

The Blandford Bugle

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

Vol. 4, Issue 1 Blandford, Massachusetts Winter 2014 bugle@townofblandford.com

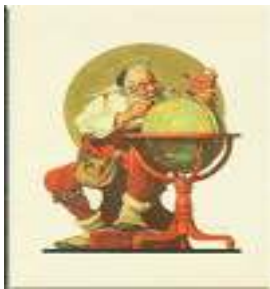
Neighbor to neighbor...what do you do?

The Welcome to Blandford Committee

Establishing positive connections with new residents

Letters to Santa

It's a long way to the North Pole and you want to make sure your letter gets there early enough for Santa to read it and write back to you.



Please place your letter in the special **Santa's Mail Box** located inside the Porter Memorial Library by Dec.

20. Santa will try very hard to answer every letter, even if they're posted after that date. Letters to Santa may be

dropped off in Santa's Post Box anytime. Stamp is optional.

Tis the Season for Giving...

The Blandford Council on Aging has set up a giving tree in the Town Hall to benefit a local women and children's shelter. They are looking for new, unwrapped items ranging from clothing and sleepwear to personal items. Please stop by and consider donating something towards this good cause.



A positive thought that was shared became an idea with a mission. Let's welcome new residents to Blandford the good old-fashioned way with a face-to-face visit and a basket of goodies. And so it was that the Welcome to Blandford Committee was formed. Cindy Montanaro and Lori Bocon presented the idea to the Board of Selectmen in October and received their go-ahead.

This new committee will be under the aegis of the Recreation Committee.

While still in the infancy stage, the committee is working diligently to get this program up and running. Presently, we are in need of the names of new residents that have joined our hilltown community as of July 1, 2014.

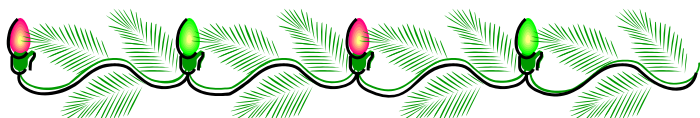
If anyone is interested in helping out in any capacity, please call Cindy Montanaro at 848-2271 or Lori Bocon at 848-2144. You can also email us at welcomcommittee@townofblandford.com.



My Good Neighbor

My good neighbor is also my computer Guru and friend! It does not matter when I call with a computer glitch, he's ready to come over and fix the problem. From simple things like a wrong setting to ridding a program from a serious virus. I don't know where I would have gone for help had he not come along. His help is always done with a smile and for no monetary compensation. A big THANK YOU to my good neighbor Dick Hamel!

Sue Racine



How to Be a Good Neighbor..... One Act of Kindness at a Time

Cynthia Montanaro

I think we all can remember the times in our lives when a good neighbor has come to our rescue. They might lend us the proverbial cup of sugar, help find our lost dog, watch the kids on a moment's notice or give us a ride when our car breaks down. We turn to the people who are nearest to us; those we know will be happy to help.

Other times we might perhaps be on the giving end of the kindness. It is a good thing to be able and eager to offer help, not only to the neighbors who have helped us, but also to the elderly woman in the grocery store who can't reach the coffee on the top shelf or the boy on the street who drops his books in the puddle.

Caring for one another and treating them all as valued neighbors is good for us and creates the kind of society and town that we are happy to live in and to invite others to share.

It would be quite a lengthy list if I tried to remember all the times that someone has treated me with kindness; as if I were their close neighbor. There were two particular days a few years back, though, which still stands out as the days our neighbors and friends came to our rescue.

In the summer of 2005, just a few short weeks after the death of our son, Tim, we lost our barn to a fire. The chickens and the curious grandson had escaped harm, thanks be to God, but the barn and everything in it were ashes. That day our good neighbors were the volunteer fireman who extinguished the blaze before it could spread to the house. They came from Blandford but also from surrounding towns; dropping whatever they had been doing to answer the alarm. One considerate neighbor and a Blandford volunteer fire fighter met me in the driveway as I came home from a grocery run to see the ashes and devastation. She instinctively knew that my worst fears were for the safety of my grandchildren and their dad. She made sure that I knew they were all safe.

After we had cleared away the mounds of debris Andy began planning the new barn. With his design in hand he crunched the numbers and realized that it would be hard to have it rebuilt without spending quite a bit more than the insurance settlement.

We toyed with various ideas and then wondered if we could try a method that hearkened back to another century. What about a barn raising? Could we pull it off? Would we be able to gather together enough of a team to get the shell up in a day? Would people come?



I made a list and sent out invitations to neighbors, friends a little farther away and family from all over. We promised food and music to sweeten the pot and waited to see what kind of a response we would get. The replies came in fast and furious and we prayed for the rain to hold off.

On the appointed day over a hundred people arrived in a steady stream of cars and trucks. Neighbors from Blandford came with their toolboxes, friends from Becket, Montgomery, Holyoke, Westfield, Huntington, Russell and New Marlboro. License plates from Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia could be seen up and down our road. It was a bit muddy but there was nothing more than a passing sprinkle to stop the work. The carpenters divided up into teams while the women and little ones carried food to the tables and watched the hammering, measuring and sawing begin.



We served breakfast, lunch and dinner to the hungry crew, passed water around at intervals and helped to fetch and carry as needed. Andy & his brother Joe, the professional carpenter, directed the work. One by one the walls went up, then the roof trusses. Three guitars, two fiddles and a tin whistle could be heard from time to time during breaks in the activity. At the end of the day we collapsed in happy exhaustion and gazed up at the framed barn, all ready for Andy and his smaller crews to complete over the next year.

Looking back I can say with gratitude that they were both beautiful days, one of destruction and one of construction made possible by the generosity of a great crowd of "neighbors".

Hats off!



- To Co & T.J. Cousineau for keeping us informed via the Town Marquee
- To The Blandford Garden Club for creating a beautiful wreath for The White Church.

Porter Memorial Library

Sunday: Closed ~ Monday 2-6
 Tuesday 1-6 ~ Wednesday 2-6
 Thursday 2-7 ~ Friday 2-6 ~
 Saturday 12-4

87 MAIN STREET, BLANDFORD, MA 01008

In the beautiful ♥ of Blandford

Phone: 413-848-2853

Fax: 888-495-5123

E-mail:

library@townofblandford.com



If you **really** listen
 you will hear them!

I PLEDGE TO READ
 THE PRINTED WORD



Porter Memorial Library is

so thankful

to be a regular feature of the Blandford Bugle.

Blandford is your town ~ the Bugle is your newsletter

Plain and simple

The **Bugle** reports about Blandford; how townspeople celebrate their lives and how we help each other everyday. **Porter Memorial Library is your library**, where patrons read, work and play.

We are your community space.

Tell us what you want and the library will deliver. Tell us what media you love, what you want to learn or share and we will **make it happen**. Porter Memorial Library is **your** access to technology, education, training and knowledge or just a quiet getaway. It is your place to interact on the level you choose.

Every single resident in Blandford is unique, but we all are neighbors. The Blandford Bugle is honoring every good Blandford neighbor by highlighting just a few. Get to know your town, read the Bugle cover to cover. You might be surprised what you will learn. Come in to the library and share how someone helped you and made a difference. It is a way of saying "thank you" for your helpful neighbor.

We are all silent partners in the town of Blandford.

If you **really** listen you will hear them!

We check on our elderly neighbor often as her family lives far away. I always bake a big basket of goodies for her for xmas
 - Donna Puzzo

Good deeds, Great neighbor = Hazel Holman! And of course Bud too. — Jenny Whitman

Several years ago my husband helped someone on Main Street. ...he pulled them out of a car on fire!

THIS. THIS is what neighbors are all about. We were gone since Tuesday. We got about 8 inches. Our wonderful neighbors plowed not only both sides of our driveway, but ALSO the space beside so we can maneuver cars. Thank you Rick!! - Karyn Brown

BROUGHT MY FAMILY DINNER WHEN I WAS SICK

We, in the summer, may mow each other's lawns. In the winter, we all help each other snow blow out the driveways!!! I do have awesome neighbors, (Jon & Wendy) & (Tasha & Bret)!!! - Kim Blanchette

My husband could not drive up Route 23 and one of our neighbors who plows for the state stopped and picked him up and brought him home—snow notwithstanding.

My late brother knew how to be a good neighbor. Every single day, on his way to work he would beep his horn when he passed by his friends' houses, and every Christmas he made wreaths for his neighbors. We could all learn from his selfless service in these and so many other ways. It's the countless small acts of unheralded kindness that make a good neighbor. He was Mike Crane, son of Tom and Millie Crane and beloved brother of Kathi, Carolyn, Jim and John. 1948-1999. rest in peace Mike. We will never forget you.— Kathi Weber

Are there when you need them

NEIGHBORS WHO LET ME SLEEP ESPECIALLY ON THE WEEKEND!!!



Color a Winter Wonderland Picture!
We would love to hang your picture at the Town Hall! Please
drop it off in the grey mailbox.



Tongue in cheek cooking...

Holiday traditions

Tricia Racine

The holiday season is my favorite time of year; I love the decorations, giving presents and most of all receiving presents! Also special for me are my family's holiday traditions. This is the only time of year that we break out certain recipes like French-Canadian Meat Pie (Tourtiere), meat stuffing, Christmas Crepes and (thank God) my mom's favorite date cookies. She insists on making these cookies every year and is the only one who eats them because frankly they are nasty, and I am seriously hoping she takes the recipe with her to the grave someday.

I am not a baker; even though recently I was told that I have a tart tongue (and surprisingly it wasn't a reference to my sweetness). I can produce the occasional cookie and pie but please do not ask me to bake a cake or batch of brownies. When it comes to baking I always say why make it yourself when there are perfectly good ones at the store. If you really want those date cookies you need to see my mom for the recipe.

Five years ago I took over making Christmas meat pies from my grandmother; I didn't know it was so involved. A few weeks before the holiday I gathered the ingredients listed on the card from my mother's recipe box entitled *Mom's Meat Pie* and set to work. I spent the entire day cooking the filling and rolling out the dough to be rewarded with two beautiful pies. Christmas night I proudly served them to the family only to be told they tasted wrong. How could that be, I followed the recipe to a tee. When I showed my grandmother the recipe card she said that it was not her meat pie. My mother had someone else's recipe and I had slaved over a hot stove all day to create some other family's traditional Christmas meat pie. I'm sure you can imagine my irritation.

The next year when I was ready to try again I called my grandmother and had her personally give me the recipe before I began. What I got from her was very vague: two parts ground beef to one part ground pork, diced celery softened in butter, salt, pepper and poultry seasoning to taste, a few potatoes mashed plain and pie crusts. She told me to call her if I had any questions; which I had: what were the exact amounts of the ingredients? First I diced four stalks of celery and sautéed them in butter until they were soft, then added four pounds of ground beef and two pounds of ground pork. Let me tell you, before you stir this much meat you might want to lift weights, my arm was killing me from all that stirring. Grandma said to season this to taste and let it cook for a few hours; no wonder this is done once a year, how tedious. After three hours I boiled four small potatoes, mashed them without milk or butter and muscled them into the meat mixture. Woo Hoo more than half way done! This year I had that Pillsbury pie dough that you just unroll and place into the pie plate because there was no way I was making dough from scratch again. (Come to find out Grandma uses this product also,



how shocking). I put together my four pies, and baked them at 350 degrees for thirty-five to forty minutes. They were beautiful and all I had to do was freeze them and wait for Christmas.

On Christmas Eve I brought them home from the store freezer and could only fit two of them in the fridge, so my father told me to put the other two on the screened in porch. He assured me they would be okay. Come morning I discovered that overnight critters had broken through the screen and had their own holiday feast! Great advice dad. Later that day when we served the remaining pies I was once again told that something was a bit off about them. Two years, two strikes.

Over the next year I did some CSing and figured out that what was different about my pies is that I used a leaner ground beef than my grandmother. Her ground beef came from the grocery store so it wasn't as lean as what I got from my parents' store; but there was no way I was going to the grocery store for the meat, I don't like inferior meat plus it's free from my dad. The third year I made the pies I explained this to the family and the complaining stopped. (It could also have been due to the Bite Me I

carved into the crust). My version of the family traditional meat pie is just a bit healthier for us.

I'm sure everyone has a family tradition that is more work than they care to do, but when you think about it going through all that work keeps you connected to your heritage. I am very proud to be French-Canadian and no more so than when I am standing in front of that huge pot as I'm sure my great-

grandmother did in her Quebec kitchen. Of course my stove is fueled by gas, not wood and I don't have a houseful of kids pulling on my apron strings, thank God! Oh, just so you know, my family's meat pie recipe is traditional not gourmet and not everyone is going to like it. I hope that everyone enjoys their holiday and all the great food that goes along with the festivities.

Bergeron Family Tourtiere

- 3 Tblsp Butter
- 4 Stalks Celery diced
- 4 lbs. Ground Beef
- 2 lbs. Ground Pork
- Salt, Pepper & Poultry Seasoning
- 4 small potatoes
- 4 pieces pre-made piecrusts

Over medium low heat sauté celery in the butter, add meats and sauté until browned and completely broken down. Add seasonings to your tastes. Boil the potatoes and mash with a remaining butter, add to the meat mixture and fully incorporate. Divide mixture between two piecrusts and top with the remaining crusts. Cut vents in top, brush with egg wash and bake at 350° for 35 minutes.

The Blandford Bugle
P. O. Box
Blandford, MA 01008

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All Blandford things you need to know

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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 blandfordbugle@hotmail.com

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Editor: Cara Letendre
Contributing Editor: Mary Kronholm
Editorial Board: Kate Fletcher, Mary Kronholm, Cara Letendre, Linda Smith