

# *The Westbrook Chatterbox*

Happy New Year!

All the Christmas packages are unwrapped and the decorations are coming down. The family has gathered and scattered again. The month leading up to Christmas was full of activities and parties. And by the time you get this, we'll be ready to ring in the New Year or maybe we will have already rung it in. The hustle and bustle is over and now, it's time to rest, recuperate and reflect.

The New Year does feel special, like a breath of fresh air. It's a great time to reflect. What am I doing right? What do I need to change? What am I in need of? What can I do to help others?

I just finished reading a book. It was about a man trying to find the writer of a notebook he had found. In the notebook was a poem. It goes like this: "Give me eyes to see what isn't shown, Ears to hear what isn't said, Hands to do what You want and the courage to not walk away." Basically, the story told about how that poem caused this man to not walk away from a situation. He shared the story with someone else and they were moved. They didn't walk away from a situation when God prompted them and so it went from person to person.

We often think that what we do or think doesn't matter or make a difference. However, sometimes not walking away, but listening or helping someone can make all the difference in the world. You could be the start of a web of good deeds or kind words shared from person to person.

This year, I challenge you to not walk away but act. It doesn't have to be a grand gesture. It may be just listening when someone needs an ear. It may be a smile at a stranger who looks sad or a hug to someone who is hurting. Maybe it's personally responding to a friend's Facebook post or group text. It could even be sharing a cup of coffee or cocoa with a new resident. Don't discount what you can do!

Below is another poem that I found. It ties in with the sentiment of the book I read beautifully. So as this New Year dawns, I hope that you will read and reflect on these poems.

Until Next Month - Janelle

*May the New Year bring you an abundance of amazing opportunities, beautiful moments and joyful experiences. May your positive actions and attitude inspire others. May you be brave enough to take on and overcome rewarding challenges. May you find yourself in high spirits and excellent health. May you love with all your heart and find peace in even the most turbulent of times. May the love you give always find its way back to you multiplied. And may you forever be filled with the hope and strength necessary to make your dreams a reality.*

**DID YOU KNOW?** "In order to set the calendar right, the Roman senate, in 153 BC, declared January 1st to be the beginning of the new year. During the Middle Ages, the Church remained opposed to celebrating New Year's Day. January 1st has been celebrated as a holiday by Western nations for only about the past 400 years."

My husband and I purchased an old home in Northern New York State from two elderly sisters. Winter was fast approaching and I was concerned about the house's lack of insulation. "If they could live here all those years, so can we!" my husband confidently declared. One November night the temperature plunged to below zero, and we woke up to find interior walls covered with frost. My husband called the sisters to ask how they had kept the house warm. After a rather brief conversation, he hung up. "For the past 30 years," he muttered, "they've gone to Florida for the winter."



As we waited for a bus in the frosty weather, the woman next to me mentioned that she makes a lot of mistakes when texting in the cold. I nodded knowingly. "It's the early signs of typtothermia."



A trucker stops at a red light and a blonde catches up to him. She knocks on the window and says, "Hi, my name is Heather and you are losing some of your load." The trucker just ignores her, the light changes, and he proceeds down the street. At the next light, the blonde again catches up and says, "Hi, my name is Heather, and you are losing some of your load." He ignores her again and continues down the street. At the next red light the blonde catches up, all out of breath, knocks on the window and says, "Hi, my name is Heather and you are losing some of your load." The trucker looks at her and finally, he says, "Hi, my name is Kevin, it's snowing, and I'm driving a salt truck."



**Auld Lang Syne Lyrics by Robert Burns (1788)**

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot And auld lang syne?

Chorus: For auld lang syne, my dear, For auld lang syne,  
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet For auld lang syne!

We twa hae run about the braes, And pu'd the gowans fine,  
But we've wander'd mony a weary fit Sin auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't in the burn Frae morning sun till dine,  
But seas between us braid hae roar'd Sin auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere, And gie's a hand o' thine,  
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught For auld lang syne!

And surely ye'll be your pint' stowp, And surely I'll be mine,  
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet For auld lang syne!

**Translation**

Should old acquaintances be forgotten,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should old acquaintances be forgotten,  
And days of long ago !

Chorus: For old long ago, my dear For old long ago,  
We will take a cup of kindness yet For old long ago.

We two have run about the hillsides  
And pulled the daisies fine,  
But we have wandered many a weary foot  
For old long ago.

We two have paddled (waded) in the stream  
From noon until dinner time,  
But seas between us broad have roared Since old long ago.

And there is a hand, my trusty friend,  
And give us a hand of yours,  
And we will take a goodwill draught (of ale)  
For old long ago!

And surely you will pay for your pint,  
And surely I will pay for mine!  
And we will take a cup of kindness yet For old long ago.

# JANUARY

NEW YEAR  
 NEW BEGINNINGS  
 WISHES dreams  
 CELEBRATE  
 LOVE FRESH START  
 FAMILY  
 Resolutions

Don't knock the weather. If it didn't change once in a while, nine-tenths of the population couldn't start a conversation.



SNOWFLAKES  
*slidding*  
 hot chocolate  
 snow man  
 MITTENS  
*winter*  
 lazy days  
 candy canes  
 CRACKLING FIRES

"The sun came out,  
 And the snowman cried.  
 His tears ran down  
 on every side.  
 His tears ran down  
 Till the spot was cleared.  
 He cried so hard  
 That he disappeared."



**THIS IS YOUR YEAR**  
*Laugh from your soul.*  
*Dream even bigger.*  
*Live in the moment.*  
*Stop comparing to others.*  
*Be joyous in yourself.*  
*Strive for contentment.*  
*Add memories, not things.*  
*Give with no expectations.*  
*Find beauty in Simplicity.*

**L I V E**

## All I Need to Know about Life I Learned from a Snowman

It's okay if you're a little bottom heavy. ~ Hold your ground, even when the heat is on.  
 Wearing white is always appropriate. ~ Winter is the best of the four seasons. ~ It takes a few extra rolls to make a good midsection. ~ We're all made up of mostly water.  
 There's nothing better than a foul weather friend. ~ Don't get too much sun.  
 The key to life is to be a jolly, happy soul. ~ Accessorize! Accessorize!  
 Accessorize! ~ You know you've made it when they write a song about you. ~  
 Avoid yellow snow. ~ It's embarrassing when you can't look down and see your feet. ~ There's no stopping you once you're on a roll.





### FRUITCAKE TOSS?!?!

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN GIVEN A FRUITCAKE AND NOT KNOWN WHAT TO DO WITH IT? MAYBE YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY LOVE FRUITCAKE. IF SO, THEN THIS ARTICLE MAY NOT BE FOR YOU. BUT IF YOU DON'T THEN READ ON.

YOU HAVE BEEN GRACIOUSLY GIVEN A FRUITCAKE. SOME OF YOU WILL EAT THE HOLIDAY BREAD. OTHERS MAY RE-GIFT THEM. THERE ARE THOSE WHO SNEAKILY THROW THEM AWAY AND OTHERS WHO WILL DO SO OPENLY.

BUT ON THE THIRD DAY OF JANUARY, ANOTHER TYPE OF FRUITCAKE, AHEM, PERSON COMES OUT OF THE WOODWORK. THESE ARE THE CHARACTERS WHO HAVE HOARDED THEM, STORED THEM AND HID THEM SO THEY CAN CELEBRATE NATIONAL FRUITCAKE TOSS DAY.

THE FRUITCAKE TOSS WAS STARTED IN MANITOU SPRINGS, CO, IN 1995. TODAY THEY OBSERVE THEIR ANNUAL TOSS IN LATE JANUARY INSTEAD OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup>. NOT ONLY IS IT A DAY OF FUN AND GAMES, BUT IT'S ALSO A FUNDRAISER FOR THEIR LOCAL FOOD PANTRY. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATES OR JUST COMES TO WATCH AND CHEER THE OTHERS ON, BRING A NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEM. THESE ARE ALL GIVEN TO THEIR FOOD PANTRY.

THERE ARE EVENTS FOR ALL AGES. THESE INCLUDE HAND TOSS AND KID TOSS FOR DISTANCE, ACCURACY, SPEED, BEST "BALANCE", ROBOTIC TOSS, MECHANICAL TOSS AND THE THREE-MAN SLINGSHOT TOSS FOR DISTANCE. PRIZES ARE AWARDED FOR ALL THE EVENTS AS WELL AS ONE FOR THE OVERALL WINNER.

ALTHOUGH PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TOSSING THE TRADITIONAL CAKES, THERE WILL ALSO BE A FRUITCAKE BAKE-OFF. LOCAL BAKERS WILL COMPETE FOR THE TITLE OF FRUITCAKE KING OR QUEEN AS DETERMINED BY THE COMMUNITY. WINNERS WILL BE BASED OFF WHO MAKES THE BEST ORGANIC, NON-GMO, NATURAL FRUITCAKES.

ALSO IF YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE WHO LIKES TO EAT FRUITCAKE, YOU CAN RENT A FRUITCAKE FOR JUST ONE DOLLAR TO USE FOR COMPETING. AND JUST A TIP: THE OLDER YOUR FRUITCAKE IS THE HARDER IT GETS AND THE BETTER IT CAN BE TOSSED.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING, SEE THE TRIED AND TRUE RECIPE FOR FRUITCAKE BELOW.

#### Holiday Fruitcake Recipe

1 C Water  
4 Large eggs  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 C Brown sugar  
1 FULL bottle of your favorite whiskey

1 C Sugar  
3 C dried fruit  
1 tsp. salt  
Lemon juice, nuts



Sample the whiskey to check for quality. Take out a large bowl.

Check the whiskey again to be sure that it is of the highest quality.

Pour 1 level cup and drink. Repeat.

Turn on the electric mixer; beat 1 C of butter in a large fluffy bowl.

Add 1 tsp. sugar and beat again. Make sure the whiskey is still OK. Cry another cup.

Turn off the mixer. Break two eggs and add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit.

Mix on the burner. If the dried fruit gets stuck in the beaters, pry it loose with a screwdriver.

Sample the whiskey to check for toxicity. Next, sift 2 cups of salt.

Or something. Who cares? Check the whiskey. Now sift the lemon juice and strain your nuts.

Add one tablespoon of sugar or something...whatever you can find.

Grease the oven. Turn on the cake tin to 350 degrees.

Don't forget to beat off the turner. Throw the bowl out of the window.

Check the whiskey again. Go to bed. Oh well, who likes fruit cake anyway???

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Rate Us!

***"Staff was always very friendly and patient, which I consider very important."*** Lane H

### Featured Resident – Sandy Smith

Sandra Smith was born in Detroit, MI, to Donald and Virginia Sanger. She and her sister, Pam, used to ride bikes and loved to play games with the neighborhood kids included “Three Feet across the Gutter”. She said, “When the street lights came on, you knew you had to go home.” Sandy liked school and in high school, she played basketball and field hockey. She graduated from Osborn High School. Her class was the first to graduate having attended all four years there. She recalls that her class was one that got to help pick the school’s name, colors and mascot.

After high school, Sandy got a job at Chevrolet Engineering doing secretarial work. While working there, she met the man who was responsible for designing the Corvette.

Sandy met Ron Sagaert in high school and they dated for a year or so. Then Ron joined the Navy and went to San Diego working in submarines. They continued to correspond. In a conversation, Ron mentioned that when he came home on leave that they should get married and she could return to San Diego with him. And that’s what happened.

Sandy and Ron married in 1962. She loved San Diego. She tells a story about going to the Palomar Observatory and climbing the ladder to the telescope. As she was climbing up the ladder, wearing a sundress and the wind came up and blew her dress over her head. Another time, Sandy got to go in a submarine and have dinner with Ron. She was amazed with how small it was. Sandy found out she was pregnant and Ron got deployed. Sandy moved in with the pregnant wife of another deployed sailor. Sandy even drove that woman to the hospital when she went into labor with her sixth child. Ron made it back just in time to be there for the birth of their son, David. Ron was discharged in 1963 and they moved back to Detroit.

Ron had trouble finding his niche after the service. Over the next couple of years, they lived in Ypsilanti where he was a Twin Pines milkman; then they moved to Royal Oak where he worked as a fireman before becoming a policeman. They couple divorced in 1965 and Sandy moved back to Detroit to live with her parents.

Sandy enrolled Dave in nursery school and got a job doing secretarial work for a couple of different temp agencies. This eventually led to a better job.

Sandy went bowling with a group of her girlfriends and they ended up meeting some gentlemen. Don Smith and Sandy hit it off, started dating and married about a year later. In 1970, Sandy gave birth to their daughter, Heather and in 1972; they welcomed Holly into their family. Sandy stayed at home with the children until the girls were in school.

Sandy worked at Michigan National Bank. She handled transactions for their commercial customers. She worked there for about five years before getting a job with the City of Warren. Her first two years, she worked for the fire department. In 1988, she transferred to the police department where she worked until she retired in 2003.

Don had a severe stroke in 1995. It left him paralyzed on the right side and unable to speak. Communicating was hard on both of them. They would try to use pictures but often frustration and anger took over. Sandy took care of him at home until 2001. He passed away in 2004 in a nursing home.

Sandy began traveling with a woman she knew from the police department. The two that stand out the most were the trips to Alaska and Hawaii.

Heather moved to Manistique in the Upper Peninsula with her husband. Sandy would go up there to visit. On one such trip, she met Mike. They hit it off and became engaged. Sandy then moved to Manistique. However in 2009, Heather died under suspicious circumstances. This caused Sandy to shut down and ultimately her relationship with Mike ended.

Sandy moved back to Warren, bought a new condo (her aunt was living in her old one) and started traveling again. Her daughter, Holly, moved to Kearney in January 2016 when her husband, Eric, got transferred. Holly’s son, Cameron, moved in with Sandy. Unfortunately, he ended up getting involved with drugs and was arrested. Currently, he is progressing well.

Holly wanted her mom closer and Sandy wanted to be closer to Holly and her family. So while visiting over Christmas in 2016, they looked at some places for Sandy including Westbrook. It took a year for Sandy to sell both the condos, tie up the loose ends and prepare to move.

In March of 2018, Sandy moved to Westbrook Villas. She has a two bedroom apartment which she loves. She can see the sunrise and the sunset with being in a corner apartment at the end of the building. She says the people are all very nice. Even though she misses her pots and pans and dishes, she really likes being able to come down to the dining room and having the food ready to eat. She also enjoys all the activities and is pleased with the variety that is offered. She is thankful for her health and the ability to still help others.

Besides her children, Sandy has three grandsons, two granddaughters and two great grandsons.

## Seniors and Post-Holiday Blues: Why it Happens and What to Do

*If you're feeling let down after the holiday season, we'll offer you some ways to get your spirit back.*

As the end of the holidays approaches, many people feel relief knowing the hustle and bustle is nearly done. Yet the day after decorations are packed away and the leftovers are in the freezer, surprisingly that relief can be replaced with feelings of depression, especially for seniors.

Older adults are more likely to have difficulty with both pre- and post-holiday blues if they are more isolated from family and friends. Seniors are also more likely to be suffering from ill health, which can exacerbate feelings of depression that may arise after the holidays. According to the American Geriatrics Society, seniors may also feel blue after the holidays if they are facing money issues, and spent beyond a budget.

For seniors, the holidays bring up feelings of loss and loneliness for a spouse or close friends who have passed. If it's the first holiday season one faces without his or her spouse or a life-long friend, that pain is still fresh.

### **Go out or invite others in**

- Though it may be difficult to make plans to attend events and socialize if one is feeling blue, this is the time when reaching out matters most. Even a small get together can contribute to a happier outlook on the New Year ahead. If one's health prevents traveling, invite friends over for a simple gathering. It can make all the difference as can connecting with grandkids while they have vacations from school--even if it's by phone, email or Skype.
- Seniors can also benefit from taking time to talk about their feelings after the holidays, whether with others at a senior center or church, or with a geriatric counselor. Often times just talking about sadness helps one understand it better and feel more in control.
- The holidays can be exhausting at any age, but for seniors, travelling, shopping, cooking and decorating can take a much bigger toll than it once did. It is important to note that exhaustion sometimes feels like depression, so seniors should schedule more opportunities to nap or simply get a little extra rest.

### **Here are some ways seniors can help alleviate the post-holiday blues:**

- Make a plan to learn something new. It can be anything from yoga exercises a person can do in a chair to learning about the computer.
- Work with family members to create visible memories of the holiday season. Collecting favorite photos and cards, and telling stories about the photos is not only entertaining, but preserves the history of a family.
- Consider taking decorations down slowly rather than all at once. Leave a wreath on the door, or garland along a bannister.
- The American Geriatric Society Foundation for Health in Aging recommends volunteering as a way to ease the post-holiday blues. This organization suggests calling the United Way or one's church to learn about others who need help. Something as simple as helping someone else, reading to someone or just being nearby can be beneficial.

### **When it's more than the blues**

- Sometimes feelings of depression are more than just the post-holiday blues. Below are some symptoms that may warrant treatment by a doctor.
- Inability to sleep, or excessive sleeping
- Significant loss or gain of weight
- Difficulty thinking and concentrating, or indecisiveness
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Severe fatigue or loss of energy
- Those who are experiencing these symptoms should consult a doctor or a clinical counselor right away.