

ICE STORM REVERBERATIONS THE 2008 CHRISTMAS PARTY THAT WASN'T

by Shirley Chambers

The elegant Christmas celebration that had been planned for Dec. 13th got dumped because that two-faced Mother Nature gave us an ice storm the day before that crippled the electricity grid and took away our power. Many residents fled town to seek light and warmth with their children or friends or to stay in motels nearby. Those of us who stuck it out here in the Village found it difficult to bathe, to stay warm, to eat, and sometimes to sleep, and even worse to amuse ourselves without TV, computers, light to read, etc. Wouldn't our early forefathers have laughed at us for being such whining wimps!



PHOTO: SHIRLEY CHAMBERS

We bless our gas log fireplaces, our gas stoves (if you are lucky enough to have one) and those power-producing generators at the Village Clubhouse where many of us took refuge during the four-and-a-half-day outage seeking light, warmth and showering facilities. After 4:30's darkness, it was a place to hang out, exchange miseries, and have fun noshing on snacks and sipping wine with our fellow residents. More bonding of our Village family! One group started a pool betting who could come closest to the power-back-on date and time. Since there were no winners, the cash was used to buy food for the Westford Food Bank.

Probably one of the most distressing results from this blackout was all the food that spoiled in our refrigerators and freezers, most of which got thrown out in Thursday's trash pickup. Also, I believe we learned how important it is to have everyone's cell phone number. Unless you have a "landline" phone (conventional, non-wireless telephone connection), communicating with fellow man without knocking on doors was difficult.

And so we asked Santa to take away our boo-hoo's and blackout stress and give us instead his happy Ho Ho Ho's to cheer us for the forthcoming Christmas and New Year's holidays.

Remember Robert Frost in his poems reminiscences about how birch trees bend all the way down to the ground after an ice storm. What better example than those in the rear of Sandstone Rd. shown in this photo taken the morning after.

2008 VSR FINANCIAL REVIEW

by **Ron Caterino**, *Treasurer, Board of Trustees*

It seems that all we read in our newspapers and hear on our TV's are reports of record unemployment rates and staggering corporate losses, as well as extraordinary business and/or personal bankruptcies.

I am pleased to report that the Village at Stone Ridge continued on a very strong financial position during 2008, and that we are also poised to continue this trend throughout 2009 barring any unforeseen major expenses hitting our P&L during this year.

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

Key to maintaining financial stability is a strong forecasting process, and we in the Village have been blessed to have such a process.

Operations: Our 2008 expense forecast (submitted 14 months ago) was \$380,000; our actual through 12/31/2008 (unaudited) was \$378,000, reflecting a favorable variance of \$2,000 (-.5%). Half of 1% difference is a true testament that our forecasting process is indeed strong.

Water and Sewer: Forecasting our W&S expenses has been more challenging, because, frankly, it is newer for the Village and we have not had six years of experience forecasting it. We projected 2008 W&S expenses of \$124,000, and our actual was \$138,000, a difference of \$14,000. Grinder pump replacements alone were \$22,000 over our forecasted expense level.



BALANCE SHEET

We have a strong cash position in Operations (\$40,000), whereas we have little cash balance for the W&S. Our reserve accounts remain a stout \$193,000 for Operations and \$131,000 for the W&S facility.

Under the leadership of Ken Hyle, Chairman, the Finance and Budget Committee (consisting of members Peter Abate, Bill Townsend, Ken Fisher, Lorraine Facella, Tom Berry, and Board of Trustee's Liaison Ron Caterino) has spent many long hours in 2008 ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the VSR finances. This Committee works directly with the Great North accounting staff to provide us with monthly statements in greater detail for better analysis. They also monitor and invest the Capital Reserve Funds in CD's to generate maximum income as well as prepare the annual budgets for the approval of the Trustees.

DECEMBER'S FIRST THURSDAY VILLAGE MEETING

by **Louise O'Donnell**, *Communications Committee*



Approximately 40 Villagers attended the December 4th '08 meeting where Sandy Dennis, Director of Health Care Services for the Town of Westford's Board of Health, discussed the following topics:

- The Medical Reserve Corps needs volunteers
- Kits for emergencies can be ordered from the Board for \$50. They contain many items necessary for survival.
- The flu—seasonal vs. pandemic. Flu differs from a cold; symptoms are fever, weakness, body aches that come on slowly.
- Don't throw away old pills. Crush them and add to coffee grounds, then dispose in trash. Needles for diabetics, etc. should be put into empty bleach or plastic containers, tightly sealed, then thrown in the trash.

Sandy then gave us a kit containing many interesting items such as:

- How to prepare a 72-hour kit for emergency preparedness
- Winter holiday fire safety
- Flu - What you can do caring for people at home
- Elderly dental program
- Town of Westford Highway Dept. snow and ice procedures
- Family disaster plan
- Many pamphlets dealing with emergencies. The town is prepared with plans in place to act as an emergency center.

Linda Barry then took over the program and discussed the use of our defibrillator, which will be located outside the exercise room to the right of the men's room.

Instructions will also be kept in a binder in the Library for anyone to examine.

Linda then demonstrated how to use the defibrillator, after which Tom Barry ran a film showing the methods used to revive someone who has collapsed. Linda will be giving a demonstration at a later date for those who could not attend this meeting and would like to know more.

As a dutiful resident of the Village at Stone Ridge I make the following resolutions for the new year 2009 :

- To make absolutely certain when leaving the Clubhouse that all doors are locked.
- To carry everything out of the Clubhouse that I carry in; i.e., take my trash and recyclables home with me.
- To check batteries in my smoke alarms.
- To replace the filter in my furnace with a new one.
- To check that my furnace's intake and exhaust pipes on the outside of my unit are not covered with snow.

OUR INFREQUENTLY PRAISED CULTURAL CONTRIBUTORS

There are special people who are not often praised for what they contribute to other Village residents. They unselfishly and patiently give their time and talents for the cultural enrichment of our VSR neighbors. The most recent of these is Joyce Minosh who has taken eight ladies under her wing to teach them the rudiments of the mind-challenging game of bridge. Joyce, you have eight very grateful thank-you's.

In the past Marie Stabile has taught several classes in oil painting, Harriet Shanzer continues with her knitting sessions, and Lois Frampton has taught quilting and flower arranging. Any more volunteers to teach artistic and scholarly pursuits would be welcome, since we seniors are never too old to learn!

PUT THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR

March 5 – At Village meeting a presentation on Westford's history by Ellen Harde, Town Moderator and Westford history expert.

April 2 – At Village meeting the Legal Committee will present a draft of Revised Rules and Regulations for residents' comments.

April 26 – Annual Work/Play Day

May 7 – At Village meeting a member of Westford Conservation Trust will talk about our town land and trail system, with a follow-up on weekend of a bird and wildflower walk in our Village.

WINTER SAFETY ISSUES

by *Bill Townsend, Chair*
Eli Demetri, Board Liaison
Property Management Committee

During the recent December ice storm and four-day power outage, serious comments were made by residents as to how they were coping with the lack of heat and electricity. Some of these comments initiated the following thoughts on related safety issues.

1. The gas fireplaces installed in our condo great rooms were not designed to be a principal source of heat, although some heat is generated from their operation. The gas flame should not be turned to high to generate more heat but rather be set to a normal standard height. This will lessen excessive heat buildup in the flue and in the wall above the fireplace.
2. The kitchen gas stove (both the top burner and the oven) should NOT be used as a source of heat. A pan of water, when heated on a top burner, will add some moisture and heat to the room. However, this should not be done for any length of time greater than one would normally use when cooking a large meal.
3. If generators are used, care should be taken to follow safe operating instructions such as proper electrical connections, exhaust emissions, storage of gasoline, etc. Also, the noise impact on neighbors should be considered.

THESE THINGS ARE ABOUT TO BECOME EXTINCT IN AMERICA

The family farm	The swimming hole
Analog TV	Ham radios
Honey bees	VCR's
Measels and mumps	Chesapeake Bay blue crabs
Drive-in theaters	Phone landlines
Handwritten letters	Dial-up internet access
The milkman	Movie rental stores
Incandescent bulbs	Classified ads
Cameras using film	Yellow pages



AREA DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT



SURF Restaurant - Serious Seafood

207 Main St., Nashua, NH (603) 595- 9293

Recommended by Jean Guthrie

Michael Buckley is the Chef/Owner of this tantalizing seafood restaurant that serves traditional seafood as well as more daring creations. Flavors range from delicate and subtle to strong and bold. The atmosphere is casual and yet refined. They have live piano nightly, but not so loud it drowns out conversation. Friendly and efficient service. This restaurant is devoted entirely to creatively prepared and seriously fresh seafood.

The raw bar at SURF, usually predictable in most seafood restaurants, is outstandingly different. Those who enjoy the fruits of the sea in their most natural state will undoubtedly appreciate Chef Buckley's creativity. Old favorites appear alongside new favorites, each having passed the restaurant's rigorous standards for freshness. For starters Chorizo Braised Mussels or Clams Casino sounded interesting. Also oysters from Martha's Vineyard are served on the half shell, or as "Absolut Oysters" splashed with a generous amount of Absolut Citron Vodka and fresh cracked black pepper. Scallops Ceviche served cold naturally poached in an aromatic mixture of citrus juices and herbs sounded mouth-watering. Also tempting for entrees were Shrimp Vindaloo, Lobster Shephard's Pie, and potato-encrusted haddock. There are choices for meat lovers too.



Michael Timothy's Urban Bistro, Wine & Jazz Bar

212 Main St. (right across the street from SURF)

Nashua, NH (603) 595-9334

Recommended by Phyllis Duggan

Chef Buckley and his wife also own and run Michael Timothy's. They serve brunch 10:00-2:00, afternoon fare 3:00-5:00, and dinner after 5:00. The Sunday brunch buffet is a very popular family event—kids are welcome! In designing their restaurant they strove to create a warm, European bistro where you could come to enjoy exceptional food and be surrounded by outstanding art work. Excellent ambiance! They feel that good art and good food add much to our daily lives.

This is a jazz bar with live music four nights a week. Never a cover charge. They offer wine tasting events every Tuesday evening. The PHANTOM GOURMET'S review reads: "Michael Timothy's is an oasis of warm amber hues, cool jazz, soft lighting, and excellent cuisine. A wide-ranging menu includes wood-grilled pizzas, creative appetizers, and Mediterranean-influenced salads. Entrees range from melt-in-your-mouth seafood to tender veal, pork and beef. PHANTOM enjoyed escargot in a flaky puff pastry shell with shrimp and garlic butter. After dinner, PHANTOM concluded the evening with a visit to the wine and jazz bar where they have forty-three wines by the glass and live music by the earful. The Best Cool Jazz/Hot Food."



by Dianne Marston

The VSR Book Club met on Jan. 8 for an interesting discussion of *The Dante Club*, led by Gail Sergenian. This mystery, set in Boston during the 1860's, had many local literary figures as the main characters, one of whom was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The author, Matthew Pearl, is also local, and Gail has arranged a trip to meet him. He has offered to lead us on a tour of the Longfellow house in Cambridge on Jan. 30. Needless to say, the Book Club members are greatly anticipating this exciting event! Thank you, Gail, for conceiving the idea and arranging this for us.

Our next meeting will be at 1:00 on Feb. 26. The book, *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, is by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. "Set in both London and Guernsey Island, this novel follows an author, Juliet, as she becomes friends with the inhabitants of the island shortly after the end of World War 2. Told in epistolary style, Juliet learns of the occupied island and its deprivations, as well as the resounding spirit of the people who live there." (Tamela McCann)

One book club member who just read the book said: "I couldn't put it down ... I spent an entire day reading it!" That's quite an endorsement.

The book chosen for the April 2 meeting is *The People of the Book* by one of our favorite authors, Geraldine Brooks.

All Villagers are most welcome to attend any of the Book Club discussions. We would love to welcome back former members as well as new participants.



NEWS

Remembering the December '08 Ice Storm



PHOTO: DOUG CRAIB



PHOTO: RONI HUBBARD



PHOTO: CATHY SHREVE



PHOTO: CATHY SHREVE



PHOTO: XINIA CHAN



PHOTO: CATHY SHREVE



PHOTO: XINIA CHAN



PHOTO: XINIA CHAN



PHOTO: RONI HUBBARD

VILLAGE MERRYMAKERS WELCOME '09 IN STYLE

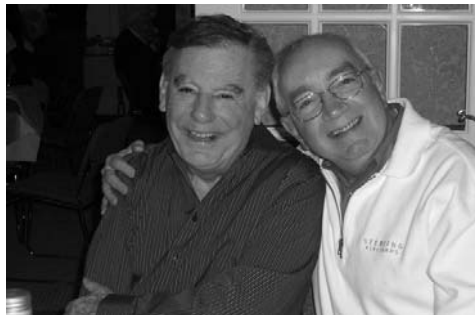
On December 31st, after tramping through bitter wind and cold to enter our Clubhouse (thankfully not a long trek), we were greeted by the elegant scene of neatly arranged tables place-set with our classy white dinnerware and new stainless white flatware, all awaiting our holiday dinner of Asian cuisine from Feng Shui. The food, served buffet style in heated chafing dishes, was tasty and received with holiday joy. The Clubhouse was decorated with gold streamers artfully cascading (a la Nany Diaz style) from our two big ceiling chandeliers in the main room. All of this created an auspicious start to our New Year's party.

Once our diners were replete and the tables cleared off the floor, DJ's Ray and Ann Marie took over the evening's entertainment, and the music and dancing and games began. These two "youngsters" are without a doubt prime purveyors of partying! The photos accompanying this article show some of the merrymaking.

As the evening approached midnight, the bubbly was uncorked, party hats doned, horns blown, strains of Auld Lang Syne sung, and we toasted in the New Year with "cheers, a votre sante, prosit, salute, ganbei, or salud" or whatever your choice. Roni was a victim of champagne cork-popping: she went home with the makings of a black eye. Earlier in the evening guest Eileen Cotter fell on the wet slippery floor in front of the booze table (cold sober, I swear). Fortunately her injury was not too serious. However, both accidents were an awakening; we now know how important it is to have first aid kits available in the Clubhouse.



PHOTOS: NANY DIAZ





ABSOLUTELY SOCIAL



by *Ruthann Fisher*
&
Dorothy Moran
Co-chairs

About 70 residents ushered in the New Year at our Clubhouse with Ray and Ann Marie Barnes using their superb DJ talents to make it a fun night.

And the bountiful repast from "Feng Shui" was enjoyed by all.

A special thanks to those male residents who responded to our SOS for assistance in setting up and moving furniture before and after the event. Couldn't have done it without your help!

Our "Taste of Soup" event scheduled for January 17th was cancelled.

Would the person or persons who cleaned the Clubhouse after the New Year's party please stand up. When our crew went in Sunday morning to do the job, it had already been done, spotlessly. Fess up you good little elves so we can thank you.

SENIOR'S DISCOUNTS

This list was developed by our villagers' brainstorming session at Ron Caterino's first VSR Retiree's Forum on September 17th of '08. If you know of others, send us an email and we can add them to this list from time to time. It is generally agreed that those age 60 and older qualify for senior citizen's discounts. Remember, you have to ASK for your senior's discount.

Dunkin' Donuts - on food items as well as bagged coffee

Golf - depends on the location, but ranges from \$10 to \$20

Train to Boston - half price

Wally's Westford Seafood - Mondays

Nail shops

AARP and AAA cards give discounts at many stores and motels

Airlines - Southwest, but discount off highest rate, so compare

Veterinarian - Lowell Veterinarian/Wignall in Dracut

Anton's Cleaners

Kohl's Department Stores - Wednesdays

Alec's Shoe Store in Nashua

Fantastic Sam's Haircut

Car rentals

Cruise ships

Movie theaters - Tuesday all day \$5.00, matinee rate in the evening

OUR NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Twas two weeks before Christmas and all through the town

it rained and it froze and many trees fell down .
The wires that were strung on utility poles snapped like twigs, and the houses all froze.

We got ourselves nestled all snug in our beds while visions of warmer days danced in our heads. And me in my thermals and Pa in his cap stayed huddled together for a bone-chilling nap.

The moon on the ice created a crystalline glow, and we asked ourselves, just how long can this go? When what to our wondering eyes did appear but our son with some coffee and donuts, the dear.

We could see our white breath in the darkness above, and deep under the covers I searched for my love. His feet, they were frozen and so was his nose – Perhaps he should get up and put on more clothes?

To add to the pleasure of this winter's delight two snowstorms came by – 18 inches of white. The snowing and blowing made things bad to worse and we prayed to the heavens our pipes wouldn't burst.

And it was just about then we heard the faint roar of a convoy of trucks, and we ran to the door. To the top of the poles, to the stretch of the cable, please bring us your power as fast as you're able!

They spoke not a word, but went straight to their work, and the power came on with a hum and a jerk. They heard us exclaim as they drove out of sight

**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL,
WE HAVE HEAT, WE HAVE LIGHT.**

*Written by someone in NH,
submitted by Barbara Leary*

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The Quarry Bulletin is a Bi-monthly newsletter to keep you informed of any events and information for The Village at Stone Ridge.

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