

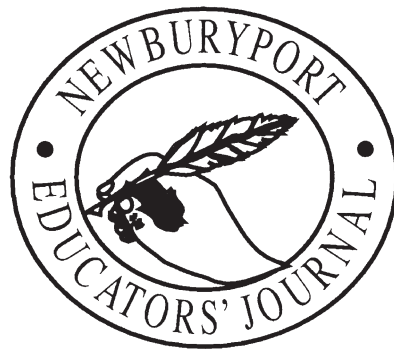
IMPRESSIONS

NEWBURYPORT EDUCATORS' JOURNAL

SPRING/SUMMER 2011

TWENTY-THIRD EDITION

(Inside Front Cover)



NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

IMPRESSIONS

NEWBURYPORT EDUCATORS' JOURNAL

SPRING/SUMMER 2011



Back Cover by Pamela J. Jamison

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*"Let go of the past and go for the future. Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.
Live the life you imagined."* —THOREAU

On the Back Cover:

Although sometimes I feel letting go of the past is hard to do, the moment you spend reading this will be gone too, passing second by second. So go for the future confidently in the direction dreams will take you.

As for me, hunched forward looking like the stick figure, I imagine looking up and meeting you along the way, to have an exchange, look for change and go forward confidently, beginning again.

"For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream"
— VINCENT VAN GOGH

FROM THE EDITOR

By Christopher G. Dollas

I have sad news to share with you. A very good friend of mine is not doing very well. Someone I've known for most of my life. Personally, I can't say that I've done a whole lot to save my friend, but perhaps my speaking up now might encourage some you to join me in rallying around my friend's survival for a little bit longer. My good buddy is a very entertaining sort, never asking for anything but always giving, always. My pal in need is truly a pal indeed, having touched my life in more ways than one. This persona grata, if allowed to pass silently away, would create a monumental void in my life, maybe yours, too. Speaking from the voice of my ancestors, Ο ΦΙΛΟΣ ΜΟΥ, my friend, you are a treasure for all time. We who indulge in you must perpetuate your existence, no matter what the price. My friend's name is Art. And what would life be without Art?

Pam Jamison's cover design idea is a collaborative effort. Admittedly the details appear negligible, but symbolically the message should be clear. The arts in our school system do not lack appreciation for their contribution to the culture of our schools and city. On the other hand, the arts department in our system is in danger of being pruned from our tree of education. All facets of the department, music (singing and instrumental), theater, visual and graphic arts, and dance provide enormous entertainment and extraordinary accomplishment by our young citizens. Impressive performances and displays allow us to observe the emerging and developing talents of our kids.

Many of you have been an audience to the wonderful play productions at the middle school, recently *Westside Story*, and at the high school, *The Importance of Being Ernest*,

Romeo and Juliet, and *Damn Yankees*. Many of you have taken pleasure in the art exhibits hanging on the walls. Many of you have enjoyed the seasonal concerts of our music department at all levels. Yet, the band and orchestra programs have been whittled away, limiting our students options for valuable creative outlets. On a side note, will the respected and recently retired band and orchestra instructor, Joe Nuccio, be replaced to carry on his work with Thom Stolar?

A ground swell of effort has materialized by those concerned. Music for Music, a fundraiser dance, has been organized to help support the music program. By the time you read this, it will have been held (Saturday, August 13). I hope that is the first step in sustaining the need to raise money to keep the arts alive.

Deb Szabo's clever parody of "You Gotta Have Heart" from *Damn Yankees* on our last page sings out to us that "We've Gotta Have Arts." Now that's music to my ears.

On a more personal note, Mary Fordham, who has been with me on the *Impressions* staff since our first issue in 1987, has decided to hang up her proofreader's quill. She has been invaluable for her dedicated service and eagle eye in scrutinizing our contributions before going to final print. Perhaps, I can at least get a submission from Mary as she continues to enjoy her retirement. Thank you, Mary. I will miss you.

Finally, congratulations to Bill Pettingell, NHS varsity baseball coach, and his players for winning the 2011 state championship game. Bill's grand exit into retirement after forty years of coaching varsity baseball here is a crowning achievement.

“...THE ARTS DEPARTMENT
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Christopher G. Dollas, a retired eighth grade language arts teacher, can be reached at cdollas@comcast.net

TEA AND COMMAS

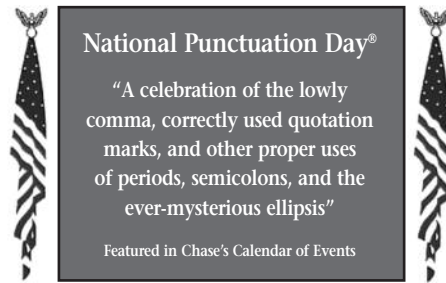
By Joni Vetne

National Punctuation Day is September 24. I was as surprised as anyone to learn there even is such a day! A day set aside to honor punctuation? A day set aside to discuss punctuation? A day set aside to use punctuation? Well, don't we do that every day? Incorrectly, perhaps, but it is being used. No. None of this seems quite right.

A day, perhaps, set aside to bemoan the ubiquitous apostrophes which decorate many an uninviting *s*? I read one match.com profile where the writer had placed an apostrophe before and after every single *s* in every word that ended with an *s*. I kid you not. He wasn't particularly verbose, so his profile was mercifully short. But he had sentences like this: I like to watch sport's' and root for the Pat's'. It was pretty amazing. I've looked and looked for that profile ever since, but haven't been able to find it.

On September 24, should we all gather 'round our well-worn Strunk and Whites and compare which pages are dog-eared? You mean you don't have a well-worn Strunk and White? You don't even know what that is? Well then.

Maybe it's a day when we should brush up on the difference between a hyphen and a dash, a colon and a semicolon, and get to the root of the highly controversial



(but in my opinion, correct) Oxford comma usage. We could maybe form a rally to get Congress to pass a bill outlawing the comma splice!

The National Punctuation Day website has a fair amount of stuff to buy commemorating the day: t-shirts, mugs, posters, and note cards. I know I'll buy the note cards because they are so "me." As I send them to people, the recipients will smile (OK, maybe they'll smirk) because they like me in spite of the fact that I'm a punctuation fanatic and a word geek.

The summer reading book for our incoming juniors last year was *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson. Central to the book is the philosophy that we have the power to change the world, one cup of tea at a time. I like to think the same is true for punctuation: we have the power to change bad writing, one comma at a time.

“...WE SHOULD BRUSH UP ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HYPHEN AND A DASH, A COLON AND A SEMICOLON, AND GET TO THE ROOT OF THE HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL (BUT IN MY OPINION, CORRECT) OXFORD COMMA USAGE.”

Joni Vetne is a special education teacher of English and history at Newburyport High School.

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

By Tom Abrams

Though I am no prophet I have been preaching 21st century learning since at least 1999. Clearly this was advanced thinking — a full year ahead of itself. But still way behind Socrates, Montaigne, Plutarch, Quintilian, Diogenes, and a dozen others luminaries who have been preaching these same skills, these same educational philosophies, for thousands of years.¹ I came to these “revolutionary” conclusions doing what I do best, loafing and inviting my soul, contemplating how I learned best and detailing this process in a series of essays. In these writings — on educating boys, on the teaching of writing, on multicultural learning — I outlined my theory of education without any knowledge of “21st century learning,” without the buzzwords found on the 21st century educational websites (which were really in their infancy). Certainly I was no revolutionary thinker. Rather, I like to think of myself as dumber than the common man, so my theories were just, to me anyway, commonsensical — a reiteration of how I learn best. After reading the above writers, and delving into the more modern educational theories of Gardner, Piaget, and Dewey, I realized I wasn’t alone and, alas, what I thought was revolutionary wasn’t so. All of us have long been proponents of these same skills and ideologies (absent buzzwords). They are good ideas. They need to be implemented, a point I have already made. Still I think it time to register a few complaints with the theory of 21st century learning.

The World is Too Much With Us

“Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.”

— WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

My first complaint is a fundamental philosophical difference in the theory of education. I have read across the board in 21st century learning — the major websites, the major books, have attended lectures on it, have watched webinars; I have even given lectures on it. In every book, on

every website, in every lecture, I discovered that 21st century learning promotes the notion that students are bung fodder for the business world.

Even a casual observer of 21st century websites can’t miss the partnerships between educational theorists and the business world. Appearing on the right margin of www.21stcenturyskills.org, one of the preeminent organizations extolling these skills, there is a laundry list of businesses, what they call “member organizations”: Adobe, Apple, Cable in the Classroom, Cisco Systems, Dell, Hewlett Packard, Intel, LEGO, Microsoft, Oracle, Sun Microsystems, Disney, Verizon. Need I continue? Notice, too, that the business partners are particularly well-suited to benefit economically from 21st century learners. All of the proposed learning models adopt some element of increased use of technology in the classroom — opening huge markets for businesses. It would be the equivalent of making dance a part of the high school curriculum because I owned a dance shoe company.

And there is no hiding these relationships when ideologies are adopted by state governments. “Ready for the 21st Century: The New Promise of Public Education,” a pamphlet produced by the State of Massachusetts, states in its opening salvo that, “As a source of workers, it [our education system] doesn’t meet the needs of employers.” The pamphlet continues, saying that the goals of educators and education by 2020 are to “educate students to compete effectively for jobs with the world’s top students...and be responsive to the evolving workforce needs of the state’s

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businesses and industries.” What if the state’s number one business requires dead bodies? Does the government then kill students? Obviously I’m being facetious. I understand that by its very nature politics and business and education must mix. After all, that’s where the money comes from. Still, I find it reprehensible that one book, *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times*, suggests that schools can help cut the business costs of training employees. “Some estimate that well over \$200 billion a year is spent worldwide in finding and hiring scarce, highly skilled talent, and in bringing new employees up to required skill levels through costly training programs” (Trilling, Fadel 7). Of course, the suggestion here is to have the schools do the training. I find this reasoning specious and antithetical to the nature of a man’s education. A man should be grounded in the fundamentals of the human race, should have a working knowledge of two thousand years of human learning. And then, if he wants to become a chef, he can learn how to cook.

Also, as one reads further into the literature, one sees that the relationships between business and education become much more incestuous. “Market licensable intellectual property generated at state supported colleges... introduce legislation to provide incentives to businesses that provide space at below market rates...align the public education system to real world needs by analyzing and communicating the academic, skill, and training needs of emerging and high growth business sectors...provide incentives for information technology partnerships to improve teaching and learning.” Soon there will be no clear line between the business world and the world of education. Business leaders will dictate curriculum, tossing *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as too anti-agrarian.

Perhaps, as an English teacher, I’m biased. After all my classroom answer when students ask, “Why do we need to read *Huck Finn*? Why do we need to read *The Great Gatsby*?” is that we are “reading human.” It’s about understanding who we are, why we’re here, what it all means — essential questions that have been asked since time

immemorial, and much more important than where does this cog go or how can I make a quick buck. Though the *Torah* warns against contemplating the before, the after, the above, or the below, philosophical issues have preoccupied humanity since the beginning of time. It’s not about some test or some job. An educated man or woman is a full human, better able to grapple with the incomprehensibility of this world. An educated man or woman is a wise one, who understands how love can wreck a person (*Gatsby*), or that being human goes beyond skin color (*Huck*), or that one of the greatest virtues is empathy (*To Kill A Mockingbird*). When one suffers the pangs of love — as most humans do at some point — one wants to recite, “And because love battles/not only in its burning agricultures/ but also in the mouth of men and women,/ I will finish off by taking the path away/ to those who between my chest and your fragrance/ want to interpose their obscure plant.” Not be told that poetry does not prepare a modern worker.

Yet I do believe that education needs to prepare a person for the world. After all, I’m the teacher that developed and teaches a course call 241 High: Discovery Through Writing, a self-generated, innovative, project-based writing class without metaphoric walls that uses local businesspeople to assess some of the work of students. Why did I develop this class? Because when I went to learn to write, when I was twenty-one and had graduated college, I had to go out and do it: write, write, try to sell, try to sell. My goal in developing this class was to span the “yawning chasm (with an emphasis on yawning) that separates the world inside the schoolhouse from the world outside” (*Time*, December 2006, “How to Bring Our Schools Out of the 20th Century”). Quite simply I designed a class to do what I have been doing for ten years — combine the scholarly with the practical, the point of any education.

The Second Coming

“And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,/ Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born.”

— W.B. YEATS

My second complaint has to do with the charge that educators have been given: stop the cyclical nature of history and keep America in the forefront of world domination. In all the literature on 21st century learning there are clarion

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calls about America's losing of an international silent war for world domination. In order to remain on top, the literature suggests, we need to change our educational ways. Look: China is beating us. Look: India is beating us. Look: here come the Russians. Indeed.

One of the reasons for the adoption of 21st Century Learning is the laggard gains American students have made on an international scale. "Ready for the 21st Century" states, "...much of the rest of the world has caught up and, in too many cases, surpasses U.S. achievement." The

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RACE OR CREED."**

pamphlet has several graphics to display this demise: the U.S. ranks 25th in math, 21st in science, and 10th in college degrees earned. Also there appears a chart highlighting the average number of instructional days in the school year for nine countries: Korea is the first with 225 days, America dead last with 180. Daily newspapers are full of these stories. On December 7th, the New York Times had an article on international test scores, highlighting America's decline. The United States ranked 23rd in Science, 17th in Reading, and 32nd in Math. Interestingly enough the article also identifies an enemy: China. "In the Math and Science tests, all participating regions of China outperformed the United States," the article states. So did Australia, Germany, Canada, and Britain. But we like them so they don't count.

Anyone with a cursory knowledge of history knows that dominance on a world stage — be it military, economic, or implied — is transitory and cyclical, or as the Bible states, "One generation passeth away; and another generation cometh." Pick the historical order of world dominance: Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Ottomans, British, Americans. Eventually every dominant country goes through a period of decadence. Despite the British proclamation, the sun did eventually set on the British Empire. The question that leaders in the United States are asking is a tough one: Is America's sunset near? Have we reached the pinnacle of our

world domination? Is it China's time for world dominance? American educators are charged with stopping the sunset, a difficult task indeed.

It's not all that complicated either. These competing countries — the three challenging U.S. dominance are China, India, and Russia — have more population. Translated into economic terms, that means more workers, more people willing to work for less money. In military terms it means they can suffer a lot of dead bodies. Also a lot of brainpower to devise military devices. Of course, I'm simplifying, but I'd refer you to my earlier comment about my own intelligence.

Our educational leaders are fighting history: structures, cultures, manpower, ideas. I'm simply not keen on worrying about what the neighbor's doing. Education should demand excellence. Education should demand continuous learning throughout the day and year, whether in a school building or not. Education should be a competition only with the self and the best of the past — Basho, Shakespeare, Newton, Copernicus, Da Vinci — regardless of race or creed.

Ours might not be a pitched gun battle in the slums of Shanghai but a pen and paper battle in the classrooms of the United States. So it's a good fight. I'll fight it for my son, the next generation of American, a generation I want to see retain power because it will make his life better. I'll fight it in the classroom, for the next generation because I want to see their lives better. At base this is basic human nature: let the next generation be better than my generation.

Money: Everyone's Religion

"When it is a question of money everyone is of the same religion."

—VOLTAIRE

Third, and final, complaint: money, in all its elements.

First off, many of these ideas, which at base are intelligent and logical recommendations if a bit faulty in presentation and theory, require money — mazuma, cashola, cabbage, spondiluks, simoleans. Federal, state, and local education funding have increased in recent years, both in technical dollar amounts and when inflation-adjusted. This begs the question: where has all the money gone? Obviously, there needs to be a major overhaul to the educational funding infrastructure if these programs — everything from increased teacher training to extended learning time to

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technological upgrades — are to be implemented. I don't have the solutions to this fiscal problem as my area of expertise is the human soul, not monetary spreadsheets. Perhaps the Massachusetts Readiness Finance Commission, whose mission is to “recommend...cost savings...identify potential sources of additional revenue...and outline options for a comprehensive overhaul of the state's education finance system,” will be able to develop a solution to fund these new programs, upgrades, and advances.

The Massachusetts report states, “The new baseline of educational achievement is an associate degree or the equivalent.” A noble goal, sure (one that the University of Phoenix has profited immensely from) but a college degree, associate or bachelor's, is still out of reach for many families. The rich surely can do it; and in the Patrick Administration plan there are accommodations for the poor, namely an “increase [in] needs-based financial aid for higher education to low-income students...” But what about the middle class? Once again they have been forgotten. As a middle-class college student (my father a police officer, my mother a baggage handler at Logan airport), I exited college with \$40,000 in student loans. Not bad comparatively, but still too large. It took me fifteen years to pay off. In addition, the report also suggests “a public education system that guarantees access to free community college or the equivalent postsecondary or vocational education.” How is the government to fund this “free community college...or vocational equivalent?”

The money crisis is not limited to the ability of students to pay for higher education, but extends to educating and retaining teachers. A significant goal of 21st century learning is a smarter, more well-trained, better educated teacher force. “Without question, any improvement in education depends on knowledgeable and effective teachers in every classroom...” the report states. The inherent problem in this, of course, is money. Many of the smartest people enter a profession where they can make money. They're smart for a reason. The occupation of teacher is not top on any list of high-paying jobs. It's not bad, just not good. According to the report, “we must address the compensation gap between positions in the private sector and teaching positions in high-demand disciplines.” Addressing this gap would require a substantial financial commitment. In addition, the report

calls for differing pay from subject to subject, math and science teachers (high need) getting more compensation. Theoretically this might be a noble goal in order to supplement a high need area, but implementing this could be divisive in the workplace. Why should a math teacher be paid more than an effective English teacher? The key word in my analysis, of course, is “effective,” for that is where the money should go. Also, to retain effective teachers a change needs to be made in tuition reimbursement.

In Massachusetts, once you become a teacher, you have to continue your education, earning a master's degree in five years to retain licensure. The graduate program I attend, at American International College, is costing me approximately \$6000 a year, not including books. I make \$60,000 a year. My mathematical skills, poor as they are, equates that to 10%. Ten percent of my pay for continuing education, an unwieldy sum if I am to pursue the big things: family, home, a life. Not small matters. My proposal: as part of the program, any teacher can take any relevant course at any state school. For free.

It always comes down to money. President Obama's State of the Union Address spoke of educating in the 21st century, calling it our “Sputnik moment,” asking that we “out-educate” the rest of the world to “meet the test” of the 21st century. I laughed out loud, thinking, *he says this, but then our education budget gets cut*. Of course, I later shouted for joy when he refused to cut the education budget, saying, “Cutting the deficit by gutting our investments in innovation and education is like lightening an overloaded airplane by removing its engine.” But then the New Hampshire Legislature proposed a bill this week that would eliminate art, music, and world languages from the schools. As Obama stated, the federal government provides a small

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fraction of a school's operating budget, so to accomplish this goal cultural reform has to take place — state and local government, the majority of a school's budget, need to align. If one is to innovate, work on a global stage, and be creative — all goals of 21st century learning — one needs languages to communicate, and music and art to innovate and develop imagination.

Concluding Note

I do complain too much. Just ask my wife. But these complaints are really ideological, semantic, and human, not necessarily a denunciation of 21st century ideas. As I stated in the beginning, 21st century learning is not new and is an exemplary way to learn — innovation, creativity, problem solving, project based, a classroom without walls, using all the tools of our time. Not because we are going into the

21st century and must confront our Sputnik, but because 21st century ideas, going back to Socrates, are the right way to educate a person. Dress it up in new language, the idea remains the same. I understand that I am an idealist and that my business sense extends no farther than whether I have enough money in my pocket for a beer. I get that. But I know enough to fear that we might lose sight of living in favor of making money. We'll save the economic soul of our country but lose our human soul.

¹ For more on this see "The Revolving Theoretical Wheel of Education: 21st Century Education in the First Century." The thesis of this seminal work: 21st century skills and ideas are ancient. Implementation in the 21st century is necessary.

Tom Abrams is an English teacher at Newburyport High School.

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NHS CLASS OF '75 ROCKS ON!

Time stood still at one of the best class reunions I've been to in years.

By Richard Doyle

On Saturday evening, October 9, 2010, at the Amesbury Playhouse, the Newburyport High School Class of 1975 celebrated its 35th reunion in grand style. Nothing was spared to make this a "Reunion to Remember." Two other retired teachers and I were invited as guests, and it was indeed a privilege to see how well so many of this unique class have turned out.

The previous winter while, I was in Florida, I received their invitation via e-mail and penciled it in on my calendar. As the time approached, I was in contact with many on the committee about various details. When I asked for a few names of people who might be attending, I was given a web site to check it out.

What I discovered was in-depth information about how the modern world took over the planning of such an event. The committee members had everything well under control and didn't forget a thing. They organized a gathering to attend to the NHS football game the night before, had a sit down dinner with wonderful choices for meals, and scheduled an post reunion party and brunch Sunday morning. There was a master list with attendees' names, their addresses, meal choices, and guests. This fine work really paid off as 128 classmates and spouses showed up.

To start the evening, we three former faculty members were asked to speak. Jean Foley Doyle was represented by her daughter Marcia who quoted liberally from her mother's latest book on Newburyport history. Marcia related how the class could find themselves in the pages Jean had chronicled about *Life in Newburyport: 1950-1985*.

I was next and chose to tell how the high school had changed since 1975: the various personnel changes, state sports titles won by the Clipper teams, and other matters such as the renovation of the school in 2000-2002.

Myron Moss, retired English teacher, related how much the class of '75 had adapted to meet this changing world. He expressed his hope that the world would get better without

the polarization presently existing everywhere in all aspects of daily living.

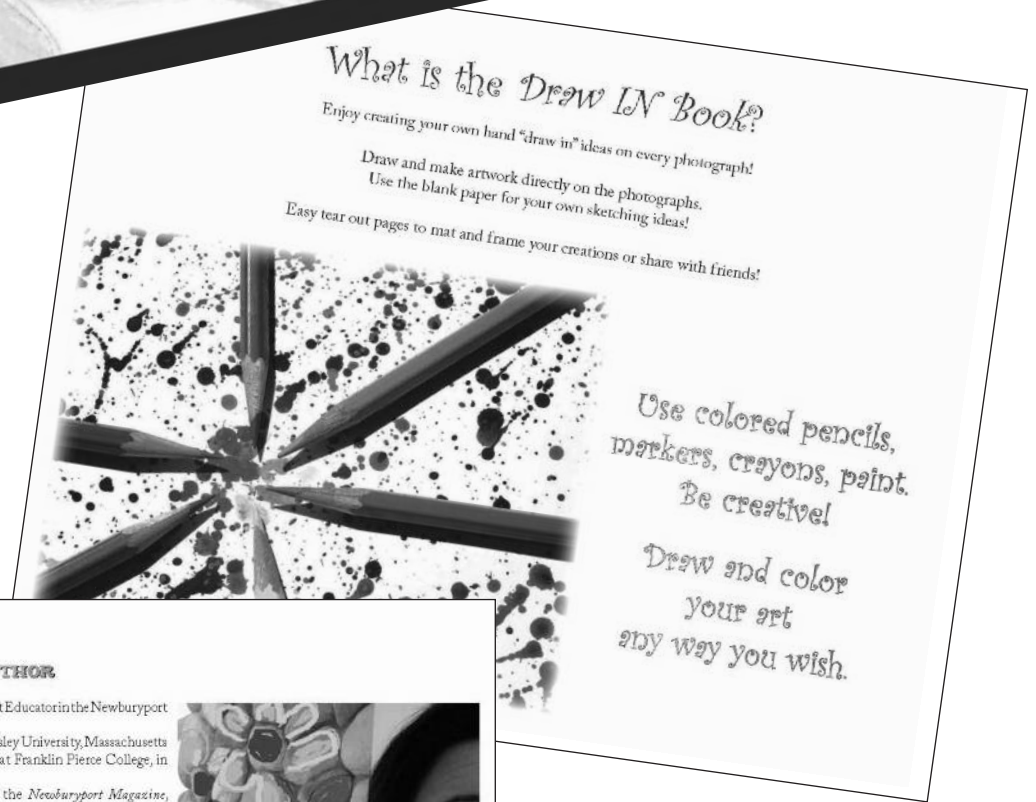
But, we speakers were not the highlight of the evening as the night belonged to the class of 1975. The class had a plethora of meaningful events that just personified how the group had met life head on. Starting with a moving memorial tribute to the fourteen classmates who had passed away, to a class superlatives presentation ranging from longest married to farthest distance traveled to attend the reunion, followed by a raffle with great Red Sox gear and, of course, dancing to the music of today and of the 70s.

I really enjoyed what makes reunions so special: meeting and chatting with the gals and guys who were just tender teens when I taught them and being able to see them and hear what they were doing now. If you ever wondered what happened to the following, stop wondering because they were all there: Steve Boyd, Dallas Coffman, Phyllis Harnch-Smith, Maura Doyle, Paul Croteau, Lyn Parker, Martha Miller, Dan Maloney, Janet Murphy DeBlois, Faith Garland, Nora Purdie Duggan, John Notargiacomo, Kathy Wilson, Colleen Sullivan Hughes, Tricia Dervan, Donn Pollard, Reymie Darling, Carol Trainor Snow, Kevin Barlow, Thea Boothroyd, Laurie Powers LeBlanc, Kevin McDonald, and Diane Checkoway to name a few.

Class reunions are really unique events that try to relive the past but really focus on the present. The unique 1975 reunion committee worked very hard and are to be commended for its time and effort to make the 35th reunion the smashing success it was!

Richard Doyle is a retired history and theater arts teacher at Newburyport High School.

“CLASS REUNIONS ARE REALLY UNIQUE EVENTS THAT TRY TO RELIVE THE PAST BUT REALLY FOCUS ON THE PRESENT.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pamela is a Master Visual Art Educator in the Newburyport Public School District.

She earned her M. Ed at Lesley University, Massachusetts and her teacher certification at Franklin Pierce College, in New Hampshire.

She has been featured in the *Newburyport Magazine*, "Parting Shot" photography.

She creates artwork in her home studio and offers private art lessons at Tree Farm Road Studio, in Newbury, Massachusetts.

She lives with her husband Michael, and enjoys creative fun loving moments with her daughter Marisa Standley age 18 and son, Douglas Standley age 23.



Pamela J. Jamison is a professional watercolorist and teacher of visual art at the elementary level at the Bresnahan and Brown schools.

A PLACE TO GROW TOGETHER

The school's custodian seizes the opportunity to volunteer and plant the seeds.

By Stephen Boulay

In March of 2010, I was asked by Mrs. Kristina Davis, principal of the Bresnahan School, if I would be interested in starting a vegetable garden at the school in conjunction with Opportunity Works. I agreed. Little did I realize, over the next seven months, the impact Opportunity Garden would have on the fifteen adult clients who participated in the garden, the Opportunity Works staff, Sandy, my co-volunteer, and me.

The first meeting with Opportunity Works administrators, Kristina Davis, Beverly Heinze-Lacey, Sandy Nippes and me was to iron out a plan. We needed to decide the size of the garden, what to grow, how many adults to come each time, how often each week, and what educational benefits could come from the vegetable garden. I also suggested that the two existing perennial gardens, the Ruth Seiger Memorial Garden and the Butterfly Garden be part of this program as they were in desperate need of renovation.

Soon after the first meeting Opportunity Garden took shape. It consisted of five separate raised beds of horse manure compost. The beds would be five feet wide, ten feet long with a three foot pathway between them. The garden had ten vegetables, sunflowers, and the two signature flowers of Opportunity Works, marigolds and nasturtiums, which were started from seed at the Opportunity Works



“LITTLE DID I REALIZE, OVER THE NEXT SEVEN MONTHS, THE IMPACT OPPORTUNITY GARDEN WOULD HAVE ON THE FIFTEEN ADULT CLIENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE GARDEN, THE OPPORTUNITY WORKS STAFF, SANDY, MY CO-VOLUNTEER, AND ME.”

High Tail Acres in Newbury to Bresnahan School. In a couple of hours the planting beds were created. On Wednesday of the following week the first group of adults would arrive at the garden. I did not know the abilities or the extent of their capabilities for working in a garden. A few years back I had received a Jung Seed Sower as a free gift with my seed order. It is a simple device, a cup with a narrow chute on one side and the cover that fits down inside. The cup has seven holes ranging from very small to pea size. Depending on the size of the seeds, you turn the

facility and transplanted into the garden. A compost bin, a garden shed, and a sign completed Opportunity Garden. Beverly took on the task of creating the sign. It took her many months to complete, working on it in her spare time. Beverly created more than a sign; she produced what has become the symbol

of Opportunity Garden!

During April school vacation we finally started Opportunity Garden. Five to seven adults with staff came on Wednesdays and Fridays for one hour each day. When time permitted, we left the vegetable garden and worked on renovating the two perennial flower gardens. The goal was to have the adults be caretakers of all three gardens.

I called upon Jeff Davis, our principal's husband, for his help and the use of his truck to bring a large quantity of horse manure compost from

INSIGHTS

cover to the desired hole and shake a seed or two down the chute onto the garden soil. "This should work," I thought. I then made a planting board, a two inch wide by one inch thick board four feet in length with a small line marking every two inches and a longer line marking every four inches down the length of the board. This was used for the proper spacing of seeds and for creating straight rows in the garden

On the following Wednesday Sandy and I arrived at Opportunity Garden fifteen minutes early to go over how we would conduct the first day and sow the seeds of radishes, beets, and peas. At 10:00 am, Hope, an Opportunity Works staffer, arrived with Steve, Donnie, Sue, Mark, and John. After introductions we gathered at the picnic table and discussed the vegetable seeds and how we would sow them. Hope told us that none of the adults liked to get their "hands dirty" so we gave them garden gloves and started to sow the seeds. It was then I learned that the adults' hand-eye coordination and dexterity were limited. Unable to shake the seeds down the chute onto the soil and unable to handle the small seed in their hands, Sandy and I had to come up with Plan B in a hurry, which fortunately took us only a few minutes to devise. Donnie and I knelt down on one side of the planting bed, I laid the planting board across the bed, and together we slid the board back and forth to make a shallow furrow.

While Donnie and I did this, Sandy did two things. First, she convinced the adults they would not get their hands dirty if the gloves were taken off during the sowing of seeds. Second, she found a twig four inches long with a "handle" on one end. It looked like a walking cane. She handed the "planting twig" to Donnie who was next to me. I shook the seed sower so one or two seeds stayed on the chute and Donnie used the handle end to move the seeds down the chute to fall onto the garden soil. After a row of seeds were sowed, I covered the seeds with a little soil. This process was repeated with each adult until we sowed three rows each of radishes, beets, and peas. It took us the entire hour to complete the planting!

What Sandy and I saw that day in those adults was the willingness to try and the desire to learn. On Friday, Erin



and Francine, Opportunity Works staffers, arrived with Grace, Vanessa, Craig, Danny, and Devon. After our discussion at the picnic table of what we were going to do that day, we put "Plan B" into action. (Like Wednesday's group their hands could not get dirty!) It took us most of that hour to

sow the same number of rows of radishes, beets, and peas. However, their willingness to try and desire to learn was just as strong as the previous group. As the two Opportunity Works vans drove away that day, Sandy and I realized that the Opportunity Garden was their garden. We also set a goal. Each of

the adults would not mind getting their hands dirty by September!

Over the next several weeks the only thing to be done in the vegetable garden was to water the seeds we had sown since we had to wait until the end of May to plant tomatoes, cucumbers, winter squash, green beans, carrots, and zucchini. So we turned our attention to the perennial flower beds and started the renovation process. The weeding, pruning, and digging up of perennials to be divided and transplanted were hard work, but the adults didn't seem to mind. With encouragement from Sandy and me, as well as from the staff, the adults felt a sense of accomplishment, as they saw gratifying progress at the end of each visit. As the weeks went by, I noticed some of the adults were no longer wearing gloves (making progress)!

The last Wednesday and Friday in May were two great days at The Garden. We planted the remaining seven vegetables. The radishes, beets, and peas had germinated

**"THE LOOK OF
EXCITEMENT, PRIDE,
AND ACCOMPLISHMENT
ON THEIR FACES
WAS PRICELESS."**

INSIGHTS

three weeks earlier and were growing rapidly. I told the adults that the next week we would pick the radishes. The first milestone at Opportunity Garden had been reached! The “German Giant” radishes were ready for harvesting.

Donnie, Steve, Grace, Sue, Craig, and the rest of the adults bent over, grabbed the leafy stems of the radishes, and with a firm tug, pulled up large red globes as big as golf balls! The look of excitement, pride, and accomplishment on their faces was priceless. We washed the radishes and placed them in a bucket. When they learned that the radishes were going back with them, all realized that Opportunity Garden was truly their garden!

We had many wonderful moments at Opportunity Garden during our first growing season. There were two that captured the meaning of Opportunity Garden. Donnie was excited on his first visit to the garden. Although he is limited in his abilities to work in the garden, he more than made up for it with his support of others, his enthusiasm, and his good nature. During the month of July the vegetable garden grew rapidly. The winter squash was taking over one end of the garden, tomato plants were loaded down with fruit, and the green beans and cucumbers were producing heavy yields. Donnie was unable to come to the garden the first two weeks of July, but on Wednesday of the third week he was back. Sandy and I were in the garden waiting for the van to arrive. Upon arrival, we saw Donnie get out and walk into the garden. As he looked around, he exclaimed with excitement in his voice “This is amazing! I can’t believe it! It’s amazing! Now I have something to talk about when I get back!” It was a great day at Opportunity Garden that Wednesday! As the van drove away, Sandy and I looked around the garden and we agreed with Donnie that this was amazing and we, too, had something to talk about with our family and friends.

Before we knew it, summer had turned into fall. We decided that Friday, October 15, would be the last day at Opportunity Garden for that season. We also decided to

**“IT’S ALL RIGHT
TO GET YOUR
HANDS DIRTY!”**

have both groups come on that day for picture taking in front of the sign and newly stained shed. We picked the last of the zucchini and green tomatoes and placed all dying plants in the compost bin. After the pictures we gathered at the picnic table and talked about our first growing season. Sandy asked the group what they would like to grow next year. Corn, pumpkins, broccoli, and lettuce were popular choices.

Next year the garden will be expanded to include seven rows of corn with pole beans and Lil’ Jack pumpkins planted between the rows to recreate the three sisters planting Squanto taught the Pilgrims in the spring of 1621. Erin, an Opportunity staff member, asked Steve, who had become my right-hand man at the garden, “What did you learn from the garden?” Steve, with his glasses sitting crooked on his



nose and that big grin on his face, responded “It’s all right to get your hands dirty!” I gave him a big hug and told him that was music to my ears, and we had a really good laugh!

When I hear the trill of the redwing blackbird and the sunshine warms my face, it will be time to renew my friendships with the groups at Opportunity Works. We will gather at Opportunity Garden, “a place to grow together.” I can’t wait!

Stephen Boulay is a custodian at the Bresnahan Elementary School.

THESE WOODS

By Steve Bergholm

I have been in these woods many times before, followed the same trails, and ascended the same hills. Each time there has been something different that has made the experience special. Different times of day, and different seasons change the look of the landscape, and different moods change my perspective.

I always come to these woods looking for the same things. I come to escape from life and find some peace of mind, some solitude and some inspiration, to experience tranquility. I come to see things that I have seen a hundred times before and yet are new each time. I come to experience a beauty that is both old and new. I can gather my thoughts, or I can let them float gently away.

Today as I walk along the main trail at the crest of the ridge, the echoes of a woodpecker searching for his breakfast resonate through the crisp winter air. Old pine trees groan painfully as they reluctantly dance with the cold February breeze. Far below, Stony Brook gently meanders through the thick marsh grasses, interrupted only occasionally by the handiwork of nature's industrious engineers.

The ground is unusually barren of snow for this time of year, but small patches of ice on the trail, lightly covered by a quick morning flurry, give evidence that other creatures have passed this way earlier today. A few hearty birds flit through the branches of the younger trees, while an occasional squirrel makes a mad dash from one tree to the next.

To me, yet unknown to them, they are my welcome friends and companions. They are part of the bigger picture in which I am trying desperately to include myself. They represent a simpler kind of life, a link to the past that seems to be embedded somewhere within my psyche.

**“I AM BOTH DEEP
WITHIN MYSELF
AND OUTSIDE MY
OWN BODY.”**

I wish that all humans could experience the serenity that I find in these woods, but the selfish part of me wants them to do it elsewhere. These are my woods, and although they technically belong to someone else, I feel a connection to every tree, every rock, and every bend in the brook. They are a part of me, and I of them. As they change, so, too, do I.



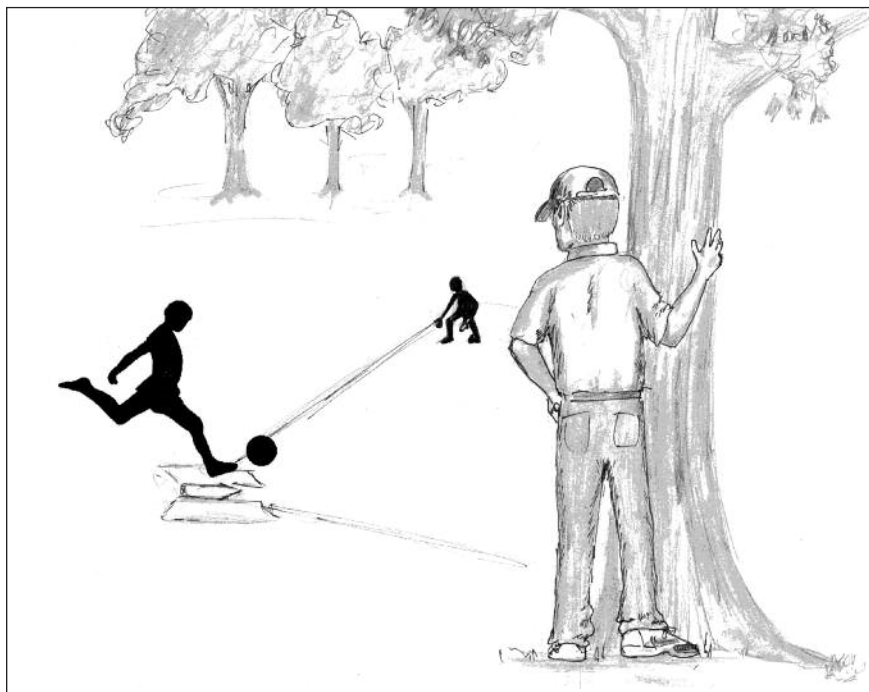
These woods are not far from home, not far from the homes of many people. There are roads, and bridges, and train tracks nearby, but when I am in these woods, everything else seems a million miles away. I am both deep within myself and outside my own body. My soul feels a lightness that it too seldom feels. The aches and pains of the physical body disappear, and a sensation of peace fills my entire being. Hours go by like minutes, and as I return to the world, my mind is clear, my body is re-energized, and my soul is uplifted.

Steve Bergholm is the facilities manager of the Newburyport Public Schools.

PLAYING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

By Bob Doyle

I sit at my son's basketball game, surrounded by clamor. Parents are yelling at their kids when they miss a basket. Coaches are screaming at the kids when they get nervous and mess up a play. Parents are shouting at the coaches for not playing their kids enough. All this hollering always makes me uneasy, but judging by the look on the kids' faces, it makes them even more anxious. However, because I'm a good parent and love my son, I will sign him up for basketball again next year and sign him up for baseball in the spring. (I won't sign him up for hockey, though. I don't love him that much!) So, as I sit watching the game, I start thinking about a time just a few months back.



Baseball was over, and basketball hadn't started yet (hockey was going on, probably at 6:00 on a Sunday morning, but that didn't impact me, thank goodness!). A few parents started asking me what my son was going to do in the fall. "You missed the sign up for soccer!" they informed me, and other comments such as, "Definitely sign him up for Fall Baseball... he'll have a double-header every Sunday morning in Methuen" and "There are still a few openings in the synchronized water lacrosse league."

I asked my son what he wanted to do, and he said he wanted to take the fall off. I was a little hesitant, wondering what on earth he would do with all this free time. And what would I tell those parents when they ask me what my son is doing in September?

**"I WAS A LITTLE
HESITANT, WONDERING
WHAT ON EARTH HE
WOULD DO WITH ALL
THIS FREE TIME."**

I thought back to when I was my son's age, and what I did to fill my free time. I didn't get dropped off at scheduled play dates. I didn't spend time at soccer practice. And I certainly wasn't driven to Methuen on a Sunday morning for a double-header. (I could talk about how my parents were taking me to church at that time, but that's another story.)

So, how did I fill my free time? I went outside and played with the kids in the neighborhood. I arrived home from school, changed my clothes, and headed outside. I made sure I was home in time for dinner. Then, I did my homework, had a bath, and went to bed. I had no problem finding things to do. But that was another time. It's different now, people tell me. Kids don't just *play in the neighborhood* anymore. What is my son going to do?

Eventually, September rolled along, and I began to really worry that my son would be missing out because he was not in an organized activity. I also worried that he would be

REFLECTIONS

incredibly bored. My son, however, wasn't worried. Instead, he started *playing in the neighborhood*.

Everyday, after school, he rushed home, changed his clothes, and headed to the park up the street. We weren't sure what he was doing there, but he was always home in time for dinner. After a couple of weeks of this, I got curious, so I took a walk up to the park to take a peek at

**“EVERYDAY,
AFTER SCHOOL,
HE RUSHED
HOME, CHANGED
HIS CLOTHES,
AND HEADED TO
THE PARK UP
THE STREET.”**

how he was spending his free time. I was amazed!

There were no coaches to make sure the kids ran plays properly. There were no adults to make sure the kids followed the rules. There weren't any parents to complain that their kids weren't playing enough. That was not an issue because every kid at the park that afternoon was

welcomed to play. On that day at the park, I noticed a child with special needs. This group of unchaperoned kids, without any prompting by adults, invited the child to play, then patiently went over the rules of the game with him. My son continued going to the park after school for several weeks.

Occasionally, I would casually “walk by” just to see what was happening. Every day I went, they were playing

something different. What they played, I think, depended on who was there. One afternoon, it was a mix of boys and girls, and the kids were playing a hide-and-seek game. Another day, it was a smaller group of just boys, and they were playing wall ball. The last time I walked by there were some younger children present, and the group was playing a well-controlled game of kickball, with the older kids encouraging the younger ones to kick the ball “as hard as you can.” However, of all the different games I observed, they all had one thing in common: The kids were really enjoying themselves! Not once did I observe any argument about fairness. I never saw any kids fighting about the rules. They were all laughing hysterically most of the time. They were having the best time!

Eventually, fall came to an end and winter arrived. The start of basketball practices brought an end to these impromptu neighborhood gatherings. That brings me up to where I started, sitting at my son's basketball game, looking at the anxiety on these kids' faces.

The parents behind me are squawking about fairness. The parents in front of me are complaining about the rules. I really miss those times at the playground when the kids had a blast because there were no adults there to screw it up.

Bob Doyle is a fifth grade teacher at the Upper Molin Elementary School.

I'M ON VACATION, YOU KNOW

Our author reflects back to 2000.

By JoAnne Brislin

My eyes open at the same speed that my mind rises to consciousness. I'm in a room that is dark and that is cool. I'm in my bedroom. I'm kitty-corner on the bed, hogging it, as usual. I wonder what time it is and then I remember... I don't care... I'm on vacation you know.

On rainy vacation days I lie there in the dark listening to the pitter-patter of the rain on the little roof over the bay window. On windy days I listen to the melody of my neighbor's metal wind chimes Sunny days are the best. I lie there and listen to Rebecca, my three-year-old neighbor, as she sings songs that only she knows out loud to herself. She sings of how later she will make mud pies and have a tea party with her doll. Maybe she'll swim in her pool to show Daddy her new water tricks. But then again, she sings that she'll help Mom in the flower garden because she's a big girl and has her own pint-size, bright green garden tools. I can just lie there and enjoy... I'm on vacation you know.

I stretch, yawn, and scratch as my body makes me think of that noisy cereal. I stagger to the bathroom. As I walk by the mirror, I notice this middle aged, overweight woman. Her hair is totally flat on both sides, yet squished up going toward the top of her head. I laugh as I am reminded of cone heads on the old "Saturday Night Live" show. I also



**“I DON'T
CHECK OUT
THE TIME. IT
DOESN'T
MATTER...”**

wonder how in the hell she got into my bathroom.

I step-step down the stairs like a child until my knees get warmed up. I think about what I will have for breakfast. I can have French toast. I can have bacon and eggs. I can always have my usual workday cereal. I can have anything I want... I'm on vaca-

tion you know.

I sit on the porch and read for hours. I walk over to the White Hen and get a sandwich, an iced coffee, and something sweet. I walk over to the Mall and sit on my bench, second from the left. I eat my lunch and read my book but frequently stop and check out the scenery around me. I don't check out the time. It doesn't matter... I'm on vacation you know.

As the Frank Sinatra song goes, "The days dwindle down to a precious few." It's back to work. As I walk up the stairs, Ray calls out to me, "Here's the queen of the Brown School." John comes along. I give him a hug and he says, "Welcome back." Mike comes along and I get a hug and a kiss on the cheek and he says, "I missed ya."

I fire up Sadie, my computer, and listen to her groan and growl. From the back room I can hear the coffee dripping through. Lynne takes good care of me. The telephone rings. Parents walk in. I guess it's time to turn into the other me. It's time to put my memories of my vacation away. I file the memories in the back of my mind. But I know five months from now, if I want, and it's snowing, I can

JoAnne Brislin is a retired secretary from the Brown Elementary School.

PHOTOGRAPHY

PHOTOGRAPHIC SIGHTS
AROUND NEWBURYPORT

By Kathy Heywood



The Old Clam Shack at Joppa



Merrimac River at Joppa in Winter



Merrimac River at Joppa

Kathy Heywood teaches music at the Brown and Bresnahan Elementary schools.

THE CLOAK OF CHRISTMAS

By JoAnne Brislin

*The
Cloak of
Christmas is
Truly a wonderful
Thing. It allows people
To hug you, to kiss you, to say
I love you, and to truly be happy.*

*Some
People are
Only able to do
These things, under The
Cloak of Christmas, in December.
They are able to cast off their inhibitions,
Their upbringings, their hangups, and to truly
Be at ease and to show their true, hidden emotions.*

*Don't
You wish the
Cloak of Christmas
Lasted all the year long?*

SHOPPING FOR A CAR

By Vicki Hendrickson

*Before I'm dressed, a salesman phones with quotes
on lease agreements lasting several years
or financing his dealership promotes,
and warranties on engine, brakes, and gears.*

*He speaks so quickly, I can barely hear
the pitch like violins coming in tune,
with strings of numbers rattling in my ear.
I need my coffee. Need it strong — and soon!*

*For sixteen years, my Honda gave me rides —
three hundred thousand miles and more. I drove
across New England's towns and country sides
from downtown Boston out to Goose Rocks' Cove.*

*I have to have a car — buy, lease, or borrow.
I'll think today, and then fast talk tomorrow!*



Vicki Hendrickson is the Founder/Director of the Newburyport Adult & Community Education Program, the Newburyport Literary Festival, which celebrated its sixth annual event in April, and the Newburyport Lifelong Learning Lyceum



WAR IS GRAY

By Ann M. Eastman-McDonnell

*Childhood is meant for color,
But all I remember is gray.
Occasional red, in hand knitted hats,
A symbol of Resistance
Emerges when I think hard.*

*Occupation is uniforms,
Air raids, the smell of wet
Granite in shelters,
The sky filled with noisy,
Gray birds flying wing to wing,
Pregnant with deadly eggs.*

*I learn to read in this grayness,
My Mimi teaches me, as school is closed,
A gray building unheatable as coal is shipped
To Germany across gray seas.
I write on gray paper with nibs and
Bottled ink. Pen wipers exist.*

*If everything is gray, then why do I
Remember being happy?*

WHO TIED THE KNOTS?

By Ann M. Eastman-McDonnell

*In our part of New England,
A barrier island,
Back to the Great Marsh
Front to the Gulf of Maine,
Lobstering goes on.
Traps are plastic over wire,
Wood has been replaced.
But warp is still warp,
And storms don't change.
The traps are tumbleweed
Under water
Coming ashore folded into themselves
With warp like snarled hair.
For Clara, they are beach toys,
Resistant to tugs.
She wonders "whats?" I wonder "whose?"
Who tied the knots?*

BLACK

By Ann M. Eastman-McDonnell

*Occupation teaches the new meaning of black:
Black market,
Black out curtains,
The black sounds of the Black Maria,
Black hobnailed boots
Black noises on cobblestones.
Swastikas everywhere, also black.
Black overcoats made from my grandfather's
Uniforms; not needed after the black bomb
Hit the smokestack of "Tromoeysund" and caused
My Mimi to wear black dresses.
The blackness of winter in the high latitudes.
The black woodstove in the corner
Of the dining room where we all lived
During the black cold.*

POETRY

WHAT AMANDUS HAS SEEN

By Ann M. Eastman-McDonnell

*A factory in Germany; 1912
A toy store in Kiel.
A captain's cabin on a ship headed for Norway.
Wrapped in brown paper, tied with fuzzy string.
Branches of a Christmas tree; flickering lights.
Chubby arms and long braids.
He sees Hanne, who looks back and smiles.
"Oh Amandus!"
Finally, a name.*

*Amandus rests through the First Great War.
He sees Hanne grow up; always from his
Corner of her bed.
He goes where she goes. He moves when she moves.
He is waiting, though he doesn't know it.*

*Amandus has aged by the Second Great War.
Once more under a tree as the only gift; newly
Upholstered paws.
He sees Anne-Margrethe who looks back with a Wonder
that the "Great Bear" is hers.*

*He goes where she goes.
To the air raid shelter to wait.
Trans-Atlantic three times by ship.
Always the comfort of home, though his hide is rather
scratchy, he makes all the moving easier.
He watches Anne-Ma grow up.
Never far away.*

Ann M. Eastman-McDonnell is a special education aide at the Nock Middle School.

*Amandus sleeps through Vietnam.
Wakes once, dampened with tears. Anne-Ma knows
Now that one of her students, newly minted graduate in
June has come home in a G.I. casket
Blind in one eye, yet always alert.
He sees the green branches again,
Illumined with colors, but, for once,
Not the only toy.
Again the first chosen. He meets Erica, a child of
Hugs and smiles. Amandus is hers.*

*In old age, Amandus has his own rocking chair
By the fireplace in Scituate.
He watches Shannon, sensing motion,
Because now he is blind. But, he is not yet hers.
Erica holds on. She still needs him. Too many clever
Things under the tree.
This time
He may not be chosen first.*

UNACCUSTOMED VIGILS

By Tom Abrams

*I am unaccustomed to such vigils
swatting at the vulture bride who swoops and steals.
My son, six weeks old, stands witness to this dying
in this blank room scrubbed clean to accept the dead.
I want to upend buckets of yellow paint, build a twig fire
in the corner, lay down a dirty rainbow rug. Instead I wait,
I feed my son, who loves to eat, his tongue drowning in milk;
he too knows the smell of hospitals.*

I RUN

By Ellie Bailey

*I run
Not very far,
Not very fast but
I run.
My feet tap, tap, tap, tap
Along the road, the track, the gym
Away from my cares and
Into that place where all I hear
Is the beat of sneakers.
Tap, tap, tap, tap
Moving like water, slipping
Lightly through sharp winter wind,
Spring's misty air,
Sticky summer mornings,
The golden haze of fall,
I run and time passes.
No longer running away from life,
I run for pleasure for
The joy of my running dance.
Each step, each tap lifting my spirits,
Buoying me up like a wave and
Carrying me peacefully home.*



*While he fades to sleep I write a poem, quickly scribbling
lines. I clean his chin, accidentally strike a pen line down his nose.
“A human poem, / marked black by daddy,” I write. I’m just playing,
while everyone sleeps. On the way here I counted the hours of life lost
like a fiendish adding machine: a Friday, the traffic, the hour drive,
the suspended hospital time.
I write Suessically: “I do not care / my son has no ear.”
I scrape the page clean. I want to yell to them all,
rage, rage against the dying light. But I can’t.
Like screaming “stop” to halt a hurricane.
What choice but to subdue our passions,
to bind the beautiful girls of our youth in coffins?
My son wakes, my uncle wakes, I read them poetry
from Charles Simic and, I swear, they both smile.*

Ellie Bailey is a fifth grade teacher at the Molin Upper Upper Elementary School.



TWELVE MINUTES IN THE DREAMLIFE OF A BABY

By Tom Abrams

*My son cries in his dreams while I sit above scribbling notes for poems,
staining the page with beer and the grease of potato chips,
trying to write a poem like a primal myth, like the crying dream
where my son now resides for a time.*

All I get is the sweat of beer, the oil of potato chips, and a note: 6:20, nap.

I want my son to only cry in his dreams;

I will cry in life for him, secretly,

while wrecking the old shed, while drinking a bottle of beer.

"Tears from our dreams," I whisper to him,

"become the rain of our skies and

the wishes of minor gods."

What does he witness in this dream that makes him cry?

How does he equip himself for these journeys

with only the knowledge of milk and light,

the blurry images of mommy and daddy?

I believe he rides into his dreams

on a fire-breathing steed, brandishing dual swords

sharpened a thousand times,

and the image of mommy and daddy on his shield —

so far from the world of glasses and hearing aids and the dull strangled predictions of doctors.

Or perhaps he becomes an ocean wave

disappearing into himself,

his strength the strength of the world's oceans, the gravitational pull of the moon.

I touch his forehead to witness his teary vision:

a party of minor angels singing and dancing

while in the corner a child of one of these cries, his halo broken, pieces scattered on the floor.

My son arrives as he is,

not as a knight riding a horse

or as an ocean wave,

but only as himself;

he stoops and plucks the broken halo from the ground,

fixes it in his magical fingers

and hands it back to me.

"Do not cry," he says.

And when he wakes, I write, 6:42, nap over.

WE'VE GOTTA HAVE ARTS

(to the tune of "You Gotta Have Heart" from Damn Yankees, which coincidentally, just happens to be this year's NHS musical production)

By Deborah Szabo



*We've gotta have arts
Every school needs lot of arts
'Cause we want our kids to open their minds,
Not leave behind their hearts.*

*We need more than hope
To expand our current scope,
Self-expression through the arts surely will
Give kids more skill to cope.*

*When the budget offers zero - o - o - o,
Music marches out the door - or - or - or,
Let's not stand around like Nero - o - o - o,
Watching arts burn to the floor.
(Creative Writing's not a "side thing")*

*Our kids all need arts,
Poetry's not for old farts,
It's alive just like theater and dance,
So give kids a chance to get some smarts
Through the wonderful arts.*

*We've gotta have arts
Lots and lots and lots of arts,
Creativity requires time and space
Blossoming in our hearts.*

*We need more than hope
To keep kids from booze and dope,
Taking photographs or acting in plays
Make better ways to cope.*

*When the budget offers zero - o - o - o,
Video rolls out the door - or - or - or,
Let's not stand around like Nero - o - o - o,
Watching arts burn to the floor.
(While animation rocks the nation)*

*We've gotta have arts,
Graphic, fine, performing arts,
'Cause the independent studies all show
Our test scores will go right off the charts,
If we only have arts...*

All the wonderful arts...

Yes, we'll always need arts...

*(Fade out...but don't let our arts
programs fade out!)*

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