

The Blandford Bugle

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF ALL THINGS GOOD IN
BLANDFORD: GOOD HOMES, GOOD NEIGHBORS, GOOD FUN.

Issue 5, Vol 1 Blandford, Massachusetts

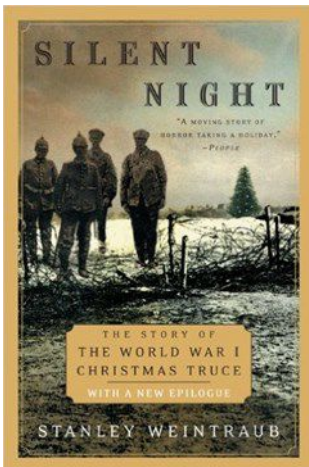
Winter 2015 –2016

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Peace on Earth

Peace in Blandford

When setting out books at the library for our annual Christmas display I search the stacks for one particular book that speaks to me about the authentic response to the message of Christmas. While the title might not sound like the usual holiday fare, it tells the story of a particularly poignant event during a bleak season on earth.



Silent Night: the Story of the World War I Christmas Truce by Stanley Weintraub is one of several books written about the first Christmas during the “Great War”. British and German soldiers were living in the trenches on the Western Front behind barbed wire, with a wide swath of ground, “no man’s land”, separating them into opposing camps. It was the first year of a brutal war, a war that would go on

to claim close to seventeen million military and civilian lives and injure twenty million men, women and children.

Using letters and diaries from the soldiers, the author, a professor of history, sets the scene for an unbelievable series of events. Though not observed universally or even sanctioned by their officers, the men on each side called for a truce in honor of Christmas. Ambulance crews came and collected the dead and they were buried with respect. On Christmas Day itself, little trees were decorated, lanterns lit and carols sung in German and English. Then in an atmosphere of peace and goodwill, the soldiers began to emerge from behind the barbed wire to exchange greetings, handshakes and treasures from home. There were even reports of football games, cards being played and rations shared. Sadly, the truce did not last past a few days; the orders were given to end the “fraternization” and it

For those of us living a hundred years later we might marvel that such a truce ever happened. It does not seem that anything of the sort would take place today in modern warfare. What was it about the men and the time they lived in that made even a few days of peace possible during a bloody conflict?

Perhaps it had something to do with the widespread celebration of Christmas in their various homes and countries and a general belief that the birth of Jesus in a little stable in Bethlehem was really the impetus to usher in a time of peace.

Then there is another question that comes closer to home: what does that Christmas truce have to do with us, those of us who live in Blandford in this enlightened age? What can we learn from reading about those few days of brotherhood? If we honestly examined our lives and our relationships within our families, our neighbors and other townsfolk, it could seem as if we were separated into opposing camps with long coils of barbed wire stretched between those on our “side” and those other people.

I propose the honoring of a truce during the Christmas season! Make some little inroads with acts of charity and kindness towards a difficult neighbor or that person you always seem to be at odds with. Bake some cookies to share, offer your shoveling services, help an elderly neighbor with the shopping, listen to another



point of view over a cup of egg nog, offer a prayer for an end to conflict. Since we are not living in a time of declared war, there will be no sergeants ordering us to stop the “fraternization”. That’s the big difference. Be a link in the chain of true “peace on earth, good will toward men” and make it a real *Merry Christmas* that has no end.

- By Cynthia Montanaro

Town Wide Invitation to sled at Watson Park



When your extended family gathers around the holiday table this year, start a conversation with this: *Tell me a story about something that happened when you were sledding.* Everyone will have at least one story to tell; I bet even Grandma will laugh and tell a tale or two. The choices for speed are as varied as the riders. Toboggans, steel runner sleds like The Flexible Flyer, snow tubes, rubber tire inner-tubes or even a sheet of cardboard will do sometimes.

Please join us on Saturday, January 26 at 10:00 a.m. The Town Hall will be open so you can warm up if you need to and enjoy a delicious mug of hot cocoa. Please park in the town hall parking lot.

If we don't have enough snow by then, we can postpone to another date but for now we'd like you to "save the date".

We will award home baked prizes for:

- the oldest sled.
- the oldest rider
- the youngest rider
- the biggest sled
- the littlest sled
- people who decorate their sleds
- most people on one sled
- fastest trip down the hill
- slowest trudge up the hill

Lending a Hand to Those in Need

Once again this year the COA will be sponsoring a food drive for the Huntington Food Pantry during the holiday season. There will be a box in the town hall lobby for donated food items. Last year, we had an overwhelming response. We look forward to your on-going support to help those less fortunate in our community.

We, also, are continuing to support the Battered Women's Shelters in the area. There will be a "Giving Tree" in the COA lobby adorned in ornaments with items needed by the shelters printed on them. Please stop by and choose an ornament with the item you wish to purchase. All articles need to be new and unwrapped. Some of the COA members visited a shelter recently and spoke with the staff there about the critical need for all types of items...from diapers to slippers, toothbrushes, and so much more. Come check out the tree and help women and children in our community who are experiencing very difficult and often life-threatening situations.

The box and tree will be placed in the lobby on November 16th and remain there until the middle of December. Hope you will consider helping out!



November 2, 2015
From: The Blandford Selectboard
To: All Town Residents

This is a public opinion survey conducted by the Blandford Selectboard to determine the degree of interest people of the town have in requesting that a Turnpike entrance/exit be constructed within the limits of our town. All town residents are encouraged to respond, with accompanying comments.

Background: In May/June of 2014 the Selectboard initiated a petition to allow residents access to the Turnpike through the gates at the Turnpike Rest Stops. This petition was strongly endorsed. However when sent to our state Senator, who forwarded it to the Dept. of Transportation, the response was negative. The Dept. of Transportation said “the Mass. Turnpike is a part of the Interstate Highway system, and exits must conform to federal standards.” There are no arrangements allowed for use of the rest stop access points.

Further, all of the Gateway Towns have been working for 2 years now to form a union which promotes development of our towns – to change the current trends of aging and shrinking populations. These changes require changing conditions and structures within the towns that will attract people who are not currently able to enjoy our (enviable) way of life. Easier access to our community is one way to remove this barrier, turning a corner in our history back to a more vibrant and healthy mix of people, activities and country living.

Hence the survey on the back of this page. Please fill out the one-question, one-comment survey for our consideration. Everyone’s ideas and viewpoints are appreciated. If you would prefer to sign your name, with the possibility of further dialog, please do so.

Or complete the survey on our website: <http://townofblandford.com/selectmen/Turnpike-Survey-1015.pdf>

And email to: selectmensecretary@townofblandford.com

Would you approve a request for an entrance/exit from the Massachusetts Turnpike from Blandford?

Yes _____ No _____ Not Sure _____

Reasons for your opinion:

Person filling survey (optional) _____

Please return your comments to the Selectboard at the Town Hall

(1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA)
Or drop in the grey mailbox at Town Hall

Or complete survey online: <http://townofblandford.com/selectmen/Turnpike-Survey-1015.pdf>

And email to: selectmensecretary@townofblandford.com

Thank you for your input and assistance.

Pancake Breakfast with Santa Claus to raise funds for Fire Department Defibrillators



There will be a pancake breakfast to raise money for two defibrillators for the Blandford Fire Department, and Santa will be there.

According to Fire Chief Ed Harvey, the equipment will go into the vehicles of two

first responders so there would be no need to go to the fire station first before going on an emergency call.

This will provide what emergency personnel refer to as a "Minute Man Response," and the responders will be able "to begin using the defibrillators as soon as possible," he said .

The estimated cost per unit is approximately \$2000. If sufficient funds are raised, the plan is to have a third defibrillator installed at the town offices.

The fundraising breakfast is planned for Saturday, Dec. 5 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. with pancakes, sausages, juice and coffee; \$8 for adults and \$4 for children. There will be live music and a raffle.

Leading the kitchen crew will be a special Celebrity Chef, Ed Harvey, who also has a degree in culinary arts.

There have already been donations made for this cause totaling \$2,000.



Hats Off!

- The Fletcher family would like to give a hat's off to their neighbors the Kanners, for sharing the most colorful dozen of eggs from their flock. Some of them were a lovely shade of green which were appropriately served with ham; nutritious and delicious.

- Hats off to the COA for honoring the Veterans of Blandford!

Recreation Committee News

We are putting the finishing touches on the skating rink located in Watson Park!



The Librarian Is In....at Town Hall

The above statement will become a reality in January 2016. We at the library are working to bring the Porter Memorial II to Blandford Town Hall.

During the coldest, snowiest, and iciest months of the year, some patrons are not able to safely navigate the lot, walk, and front steps of our library.

Our new satellite library will enable all patrons to have access to materials all year long.

We won't be just another pretty facade either. The secondary location will allow you to pick up ILLs, place items on hold, check out or return library materials, update patron information, and/or just drop by to say hello. The library staff will also bring DVDs, books, and periodicals that you may want to borrow on that day.

Starting in January, feel free to leave us a voice mail or send us an email suggesting library materials you would like available at the Town Hall site. Our contact information is 413-848-2853 or email info@blandfordlibrary.org .

The Porter Memorial II will be in operation January through the end of March 2016. Hours will vary depending on the schedules of COA functions, town meetings, etc. Please watch the Country Journal for information as well as on our Facebook page and our website.

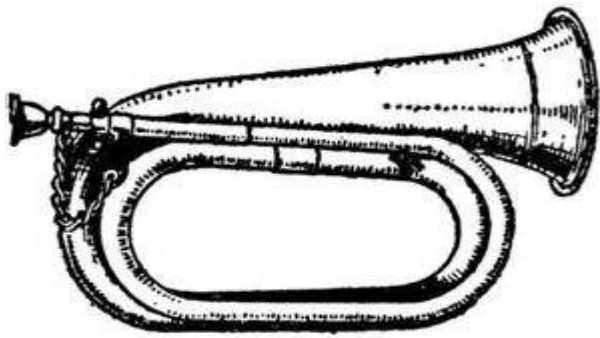


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All Blandford things you need to know

Postal Patron
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The Blandford Bugle

Send all communication to:
The Blandford Bugle C/O Recreation Committee
Blandford, MA 01008
Or, Drop in the town box outside town hall
Or, Email us at bugle@townofblandford.com

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