart-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn the households born
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God I not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."*
(in the public domain)

Christmas Music

By Sally Hartikkan

At the birth of Jesus, the Bible records, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'" We have come to interpret this as the angels singing at his birth, and songs have continued to play a large role in the celebration of this occasion. I, too, associate music with Christmas. I have loved singing carols since I was a small child, waiting impatiently for them to start playing on the radio shortly after the end of the Thanksgiving weekend.

As I grew older, I joined choruses and choirs that spent much of the fall learning some of the beautiful music of Christmas. One of

my first experiences singing with a large chorus and orchestra was that of singing the "Messiah" by Handel. I was in high school, and my choir was one of several that joined the Bowdoin Glee Club and orchestra under the direction of Frederic Tillotson. What a thrill!

The orchestra and soloists were in the front of First Parish Church, while the chorus members filled both balconies. Music filled the sanctuary.

Over the years, I have sung plainsong, early medieval carols, and songs in many languages. Even the more popular, secular music has been part of my repertoire. Bring it on! I loved it then, and I love it now. It would not be Christmas without music and a chance to sing it!





Poems & Prose

Happy New Year!

A New Year, Already?
By Doris Weinberg

Where did this year go?
It went by much too fast!
When you got to be as old as me,
you went the time to last.
If I think back to my early years,
I was always looking ahead.
At six, I couldn't wait to start school,
and those years through eighth grade just sped.
Then I couldn't wait until high school.
I would carry a pocketbook and wear lipstick.
And then those four years flew by;
I didn't think it would be so quick!
College for me was a very big change.
I was away from home on my own.
It didn't take long to realize,
just how much I had grown.
First job, marriage, and raising a family,
filled the following years.
My children grew up and left the nest.
Looking back, I did shed some tears.
And now I have just turned ninety,
and the new year is only weeks away.
What do I look forward to?
That may be hard to say.
My life has really been good so far.
I haven't wanted for much.
I hope that I have given something,
to all the lives I've touched.
Maybe next year I will continue in good health,
and the world will find some peace.
And life will improve for everyone,
if those big problems would finally cease.

Wishes for the New Year
By Vince McDermott

May you get what you wish for
but be careful what you wish for.
May you be where you want to be
when you want to be there.
May your talents be recognized
and your efforts be rewarded.
May your computer and your spirits
stay up in the coming year.
May you not be boring.
May your muse not desert you.
May you have a nice year.

The Resolution
By DK Allen

I should make a resolution
To start this brand-new year.
Should I promise to eat less food,
Or perhaps to drink less beer?
Sometimes I get so confused
I don't know which way to steer,
So I'll just make a resolution
To think it over till next year.

Waiting
By Alice Staley

I am waiting for the first snow of the season. By that I mean the first snowstorm when winter finally shows up to stay. When the snow piles up and takes at least a day or two to melt. I know that snow changes my life, but it also gives all of us a chance to press the pause button. To relax and just stay home off the roads, watch the snow fall, and maybe read a book or take a nap.

When I was teaching it was magical when the first snow started to fall. Classes inevitably went quiet and everyone looked out the window. Even in offices, if there are windows, people often go quiet when the first snow starts.

I love the peace that comes with early winter. I love seeing the beauty that emerges in the snow. There is work to do when it snows, shoveling, roof raking, and all the necessary tasks. It comes amid a quiet cozy contentment and provides an excuse to stay home. And soon enough the roads will be plowed and traveling will be easy again. Enjoy the first snowstorm and the start of winter.

New Year Wishes
By Bonnie Wheeler

An America that's still free
No more fits to isolate us in
Return to respecting for all who keep us safe
Leaders who choose our nation's needs first
A time our kids are safe and educated
And God will bless America again

2022 History — 2023 Mystery
By Betty Bevor

Father Time 2022, rest in peace! You managed to survive a year of inescapable truths, difficult challenging times and events. People around the world have experienced unimaginable sadness, property losses, political unrest, financial issues and loss of a precious sense of faith and more! 2022's history will be written for future generations. What will they remember and write in their memoirs?

Baby 2023, we are a nation bruised, hurt, frightened and need your help! Come to us with new energy, innovative ways, technology, science, medical cures and educators with vision. Students need resilience, intelligence, mission, purpose, patriotism, kindness, and ideas as they prepare for the future with a goal to make the world a better place.

There are limitless opportunities on land, sea, and air for research in every field or discipline one can name. The future is a mystery with the gift of each day. Wishing you 365 chances to be productive, positive, live life in the fullest and may the new year shine with happiness, adventure, love, peace and God's blessing.

Stuck in a Snowstorm
By Norris Moody

The weekend was free
Road trip to Pennsylvania
Snowbound in the car



Timeless Wishes
By DK Allen

I wish for the promise
of peace instead of war,
and for those who have less,
I wish for much more.

I wish for the promise
to end hunger and disease,
and for those who are afflicted,
I wish their suffering to ease.

I wish for a country
not divided, but one,
where differences can be settled
without the use of a gun.

I wish for a world
where all people are free
to live, to worship, to prosper
in peace and harmony.

I've Been Thinking
By Doris Weinberg

There will be new adventures
In the year of twenty twenty-three
Where to travel, to be far or near
Or maybe a B&B in the country.
How are we traveling this year?
The car will be on vacation.
Other options are bus, train or plane
To selected places in the sun.
At home working in the garden
What seeds to sow for future delights
Or shall the garden be small this year
Planting it all in annual favorites.
What project to plan with extra time
A dream of a new sewing design
Or will there be a quiet time
For many unread books of mine.

The Old Man and the Kid
By Vince McDermott

The old man groaned as he got up
from his easy chair. What a year! He was
glad it was almost over. He had done
what he could — with mixed results.
Just then the doorbell rang. He opened it
and found a young kid there. The kid
pushed by the man and looked around.
Just wanted to make sure things were
ready for me."

"Who the heck are you?"
"Come on 2022. I'm 2023."

"You're early. Come back when it's time."
"OK, I'll go. As the robot says — Happy New Year
— yuk yuk."

The old man just stared at the kid with his
mouth open. Good grief. What kind of year
will it be, he wondered.

The kid paused in the doorway.
"See you at midnight on the 31st!"
He slammed the door on his way out.

10 Wishes
By DK Allen

If I could have 10 wishes
for this year that's bright and new,
I'd wish for Peace, Love, and Happiness
to name but just a few.

I'd continue on with Compassion,
and bringing Poverty to its knees,
followed by a miracle
that would end Hunger and Disease.

Then, I'd end with Freedom and Justice
For all people right from birth,
along with care for the Environment
to help our Mother Earth.

If I could have 10 wishes
that would all come true,
the world would be a better place
to live in for me and you.

Write On Christmas Party
By Stacy Wheeler

The Christmas party was fine
Around the table we talked and dined
Santa brought us all gifts
Our Christmas cards read and displayed
Picture albums, a memory made
My favorite part was Carol's caramel corn homemade
Come join us next year
Paper and pen in hand

Write on Writers
Wednesday at 1 pm

THE MEMBERS OF THE WRITE ON WRITERS group love to get together every Wednesday afternoon at the Center! This month Stacy got them all lined up for their annual holiday party photo! They are a fun group who love new members! Come join the fun!



Be Mine! By Doris Weinberg

A little more lace and it was done.
I had made a valentine for my mum!
I must have been maybe eight or nine.
Some red paper and glue and it turned out fine!

Many years later, the holiday came again.
I got all my supplies at the five and ten.
I had a secret crush and so special it had to be.
The words would say it, but he wouldn't know it was me.

I looked over so many cards
at the nearby stationary store.
But some were just too mushy.
Even though I liked them more.

I had to be so careful,
in how I expressed my love.
I didn't want to scare him off.
Even though, he was what I dreamed of!
And then I saw it! The perfect card!
It said my feelings very well.
Would he read it and also find
the words made his heart swell?

I read it through several times,
and decided it was the one.
I would take it home and add my name.
The search was finally done!

The card got mailed and I patiently waited.
I hoped for one in return.
But the days went by and nothing arrived.
I had to hide my disappointed concern.

I never did get a response,
but a surprise did come my way.
A boy who lived next door to me,
sent me candy that Valentine's Day.

I really had never looked his way.
He was just "the boy next door!"
But I was so surprised with his gift.
He was just what I was looking for!

I had never thought to look so closely.
He was right under my nose.
While I was looking the other way,
he was waiting for me, I suppose!

Childhood Valentine Memories

Mary Ellen Butterick School in Sterling, Massachusetts, is where I began school. There was one classroom for each grade, with 18 to 25 students. The two-story building was fronted with windows decorated appropriately for holidays throughout the school term. For Valentine's Day, the windows were decorated with red hearts students in all grades had cut out.
We all made Valentines for our parents. My mom had construction paper, doilies, maybe a magazine for pictures, paste, crayons and scissors for us to make our school cards. We had learned to make perfect hearts by folding paper in half and drawing a crook-shaped line from top to bottom on the fold side in all sizes. My brother and I were encouraged to be

creative designing cards fitting girls or boys.

Our teacher brought a box for the class to decorate, seal and cut a mail-slot on top for classmates to "mail" our cards. Prior to our home-making card project, we had a brief discussion about who would get our Valentines. Somehow our mother made us realize if we gave to one classmate, we should give to all classmates. If we planned to write a verse, she had to check it out. As we advanced in grade, we wished to be more selective, though mom's advice prevailed and I remember my verse being just one word, "Valentine or hello." All classmates always received a card from us.

Poems & Prose

An Ode to Chocolate By Deb Noone

Versatile chocolate in every shape and flavor imaginable
What's not to like?
I pick through the heart-shaped, red box
Do I eat my favorites first?
Or save them for the very last, anticipating each sweet nibble?
Do I polish off the entire box in one sitting?
Or limit myself to one every other day to make the box last?
I toss my hands in the air ... and dive in
Then I add to my grocery list — buy more boxes of Valentine's Day chocolates
I'll have enough to get me through the dreary month of February

A Valentine Puzzle By PK Allen

Though we both have different shapes
that are of different size,
and faces with different tints
along with different eyes.

Though we both have different hair
that's cut to different lengths,
and spirits with different weaknesses
along with different strengths.

There's a corner in my heart
where I keep for you a space,
for like two different parts of a puzzle,
we both fit right into place.

Happy Valentine's Day



Winter Lament and Valentine's Day By Vince McDermott

I don't mind snow. I don't mind wind.
I don't mind rain. I don't mind sleet.
BUT NOT ALL AT ONCE!
How many more storms with mixed
precip will we have to bear this winter? Is
that all we have to look forward
to? Actually, no. There is
Valentine's Day. We can
all enjoy the warmth, the
color, and anticipation.
Who will send a card?



Do you recall grade school where cards
were exchanged? Sometimes no signature
was included. On rare occasions,
the sender was never identified. Are you
still wondering today about a card or two?
Might your life have changed if you
had discovered the sender? Some
romances begin in grade
school and last a lifetime.
What a mystery!

By Betty Bavor

On February 14th after
lunch, the entire school partied
singing, playing games, a story
read by the teacher, opening the
Valentine mailbox and having treats
the room mothers had prepared. One time
a teacher gave each of us a Hershey Kiss.
The principal visited the classrooms with a
Valentine greeting. I wonder if he was giving
the teacher a Valentine or checking classroom
behavior!

I kept my cards for weeks. It was a memorable,
happy, experience — oh, to be young
again in days of yore. Have you received a
handmade Valentine? How about you making
one with grandchildren for someone special!
HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY ONE AND ALL

Cold, Wet and Snowy

By Nonie Moody

The temperature cold
The roads are wet and slippery
Hard to see when dark
The snow clouds are coming in
Morning brings a soft new look



Tobogganing By Laura Lee Perkins

Today we've gone tobogganing
Flying over the snow —
Bumping down the steep long hills
To the slowing valley below.

First a sense of exhilaration
Then almost a tremor of fright —
And a wondrous feeling of helplessness —
Too fast! Over the blanket of white.

The spills are a bit scary,
The pulls uphill are long —
Again and again we make the run
And experience, with nature, a song.
The song tells the beauty
Of having the freedom to roam —

Midwinter Thaw By PK Allen

The midwinter thaw
is a break that won't last
From the bitter cold weather
and an icy northeast blast

Thoughts turn to spring
and warm skies of blue
Yet, remembering sadly
winter's not through

Blizzard By Laura Lee Perkins

The furious winds swirled their way
Into our aging domain —
Singing through cracks and crevices
As an impending, stinging refrain.

The threat in the storm's approach
Was fearful to behold —
The winds could sweep you off your feet
And make you shudder from the cold.

And then the snow began to fall
As it drifted, piles grew by the doors.
Nature had taken over our world
Closing schools, banks, and stores.

The blizzard howled all through the night
And most of the following day.
Then humans began the task of reversing
Nature's wild and perilous ways.

Write on Writers

Wednesdays
at 1 pm

Join us for the launch of a new book from our resident writers!

Wed, Nov. 13, 2 pm. Join us for the authors' chat to launch *Voyages ... Real and Imagined*, the latest book by the Write on Writers group at People Plus. Covering everything from a grandmother's pin cushion to stories of life and love and telling the truth about accidentally breaking your sister's beloved flower vase, this book brings it home. Featuring 22 writers and nearly 200 pieces of poetry and prose, *Voyages* will take you on a real trip, open your imagination, and make you want to sit down and tune in for more.

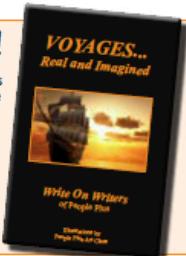
In almost 30 years, the WOW writers have published 11

books, and along the way have become a respected and endearing group at the Center. The group members love their weekly Wednesday gatherings in a "this is a lifeline" kind of way. The unique talents of the writers stand out as you encounter different experiences and sensitivities. This latest book journey is marked by a full range of writing styles and originality. The poetry takes you deep into each poet's world, while the prose stirs your interest as you experience the insights of each writer.

The very first entry in the book is about a poem in a pocket

that wants to get out. How's that for a starter? Dare we say WOW?

Note: This latest book by our writers' group will be available for purchase at the Center; just see Sarah at the front desk to get your own copy.



Poems & Prose

Our Bill Says Goodbye

There is an empty chair at our table.
One of our best writers is gone.
Our season with Bill was so sweet.
But too soon it was complete.

Bill was a joy and gifted with wisdom.
He gladly shared with all of his friends.
He is walking a new path today.
We wish him peace and love all the way.

– Bonnie Wheeler

I Saw it Standing There

I opened the shade that morning,
And I saw it standing there.
A beautiful doe stock still in the road,
Of the motion my blinds made aware.
We looked at each other with awe.
She was beautiful, healthy and sleek
And ready to bolt on quick notice,
Athletic and right at her peak.
A car slowly approached from her rear,
Came to a stop with great care.
As the woman rolled down her window
She took a photo of the deer there.
The click of her camera finally scared her,
And the doe quickly turned and ran,
Tried to get into my backyard,
But a fence put an end to that plan.
She next turned again to the street,
Where she sprinted down toward the base.
I lost sight of that gorgeous creature;
Of her there was no longer a trace.
– Sally Hartikka

The Baskets

They are cream-colored, made
of hard sturdy plastic, my swinging
two-handled baskets. I do not
remember when or where they
were purchased, only that they
came at different times.

The baskets were great in the
garden, especially when collecting
the pumpkins, carrots, and green
beans. When finished, the baskets
would be so streaked with mud
and dirt they needed to be cleaned.
Cleaning was easy, just turn the
hose on them for a quick cleanup
and let them sit in the sun to dry.

When canning, the baskets
were great for stacking the glass
containers and using the handles
to carry the empty jars from the
basement up to the kitchen to be
washed and ready for canning.
After the canning was finished,
the clean filled jars were ready to
be taken back to the basement for
winter storage. I would arrange
six quarts for each trip to the

basement, walking slowly down
the stairs with the heavy load.

When our family lived in
Virginia, we would travel to our
respective family homes during the
summers. One of these baskets was
always used for packing lunches
and snacks. I made a sturdy flat
lid, covering it with a blue cloth
and putting a solid 1x2 wood piece
down the middle – making a nice
handle on the lid to keep items in
and able to stack things on top.

On Mondays the washing is
usually done. All the dirty clothes
were carried from the bedrooms to
the washer in my favorite basket
stuffed full. After the wash is dried
and folded, clothes are repacked
in the basket and returned to the
bedrooms.

Like a favorite pen or knife are
my trusty two-handled, cream-colored
baskets. I would never mis-
place them or give them away.
– Nonie Moody

For more submissions from our writers' group, go to www.peopleplusmaine.org/write-writers-0

Vacation to Paris

It is time for another trip to Paris, France. I went right after I got my degree in nursing about 50 years ago. The only thing I remember is how disappointed I was. The people were not dressed up as fashion models on the runways and the buildings all looked older than my home in Peoria, Illinois. It was built in 1837. Maybe this time I will like Paris better?

The first place I plan to visit is McDonald's. I heard the Big Mac there costs only \$4.93 and here in USA they average \$5.29. I found out there are 1,564 McDonald's in France and 41,800 worldwide. California, Texas, then Florida, have the highest number of McDonald's in the USA.

I am going to see the Eiffel Tower again, and this time I plan to eat in the restaurant up in it. Last time I saw it at a distance. My special tour in the tower will cost me \$62. Then I will go on the Versailles tour for \$163, followed by the trip to the French Riviera and Nice, France, for \$112.17. Whoops! I forgot to mention before Nice, I will be seeing Normandy for \$158. My cheap hotel is only \$63.65 a night.

I haven't decided yet. Should I stay for six days or for ten? I have a lot to see in this city of 2.161 million people with a mayor named Anne Hidalgo. I will be paying \$584 for round-trip tickets on United Airlines.

The last two days I am there, I want to visit these three places: I have to see my favorite painting by my favorite artist, Mona Lisa by Leonardo Da Vinci, in the Louvre Museum; I have to dine at Fouquet's, a restaurant open since 1899; and I need to visit the Seine River.

The museum will cost \$150 for the exclusive guided tour and reserved entry included. Fouquet's is so famous that several movie stars like Bradley Cooper and Catherine Deneuve are often seen there. I was unable to find the expense of eating there, so will have to allow plenty if I am hungry or have a couple of drinks if I am out of money. The Seine River Tour will cost me \$141.

What do you think? Should I stay for six days or ten days??

– Lucy Derbyshire

Imagination Magic

Where do our ideas come from?

Out of the blue

an idea pops –

whether in words, or...

visual, in our minds,
encouraged by our surroundings

A brilliant red maple leaf

conjures memories of

driving Route 2

through New Hampshire to Vermont

end goal – University of Vermont

parent's weekend ... my son's freshman year

Now he turns fifty this month ... and yes, I aged, too

Or memories ... the once majestic maple tree in my yard

before succumbing to rot from within

memories of leaves collected

and dried – sent my daughter

in Colorado – homesick for Maine

Out of one tree, so beautiful despite its last stages of life

The brilliant red leaf

now mottled with black...

the beloved tree, diseased, on its deathbed

Sadness filled my heart

The years pass by, one by one

I, too, age

but dreaming of my beautiful,

majestic tree, I still see those bright red leaves

atop that tall tree, so alive ... in my mind

Life passes along, each experience a gift,

a memory, treasured

– Debora (Deb) Noone

The Last Goodbye – The First Hello

The last goodbye to summer with cooler shorter days.
Vacation adventures, visitor memories, and
Maine State Music Theater plays.

The first hello to fall with county fairs, festivals, and
farmers markets on the green.
Forests ablaze with fall-colored leaves, yards and
gardens harvested, weeded, trimmed, and clean.
Pack away the summer toys.
Get ready for the winter joys.

– Betty Bavor

Moose on the Loose

Older brother Troy and I were home alone
Upstairs, getting ready for bed
When I peered out the window at the setting sun
And I saw moose antlers instead!

"There's a moose on the loose," I said out loud,
"Oh dear, WHAT should I do?"
Should I run and tell Troy or call the police?
Would they lock it up in a zoo?

It's standing right beside our house
Right THERE on our front lawn.
Oh dear, it's getting very late –
It might stay there til dawn!

I'll run and tell my brother
Who's doing homework on his bed,
"Troy, come quick," I yelled down the hall,
"There's a moose with antlers on its head!"

Troy came scampering quickly,
But he thinks this must be a joke –
"If this is a fib," he yelled as he ran,
"You're going to be one sorry folk."

But as he entered my bedroom door
His eyes popped and mouth opened with glee –
"Wow a real moose! on our front lawn.
Get the camera, and hurry – quickly!"

I run downstairs to the kitchen
Grab the camera, and off I fly
Back up the stairs, and into my room
Troy snaps a photo proving it's no lie!

The moose very slowly raises its head
And spreads its back legs to run
Oops not to run, but to "water" our lawn,
Boy – this evening sure is FUN!

And then the moose starts to wander
Down the driveway he goes,
We were sad to see him leave
And wondered what it all meant?

To have a moose appear on the lawn
When our parents were both away
We weren't sure what we should do
Just watch or chase it away?

"You did the right thing," Mom later said,
"You watched and didn't scare the moose."
The animal was curious and wandering –
Lucky you SAW "The Moose on the Loose!"

– Laura Lee Perkins

VOYAGES...

Real and Imagined



Write On Writers
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Illustrations by
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VOYAGES...

Real and Imagined

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The Authors



Somewhere at Christmas

The kids ran in and found their places. They snuggled and nestled, and finally came to rest. "Are you all comfortable, cozy?" I asked. They all nodded. Kids, lying through their teeth. Maybe to them the body heat of another was enough to make them comfortable, cozy, for as long as it lasted – the body heat, that is.

You really had to concentrate to even hear the air raid sirens outside. Hearing the warplanes and bombs and strafing machine guns required no concentration whatsoever. This shelter was nifty and outmoded, but, hopefully, the enemy didn't know where it was, or even care. To kill a dozen or so Quaker children and their teacher was left to the fates.

I tried to judge the closeness of the bombs, some shook the foundations of our shelter. Listening intently was the worst thing I could have done. I was powerless, and I knew it. I admired the children. They entered a cataclysmic state when they put their senses on hold. Bomb blasts and tremors and shaking of the structure were things they had no reaction to. I was alone, with my anxiety.

In time, the bombing abated. This was when you heard the "all clear" sirens. But they weren't there. Perhaps, their lack was due to enemy troops in the streets. My anxiety went up a quantum step.

Then out of the stillness, a thin, reedy voice sang –

"O holy night, the stars are gently shining
It is the night..."

The voice was joined by three or so voices.

"...of our dear Savior's birth."

The rest chimed in, and somewhere, I have no idea where, I joined them.

"Long lay the world in sin and error pining

Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth

A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices

For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn."

I knew I should commend the instigator, and all the others. The trouble was I had a paralysis in my throat – I was choked up.

I thought, "This is the best Christmas anybody ever spent." But it got even better.

Another single voice, more nasal than reedy, began to sing, and everybody joined in.

"Grandma got run over by a reindeer

Walking home from our house Christmas-eve

You can say there's no-such-thing-as-Santa,

But as for me-and-grandpa, we believe."

And they knew all those words too, the chorus and three long, irreverent verses. I was a bit hazy on some of them, but I sang what I knew.

The song ended.

Time for me to say something... anything. Something appropriate to Christmas in a war-torn country and the dominance of the human spirit, and its best embodiment – youth.

The words wouldn't come before "Silent Night" began from a third voice.

– Fred Cheney

Christmas 1940

Very young was I
Memories fade
Some vivid, some not
Strong impressions made

Out for the best tree
My uncle, cousin, and dad
Not me, you see
I was just a tad

They went in high spirits
With some in a flask
A great time was had
Twas not to last

Good times soon gone
For many a year
We went into darkness
Not much to cheer

Then came a day
Clouds were lifted
Fine times returned
We were gifted

The men came home
Happy Christmas again
We celebrated a lot
To forget the pain

– Vince McDermott



Santa's Elf

Dear children of all ages:
Let me introduce myself.
I'm one of Santa's helpers,
Better known as an elf.

I make toys all year long
With help from all my friends.

We saw and hammer and paint;

The hard work never ends.

Then, as Christmas approaches,

We begin to check Santa's list

To see who's been bad or good:

No one is ever missed.

Once we know who gets toys,

And who only lumps of coal,

We double-check all to make sure:

One hundred percent is our goal.

Finally, a day or so before Christmas,

We begin to load the sleigh.

It's hard work to lift toys onto it.

Then we see him on his way.

Once he returns up here,

The work begins anew.

We start making toys for next year.

There's always so much to do!

– Sally Hartika

Giving and Receiving

During the busy holiday season, we have many opportunities to say "Thank You" as we experience the cyclical joys of giving and receiving. But commercial messages about holiday expectations are mostly empty – devoid of deep meaning.

When we compare these empty promises to the reality of the experience, we are often nudged in a different direction.

These holidays can leave us feeling fragmented and exhausted, unless we plan our gift-giving carefully. Taking time to embrace the mysteries of

the December holidays invites internal peace. We know that silent, cold, star-filled nights can inspire awe. Christmas carols can bring tear-filled memories, and a simple handwritten verse might offer a deep connection to someone needing comfort.

There are many gifts of love that don't cost anything and don't need to be wrapped. Offer yourself to others this holiday season. You'll be filled with the joy of giving and your loved ones will be filled with the joy of receiving a gift from your heart.

– Laura Lee Perkins

The Christmas Gingerbread House

During the 1970s and 1980s there were pictures of beautiful candy- and frosting-decorated Christmas gingerbread houses on the front covers of the December issues of "Family Circle" and "Woman's Day" magazines. The dreamy sweet little gingerbread house caught my creative ambition.

The first gingerbread houses

came from Germany about the 16th century and were shared

in homes in the 1800s. Some

said that the 1812 Brothers

Grimm fairytale Hansel and

Gretel was the story that

inspired the gingerbread

houses or was it the gin-

gerbread houses

that inspired the

fairytale?

Many famous

hotels display

their version of

beautifully

crafted ginger-

bread houses.

The White

House

executive pastry chef to five presidents, Roland Mesmer, created a masterpiece every year to be displayed in the White House State Dining Room. Gingerbread houses were displayed around the world, and in Norway they were called "the gingerbread village." Several years ago, L.L. Bean had a gingerbread scene in its display window.

About 20 years ago, I started making my own gingerbread house from scratch. It was a big job then, but now those cute little houses are sold in boxes for you to decorate at home. Each year I purchase one, trying my best to make it look cute and festive for the grandchildren.

What fun to have it displayed on my kitchen counter for the Christmas holidays.

– Nonie Moody



the Write On Writers

What Baby Jesus Means to Me

There's hope after the grave
There's celebrating so great
There's love beyond compare
There's joy for each person on earth
There's a song whispered of gladness
There's no more sorrow or sadness
There's no more isolation or madness
There's freedom for all to share
There's no murders, stealing, or divorces
There's no pride, greed, or lies
Best of all, the maker of all bids us to come home.

—Lucy Derbyshire



Christmas Cards

Christmas card history, thanks to Wikipedia: In 1843, Sir Henry Cole, a civil servant in the UK, worked as an assistant keeper at the new 'public record,' later called the post office. He wanted more ordinary people to use this facility. His idea of a Christmas card became a reality with his artist friend John Colette Horsley, as they designed the first Christmas card. It sold for 1 shilling (8 cents), and had three panels. The center panel showed three generations raising a toast to the card's recipient, and on either side were scenes of charity with food and clothing being given to the poor.

One thousand cards were printed and only the wealthy could afford them. When cards became more popular, more efficient printing production developed and postage dropped to a half-penny. By the 1900s, the custom had spread to Germany. Later in that century, cards began to appear in America, but were very costly. Louis Prang, an American printer from Germany who formerly worked with the UK card makers, began mass producing more affordable cards with pictures of flowers, plants and children. In 1950, Joyce C. Hall and two of his brothers created Hallmark cards. This company is still in business today after 100+ years – with grandchildren now in charge of innovating.



—Betty Bavor

The Snows of Winter

The first snow of winter is a child's delight.
The second snow of winter is so fluffy and light.
The third snow of winter is freezing and cold.
The fourth snow of winter is getting pretty old.
The fifth snow of winter hail and sleet sting.
And by the sixth snow of winter I'm ready for spring.

—P.K. Allen

The Holiday I Liked Best

The holiday I liked best was Christmas. We would go to see our grandparents. On Christmas Eve, we would be at my dad's folks. We got to sleep in the attic. Yes, it was cold, dark and one lightbulb to keep away the scary things we thought were there. You could hear the wind blowing, but grandpa said we would hear the reindeer when they landed.

The drive to grandma's house was on the afternoon of the 24th. A big dinner would be waiting for us. We ate our fill, then out to the barn to give the livestock their special Christmas treats. Back to the house, we sang Christmas songs and say what we wanted from Santa. We always had a big list. Me and my brother waited with excitement for bedtime. Climbing the narrow stairs, getting into the same bed. We lay there listening for the reindeer to land. But the only thing we heard was grandpa yelling "Santa's been here." Which was around 3 am. Flying down steps ... there it was, the Christmas tree with presents under it.

Grandpa would pass out the gifts, first came the ones with new clothes. Did everyone get new clothes for Christmas in the 1940s? Then came the toys. We

only got two or three small ones. After everyone had opened their gift, dad would bring in our big toy. Maybe a snow sled, or a red wagon, which we both shared. Grandma and mother would bring out the coffee, and hot cocoa for brother and me.

Donning our winter farming clothes, we went to take care of the animals. Returning to the house for Christmas breakfast, grandma's pecan sticky buns were always on the menu. After breakfast, we climbed into the car and headed for mother's family for dinner.

There were always about 30 people there, the women in the kitchen fixing all the goodies, taking pie out to cool, the cousins running in and out, the men chatting about the size of the crops and animals. If you were a lucky kid, you got to sit at one of the adult tables. After dinner, grandma gave each of the grandkids a box of her homemade candies. There was always some burnt brown candy in it. Around 3 o'clock, we headed back to the farm to take care of the animals, and back to the scary attic for the night. Then the drive back to the city and home.

—Jim Cherry

Solstice Time

Snow likely, silence and darkness certain.
Ovens, family meals seasoned with contentment.
Lights sparkle from windows, trees, doors.
Starry skies bring wonder and hope.
Time slows with long nights and short days.
Inside is where we dwell in cozy warmth.
Cuddling becomes a cherished necessity.
Each day forward brings one more minute of light.
Treasure family and friends.
Invest in time for rest and renewal.
Make merry with music and dance.
Enjoy precious gifts of love, light and joy.

—Alene Staley

Child's Christmas

Santa Claus is a lively and exciting memory from my childhood. Though I was schooled by nuns throughout my young life, Jesus sleeping in a manger, in a place where animals were kept, with his family looking on, and visited by three Magi from the East somehow didn't make it into my imagination. True, it was a beautiful Christmas story, but with troubling features to it. Think about it! Jesus grows up to be crucified, nails hammered into his hands, and dies on a cross. No child of five wants to hear a tale like that, no matter how it is told to you by the lady of God dressed in black. Death is personal and scary to a child.

The Santa Claus story, however, was a glossy tale with many books and songs being written and sung. Santa was this kind, generous, happy and round man. The books and magazines I read, the town's holiday activities, what I heard on radio, and conversations I overheard from friends, family, and store employees all told of a pleasant Santa who cares. It fed my imagination. And Santa

lived in a place with bright red clothing, with a wife who welcomed all with joyous smiles, and with elves dressed in green who were very busy creating presents for you and me. So, yes, through my early years, Santa Claus earned more attention from me than Jesus did. And yes, the Santa I knew and believed in was a kind, charitable man, surprising me on Christmas morning. Other elements of his kindness and strength were the presents he gave to all as he traveled the whole world on Christmas Eve delivering these gifts, assuring everyone of happiness when they awoke. And Santa was sort of a real man, who they say is celebrating his 1,750th birthday, come December 25 of this year! It's very obvious that the media was very kind to Santa also. There was no negative press!!

Oh, the sweetness of that youthful ignorance! Then,

when I was seven, all my friends told me there was no Santa Claus. Bam! Bam! Finding out that the Santa

Claus story was fiction was the beginning of a maturation process for me. So, at seven, I dealt with loss. Santa Claus became only a well-loved myth.

Even though Christmas became different for me after my friends' big revelation, I continued to keep Santa in my Christmases, bringing out the Santa relics I have gathered through the years. And even without my belief in Santa, the Christmases past have held so many other exciting memories that can never be forgotten, like the religious aspect of the birth of Jesus, the gathering of families together, the singing and feasting, and the exchange of gifts that were part of the holiday, and continue to be part of our family legacy. These legacies have the bonding and binding elements that make my Christmases a joyous celebration, year after year after year.

—Carol Smith Markell