

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Daily Life & History of West Bath, Maine

FALL 2013 • PUBLISHED BY THE WEST BATH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BUDDIES FOREVER, A World War II Combat Pilot's Tale

[Editor's note: A few years back, we did a story in Middle Ground in which then-West Bath resident, Bill Bellows, shared some of his long-ago memories of his time in action as an Army Air Corps combat pilot during WWII.

Here, in honor of Veterans Day this November, we spoke again with Bill and he shared still more memories, and also, importantly, lots of photos.]

It was June of 1944, and the world was at war.

In a staging facility in Lincoln, Nebraska, 10 strangers, ranging in age from 18 to 27, met for the first time. The young men came from various Army Air Corps training programs throughout the country. Four were officers and six, enlisted men. Their skills, honed in intense training, ranged from piloting or navigation, to operating a bombsight or radio, gunnery, or mechanics. On that day, gathered together at a numbered sign on one of long tables in the cavernous space, Crew #6795 was created, with Bill Bellows among them. Their first assign-



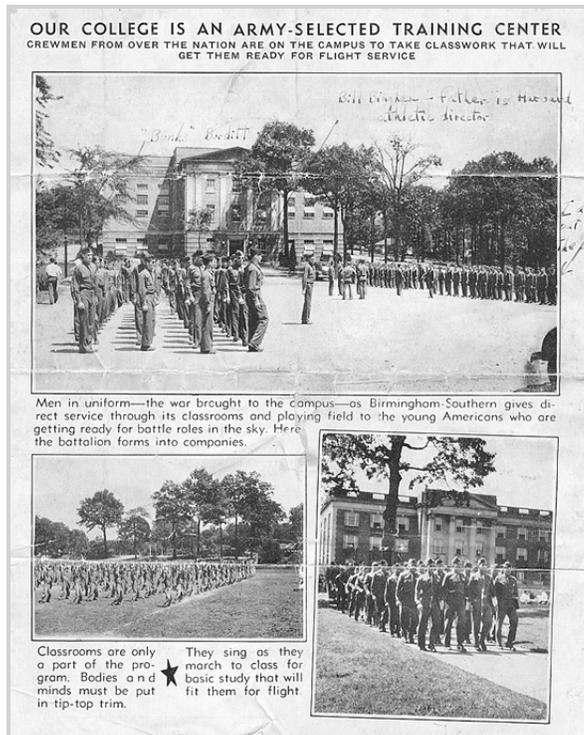
Bill Bellows with the flight crew.

ment as a 10-man crew was further training on a B-24 "Liberator" bomber at a base outside Tucson.

Off to the Front, Sort of

In the course of their training – from the interminable troop-train treks from base to base, through cross-country flights, bombing practice and aerial target gunnery over California, New Mexico and Arizona – they quickly became a team. Equally important to their bonding were various pursuits other than flight training. Those capers include cutthroat card games, forbidden midnight forays into a fenced-in pool, and jolly nights in town, including a wedding reception hosted for their tail gunner

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The Birmingham-Southern training center.

WEST BATH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SERVICE DEC. 17

The Christmas season is 'a-coming in', and once again, the West Bath Historical Society will be hosting our Annual Christmas Service & Community Sing at the Old West Bath Meeting House. Tuesday, December 17 at 7 pm. This year's ecumenical celebration will be led by Rev. Mark Wilson. Traditional carols will be sung, backed by Steve Masters playing our historic pump organ, and there will be six readings, including passages from the Bible, a holiday poem, and a Native American prayer for peace.

Come and embrace the holiday spirit, enjoy some spirited singing, and gather afterward for hot cider and assorted homemade goodies. As part of our tradition of community service, we will share our offering with a deserving non-profit. This year, again, we will be donating to the Bath Area Food Bank. ▲



Combat Pilot's Tale

Continued

in the Hotel Conquistador in Tucson. They were the “top guns” of their day!

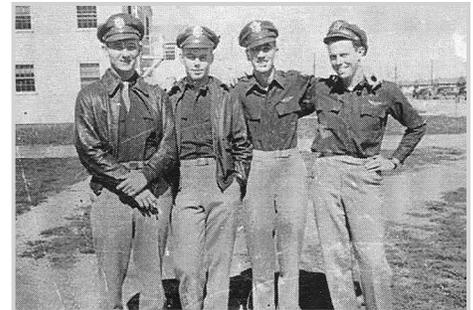
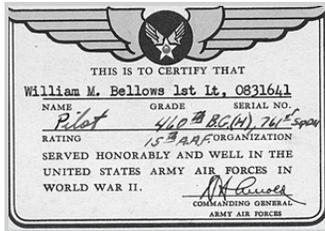
Bill still remembers those training days with intense clarity. “We were a maverick bunch; no distinction by rank off duty, but military to the nth degree when we were in the air. Trained and ready for the fight, we awaited combat duty assignment and, of course, a Liberator to ferry overseas. But unfortunately, waiting became our ‘duty’ for a variety of reasons: no plane for us in Topeka; a week of nothing in Virginia; a 21-day trans-Atlantic crossing on a Liberty ship in convoy; abandonment in Algeria for nearly two weeks.”

The snafus (a word coined in WWII, and if you don't know what it means, look it up!) kept mounting. The first was a transportation glitch. Bill still remembers how disappointed he was: “We pilot trainees had practiced precision exercises and acrobatics; we had soloed. We were

moving to the next base for more skill training, instrument flying, and a plane three times

as powerful. We were eager for the next stage as we stood in formation beside the train track. Suddenly our sergeant roared, ‘All with names beginning A or B fall out.’ The rest of the group then boarded the train. We felt victimized and outraged. Why? A sloppy person in the corps transportation department had not sent enough Pullman cars required for our move from Georgia to Mississippi.”

Snafu #2 was another transportation mess. “Most crews heading for combat were usually assigned a B-24 to fly overseas, but we and twenty-nine other combat-ready crews had to take a Liberty ship from Newport News, Virginia for mysterious reasons. We sailed a convoy to the Mediterranean, with each interminable day becoming increasingly warm and humid. Playing hours of



With Air Corps buddies.

The crew found temporary quarters in de-activated British hospital tents. No dinner that night. No mattresses. No warm clothes. And, says Bill, “it gets darned cold in the desert when the sun goes down! Two weeks later, our six enlisted men traveled to Italy in a cattle boat. We four officers crossed on a British cruise ship. Our crewmen said their boat still stank!”

When they finally arrived at their assigned combat base in Spinnazola, Italy, there was more waiting. This time, their command pilot had an emergency appendectomy which delayed him in Naples. Some of their crewmen flew once or twice to fill empty slots with other crews, army air corps combat unit #6795 would not fly their first mission together until early January, 1945. Then the missions came as regularly as the winter weather would allow.

Mission: Strike!

“Our first assignments were to attack oil refineries in Poland. Other targets were Czechoslovakia and Hungary – the second step in the bomber command strategy. (Step one had been to go after German aircraft plants.) After those first long missions, our targets later were in Austria, primarily railroad hubs. Fighter protection increased as more P-51's came to cover us, including the arrival of the now-famous 332nd group of black pilots (Tuskegee Airmen). Then, in early April of '45, we bombed German troops just ahead of Allied forces as they moved out of the Apennine Mountains into the Po valley of northern Italy.”

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Bellows' snapshots of his WWII experiences.

bridge or reading helped, but not much. Once in the Mediterranean, our ship suddenly split off from the convoy, and turned right toward the African coast. We were basically dumped dockside in Oran, Algeria, where no one was expecting a combat-ready flight crew. Why? Our units carried orders for Italy; the convoy's destination was India by way of the Suez Canal. I now think we were lucky that someone found the error then and not later!”

Combat Pilot's Tale

Continued

Taking Flak

“Any flak was nerve-wracking and we were getting plenty. The worst moment came when two of our four engines were knocked out and Bob, command pilot that day, announced, ‘Prepare yourselves to bail out!’ Luckily we didn’t have to; we made it home. Extreme tension also reigned on other occasions: failure of one engine; a piece of flak which ripped through the top turret just over Smitty’s head, or the piece that went through our windshield between me and Bob, each thinking the other had been hit. Adding to the stress was that above 25,000 feet, our inside temperature was minus-40 to 50 degrees, and we had to wear an oxygen mask for most of each flight. The fact that all ten of us returned to the U.S. without a scratch still awes me.”

R&R

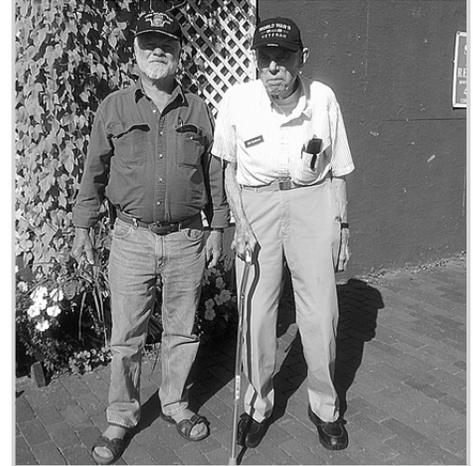
After twenty-seven missions, the crew earned well deserved rest leave

on the Isle of Capri, where, Bill recalls: “we celebrated the German surrender for thirty-six continuous hours just a day or two before the leave ended. No snafu there. Just a joyous thirty-six hour victory party!”

Reunited After 50+ Years

There was another important milestone for the #6795 crew years later. All of them had pretty much gone their own way after the war. By 2002, seven of the combat gang were still alive and kicking. Through an alumni organization, they finally met up again. It was a great reunion. Bill admits, “Most of us, though buddies under fire, had not kept in touch for the fifty-seven years since we left Europe. The association helped bring at least six of us together face to face again.” And the remaining crew has kept in touch ever since.

Today, Bill is happy to report that his crew still has four living members. “But in our hearts, we remain a crew of ten, bonded from the year we spent stateside and in the European theater during WWII, working and growing together. Crew #6795 – Bob, Bill, Luke, Dick, Smitty, Sam, Don, Marty, Russ, Steve.”



Bill Bellows, right, recently, with Pete Guild, Viet Nam era vet.

Afterwards: In 1947, just after the Japanese surrender, Bill, combat pilot and now a civilian, went to graduate school (with his new bride!), and then on to a teaching career, with history and English as his subjects. Together Bill and Lou raised five boys. The couple retired to West Bath in 1966, where they rehabbed an 18th century farmhouse and built a barn by themselves. Today, Bill, a recent widower, lives in the Highlands, a retirement community in Topsham, Maine. ▲

Call for New Board Members for the Historical Society!

It is time for new blood! And we don’t mean for Dracula. Our very dedicated Board of Trustees for the West Bath Historical Society has several slots open for new members. Most important is that our President and our Treasurer/Secretary (Avery Meyers and Pete Guild, respectively) are both long overdue for stepping down. Both Pete & Avery have agreed to keep their posts beyond their term limits, but we hope that folks in West Bath will step forward and volunteer for these two important jobs. It’s not hard; it’s fun and it is vital to the community. Here is the listing of WBHS and their terms and contact information. Please give anyone of them a call if you have any

questions. And do step up to the plate and join us!

Avery Hunt Meyers, President, pro tem:
1 year. 3rd (final) Term ended, June ’12
121 Shoal Cove, West Bath 04530
Tel. 443.4449 cell. 751.9559
Email: averyhunt@comcast.net

W.N. (Pete) Guild, Treasurer/Corp.
Sect’y – 3rd Term, ends June ’13
P.O. Box 167, Bath, 04530 (36 Guild Point, West Bath)
Tel. 443.6056 cell: 713 817.8499
Email: wnguild@aol.com

Bob Bittner – 2nd Term, ends June ’14
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Tel. 442.0647 cell. 617 688.281.7400
Email: jibguy@aol.com

Raisa Bittner – 2nd Term, ends June ’14
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Tel. 442.0647 cell. 617.688.3004
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Ivon Boyer – 2nd Term, ends June ’14
141 Fred Brigham Road, Phippsburg 04562

Tel. 389.1109

Email: ivonboyer@comcast.net

Beth Brewer – 1st Term, ends June ’14
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Tel. 443.8955 cell. 207.504.7734
Email: Beebrew@comcast.net

Sally Graves – 1st term, ends June ’13
22 Austin Road, West Bath 04530
(PO Box 235, Phippsburg 04562
Tel. 443.4918 or 389.9274
Email: stgraves921@gmail.com

Cindy Fahay – 3rd Term, ends June ’14
241 Sabino Road, West Bath, 04530
Tel. 443-1253 cell. 848.466.6476
Email: cindyfahay@yahoo.com

NON-BOARD MEMBERS – COMMITTEE HEADS

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143 Sabino Road, West Bath 04530
Tel. 443.5118
Email: sabinosam77@yahoo.com

***Betty Fitzjarrald** – Committee chair,
Littlefield School
342 Houghton Pond Road, West Bath
Tel. 442.9780
Email: bfitz831@gmail.com ▲

CROSSING THE BAR



Justin Aric Wold, 56, died April 7, in Bay St. Lewis, Miss. Born in Bath, he attended Kents Hill School, and then moved to Alaska, Colorado and has two daughters. Aric spent time at the home of his uncle, Laurence Wold, who passed away last spring.

Winifred A. Snow, 86, of Washington Street and formerly of New Meadows Road in West Bath, died May 30 at Kindred Health Nursing in Yarmouth. She was born in Annisquam, MA, a daughter of Earle & Ida Andrews. She graduated from Bouve College in Boston. In 1966, she married **Harry Snow** and moved to West Bath in 1974. She was predeceased by her husband, and one daughter, Winifred Hutchison. She is survived by a daughter, a son, two step-children, nine grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. She is buried in Orchard Hill Cemetery in West Bath.

Georgie May (Coombs) White, 67, died May 28. Survivors include a daughter, **Cindy Barrington** & her husband **Larry (Smoke)**, of West Bath.

Dixie L. Adams Carter, 75, died June 11. Survivors include a daughter, **Peggy McCabe** & her husband **James**, of West Bath.

Olive L. Ward, 91, a resident at the Plant Home and formerly of West Bath, died June 13. She was born in Auburn, a daughter of Earland F. & Madeline (Spencer) Tainter. In 1951, she married Robert Ward, and moved from Augusta to West Bath in 1954. She was predeceased by her husband and two brothers. She is survived by one son, **James Ward** & his wife **Pamela**; one daughter, **Jean White** & her husband Albert Jr., all of West Bath; two sisters, one sister-in-law, six grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Jane Marie Powers, 75, of West Bath, died June 22, at her home in the presence of her children. Born at home in Somerset, Mass., she was the daughter of John Burns & Virginia Carvalho Burns. She trained as a nurse at Boston City Hospital, receiving her degree in 1958. That same year, she married Edwin T. Powers Jr., and became a military wife during his deployment in the Navy. After his retirement, the Powers returned to the Bath area to raise their two children. She began her nursing career at Bath Memorial Hospital, but also was active in politics. She served on West Bath's Board of Selectmen for 11 years, acting as chairperson for 7. She was a delegate at the Maine Democratic Convention and a candidate for state senate. Jane was instrumental in building the present West Bath Town Hall, and was active in the West Bath Historical Society's restoration efforts. She was predeceased by her husband. She is survived by her son, Timothy Powers & his wife, Joanne; her daughter Jane Casey Powers & her partner Josh Seals; two brothers, and three grandchildren.

Charles Dutton III, 71, of Brunswick and formerly of Bath, died unexpectedly on July 9. Among his survivors is his brother **Bill Dutton**, of West Bath.

Clare I. Sturgeon, 80, of Bath, died July 17 at Maine Med, due to injuries from a fall. Born in Bath, she was the daughter of Evie A. & Regina M. Babine. In 1953 she married **Ben-**



ton V. Sturgeon. After her children were grown, she worked for the City of Bath in various capacities. She volunteered for many causes, includ-

ing Meals on Wheels, the American Red Cross, and the Bath Food Bank. She was an active member of the Bath United Methodist Church for over 40 years. All her life, Sturgeon was a caregiver for family, friends and neighbors, and could always be counted on when someone needed a helping hand. She is survived by her husband; her two sons, her two daughters, including **Kerry Nelson** and her husband **Albert Jr.**, and their daughter **Elizabeth**, of West Bath. She is also survived by sisters-in-law and dear friends, including **Dot Mullen** of West Bath.

John T. Vigue, 70, of West Bath, died August 3 at Mid Coast Hospital. He was born in Portland, the son of John & Hannah (Prescott) Vigue. He graduated from Kennebunk High School and worked for many years at W.T. Grants at several locations in Maine and Mass. More recently, he owned Vigue's Furniture in West Bath, Brunswick, Gardiner and Winthrop. In 2004, he married **Kathleen Swift**. He is survived by his wife; his mother; two sons; two daughters; three stepsons, 11 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Maria Lavoie Tardif, 97, passed away peacefully on Aug 19 at the Freeport Nursing Center with her family by her side. She raised her family in Lewiston, but always looked forward to summers at their camp in West Bath. She is survived by her daughter and two sons, and their spouses, including Paul & Linda Lavoie of West Bath, as well as two grandchildren.

Ralph W. Williams, 81, of West Bath, passed peacefully on Sept 7 after a long illness. He was born in Phippsburg, the son of Arthur & Mabel (Mann) Williams. After attending local schools, Ralph joined the Army in 1959, and proudly served for the next 3 years during the Korean Conflict. After returning home, he worked at many careers, including supervisor at Maine Yan-

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West Bath Meeting House is Available to the Community!

Have a wedding coming up? Need to hold a special a memorial service? Whatever your event needs might be, the Old West Bath Meeting is available for a very reasonable rent. As part of our historical charter, the West Bath Historical Society – which restored this special 1839 building with the help of many in the community – believes we should make sure that the Meeting House is open to the community. Of course, we hold our own free public events (see the Christmas Service announcement on page 1). But in addition, we encourage any and all in the community to think of the Meeting House (aka the “church”) when planning something private

and special. For more information, visit the West Bath town website, or call Town Hall at 443-4342. We even have cards available that you can use for invitations.

Historical Society Holds Another Special Annual Meeting Event

Our regular Annual Meeting was held at the Old West Bath Meeting House on June 11. As usual, it included a delicious pot luck supper (message to Skip Cahill; please send us your yummy moist corn bread recipe!!), and a brief business meeting. The highlight of the evening, however, was a special presentation by renowned West Bath artist, Evelyn Dunphy, who

demonstrated her work, and talked about her famous paintings of Mt. Katadin, a special Maine place that she helped to save.

– WBHS Board



Evelyn Dunphy

Crossing the Bar

Continued from the previous page

kee and long time employee of BIW. He also ran a saw mill part time, and was an avid hunter. He is predeceased by 4 brothers and three sisters. He leaves behind his loving wife of 48 years, **Judith L. Greenleaf Williams**, and his 4 children including **Lisa Williams & Penny Faulkingham**, both of West Bath; 9 grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren.

Thomas B. Wing, 78, of Quaker Point, died peacefully at home on Sept 12, after several years of declining health. He was born in Bath, the son of Harold B. & Bessie (Hopkins) Wing. After Morse High, class of '54, he graduated from Burdette College in Boston, and married his high school sweetheart, **Gaynel (Gay) Bonney** in 1957. Following college, he worked for Liberty Mutual Insurance in Boston, returning home where he was an electrical planner at BIW for 38 years. Retiring in 1997, he enjoyed many hobbies including refinishing fine furniture

and gardening. His survivors include his wife; his son and wife; his brother and his wife; two grandchildren; ten great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephew.

Katherine Elizabeth (Niles) Roy, 75, of West Bath, passed away peacefully at her home with her family by her side on Oct 3. She was born in Waterville, the daughter of Cecil & Mary (O'Brien) Niles. She studied chemistry at Colby College, where she met her life-long friend and husband, **Laurent (Larry) Roy**. They were married for 56 years. Her first job was at Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C., while her husband was in graduate school. They returned to Maine to raise their four children, living in Scarborough. Once her children were in school, she worked in the chemistry lab at Maine Medical Center for 23 years. She was devoted to her children, and enjoyed rock hounding, skiing with her husband, and sailing their boat on Winnegance Bay. Kathy fought a brave battle with Alzheimer's for 20 years, never losing her grace and charm. Larry cared for her at home in Brigham's Cove to the very end,

with the kind support of CHANS Hospice and many friends and family. In addition to her husband, she is survived by her children and their spouses; 11 grandchildren, and her brother. A memorial Mass was held at St. Mary's Church in Bath.

Emory “Rip” Jordan, 86, of East Boothbay, passed away peacefully at the VA Togus Hospice House on Oct 14. After his service in the U.S. Navy, he spent his entire career in law enforcement in Maine, with the Maine State Police, and then as the state's top federal law enforcement official. Among his survivors are his daughter **Michelle Jordan Moroney** & and her husband **Allen**, and grandchildren, **Michael P. & Rachel A. Maroney**, all of West Bath.

Eva Racine, 98, of Thornton hall, died Oct 16 at her residence. She is survived by four sisters, including **Lorraine L. Johnson** of West Bath.

Delma S. Weed Merrill, 91, of Brunswick, died Oct 19 at Maine Med. Among her survivors; her daughter **Barbara Bisson** and her partner, **Tim Davis**, of West Bath. ▲

CHANNEL BUOYS



BIRTHS

Margaret Grace Ballou, born May 24 to Jacob & Kathryn (Gayton) Ballou, Durham. Grandparents include **Dale Green** of West Bath.

Andrew Jeffery-Arthur, born May 28 to Matthew & Misti (Utecht) Perkins, Bath. Grandparents include **Arthur & Shawn Utecht**, West Bath.

Bentley Owen Moore, born July 10 to Trevor Hatke & Amber Moore, West Bath. Grandparents include **Shannon Heath & Jeff Moore**, both of West Bath.

Madison Anne Desmond, born Aug 23 to Amanda (Lemont) & David Desmond, Bath. Grandparents include **Frances & James Lemont III** of Bath and West Bath.

Samuel Matthew Cunio, born Sept 10 to Matthew & Sarah (Dranchak) Cunio, Topsham. Grandparents include **John & Linda Dranchak** of West Bath.

Maelynn Elaine Stiles Mitchell, born Oct 18 to James & Angeline (Stiles) Mitchell, Woolwich. Grandparents include **Diane Delano** of West Bath.

Layla Jean Smith, born Oct 4 to Donald Smith Jr. & Jessica Hall, Richmond. Grandparents include **Donald Smith** of West Bath.

WEST BATH STUDENT NOTES

Kyle Hietala, who has been featured in *Middle Ground* numerous time, and is now a senior at Morse High, continues to rack up even more academic honors. In September he was named a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist, among the 16,000 who will have the chance to compete for 8,000 scholarships nationwide, worth a total of \$35 million. He also attended the 66th annual Dirigo Boys State last summer and was elected governor. He was also voted to be one of the two delegates from Maine to attend Boys Nation, and has also served as Morse student representative for RSU I Board of Directors.

Jennifer Brown was named to the honor roll during the 2012-13 school year at North Yarmouth Academy.

Central Maine Medical Center Nursing College awarded **Jennifer D. Bowdish**, a pediatric nursing

student, an “Award for Excellence in Nursing in June.

Samantha Blanton, a former Bath resident now living with her parents in Texas, has earned the Girl Scout Silver Award, the highest that girls ages 11-14 can win. She is the granddaughter of **Deborah Frost** of West Bath.

WEDDINGS

Lauren Leeman-Hook & Devin Hook of Bath were married on May 26 at Saint Joseph’s College. The bride is the daughter of Mark & Jennifer Leeman of Phippsburg. The groom, son of **Kevin & Denise Hook** of West Bath, is a graduate of Saint Joseph’s and now works at BIW.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

Dorothy (Dottie) Mullen celebrated her 91st birthday with a delivery of “Flowers of the Week” by Hawkes Florist II on October 18.



Maxine Thompson sky diving on her 80th birthday.

Maxine Thompson of Berry’s Mill Road, who turned 80 on September 19, decided to celebrate her big birthday in a big way. How big? Totally out of the blue, she announced to her daughter, Marcia Hinton and her husband Thom, with whom she lives, that she wanted to sky dive. Jump out of an airplane? For the first time, ever? You have to be kidding. Nope, she was adamant. That is exactly what she wanted to do. Why? “I just decided to do it. I wasn’t scared or anything like that.”

So on the day of her birthday, Maxine drove over to Lebanon, Maine with her family to “Sky Dive New England.” After viewing a quick safety video, she was outfitted in a bright yellow jumpsuit and hopped into a little plane. In addition to the pilot, Maxine’s instructor and another sky diver, a cameraman from Channel 13 TV, also came onboard. “He wasn’t that interested until he found out that an 80 year old woman was making the jump. Then he was all over it!”, recalls Marcia. In fact, Maxine’s feat made the evening news.

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Maxine lands!



COOK'S KORNER

It's late fall in Maine and time to share some unusual holiday recipes that incorporate

the best of winter squashes, which are full of vitamins and minerals and low cal to boot.

Joan Boyer's Stuffed Pumpkins

(Joan is an excellent cook and happens to be the wife of WBHS Board Member Ivon Boyer.)

- 2 sugar pumpkins (little, sweet and about 3 lbs or less)
- 2 lbs ground beef
- 2 large onions, minced, 2-3 stalks of celery, chopped
- Oregano, basil, salt & pepper to taste
- A cup or so of bread crumbs or cooked rice (optional)

Take the tops of the pumpkins and scoop out the seeds and strings. (Save the tops)

Quickly sauté the onions, celery, meat and spices together until just barely cooked. Stir in breadcrumbs or rice, and divide the mixture between the two pumpkins. Put tops back on and bake on a rimmed baking sheet in a 350 degree oven for about 2 hours. Take the tops off for the last 1/2 hour to brown the meat

a little. Really good served with twice-baked potatoes, stuffed with a bit of sour cream and muenster cheese.

Avery's Winter Squash Pasta

(Avery happens to be WBHS president, still, and would joyously give away all her recipes if someone would fill her slot on the Board!)

- 3 cups peeled, cubed butternut squash
- 8 oz dried elbow macaroni
- 8 oz. button mushrooms, sliced 3 green onions, thinly sliced 1 tbs butter
- 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour, 6 oz. fontina cheese, shredded (1-1/2 cups)
- 2 slices bacon, cooked & crumbled (optional)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly coat 2 quart rectangular baking dish with cooking spray.

Cook squash in microwave with 2 Tbs water, covered with vented plastic wrap, 8 minutes (stop and stir after 4 minutes, cover and finish cooking. Carefully remove wrap and mash the squash with a little salt & pepper.

Cook pasta according to directions; drain.

Meanwhile, in medium saucepan, heat butter, add mushrooms and green onions. Cook about 5 minutes. Sprinkle flour over mushroom mixture. Cook and stir for 1 minute. Add milk and salt & pepper. Keep stirring over medium heat until thick and bubbly. Remove from heat. Stir in squash, then gently fold in pasta. Transfer half of mixture to dish, sprinkling with half the cheese. Add remaining pasta mixture and top with cheese. Scatter bacon over top. Bake uncovered for 25 minutes, or until heated through and cheese is melted. Top with additional chopped green onions. Serves 6.

Holiday Pumpkin Cheesecake (no clear provenance)

Make a graham cracker crust. Pat into pie pan. Bake 15 minutes and cool before adding filling.

Filling: 12 oz. cream cheese, 3/4 cup sugar, 1-1/2 tbs flour, 3/4 tsp each, grated lemon and orange peel, 1/2 tsp vanilla, 3 eggs, 1 cup canned unsweetened pumpkin. Beat at medium speed until well mixed. Pour into crust and back 35-40 minutes in 350 degree oven.

Topping: 1-1/2 cup sour cream, 1 tbs sugar, 12 tsp vanilla. Mix well and spread over hot cheesecake & bake for another 10 minutes. Refrigerate until cool (5 hours or overnight). Serves 8 – 10. ▲

Maxine Thompson

Continued from the previous page

Once they were in the air, she was, of course, strapped to an instructor for safety sake. It was a so-called tandem jump, in which a neophyte skydiver is connected via a harness to an instructor, who then guides the student through the whole jump.

“He was a real cutie” she says impishly. When she prepared to make the actual jump, she squeezed her eyes shut and hung on to the straps for dear life. But she was finally convinced to open her eyes for the camera. And then, zoom, she

was out of the plane and soaring like a bird, her red hair streaming and her arms stretched out, safely tethered underneath her instructor. The other instructor had jumped out first and began taking photos as Maxine floated down with her instructor in tandem. It was magical.

Tandem or not, skydiving is quite a feat for anyone not accustomed to it, and certainly not a sport undertaken by many octogenarian women. But our Maxine is intrepid. She is also pretty fit, spending at least three mornings a week swimming at the Bath Y.

How about the touch down? Was it a hard one? “No, we just held our feet

up and just landed on the soft grass.” And how was this whole experience? “It felt great!” In fact, she hopes that “...other old people will do the same thing. No need to be scared. That just makes you feel old and then you die!” For Maxine, sky jumping was a once in a lifetime experience, but would she do it again? “If I had a chance, sure!” – Avery Meyers



Maxine at the Y pool.

TOWN CRIER



Dog Licensing renewals for the 2014 year are now underway, with a deadline of Jan. 1, 2014. Owners who do not renew their dog licenses by February 1, will be charged a \$25.00 late fee in addition to license fees. The Town will host another **Rabies Clinic** (for dogs & cats) on Saturday, December 7, 2013 from 10 am to noon at the West Bath Fire Hall. Dog Licensing and renewal can also be done On-Line! Search for Maine Dog Licensing Online and you can complete your registrations within minutes.

2014 Snowmobile Registrations are now available. 2014 Boat Registrations will begin 1 December.

Snowmobile, ATV and Boat *re-registrations* for West Bath residents may now be done on-line at [http://www.maine.gov/ifw/!](http://www.maine.gov/ifw/)

West Bath now participates in Maine's **Rapid Renewal** program where you can re-register your vehicles and trailers on line. Go to the Maine website: <https://www1.maine.gov/online/bmv/rapid-renewal/>.

Please note that any **unpaid 2011 property taxes** will go to foreclosure on January 10, 2014.

Meeting Notifications – Residents who would like an e-mail notification of any Town or Committee work session or other public meeting may submit their email address to the Town Clerk at townclerk@west-bath.org, or call us at 443-4342.

– Rob Morris, Town Clerk

THE MIDDLE GROUND

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We publish researched historical materials, local news and events that may be of later historical interest.

We do not print gossip, paid advertising or political opinion.

To provide news items, historical photos or documents, or FMI, contact Avery (443.4449) or Kerry (443.5118)

THE MIDDLE GROUND

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West Bath's flying grandma Maxine Thompson celebrating her birthday sky dive (see page 6) with a spontaneous kiss from her flight instructor. Or was it the other way 'round?