



THE NEW HAMPSHIRE

TROUBADOUR

JULY/AUGUST 2009



## Publisher's Note

*The NH Troubadour comes to you every month singing the praises of New Hampshire, a state whose beauty and opportunities should tempt you to come and share those good things that make life here so delightful.*

*The NH Troubadour, 1931-1951*

It is my pleasure to present you *The NH Troubadour* as a gift and a window for witnessing the extraordinary people, places, history and culture that make our Granite State so unique. This is a publication you can truly call your own. It is my hope that you enjoy it and share it; that you close each issue feeling a little better, a little wiser and a little prouder of life here in our wonderful state.

Robert J. Finlay

## Letter from the Editor



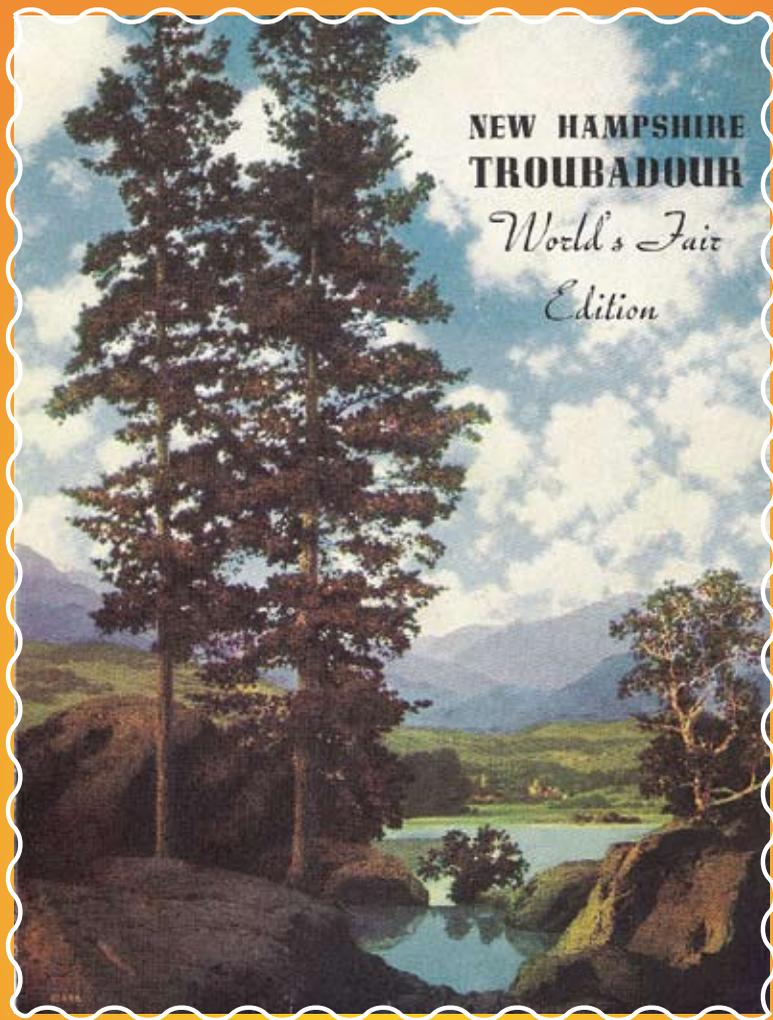
Time sure does fly when you are having fun. This issue marks the culmination of an exciting first year for us bringing you *The NH Troubadour*. And, what a year it has been! As we have crafted these past 10 issues, you have welcomed us into your communities, your homes, and your hearts, and we couldn't be more grateful for the outpouring of support you have shown us.

We have always designed this magazine to show off the majesty that is our great state. It is a marvel we witness in the magnificence of our scenic and charming mountains, lakes, trails, farms and coastline. And beyond the splendor of our surroundings, in the generosity and kindness of the people we have had the great fortune of meeting.

Together, we have shared poetry, prose and photography of unrivaled excellence. We have discovered the sometimes hidden, often obvious, but never overlooked charm of towns across the state. We have told tales, inspired by hard work, healing and history. We have met individuals and organizations dedicated to improving the lives of others by offering a helping hand to those less fortunate, or putting a smile on the faces of so many in need. In short, we have made as many new friends as we have delightful memories. We can only hope you have enjoyed taking this journey with us, as we look forward to an even more exhilarating year to come.

So, as we close out this first chapter, embracing a summer that no amount of wet weather can forever deny, we bring you a full complement of all the ingredients you have come to expect in the *Troubadour*—words, images and ideas that we hope make you think, make you laugh, make you wonder, and above all else, make you proud to call New Hampshire home.

- Michael DeBlasi



### NEW HAMPSHIRE TROUBADOUR *World's Fair Edition*

The New Hampshire Troubadour's World's Fair Edition, published in 1939, touted itself as "A selection of pictures and articles which have appeared in the Troubadour, a monthly singer of songs about the mountains, seashore, lakes, countryside and people of New Hampshire and the delightful kind of living one may enjoy in the land of scenic splendor." This issue features a most memorable cover image. The picture was a reproduction of an original painting by the highly acclaimed painter and illustrator Maxfield Parrish. The painting had also been reproduced as a diorama in the New Hampshire exhibit at the New York World's Fair. Parrish (1870-1966) who lived in Plainfield, NH, near the Cornish Art Colony, painted until he was 91 years old.

*Front cover photo: Taken in Pittsfield, NH, by Mark Stevens. View his photos at [www.betterphoto.com](http://www.betterphoto.com)*

*Back cover photo: Taken at Rye Beach, NH by David Lazar.*

# Rooms with a view *of history*

by David Lazar

*NH resorts have always had a front row seat to world events*

**D**IXVILLE NOTCH – Steve Barba was a long-haired grad student working the summer as a bartender at the Balsams, when a world-famous burger broker arrived at the historic White Mountains resort to make a special introduction.

It was August 1968, a month after the Democratic National Convention in Chicago had erupted in chaos, but Ray Kroc—who just a few years earlier had purchased the rights to a blossoming fast-food chain from Manchester natives Dick and Mac McDonald—was determined to nominate a new “candidate” for President.

In Dixville Notch and the castle-like Balsams, he’d found the perfect setting. Just eight years before, Dixville had won the right to call itself the first-in-the-nation polling place for Presidential elections. For about one hour every four years, this tiny mountain community would become the center of the political universe, as the town’s two dozen or so registered voters descended on the Balsams at exactly midnight on election day to cast their ballots (the very first election in 1960 went to Richard Nixon 9-0).

The symbolism wasn’t lost on Kroc. Nor was New Hampshire’s significance as the home state of the McDonald brothers as he chose the location for that year’s regional managers’ convention.

“He spared no expense staging the event like a political rally,” Barba recalls. “He was a showman. There were flags and straw hats and placards, vests and political regalia. It was something to see.”

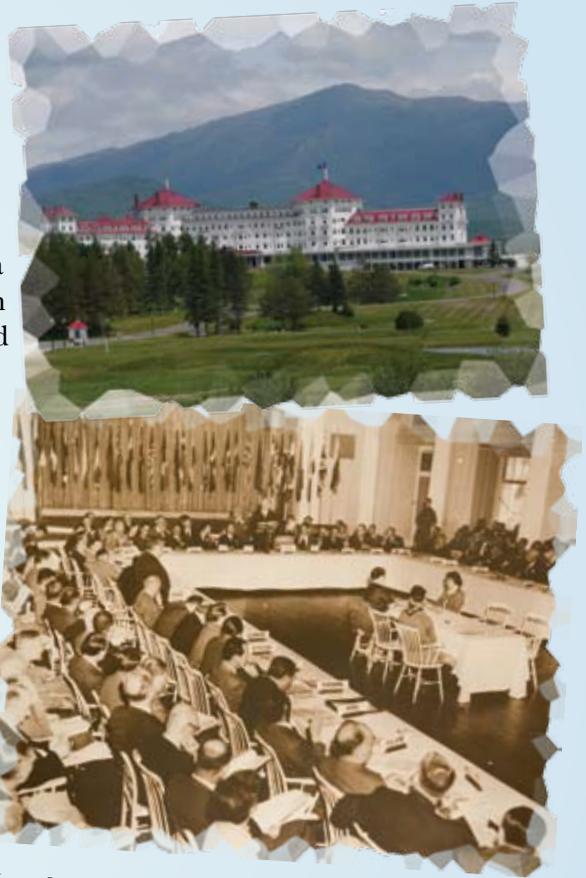
Barba, who’d go on to manage the Balsams for more than 30 years, recalls Kroc chatting him up at the bar, taking a look at his long hair, and asking if he could round up some friends to pose as pretend-protesters to crash the convention and ultimately be escorted out by a security guard. Barba would happily play the role.

That summer’s regional managers’ convention will be remembered for Kroc’s introducing a new organizational president for the McDonald’s chain, but more importantly for using the Balsams’ one-of-a-kind location

to officially launch another national “candidate” – one whose name was “Big Mac” and promised a pickle in every bite.

A waist-expanding international icon was born that summer in Dixville Notch. For the Balsams, it was another colorful story to add to an already storied legacy. For New Hampshire, it was another example of one of its famed grand hotels playing host to world history.

“New Hampshire is a state that has always been scenically attractive and secluded,” says Bryant Tolles, Professor Emeritus of History and Art History at the University of Delaware and author of numerous books on New England’s grand resorts. “But it’s also had the advantage of being well-located and reachable from major areas like Boston and New York. Because of this, people over history have looked at this state as a place both to escape and... to hold some very major events.” And, on many occasions, to change the world.



*More than 700 delegates from 44 countries descended on the Mount Washington Resort in July 1944 to save the world’s financial system from collapsing after WWII. (Photo: David Lazar; photo courtesy of the Mount Washington Resort).*

From the earliest days of rail travel, New Hampshire’s hotels and resorts have been among its most enduring and eye-catching attractions. From the ocean views and salt air of the Seacoast to the cool, back-to-nature

seclusion of the Lakes Region and the North Country and Great North Woods, the promise of privacy, pristine landscapes, and accessibility drew tens of thousands each summer seeking safe haven from the pressures,



*The Balsams in secluded Dixville Notch has hosted the first-in-the-nation vote in every Presidential election since 1960. Richard Nixon would win that first contest 9-0. Town clerk Rick Erwin, who collects the ballots at exactly midnight each election day, compares the experience to walking into the Boston Garden. (Photo: David Lazar)*

heat and public exposure of city life. Between 1870 and 1920, historians have estimated that upwards of 400 hotels went up around the Granite State, with some 28 grand resorts (each full-service and holding between 175 and 225 rooms) in the White Mountains alone—the largest concentration of resort hotels in New England. Most were aided by a lumber industry that built and owned many of the state’s rail lines and offered convenient routes of access. And by a client roster that routinely read like a Who’s Who of national leaders, entertainers, athletes and business tycoons.

These hotels came to be as historic as they were prolific. From the mountain getaway of Bethlehem, where a cluster of grand resorts hosted families

with names like Roosevelt and Kennedy, served as a sort of second Catskills for Hasidic Jewish families, and helped launch

musical careers like Harry Belafonte’s... to North Conway’s Eastern Slope Inn which helped usher in the arrival of North American downhill skiing in the 1930s, the hotel tradition in New Hampshire spans time and geography. It was from owner Walter James Dunfey’s office at Manchester’s Carpenter Hotel that a young John F. Kennedy launched his 1960 Presidential campaign... while the Balsams—long a palatial retreat for writers, politicians and celebrities; a place even floated as a possible United Nations location in the 1940s and where Standard Oil once kept duplicates of all its documents in case New York was ever attacked—has hosted nearly every president or presidential wannabe since winning first-in-the-nation status in 1960.

To cross the threshold into the Balsams’ famed ballot room, with its wood-paneled walls bearing the photos of victorious “visitors” almost like medals, is to enter a museum-like space, at once hallowed and—typical to New Hampshire—unpretentious.

“Walking into that room every four years is what’s what it’s like, I imagine, for a Boston Celtic to walk into the Garden and see all of those banners hanging up there in the rafters,” says Dixville Notch town clerk Rick Erwin, who also plays drums in the Balsams’ dining room band—an ensemble that once included John Phillip Sousa. “There’s a great deal of history and tradition here, and we take it very seriously. It is sort of a microcosm of the American way.”

The Balsams remains one of just four Granite State grand resorts still standing and carrying on the proud tradition—the vast majority having long ago fallen prey either to Mother Nature (most were built entirely of wood, with lax fire regulations) or tough economics. Bretton Woods’ Mount Washington Resort, Whitefield’s Mountain View Grand, and New Castle’s Wentworth by the Sea round out the list of stately structures still in operation. All were built to resemble majestic ocean liners on land, with their opulent common areas, lavish gardens, grand dining halls and ballrooms, promenade decks, and emphasis on personal service. And thanks to ongoing restoration and renovation, all remain Gilded Age jewels distinct in both setting and experience.

While each has gained an international following, two in particular have been the improbable center of the world at one point in their histories, credited with helping to end one world war and preventing another one from ever starting.

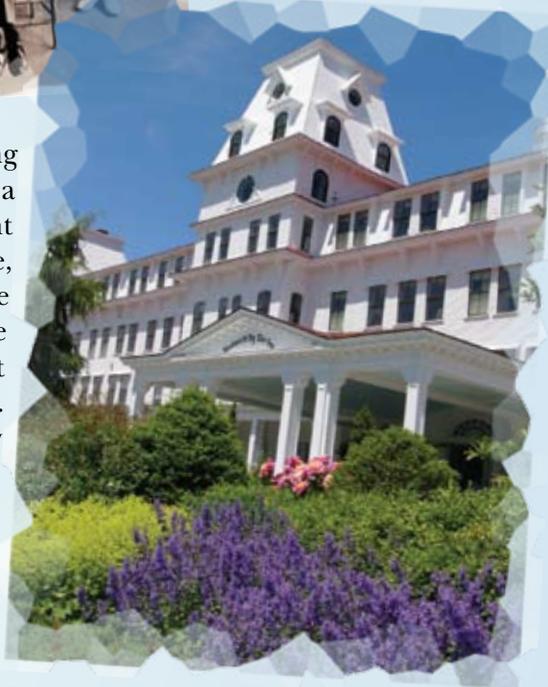
This July marks the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bretton Woods International Monetary Conference at the Mount Washington Resort, a nearly month-long series of negotiations that many credit with saving the global financial system after WWII from complete collapse. In the months leading up to D-Day in 1944, Roosevelt and Churchill fully recognized the flaws in the Treaty of Versailles that had closed WWI—a treaty that despite ending the conflict had plunged Germany into further bankruptcy, prompting it to print money, which led to hyperinflation, economic depression and the rise to power of a young Adolph Hitler.

Chosen by Roosevelt, partially at the urging of his friend NH Senator Charles Tobey, the Mount Washington Resort—Joseph Stickney’s turn-of-the-century masterpiece, with its breathtaking backdrop and trademark scarlet towers built to resemble the funnels of a steamship—offered something few venues could: a setting that offered both privacy and accessibility by train for the conference’s 730 delegates, most of whom were sailing into Boston or Portsmouth. It also offered a staff of some 750-800 to tend to every need, electricity (Thomas Edison had toasted the resort at its 1902 opening), a bowling alley, indoor swimming pool, polo grounds, a 9-hole golf course, the best clay tennis courts on the east coast, and even an onsite stockbroker.



The only problem: at the time the hotel was chosen in spring of 1944, it was a complete shambles, having recently switched owners and fallen into disrepair. Over the course of two months, the federal government sent in

hundreds of workers to bring in new furniture and slap a fresh coat of white paint on virtually every surface, creating an atmosphere that was more upscale barracks than luxury retreat for the talks. Led by U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau and Britain’s Lord John Maynard Keynes, the Bretton Woods conference accomplished four goals: it stabilized the price of gold at \$35 per ounce, set the dollar as the world’s reserve currency (replacing the British sterling), and established the World Bank and International Monetary Fund as lending institutions for postwar reconstruction.



*In August 1905, Wentworth By The Sea became the center of the world, the neutral site chosen by President Theodore Roosevelt to resolve the Russo-Japanese War. Diplomats from Russia—pictured on Wentworth’s front portico—and Japan would negotiate for a month, reaching an improbable agreement at the 11th hour. The meeting would lead to a Nobel Peace Prize for Roosevelt. (Photo: David Lazar; Photo courtesy of Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum/Portsmouth Athenaeum)*

Today, perhaps the most enduring reminder of the Bretton Woods talks can be found in the hotel’s ornate Gold Room, where the signing table still

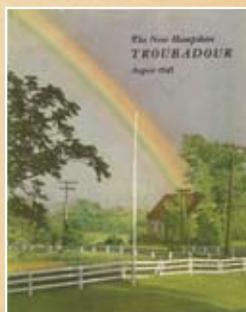
## Troubadour Treasures

### Small New Hampshire Town

by Vileta Nelson Chartier

I like a small New Hampshire town  
Where people nod as they pass by,  
Or smile and wave as if to say  
“We share a secret, You and I.”  
I like it where the trees bend close  
To form an arc of summer shade,  
Where robins from a fence post sing  
The sun their saucy serenade.

I like it, too, when night comes on  
And I can watch the daylight wane;  
The mountains lose their rugged lines  
As if in easement of their pain.  
There, there is peace to still the soul;  
There, no consuming urge to roam,  
For all Life’s richest blessing lie  
In that small patch of earth, it’s—Home!



NH Troubadour  
August, 1945





# Welcome to Rye

To walk the town of Rye's rocky shoreline, breathe in the salt air and peer out at the shimmering horizon is to understand what drew New Hampshire's first visitors four centuries ago to this quiet, seaside sanctuary—and what's drawn them in droves ever since.

Settled at Odiorne Point in 1623 by Scotsman David Thompson, Rye was known first as Pannaway and later Sandy Beach before its incorporation

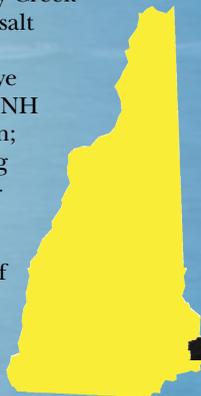
## Troubadour Town Facts: Rye

- Population of 5,174 (est. 2007)
- Captain John Smith arrived at the Isle of Shoals (which he called "Smith's Isles" in 1614.
- 38 residents of Rye gave their lives in the American Revolutionary War.
- 86 Rye residents served in the Civil War.
- Ocean Boulevard was constructed in 1902 and the first Rye library was erected in 1911.
- Odiorne Point is the largest undeveloped stretch of shore on NH's eighteen mile coast, offering an extensive array of habitats. On the south end of the park, sheltered tide pools of the Sunken Forest give way to exposed rocky shore. Just north, the shore evolves into a pebble

beach which shelters a fresh water marsh. Along the way to Frost Point where a jetty extends into Little Harbor, lies a small sand dune environment. At the end of Little Harbor, Seavey Creek feeds the neighboring salt marsh.

- Notable residents of Rye have included: former NH Governor Craig Benson; Dan Brown, best-selling author of "The Da Vinci Code"; U.S. Senator Judd Gregg; Liv Tyler, actress and daughter of rock star Steven Tyler.

- Michael DeBlasi



in 1726 as a parish of New Castle. With plentiful farmland and miles of open coastline, Rye thrived for more than a century as a bustling agricultural, fishing and shipping community. The end of the Civil War brought a boon in tourism, as wealthy travelers seeking cool escape from the city's summer heat discovered Rye's unspoiled seaboard and began building dozens of large summer homes and luxury hotels.

While the sight of families strolling along Jenness Beach in their Sunday best has long since given way to surfboards and string bikinis, Rye's relaxed character, rich seafaring tradition and neighborly devotion to community and land continue today. From Ocean Boulevard's historic homes and boardwalks flanked by sea roses and sand, to the green calm of Parsons Field and Brown's Pond, Rye's landscape remains remarkably sprawl-free.

No visit is complete without a stop at Odiorne Point State Park with its wooded paths, panoramic ocean views, and massive military fortifications installed in the 1940s to safeguard against German attack. While at Odiorne, you'll want to visit the Seacoast Science Center, an interactive lesson in local lore and aquatic life, complete with an indoor touch tank and 1,000-gallon aquarium. Nearby, you can discover the house where the nation's first direct transatlantic cable lines came ashore in 1874—a far cry from cell towers—or board the Uncle Oscar for a day trip to the Isle of Shoals, and view the shorelines, gardens and wildlife that inspired 19<sup>th</sup> century poet Celia Thaxter's writing. For an eye-opening look at the area's evolution, visit the Rye History Museum, where historian Alex Herlihy tells some of the best stories around and can walk you through an excellent new exhibit detailing Rye's four centuries: Rye on the Rocks ([www.ryehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.ryehistoricalsociety.org)).



## What Say

NEW ENGLANDERS ARE KNOWN for their sparing but precise use of words. In the classic example, tourists ask the local if he knows how to get to Randolph. “Yup,” he says. In another, tourists in Portsmouth, consulting a map, ask a local if it makes any difference whether they take I-95 or Route 1 to Portland, Maine. The local replies: “Not to me, it don’t.”

The same taciturnity applies not just when we talk to people from away, but when we talk to each other. A father and son were fishing from the bank of the Contoocook River. They dozed off. A fog rolled in. The son woke up, alarmed. “Father,” he said, “We ain’t here no more.”

“Don’t worry, son,” the father said. “We ain’t far from here.”

This one-liner was attributed to Walter Sanborn of Chichester. He’d brought his sons to the old swimming hole for a dip. When it came time to go, the boys refused to get out of the water. Walter is said to have said: “If you boys don’t behave, next time I bring you, you won’t come.”

Bruce Geiger’s neighbor in Lyneborough told me this story. Bruce is fondly remembered as a great yankee character. He pronounced his name Geigah, of course. A tall thin man, good with horses, did a lot of work in the woods. One morning he told his wife he was headed out to the wood lot with his tricycle tractor. When she returned from the village that afternoon, Bruce hadn’t come in from the woods yet. She got a hold of their other neighbor, Tinka Johnson. “Tinka,” she said, “I haven’t seen Bruce. He should have been home hours ago.”

So Tinka went in search of Bruce and came upon a terrible scene – the tractor upended and Bruce, apparently, pinned underneath. Tinka rushed to Bruce’s side expecting the worst. But he realized his friend was o.k. when Bruce looked up and said: “What took ya?”

*Becky Rule has lived all her life (so far) in New Hampshire. She has written several popular books set in her home state, including her latest collection of stories, “Live Free and Eat Pie” (Islandport Press), and hosts live storytelling events, many sponsored by the New Hampshire Humanities Council. She posts stories regularly on her website, [www.livefreeandeatpie.com](http://www.livefreeandeatpie.com).*

# LABOR and LOVE

by Ron Roberts

## END OF THE DAY

A HUNDRED PLUS MEN DESCEND  
DOWN THE IRON RAILS THEY SLIDE  
SKIMMING THE SCUFFED HARD SOLES DO FLY  
AS THE CALLOUSED GRIP OF HARD LABOR  
BRAKE THE LEATHER ON THE TIME SMOOTHED RAILS  
THE HUNDRED PLUS MEN DESCEND  
LANDRIES AND LEATHERS OF WELDERS  
THE HARNESSSES AND SPUDS OF CONNECTORS  
HOUNDS THE BARK AND GROWL OF THE PUSHERS  
RATTLING THE CHOKES AND SHACKLES OF RIGGERS  
AS A HUNDRED PLUS MEN DESCEND  
CLAD IN ARMOR OF LEATHER DENIM AND DUCK  
THE SOULS OF ORGANIZED LABOR  
THIS GRIT OF SWIMMING IN SOOT AND ASH  
THAT FORGES ANY BOILERMAKER WORTH BRASS  
AS THE LAST OF THE HUNDRED PLUS MEN DESCEND



*A native of New Hampshire, Ron Roberts recently retired from a life of working with his hands. From his early days on a family farm to a career as an industrial welder boilermaker, he has always felt a kinship to the land. Comfortable working with timber, granite and soil, Ron, with his wife of 32 years, raised their family in a home he designed and built in Stratham. Only recently has he turned his artistic talents from timber frames and barn raising to poetry and photography as displayed here, from his self-published book “LABOR and LOVE.”*

"Your Troubadour" is designed specifically for you, the reader, to share a bit of your memories, moments, stories and smiles about this state. We encourage you to submit to us your essays, poems, recipes, photographs and more—provided of course, they maintain the standards and decency we have come to expect here in NH. Send your treasures for publication electronically to: [submissions@nhtroubadour.com](mailto:submissions@nhtroubadour.com) or mail to: NH Troubadour, 29 Armory Road, Milford, NH 03055.

## Dusk at Barnyard Park

by Kellie Wardman

Last summer's baseball pants ride up  
your calves, blond hairs just starting to show.  
You're crouching in the grass  
like a lion, calling the pitches,  
a seven-year old Yogi Berra.

I'm on the mound—fingers curled in a glove,  
smelling like calfskin and sand.  
A fly pop arcs over my head.  
You scamper around the bases:  
the ball clunks a minivan in the lot.

Rubbing your thighs with dirty palms,  
you spit through your teeth.  
If I didn't call time, you'd play  
until the fireflies were lighting the fields.  
Hit, catch, toss: the dependability of each pitch;  
the punch of the ball hitting your mitt.

The night finishes with us curled  
on the couch. The back of your hair is damp.  
We eat chocolate ice cream  
from chipped bowls, spoons clanging.  
You're too tall to fit in my lap, but we try.

*(Kellie Wardman is a Troubadour reader from Bedford, NH)*

All entries become property of The Troubadour and are subject to editing for content and space; views displayed here do not necessarily reflect those of this publication and are submitted by readers of this magazine.

## The Wooded Road

by Catherine Currie

We walked the wooded road  
Just the two of us,  
Leaving the world behind  
To mend its many woes.

Sun shone through trees  
Making light, dark patterns  
On strong granite rock  
And scattered wildflowers.

The road topped a hill—  
Far below we saw  
New Hampshire's Pleasant Lake  
Where dreams are fulfilled.

We walked a wooded road,  
Just the two of us.  
Beauty filled our minds,  
Serenity our souls.

*(Catherine Currie is a Troubadour reader from Concord, NH)*

## Life with the Dragonflies

by Susanna Hargreaves

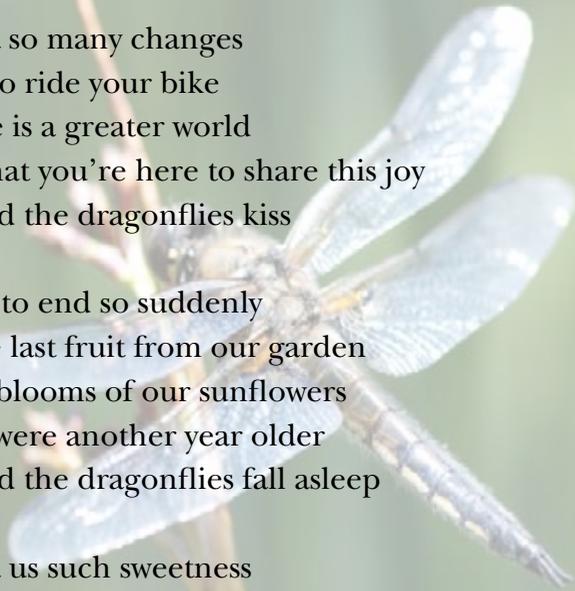
This summer brought us such sweetness  
I really tried to hold on  
You laughed and sang  
As you discovered the miracles in our yard  
At twilight, we watched the dragonflies dance

This summer brought so many changes  
You ran and learned to ride your bike  
I saw you realize there is a greater world  
And I thanked God that you're here to share this joy  
At twilight, we watched the dragonflies kiss

This summer seemed to end so suddenly  
It was time to pick the last fruit from our garden  
And we gathered the blooms of our sunflowers  
Before I knew it, you were another year older  
At twilight, we watched the dragonflies fall asleep

This summer brought us such sweetness  
Yes, it was sweetness I will never forget  
I know there is hope for all of us  
as long as the dragonflies dance

*(Susanna Hargreaves is a Troubadour reader from Hooksett, NH)*

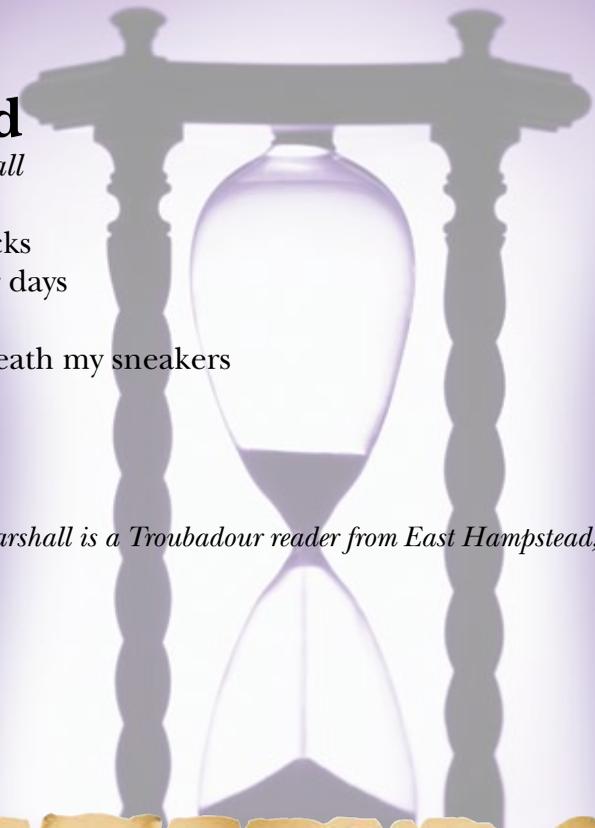


## untitled

by Ed Marshall

railroad tracks  
hot summer days  
one by one  
slipped beneath my sneakers

*(Ed Marshall is a Troubadour reader from East Hampstead, NH)*

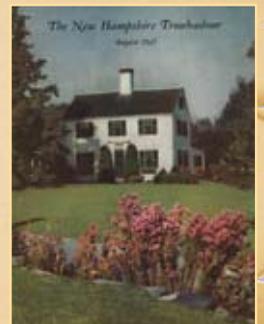


### *Troubadour Treasures*

"I have motored through nearly every state in our country, and while opinions may vary with shifting scenes in many places, I always return to my first love—New Hampshire. There is no more charming or beautiful spot.

"Particularly interesting to me is the view of Chocorua taken near Scudder's gate. I have been there some part of sixty years. Then covered bridges, old houses, white churches, rocky fields and zigzag walls and fences—all of them forming the backdrop against which sunshine, snow and rain play a symphony of color, light and music of mystic charm and beauty. No wonder there are fine and gracious folk in New Hampshire. It could not be otherwise in such pleasant surroundings."

—Wallace Tibbetts—Wellesley, Massachusetts



NH Troubadour  
August, 1947

## Beach House

by Rose Kowaliw

Early morning walks  
on the beach searching for gifts  
brought in from the sea.  
Breathlessly happy  
barefoot we raced down towards the  
wave-slapping shore.  
Sunburned faces  
squinting at seagulls sweeping  
bright skies with their wings.  
Playing 'Go Fish' on  
the porch with creamsicle hands  
when the summer rained.

*(Rose Kowaliw is a Troubadour reader from Swanzey, NH)*

### *Troubadour Treasures*

One of the many pleasant features of the Troubadour from our standpoint is the large number of appreciative, encouraging letters which we are constantly receiving from our readers. If you enjoy the little magazine and find it in some of the atmosphere and spirit of New Hampshire and care to tell us so, we are grateful.

We who live in New Hampshire love the State and the way of living that is possible here. But we realize that there is always room for improvement and we wish that you would offer suggestions as to what we can do to make the State more attractive to those who visit us. We shall welcome any constructive suggestions. Won't you write us? —The Editor



NH Troubadour  
July, 1937

## Squam

by Ted Lambert

All around me I feel the arms  
cold comfort.

The ghost of my youth  
tied up in the walls.

The books, the pictures,  
layers and layers of memories,  
images gone by.

The spirit of those passed on  
are here stronger than  
anywhere else.

Night noises command my attention.

Within them I hear laughing.

I hear crying, snoring, buzzing,  
Questions being asked.

Some with answers, some without.

Blood runs thick in Robin Hood.

We will be all here together  
At the end.

*(Ted Lambert is a Troubadour reader from Hampton, NH)*



July is typically the month when we are supposed to press our reset buttons for the year—to take a hard-earned break from the daily grind of work and spend time with our families savoring the sun (or the air conditioning), gathering seashells, seeking out new trails, or simply catching a summer blockbuster. It is also a month of parades, picnics and, here in New Hampshire, especially intense pride in the independence that's always been a hallmark of our state.

New Hampshire has always been a little different in that regard. We have always placed a premium on the belief that anyone—regardless of blood or birth—has the power to make a difference here if he or she wants to; that our government and our leaders are held to a heightened level of accountability; and that our communities, neighbors and families are often the best places to look for solutions to everyday problems. All can be summed up in the four words that make ours perhaps the best-known of all state mottos: “Live Free or Die.”

July 31 will mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that phrase, a toast written by New Hampshire's most famous soldier from the Revolutionary War, General John Stark, to commemorate America's victory over the British some 32 years earlier at the Battle of Bennington. The full toast—which Stark wrote in a note declining his invitation to an event due to poor health—read, “Live Free or Die; Death Is Not the Worst of Evils.” A year later, those same organizers would send Stark another invitation (again declined), which read, “The toast, sir, which you sent us in 1809 will continue to vibrate with unceasing pleasure in our ears.”

It has indeed. In 1945, New Hampshire made “Live Free or Die” its official motto, and today monuments to Stark can be found in Manchester, Concord, his hometown of Londonderry, and in New Boston—home to the Molly Stark Cannon (named for Stark's wife), captured from the British at Bennington. The greatest monument, however, is to be found in the hearts of our citizens, who now as then have taken Stark's famous charge and that same assertive independence and made it their own.

*Do you know of a special person, organization or tradition in your community that deserves to be trumpeted on these pages? Would you like to join our mailing list? Contact us at [www.nhtroubadour.com](http://www.nhtroubadour.com) or by telephone at 603.673.0100.*

Joe Byron was a retired Manchester policeman helping investigate crimes against seniors when he struck up a friendship one day at the Mall of NH with an aging WWII vet, that he says changed his life.

“The more I talked to this gentleman, the more I appreciated just how much he had done for his country,” says Byron. “It is a generation that gave so much and really never asked for anything in return.”

Three years later, Byron, a 54-year-old Vietnam era vet, is looking to return the favor the best he can. In March, he launched Honor Flight New England, part of a national volunteer network that brings aging and terminally ill veterans down to Washington, D.C., for a full day, free of charge, to visit their war memorials for the first time. “These guys deserve it,” Byron says. “After what they've been through, so many of them have still never seen any of the memorials, either because they couldn't afford it, or because their family was afraid to take them because of medical needs.”

On June 13, Byron, with the aid of several volunteers, veterans' family members, and medical personnel (and sent off by a full complement of flag-waving greeters) took 19 area WWII vets on their inaugural Honor Flight – a trip that included visits to Arlington Cemetery and the WWII, Iwo Jima, Korean War, Vietnam, Air Force and Navy memorials. “Seeing these monuments on my own had struck me, of course,” Byron says. “But not nearly as much as when I saw the look in their eyes. I think for a lot of the guys going on this trip, it's closure. I was amazed to hear the experiences they shared as the day went on.”

Byron recalls talking with one vet, who'd deposited soldiers onto Omaha Beach on D-Day and a half-century later suffered post-traumatic-stress-disorder after viewing “Saving Private Ryan.” Another, an ex-POW from Hillsborough, had come within inches of losing his legs in the South Pacific. “We're losing 1,000 WWII veterans a day, and so many don't tell their story,” Byron says. “When they die, that history often dies with them. There are generations that need to know about their sacrifice.”

Byron and volunteers pay for Honor Flights entirely through private donations, with each visit costing \$400—volunteers and family members pay their own way. Future flights are scheduled for Sept. 20 and 26 and Oct. 17. For more information, visit [www.honorflightnewengland.org](http://www.honorflightnewengland.org).



*Manchester's Joe Byron began Honor Flight New England as a way to thank aging and terminally ill veterans for their service and allow them to see their war memorials first hand. (Photo: David Lazar).*

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