



THE NEW HAMPSHIRE
TROUBADOUR

OCTOBER 2008



New Hampshire's moose hunt is nine days, starting the third Saturday in October. This year's hunt takes place from October 18-26. A total of 515 permits are being issued; NH has an estimated population of 6,000 moose.

(Photo taken off Route 302 in Crawford Notch near the old Wiley House Station, by Glynis Maury; www.sweetshotphotography.com)

Front cover photo: Roadside pumpkin sale near Lake Winnepesaukee in Gilford, by Jeffrey Newcomer; www.partridgebrookreflections.com

Back cover photo: Footbridge at Mine Falls, Nashua, by Ting Cai; www.caiphotography.com



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



We were honored to mark our launch last month by featuring a contribution from Poet Laureate Donald Hall. Mr. Hall's artistry has inspired generations, including reader Susanna Hargreaves who submits her own poetry to us this month ("Your Troubadour," pg. 13). Unfortunately, the structure of Mr. Hall's original submission, "Cowgirls," did not make it into the final translation of our September print edition.

Art is, indeed, a medium of form and meaning. For writers, so much of the flow and intent of the work being created comes through its arrangement on the page. As Mr. Hall says, "Poetry is its sounds." Below, the "sounds" for you, as intended by Donald Hall:

COWGIRLS

I watched the calves suckle their mothers. After a summer loose in the heifers' pasture, they fattened all winter

in the barn and were bred. My grandfather Wesley teased me for the names of the girls I was sweet on at school: He named

a Holstein for Marsha, who did somersaults in kindergarten. "I see London, I see France, I see Marsha's underpants."

Annually the tie-up extended to Mary Beth, Dottie Page, -black and white spotted monsters of milk and manure-

Nancy, Elizabeth, and Phyllis Rebecca Gordon, so beautiful in the sixth grade I could barely look her way.

We cannot thank Donald Hall and each and every contributor enough for their generosity in helping to make the return of *The NH Troubadour* a success. We promise to always try to live up to the standards we have set for ourselves and you have come to expect.

Michael DeBlasi

Big Poem *for a little church*

by David Lazar

A Madison landmark inspires more than words

The poet E.E. Cummings and his wife Marion had finished supper at the Conway Café and were driving back to their Silver Lake summer farm when something stopped them in their tracks.

On the side of Rural Route 113 in Madison, a crowd swelled outside a small, non-descript white church — an old, green-shuttered, clapboard structure no different from any other house of worship in the region. On this evening, however, the tiny church was lit up like Christmas, its small bell echoing

in the outsize shadow of Mt. Chocorua.

It was VE Day, May 1945, and word was out that World War II had come to an end. A pastor led an ongoing convocation, as residents from Madison and surrounding communities milled in and out to pray and offer thanks.

The image so struck Cummings that he stopped his car and got out. Friends say Cummings had never been the churchgoing type — or much of a fan of organized religion. His writing, however, often showed a reverence for spirituality. Cummings famously discarded capital letters from his poetry, some say out of humility. A rare exception was in reference to God.

Amid the hum of crickets and the idling engine, Cummings stood in the shade of the tree-lined road that evening and observed. In The Madison Church, he'd seen something special — something that couldn't be seen by just driving past; something that transcended wood and paint and glass. He returned with Marion to Joy Farm. There, in the artist's loft his father had long ago built for him, Cummings wrote one of his favorite, and perhaps least known poems: *i am a little church* (no great cathedral).

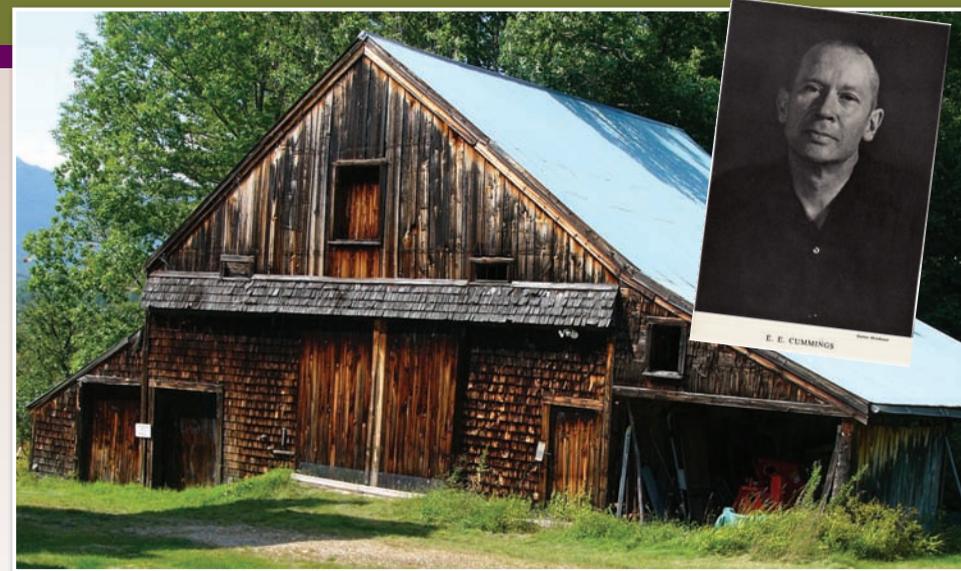
*i am a little church (no great cathedral)
far from the splendor and squalor of hurrying cities
- i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
i am not sorry when sun and rain make april*

*my life is the life of the reaper and the sower;
my prayers are prayers of earth's own clumsily striving
(finding and losing and laughing and crying) children
whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness*

*around me surges a miracle of unceasing
birth and glory and death and resurrection;
over my sleeping self float flaming symbols
of hope, and i wake to a perfect patience of mountains*

*i am a little church (far from the frantic
world with its rapture and anguish) at peace with nature
- i do not worry if longer nights grow longest;
i am not sorry when silence becomes singing*

*winter by spring, i lift my diminutive spire to
merciful Him Whose only now is forever;
standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence
(welcoming humbly His light and proudly His darkness)*



Opposite Page: Open since 1789, The Madison Church remains the focal point of this small mountain community. (Photo courtesy of The Madison Church)

This page: E.E. Cummings wrote "i am a little church" from the artist's loft of his secluded Silver Lake farm (Photo: David Lazar)

E.E. Cummings (Photo courtesy of Carol Batchelder)

For Cummings, or ‘Estlin’ as locals called him (for Edward Estlin), “i am a little church” symbolized how something so outwardly ordinary could hold such importance for a community.

Cummings waited until 1958 to publish “i am a little church.” It would not earn him the renown or schoolbook celebrity that other iconic works like “anyone lived in a pretty how town” or “i thank you God for this most amazing” would. But when Cummings appeared before more than 10,000 at the Boston Arts Festival in 1957 — the largest public reading of his career — it was his snapshot of life in Madison he chose to recite.

“He really does capture the finite and the infinite with this poem... how a church can be the central part of this kind of rural rhythm of life,” says The Madison Church’s pastor, Sean Dunker-Bendigo.

Five decades after Cummings published his poem, The Madison Church stands just as it did — unadorned, but undoubtedly the heart of this tiny mountain community of less than 2,000 people; its only house of worship, open since 1789.

Despite its Baptist beginnings, it is the place where neighbors of all faiths and political stripes gather to contemplate and offer thanks, to celebrate beginnings and mourn endings. Each Sunday, 70 or so residents young and old, many of them farmers, pack The Madison Church’s cozy pews; folks like Donna Nichols, the church’s treasurer and a deacon, who’s been on church missions to Haiti and Mississippi and greets parishioners with a big, enveloping hug; folks like 80-year-old Ruth Shackford, a former caretaker for Cummings’ farm, who’s been going since she was a little girl, and each year whips up crowd-pleasing cakes for the church’s annual Oyster Stew, Corn Chowder and Fancy Cake auction for charity. (This year’s is set for Nov. 1.)

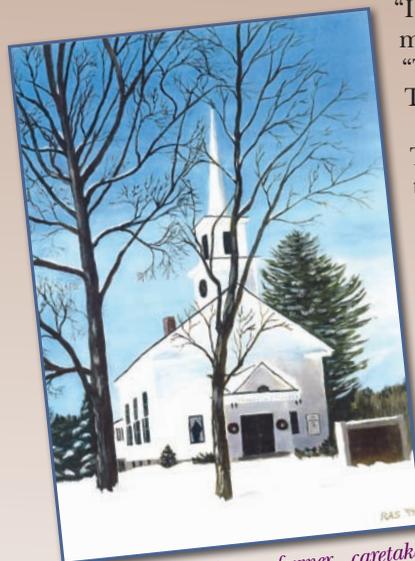
“It’s truly a special place,” says Shackford. “It’s not something you’d necessarily see just by driving past, but it really is the focal point of the town.”

At its heart, parishioners say, is a faith that extends beyond psalms and sermons — a coming together of ordinary people to help their neighbors. The Madison Church houses the town’s only independent, non-religious pre-school. It’s where Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held on Friday nights. An average day for Dunker-Bendigo may be split between chopping wood for parishioners in the morning, helping to run the church’s call-in and shuttle services for seniors, and responding to a five-alarm blaze as a volunteer firefighter.

As for Nichols, the deacon, it is a place that summons emotion each time she thinks about it.

Nichols had just moved to Madison with her daughter and boyfriend, when the home they built burned to the ground one awful night three decades ago. Left with nothing but the clothes on their backs, she would awaken the following

morning to find an Angel of Mercy from The Madison Church bearing pots and pans, clothing and gift certificates to grocery and department stores.



Ruth Shackford, a former caretaker for Cummings’ property, painted this portrait of The Madison Church.

“I was not a churchgoer; I wasn’t even a member,” Nichols says, her voice breaking. “They didn’t know me from a hole in the wall. They just knew I needed help.”

The deliveries continued every day for another three or four weeks — food, furniture, breadboards, things Nichols says even she wouldn’t have thought of. She eventually rebuilt her family’s house in Madison and began attending the church off and on. Today, Nichols is among The Madison Church’s most active members, leading efforts to help others in times of need.

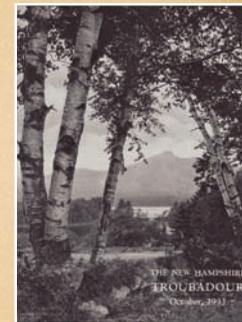
“It’s a community church, plain and simple,” Nichols says. “It is for the community. That’s who it serves, and that is why it’s endured for more than 200 years.”

And that, no doubt, is the snapshot Cummings took with him as he closed the door of his car and drove away from the little white building on Rural Route 113. It is a snapshot that hasn’t faded in the years since and likely won’t in the years to come.

Special thanks to Ruth Shackford and Carol Batchelder of Silver Lake for their help with this story.

Troubadour Treasures

Evidently, The Troubadour is not without some tonic effect. William V. Dixey, executive director of the architectural division of the Emergency Planning and Research Bureau, Boston, says that after an exceedingly difficult day, very tired, and perhaps a bit depressed, he read the Ernest Poole article and the other articles in the June number. After reading our little magazine, he says, “it is amazing how one finds himself among the fields of New Hampshire; troubles and worries evaporate into thin air. It is without doubt the most refreshing magazine that comes to our home.”



NH Troubadour
October, 1933



(Photos: David Lazar)

Schneider from Nazi captivity to help open his newly built Cranmore resort.

While outlet shopping has in recent years overtaken skiing as the town's featured pastime, North Conway remains a place where you can test your skills on the slopes, or simply take in the views from one of the pastel deckchairs at historic Stonehurst Manor.

It is a town where history still stars front and center, whether it is snapping up that rare bargain in one of the nation's few remaining five-and-dime stores, sampling some of the homemade preserves and syrups at Zeb's General Store... or simply waving to Mrs. Evelyn Woodbury on the porch of her immac-



Crawford Notch. Built in 1874, North Conway's iconic twin-domed Victorian depot has more than withstood the test of time, greeting everyone from dignitaries to moms and dads over the decades with its Crayola-yellow facades and dramatic Mount Washington back-

Welcome to North Conway, New Hampshire

To stroll along North Conway's Main Street and glance up on either side is to see why vacationers for generations have flocked to this scenic retreat in the heart of the White Mountains.

Flanked east and west by Mount Cranmore and Mount Washington, this tiny village's majestic views continue to inspire artists and challenge skiers. Indeed, North Conway is celebrated as the "birthplace of American skiing", a designation earned in the 1930s when prominent businessman Harvey Gibson rescued world-class skier Hannes

ulate 19th century Queen Anne home, a yellow wedding cake of wood and glass unchanged since its cover shot on a 1957 Saturday Evening Post.

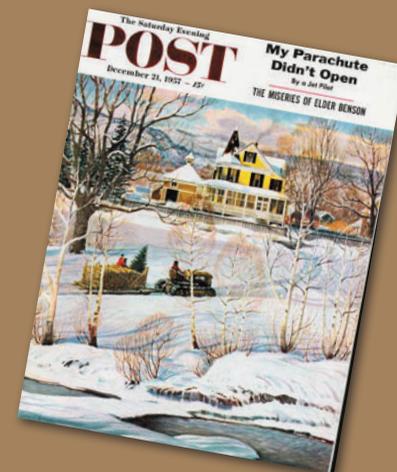
drop. Now a National Historic Landmark, the depot no longer shuttles skiers from New York and Boston to the slopes, instead offering seasonal excursions through the Mount Washington Valley.

—David Lazar

Troubadour Town Facts: North Conway

- Population of 2,069 (2000 census).
- Largest village (4.3 sq miles) within the town of Conway.
- Located directly in the heart of the White Mountains, with Mt. Washington (the highest peak in the Northeastern U.S.) looming to the northwest.
- The rugged terrain became popular in the 19th century with artists. Their paintings were known collectively as White Mountain Art, which began attracting tourists to the area in the 1870's.
- Cathedral Ledge in Echo Lake State Park and White Horse Ledge, are regarded among the top rock climbing spots on the East Coast.
- The landmark train station, home to the Conway Scenic Railroad, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Emmy Award winning actor Gordon Clapp, a distant relative of Ethan Allen, was born and raised in North Conway.
- For the past 33 years, North Conway has hosted the "Mud Bowl," a weekend of family, fun and mud football competition that has raised nearly half a million dollars for local charities.

- Michael DeBlasi





Stark Coffee

SOMETIMES PEOPLE FROM away say New Hampshire folks are reserved, even chilly.

That is, of course, a matter of interpretation. We may not exude friendliness like people from, say, the Deep South... like Connecticut. But we're friendly enough, in context. We don't go around hugging everybody in sight or smiling for no particular reason. And we don't usually get all gushy – 'Hello, how you doing?' 'Where you from?' 'Nice T-shirt' – unless we have an inkling of who you are or we really like your T-shirt. We don't always speak first, but we'll speak when spoken, too. We're friendly in our own way.

Family story – not my family, but a story told by the daughter of a game warden who, years ago, spent a lot of time maintaining order in the wilds of the North Country. There he was at seven o'clock in the morning. It was a foggy, dismal morning. Chilly, you might say. He was filling his tank at a gas station in one of those stark North Country towns. This was years ago, when gas stations sold just one thing. Gas. Also at the pump was an old guy – "an old salty salt" – the daughter told me, though how a person gets salty in the White Mountains I don't know. Must be the roads.

The old salty salt had a beater truck, overalls, gum boots, and a cap pulled low over his eyes. He was smoking one of those short black pipes. (This took place in the time before regulations were posted warning customers about the hazards of smoking around gasoline: If you smoke close to this pump, you may blow up.)

The old salty salt and the game warden stood side-by-side, filling their respective vehicles. Staring off into space. Contemplating their respective places in the universe. And not saying a word to one another, in the Yankee tradition.

Finally, the warden said out loud more to the aforementioned universe than the old salty salt: "I wonder where a fella can get a good cup of coffee around here this time of the day."

The old salty salt took a draw off his pipe, pulled it from his mouth and set it carefully on the roof of the truck. "Well, sir," he said. "I guess you'll just have to come home with me."

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.



New Hampshire Then

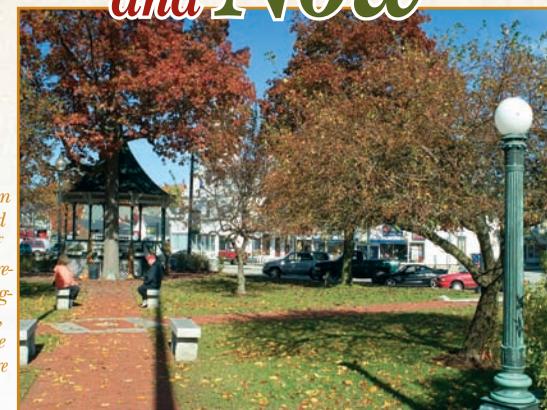
by Peter Randall
(in cooperation with the NH
Historical Society)

Union Square, Milford,
photographed by Atkinson's
Pictures, c. 1940. (NH Historical
Society Collection)

Union Square, Milford. As an ongoing community project, the common was renovated in 1996, complete with a sidewalk composed of bricks with the names of the buyers stamped on them.
(Peter Randall)

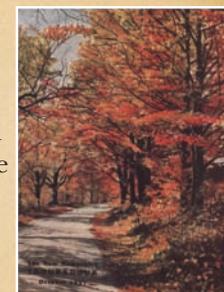
A native of the New Hampshire seacoast, Peter E. Randall is the twelfth generation of his family to live in the region. He has been involved with publishing and photography since graduating from the University of New Hampshire. A former newspaper and magazine reporter and editor, Randall has authored 14 books ranging from collections to photographs and travel guides, to local history. His most recent photography books are New Hampshire, A Living Landscape and New Hampshire Then and Now. (www.peterrandall.com)

and Now



Troubadour Treasures

"On a perfect fall day," writes Mrs. Russell A. Wentworth of Baltimore "we made a trip by motor to Mt. Washington. I thought I had never seen anything so gorgeous as the sun shining on and filtering through the multi-colored leaves. Then around the next curve a lake of crystal water would burst into view. One beautiful scene followed another so rapidly that we were completely at a loss for words to express our enjoyment and appreciation of the beauty we were privileged to view."



NH Troubadour
October, 1935

"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 or mail to: **NH Troubadour, 29 Armory Road, Milford, NH 03055.**

Covered Bridge Adventure

by *Diane Russell*

Malcolm and I had been dating long distance when we decided in February 2005, that it was time for one of us to move closer. Since the bank where I worked in Vermont had branches in New Hampshire, it made more sense for me to relocate.

We both have a passion for motorcycle rides and we wanted to make our first full summer together a romantic and adventurous one. We found a map of all the remaining covered bridges in New Hampshire and in May 2005, we began the venture on our 2002 Honda VTX 1800 Retro motorcycle to begin photographing each covered bridge. We decided to photograph our bike and one of us in each picture as we wanted to document that the journey was by motorcycle only. At the end of our day, we would print the pictures and on the back we would indicate the name and number of the bridge, the date, and the town location. Four months, 56 covered bridge photographs and 9,185 miles later, we proudly completed our adventure. It was an awesome journey and we had a great time completing it!

The following year, we decided it was time to make wedding plans. And with such an incredible previous summer, we determined that it would only make sense to be married on a covered bridge. On the evening of July 21, 2006, Malcolm and I rode our motorcycle to the Henniker Covered Bridge, where we were pronounced husband and wife. We look forward to our next adventure.

Diane Russell and her husband Malcolm live in Hillsborough.

Newport

Built in 1907, located in Newport. This double Town-Pratt lattice truss bridge was built as part of the Boston & Maine Railroad System.



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

Pittsburg-Clarksville

Built in 1876, located in Pittsburg. This bridge, also known as the Bacon Road Bridge is one of seven covered bridges that stood in this rural northern town. Only three remain.

God's Country

by *Susanna Hargreaves*

Every autumn my spirit feels alive
It shines with the golden leaves
that fall throughout Mine Falls
Following the path of yellow, amber and green,
I savor this beautiful day with all of my senses
For a moment, my spirit soars with the words
of Robert Frost,
Jane Kenyon and Donald Hall.
Imagining their approval as they watch
above the Nashua River,
in the shadows of the granite mountains,
just beyond the soft pine treetops,
over the glittering waves
with the seagulls-
they call my name.
Live, they whisper.
Remember, they say.
And with their words,
we can share our heart
believe in our dream
And touch heaven with our hands.
Again and again,
surrounded by yellow, amber and green,
to celebrate life in God's country.

Susanna Hargreaves is a Troubadour reader from Hooksett, NH

Cornish-Windsor

Built in 1866, located in Cornish, NH & Windsor, VT.
At nearly 450 feet, this magnificent bridge is the longest remaining covered bridge in the United States.



Our New Hampshire

by Robert J. Finlay

It has been a privilege to drive around the state and see firsthand the response this little magazine has received since we launched a month ago. It has also been an affirmation that there is, indeed, a demand for stories that celebrate the best our people and communities have to offer.

The strength of New Hampshire is its people – earnest, decent, hard-working folks who strive to make our neighborhoods and state a wonderful place to live. The strength of *The NH Troubadour* depends on these same people. In other words: you. Each month, we are on the lookout for ordinary individuals doing extraordinary things; people who help make life here better by quietly making a big difference in their communities. We need your help in identifying them.

From our monthly feature story to the “Your Troubadour” section and the “Troubadour Trumpets” on the facing page, we are in constant search of folks and organizations whose stories you believe are worth sharing. If you know of someone, please contact us.

In the short time we have been in print, we have been overwhelmed by your generosity in the poetry, photography, story tips and even recipes that have filled our mailbox. From readers like Lisa Bell of Marlowe who wrote us championing the Marlowe Women’s Society’s Harvest Fair efforts to raise money for those in need, to Rose Kowaliw of Swanzey and Ginger Jannenga of East Colebrook who shared striking gifts for poetry and photography, respectively, we cannot be more grateful. We plan to feature as many of you as we can in the months ahead, and as space allows.

In the meantime, we continue to be blessed with stunning cover and inside photography from folks across the state, all of whom have volunteered their time and exceptional talents. The pumpkin shot on this month’s cover, for instance, is from Jeffrey Newcomer, MD, medical director of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene.

Dr. Newcomer annually produces and sells a “New England Reflections” calendar as a fundraiser to cover the cost of pulmonary rehabilitation for area residents lacking insurance coverage. These calendars can be found at the hospital cafeteria as well as in bookstores, art shops and markets throughout Cheshire County and the Monadnock region. We are thrilled to feature his work and to assist his efforts in any way we can.

This past month reinforced for my wife Karin and me why we moved back to New Hampshire to raise our family. Many of us know about the natural wonders our state has to offer, but it is truly the people who make it extraordinary. And, with your assistance, *The NH Troubadour* will proudly do its part in pointing them out, so they can receive the attention they deserve.

Troubadour Trumpets

Recognizing Those Who Make A Difference



Paul Bordeleau takes a break from his recent free performance on Bedford Community Television. (Photo: David Lazar)

For more than a half century, Bedford’s Paul Bordeleau has devoted his life to a simple proposition: that anyone, no matter their age or limitation, can learn to play and enjoy music. Judging by the thousands of smiles he has delivered across New Hampshire and the countless hours he continues to log, often free of charge, it is a promise and legacy fulfilled.

At 84, Bordeleau’s daily calendar reads like that of a maestro half his age, each day a melodious mixture of concerts, volunteer appearances,

and piano lessons in his home studio.

Bordeleau began playing piano from his mom’s lap at age 6, thirsting to learn every instrument he could as soon as he could. By 17, Bordeleau was leading his own big band and headlining some of the region’s biggest dance halls. By 20, he was dodging bullets at Normandy on D-Day, as a member of the Army’s Signal Corps, installing the first American switchboard in enemy territory.

Indeed, much of Bordeleau’s life has been about service, from helping lead the Army’s 11th Airborne Division band at Ft. Campbell, KY, during the Korean War to more than 50 years teaching music to middle school, high school and college students throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music and Boston University, Bordeleau has held distinction as president of the NH Music Teachers Association.

He has held equal distinction as a volunteer, sharing his passion for music daily with everyone from children to seniors and the disabled. For nearly 20 years, Bordeleau – recently inducted to a second term as president of the Bedford Rotary Club – has fielded requests each week as a volunteer performer in local hospitals and nursing homes. It is a tradition he has passed on to his students over the decades, arranging for youth ensembles to play at nursing homes regularly throughout the year. Today, Bordeleau’s list of ‘graduates’ reads like a Who’s Who of New England music educators.

“If you do what you do not for money, but for the joy of it, I believe it comes back to you,” he says.

Do you know of a special person, organization or tradition in your community that deserves to be trumpeted on these pages? If so, please contact us via email at submissions@nhtroubadour.com or by telephone at 603.673.0100.

Do you have poetry,
photos, artwork, stories
or thoughts you'd
like to share?

Would you like to add
your name to our
mailing list?

CONTACT US AT:

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THE NEW HAMPSHIRE
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