



Whitefield News

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May the 4th Be With You!

by Nathan Burns

Ever since I can remember, the Kings Mills 4th of July parade has been something I've looked forward to and enjoyed. I have very vivid memories of standing on the side of the road and collecting candy being thrown from the various floats and fire trucks. In the summer of 1999, when I was 5, my family decided that it was time to get off the sidelines and throw our hats into the float business.

It all started with the Daily Planet, and I was Superman. My 5 month old sister, Hannah, was riding along inside the truck cab. Our message was "Have a Super 4th"! The next year, my dad constructed a giant Star Wars X-wing, and I dressed as Luke Skywalker and Hannah dressed as Princess Leia. "May the 4th be with you" was the theme to our float, and as a 6 year old obsessed with Star Wars, you couldn't get much better than that.

After our first couple of fun floats, we shifted to a more patriotic vision; focusing on the spirit of the 4th, and encompassing what we think it means to be an American. Our floats have always stayed on a strict rule of being positive and staying patriotic. This has been the most important requirement for us when making a float.



Photo courtesy of the Burns Family

One year, Hannah dressed as Betsy Ross, and we walked alongside handing out hundreds of small American flags. Another year, Hannah dressed as George Washington on our "Vote Float". Over the years, our floats have included the Lincoln Memorial, Washington crossing the Delaware, a Giant Birthday Cake, a fireworks display, the Liberty Bell, giant rockets and many more. Our float portfolio has been very diverse, but always patriotic. A favorite of my dad's was a giant red, white and blue eagle which towered high above the crowd and had a wing span of nearly 20 feet. It was majestic!

Our family has always discussed what our float would be as a group. One year, Hannah had the idea to do a flower float. So that year, a 4x8 foot flower box was built and my mom planted red, white and blue flowers in the box in the formation of the American flag. Our "Flower Power" flower flag stood on our float and brought a living flare to the flag. Another year, my mom wanted to do the Declaration of Independence, and so she hand wrote a portion of it on a 12 foot high piece of canvas. Last year, my dad wanted to celebrate the Statue of Liberty, and so he built a giant torch, capturing the essence of what Lady Liberty represents.

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Photo courtesy of the Burns Family

The Hideout

by Charlie Tobin

There was an abandoned foundation made of granite slabs in a pasture on our property that was overgrown with wild rose bushes. I mean those rose bushes made a fortress around that old hole in the earth. I remember imagining what sort of building was there long ago; a log cabin with a cellar was what flashed in my brain the most often in this guessing game, though other guesses were a small barn, a harness shop, and a house, maybe a store or an office. Whatever it was, it was next to impossible to get inside. I recall ignoring the entire area for some time after stumbling upon it - just too tough to get through all those thorns. You know what? Sometimes boredom will drive you to work harder at something for free, than if you were being paid for it. The decision I was about to make took several stabs of confidence-building, telling myself that I was an educated third grader who had a brain. "Was I going to let a few rose bush thorns keep me from discovering a strong box of coin, or possibly even a knife or a gun? Yup, by golly, I will let all the folks in town see that they are not wasting their hard-earned money on my education!"

A plan. That was it. A plan was all I needed. First things first...more clothing. One doesn't usually don wool pants and a sweatshirt in the summer, but this was



serious. Thorns hate everybody; third graders, especially! Ok, clothes - check! Now I needed some tools. Going down cellar, I located an old hand saw, an even older hacksaw, and the bluntest axe (which I haven't a clue as to how it got that way) on God's green earth - check! Vittles - a sandwich, a couple of cookies for fortitude and stamina and a jug of apple juice - check! And my secret weapon - Mom's pinking shears - check! It's okay, you can ask your mom or grandmother what they are.

Off I struck for the showdown with those bushes; although, I would have to drop the axe on the ground part-way there (too much to carry in one trip). Drop the "haul" by the foundation, scoot back for the axe and this was it. If I did it right, I would be the only one who would be able to locate the entrance...perfect place for a hideout. Getting on my hands and knees, I used my shoulders as a height gauge, and with pinking shears in my right hand and one right-handed, old stiff glove on my left hand, I gingerly pulled back two long stems and tucked them behind other stems, so I could put them back to help conceal the opening when I finished my new hideout. The pinking shears worked, but I found I needed two hands to close them to make a cut. Unfortunately, the cut wasn't clean, the stem sort of fell over, but was still hanging there. "Let me try the hand saw....Ouch!" My first parry with the saw blade revealed the teeth to be too big to cut the skinny stems which only pulled the surrounding stems downward and there were at least two or three long stems soundly lodged in my hair! Another stem was resting about a half an inch from my cheek. Now, I'm not sure if you were paying attention before, but I told you this was serious! Not only do thorns hate third graders, it seems they hate their hair as well.

"Now which one do I move first?" You don't just go ripping at them! Reaching up with my right hand after letting go of the *Continued on Page 2*

4th Continued from Pg. 1

My memories of the parade are very precious to me. Year after year, our journey from our house to the parade is always fun. It always takes a while since our tractor can only go so fast. My dad is always concerned that the float is too high and that it will hit tree limbs or worse yet, power lines! However after doing it for a few years, we have it down to a science.



Photo courtesy of the Burns Family

For me, participating in the parade has always been something I've loved to do. Through the years, it's been fun to watch the younger kids in their first parades, riding on floats, in cars and alongside the road collecting candy.

The Kings Mills 4th of July parade is something that is cemented in what makes Whitefield a great small town. Between the grilled hotdogs, french-fries, and cake walks, the spirit of Whitefield is evident and strong. People see each other that they only see once a year at the parade.

I encourage everyone, if you've ever had the urge to participate in the parade, or you have small kids who are looking to "up the ante" on their 4th of July celebration, take a chance and make a float. For me and my family, it was a Superman float that set this 17 year tradition into motion. Figure out what yours will be and go for it!

Hideout Cont. from Pg. 1 saw, I immediately drew blood on my right thumb and I hadn't even moved anything! Raising my sweat-shirted left arm up and tipping my head down I scooted backward, and was free. Instantly, though, I felt what I was sure was blood on my scalp! Further inspection showed this to be sweat, not blood! "Well that didn't go as planned". Somehow I had to protect my head! I made for the dump (regrettably, we had a burn barrel and an embankment nearby that received whatever wasn't burnable - this was before mandated garbage pickups) to scan the pile for anything that may be useful to cradle the pate against attack. Nothing that I would consider putting on my head stuck out from the sloping pile before me...bugs, crud, or goo abounded! "Wait a second! We have grass shears!" I forgot about them! Off I flew back to the rollway doors and found them on the topmost step and tried them on some grass beside the house. "Yes!" They worked! In the kitchen, I opened the pots 'n' pans door and grabbed what I needed, stopped at the hallway closet, and removed the widest shoelace I could find and continued back outside. There, I tied each end of the shoelace to each handle on Mom's colander and pulled it over my head. A quick re-tie of the lace to tighten my chin strap, and away I ran with the colander on my head and shears in my hand back to the foundation.



By the time I got back, the day was beginning to heat up and the sweatshirt and wool pants were taking a toll. I ate some cookies and had some juice. Confident that this time would be better, I once again got on my hands and knees and approached the stems. "What gives with rosebush stems?" The grass shears only worked just a little bit better than the pinking shears - with every second or third cut, the stem would kink and only peel back the outer layer of stem skin! You had to fight to get the shears to open up again and progress was poor at best!

I was pretty sweaty, but forged on, and by the time it was lunchtime, I had only moved forward about three feet with that tunnel. The colander was working, but all those little holes were the perfect size for the thorns to snag, and my neck was killing me from trying to turn my head only to be held fast by a snagged thorn. Backing out of the tunnel, the sweatshirt rode up and exposed my back. "Unaware" quickly turned to "very aware" as a thorn ripped across my skin, drawing blood and pain and a yell! Yanking the colander off my head after being able to stand up again, I tossed it aside. "That's it, no more tunnel, no more hideout!" Ready to quit and head for home I remembered the axe. I raised up that

axe and flailed into those stems with repeated downward blows! By accident, I allowed the head of the axe to lay flat on one of those swings, and that was the ticket! I was elated! I was beating and mashing thorn stems right down into the soft earth, and they weren't springing back up again!

In the course of about ten minutes I was past the three feet of tunnel and progress was excellent; a few more feet and I would be through. "Okay, this is good". I had made a swath wide enough for a team of oxen to pass without so much as a nick. Hungry, I sat, ate, and drank more juice and peeled out of the sweatshirt. At last, less than an hour after eating, I had made my way to the foundation! Now to look for clues or relics or strong boxes! Walking over to lay the axe down with the other things, it struck me, "Oh, no! Where are Mom's pinking shears?! You've got to be kidding me! Really, did I really just mash them into the soft earth with all these mangled rosebush stems?" Any lost treasure would have to wait! I had to find her shears! Why didn't I take better care of them? Using the grass shears as a pry, I gently started to lift various stems up out of the dirt ready to jump back if the stem should shoot back up. I started at the front and worked my way to the foundation methodically. Nothing! Not so much as a shiny glint of metal! I felt a wave of dread wash over me! "Gosh, she uses those pinking shears all the time! She's going to blow her top!"

"Well, better go home and face the music." I began to gather the shirt and tools, and as I picked up the shirt, to my relief, underneath were the pinking shears. I almost collapsed with joy, knowing I would be spared retribution! "Okay, let's go looking for stuff in the foundation." As you might have guessed, there was not so much as an old square-headed nail; certainly no gun, knife, or strong box; not even an old can or bottle. That's the way it goes in archaeology...King Solomon's mines, if you are lucky...diddly-squat, if you're not! Sometimes you work hard for nothing. Sometimes it will involve pain, and sometimes you just need to strap a colander on your head and run through a pasture carrying shears.

Before I forget, would you do me a favor? If any of you should happen to bump into any one of my three sisters after reading this, would you please not mention reading it. If it gets back, I can just see the three of them sitting around a table with the eldest saying, "Well, I've been saying it all along, and here it is, in black and white. He is as crazy as a loon! A colander on his head!" My middle sister would say, "It's sad, really, but I'm glad Mom and Dad aren't here to witness this!" The youngest would say, "I doubt any nursing home would take him after they've read this, and don't you two try to pawn him off on me!"

Thanks, from a grateful author - I sure do appreciate this staying just between us.

Sheepscot West Branch Trail Opening

A small, but enthusiastic group gathered on June 4 at the Howe Road trailhead of the new Sheepscot West Branch Trail to unveil the kiosk and take a celebratory hike along the 1.2 mile loop trail. Standing left to right: Sue McKeen, David Elliott, Ellis Percy, Libby Harmon holding trail brochure, Kit Pfeiffer, Bill McKeen. Kneeling L to R: Dave Wright and Toki Oshima



Photo by Tony Marple

Whitefield Historical Society "Just Yesterday"



Kings Mills 4th of July celebration on the banks of the Sheepscot River 1909 ; also the year of Whitefield's centennial.
(photo from the Glendon Jackson collection. Courtesy of WHS).



The traditional decorated outhouse sits in the center of the Kings Mills intersection on July 4, 1957.
(photo from the Glendon Jackson collection. Courtesy of WHS)

From E C Jewett Diary 1911-1912 Fourth of July

Entry for 1911:

They had a Celebration at the Mills. Fantastic Boat races, Grease pole, Three legged man sack race and a good Dinner and Fire works in evening. I did not go in day time but went in Evening. It has been awful hot 96 at 2 o'clock PM. I hoed corn a little but not very much; went out and gave the young cattle some salt, and picked some blueberries. Have got some corn spindling. Shipped the two cars of lumber to NH.

Entry for 1912:

Celebration at Kings Mills consisting of Street parade of the horrors. Band hauled by my oxen hitched to a hay rack. They had a tub race, a greased pole to walk out on placed on the bank of the river and run out over the water, 3-legged race, fire works in the evening. Also a dance. There was a very large crowd. It has been a very warm day as most all 4th of July's are. We all went day and evening. Ernest Dunton's Farm buildings were burned this PM. He was to the Celebration when they were burned.

Whitefield School's Day of Caring

by Karen McCormick

On May 20th the National Junior Honor Society at Whitefield Elementary partnered with the Kennebec Valley United Way to host the Second Annual Day of



Photo by Tony Marple

Caring. All of the students, grades pre-K through 8, participated in this day of service. Some projects included: planting pumpkins for the PTA, cleaning up the front garden, service work on trails, work at the Lions Club, work at the district office and helping a couple of elderly residents with spring



Photo by Tony Marple

clean-up. The United Way came to cook a barbecue lunch. Following lunch, the staff and students participated in the dedication of our new outdoor classroom, now known as the Barry

King Memorial Classroom. To quote Katherine, a current seventh grade student, "It was great to help out people and nice to see how happy it made them". It was a terrific way to get kids out and meeting the greater community.



Photo by Tony Marple

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JULY 2016 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

- 1st** **WHITEFIELD FOOD PANTRY**, St. Denis Hall, 1-3 pm
- 4th** **KINGS MILLS COMMUNITY 4TH CELEBRATION -4TH OF JULY PARADE**, 10 am
Famous Parade, Fireman's Auction, Kings Mills Union Hall White Elephant Sale, Bounce House and Games, Food, Live Music, Cake Walk, Bake Sale, Raffles. Good Friends, Food and Fun for a Great Cause!
- 5th** **SELECT BOARD**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 6th** **WEDNESDAY WALKERS**—Wednesdays from May 4 into the Fall, join a group of intrepid hikers, led by a rotating roster of guides, to discover new trails throughout the Midcoast area. Hike locations and times are emailed to members of the Yahoo Group; to sign up, go to https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/wednesday_walkers/info
WHITEFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY meeting 6:30 pm
ARLINGTON GRANGE MEETING, Pot Luck Dinner 6 pm, Meeting 7 pm
- 7th** **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 9th** **WHITEFIELD LIONS CLUB AND SHEEPSBOT LINKS 10TH ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT**. 12 noon registration, 12:30 Shotgun Start. Win a 2016 Jeep with a hole in one, courtesy of Newcastle Chrysler Dodge Jeep. Prizes! Call Cal Prescott 232-3603 or Jerry Maldovan 549-5664 for more information.
- 10th** **WHITEFIELD ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (WAA)**, Whitefield School, 6 pm
- 11th** **WHITEFIELD MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPT.**, Fire Station, 7 pm
- 12th** **WOMEN OF WHITEFIELD**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
SELECT BOARD, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 13th** **WEDNESDAY WALKERS—SEE JULY 6TH**
- 14th** **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
RSU SCHOOL BOARD MEETING Chelsea School, 6:30 pm
- 14th–17th** **TIMBER FRAME CONSTRUCTION COURSE** HVNC, Jefferson Class will run 8am-4pm each day. Camping space is available, and HVNC huts are available at a discount to students. \$450 Midcoast Conservancy Members, \$500 Non-Member. To register go to: https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/UAm1EZ7EefNpimUCyL40g
- 16th** **DRUMMING CIRCLE**, Sheepscot General, 6:30 pm. Open to the public, all ages
- 19th** **SELECT BOARD**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 20th** **WEDNESDAY WALKERS—SEE JULY 6TH**
PLANNING BOARD, Fire Station, 7:00 pm
- 21st** **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 23rd** **MAINE SUMMER ADVENTURE RACE** HVNC Teams of two, three or four people will race land and water, trail running, biking, canoeing and orienteering in a search for checkpoints hidden in the woods and on the waters of beautiful Midcoast Maine. First-time adventure racers and families can check out the sport with our beginner-friendly three-hour adventure race, while seasoned racers or teams looking to challenge themselves more can take on the eight-hour race. For more information and registration visit: <http://mainesummerar.weebly.com/>
- 26th** **WOMEN OF WHITEFIELD**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
SELECT BOARD, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 27th** **WEDNESDAY WALKERS—SEE JULY 6TH**
YOUNG AT HEART SENIORS, Whitefield Lions Club, Coopers Mills 12 pm
- 28th** **SENIOR MEN'S GROUP**, Sheepscot General, 10 am
- 30th** **WOMEN AND OUR WOODS** Do you or your family own a woodland? Have you taken the time to plan and care for your land? Here's your opportunity to join fellow women woodland owners and foresters at Hidden Valley Nature Center in Jefferson for this day-long workshop designed for YOU. Bring your questions about forest management. \$40 MC and Maine Farmland Trust, \$45 all others, includes lunch. To register, go to https://secure.lglforms.com/form_engine/s/aMOehEvSjrKjTpSO4Y7rwQ



Do you have an event? Contact whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com

Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 15th of the month. Email whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com



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