

## CHAPTER XX

### A DAY IN THE LIFE . . .

*In the course of working to update Jaffrey history to the end of the century, members of the committee realized that previous volumes did not really offer a clear picture of daily life for individuals in the town during various periods. We thought it might interest future generations to read how a typical day was spent in 1996 by people of various age groups and occupations. Following are the stories of a few people who agreed to detail a single day in their lives.*

#### WILFRED AND MARY COURNOYER

Wilfred (Joe) and Mary (Ryan) Cournoyer (age 84 and 78 respectively), have lived in Jaffrey most of their married life and have been married for 55 years. Wilfred retired from the army in 1956 and bought the former Duncan's Drug-store where he and Mary ran Cournoyer's Cut Rate store for 10 years. Before his retirement he worked for seven years as a custodian at New



*Joe and Mary Cournoyer*

Hampshire Ball Bearing plant in Jaffrey. He represented Jaffrey for six years in the New Hampshire General Court. Mary worked three years in the finishing room at New Hampshire Ball Bearing, five years as a bookkeeper for the Monadnock Bank, and then for a time both Joe and Mary worked at the Jaffrey Center Post Office when it was located in the Oribe Tea Barn.

They have three children, Marie Elaine (55), Joseph Cournoyer (53), and Philip Cournoyer (50), and eight grandchildren, Scott Cournoyer (30), Jeffrey Cournoyer (29), Daniel Cournoyer (26), Stephanie Joyce (26), Stacy Cournoyer (19), Sara Cournoyer (24), Jill Cournoyer (21), John Bank (24), and one great grandchild Kevin J. Cournoyer (9).

"We awoke at 7:00 A.M., showered, dressed, and hurried to keep Joe's appointment at 8:30 at Monadnock Community Hospital for

a sonogram. It took over an hour, with part of the time spent just waiting. Afterward we decided to have breakfast in the cafeteria, where we had a nice visit with a friend we hadn't seen for a long time who used to bowl with Joe.

"When we got home, I put a load of clothes in the old Maytag washer, then hung them out to dry. I like to do this on sunny days rather than use the dryer. In doing laundry we have to be careful that we use a very mild detergent because of Joe's skin condition. I use Ivory Snow but only half the amount suggested.

"The night before we had put our dinner in the crock-pot where it had cooked on low all night. Now it was ready, so we sat down to eat our main meal of the day, Swiss steak with celery, carrots, and onions in tomato sauce topped with grated American cheese served with brown rice. Dessert was sugar-free Jell-O. Joe is diabetic so I watch our diet. He retains potassium and I am low in it. After dinner I picked up, tidied the kitchen, and loaded the old Kitchen-Aide dishwasher. (All our appliances are old but still running well.)

"After setting the VCR to tape two soap operas, we left for Market Basket to do some grocery shopping. This takes a long time because we are careful to read labels for low-fat, low-sodium, and sugarless foods. Here are the items we bought: one gallon skim milk \$1.99, one watermelon \$4.25, Ivory Snow (2 lbs./18 loads) \$4.69, skinless chicken breast (1.56 lb.) \$4.55, corn (six ears) \$1.69, 1/2 gallon frozen yogurt \$2.69, one pint blueberries \$1.69, sirloin steak (1.16 lb.) \$3.65, and Cheerios cereal (15 oz.) \$1.99.

"After getting home and putting the food away, we read the weekly papers, the *Monadnock Ledger* and *The Peterborough Transcript*. Later we took some mail to the post office (a block away) and checked on the garden. The strawberries looked very good.

"For supper we had a light meal of a turkey sandwich, a small salad, and tea. After cleanup, we spent the evening watching the news, followed by Joe's game shows, 'Wheel of Fortune' and 'Jeopardy,' and reading *U. S. News and World Report*. The day ended after we watched the shows we taped that afternoon."

#### PETER AND OLIVE BOURQUE

Peter (67) and Olive (73) Bourque are both retired, but very active. They live in the home on Main Street where Olive grew up.



*Peter and Olive Bourque*

Before retiring Olive worked 23 years for D. D. Bean & Sons as a machine operator, then inspector, waited on table at Shattuck Inn, The Ark, Woodbound Inn, and Monadnock Inn, and worked at W. W. Cross Division, PCI Group Inc. as a quality control person. Peter worked 26 years for D. D. Bean & Sons Company.

They have three children, Donna Thomas (53), Bette Chase (51), and Joan Thomas (48), three grandchildren, Steven Norwood (32), Jody Thomas Bailey who died of cancer at age 24, and Cheryl Hilton (24), and four great grandchildren, Alexander Thomas (eight), Dana Hilton, Jr. (six), Jonathan Hilton (four), and Kaitlyn Norwood (one).

Olive writes: "A day in our life follows a somewhat routine pattern, yet with variations in some way. Peter makes coffee at home in the morning and reads the sports pages as he sips it. Then he leaves for Mrs. Murphy's for another cup and some socializing.

"After Peter leaves, I get up, dress, make the bed, and carry the dog downstairs to let her out. While she's out, I take my vitamins and, more than likely, start a load of laundry before leaving for coffee and a muffin at the Rusty Bucket, or coffee and a bagel with cream cheese at Mrs. Murphy's. In spring, summer, and fall I often go to Conant Cemetery to tend the flowers on the graves of my darling granddaughter and my first husband, John Fuller.

"This summer of 1996 has been hot and very dry after a wet spring. The town has been putting in a new water main on our portion of Main Street, and work goes on just outside our windows. The dust has been horrible, not to mention the noise. I can hardly wait for the project to be finished.

"If Peter and I are at home at midday, we usually have a sandwich for lunch. Because Peter works at Shattuck Golf Course some days and at D. D. Bean on Fridays, this varies.

"During this summer I picked strawberries and made jam with a 74-year-old friend, Barbara Deschenes. Some of the berries went

into the freezer for our winter enjoyment. I also picked blueberries when they were ready.

“We have dinner at night and often have meetings to attend afterward. Both of us belong to the Jaffrey Grange, VFW, and American Legion. I am also active in Triple D at the United Church of Jaffrey.

“If I have a few days of not feeling well but need to stay busy, I knit, crochet, read, or quilt. I am working on a quilt now for a great grandchild due this fall.

“In the 1990s the price of food is very different from when I was a child, but then again so is the way we eat. For example, coffee these days is \$2.50 for a can that used to be a full pound but is now 11 or 13 ounces. Decaffeinated coffee is double the price. We are fortunate to have so many fresh vegetables available in the summer. There is nothing like a fresh cucumber or tomato on a sandwich or in a salad. We also enjoy fresh corn from Coll’s Farm Stand, which this year was \$2.49 a dozen.

“We are fortunate enough to still own and maintain our own home, although there is always plenty to do like mowing the lawn in summer and shoveling snow in winter. I try to wash my windows and curtains at least twice a year. Sometimes I wonder how I ever had time to hold a full-time job and still get everything done that I enjoy doing.

“Peter and I are both thankful for our good health and are enjoying our years as senior citizens.”

#### EDMUND AND BERTHA ROBICHAUD

Edmund (Mun) and Bertha (Bernier) Robichaud are lifelong residents of Jaffrey. Both are now retired. Mun suffered a stroke some years ago that left him handicapped. He had worked 39 years at W. W. Cross Inc., the last years as production control manager. Bertha worked 11 years at W. W. Cross in accounts receivable, five years at Franklin Pierce College in the finance office, six years at New Hampshire Ball Bearings in the finance office, five years at Public Service, and held many part-time positions.

They have three children, Diane Stone (43), Edmund Robichaud (39), and Mary Anne LaBrie (32), and four grandchildren, Alex Stone (16), Zachary Stone (13), Erin Stone (11), and Trevor LaBrie (2).



*Mun and Bertha  
Robichaud*

Bertha writes: "I woke up at 5:45 A.M., took my morning shower, dressed and went to 7 A.M. Mass. Mun stayed in bed until I returned from Mass. I helped him with his shower and prepared a breakfast of oatmeal, orange juice, Carnation Instant Breakfast, and black coffee. Mun likes to have the same thing every day. After breakfast he takes his medication (pills that I crush for him) mixed with fat-free instant pudding. I had a piece of toast and black coffee, although I sometimes have cereal.

"Later I went to the drugstore (Rite Aid) to refill prescriptions and then to Belletetes to send a parcel UPS. When I got back home, Mun was getting ready to leave. He is going to pick up his blind friend, Richard McNear, and they will ride around town for a while before going to Mrs. Murphy's for coffee.

"In the meantime I made a trip to Market Basket for some groceries. While I was putting the groceries away, Mun returned home and we sat down to watch the news on Channel 9 before lunch. Lunch consisted of soup and an English muffin for Mun and a sandwich for me.

"After cleaning up the kitchen and doing the dishes, I picked up the mail and sat down for a few minutes while Mun rested, as he usually does in the afternoon. A neighbor called and we talked for a while before I went out to do some weeding in my flower garden.

"By midafternoon Mun left to pick up our grandson who needed a ride.

"We had planned to take our rubbish to the dump, but decided to postpone it for another day. At 5:00 we had a supper of leftovers.

"In the evening Mun stayed home to watch 'Wheel of Fortune' and a ball game while I went to Bible Study class in Greenville with my friend Yvonne. I got home just before 10:00, so we watched the early news before getting ready for bed. We are looking forward to having two of our grandchildren with us tomorrow."

*\*Edmund passed away August 2, 1998*

## NORMAN AND RITA COURCHENE

Rita (Lessard) and Norman Courchene have lived in Jaffrey all their lives. Norman retired in April 1997 from Belletetes Inc. where he worked 28 years, 25 as a door maker. Rita retired June 1997 as a teaching associate at the Jaffrey Grade School.



*Rita and Norman Courchene*

They have three children, Catherine Gauthier (41), Christine Somero (37), and Peter Courchene (29), four grandchildren, Sara Walker (22), Martha Gauthier (15), Bethany Somero (19), and Samantha Somero (2<sup>1/2</sup>) and three great grandchildren, Britni Gauthier (3<sup>1/2</sup>), Kaitlyn Walker (2<sup>1/2</sup>), and Kelsey Walker (4 months).

Rita writes: “What a beautiful sunny day! I am an early riser, and since it’s only 6:30 A.M. I make a pot of Maxwell House coffee (\$4.89 for a 13-ounce can) and enjoy that first cup as I sit out on the back deck. It’s not long after that that Norman joins me for his first cup and my second cup as we discuss what we are going to do today.

“We enjoy going out for breakfast and today we are eating at Casey J’s in Fitzwilliam. We like a hearty breakfast and since the food is homemade we think it’s wonderful. The cost of the meal is approximately \$10.00 for two.

“Since it is already warm when we come out of the restaurant, we put the top down on our Ford Mustang convertible. We stop at DeMoulas Market Basket in Rindge on the way home to pick up a few groceries and some chicken. Our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren are coming over for an afternoon barbecue. After the barbecue we play croquet, throw horseshoes, and play with the younger ones.

“After everyone left Norman and I went to Gilmore and paddled

around the pond in our Water Tender. Upon returning home we watered the garden before going into the house to watch the Sunday night movie on our Sylvania television. After the movie we turned out the lights and went to bed.”

### PHILIP AND JEANNE LABRIE



*Philip and Jeanne LaBrie*

Phil and Jeanne LaBrie live in a six-room ranch house at 46 Charlonne Street that they built in 1964. Phil has lived in Jaffrey all of his life and was born on November 6, 1934. Jeanne was born in Webster, Massachusetts, on November 18, 1936, and moved to Jaffrey with her family when she was 12 years old. They were married at St. Patrick Church July 14, 1956. They have two grown children, Denise Miller (39), and Donald LaBrie (38), and five grandchildren ranging in age from 2 to 19.

Phil has worked for Belletetes Inc. for 35 years, beginning back in 1959 when he was hired to be the produce manager in their new supermarket on Peterborough Street. He worked his way up to be the store manager, a position he held until Belletetes sold the supermarket division of their business. He is presently employed at Belletetes in Peterborough in hardware sales. Jeanne works as a medical assistant to Dr. Charles Hamilton and has held that position for the past 29 years.

Jeanne writes: “Life today, as a couple in our early 60s, can be the best of times. Phil and I live in a residential neighborhood in a house that is assessed at \$82,900. Our property tax bill for last year, 1996, was \$2,971.14. We have three motor vehicles: our family car is a 1994 Buick Regal, Phil’s vehicle to travel to and from work, a 1993 Jeep Cherokee four-wheel drive, and an old Mazda truck that serves as a utility vehicle for all those lugging chores.

“Our children and their families all live in Jaffrey, which allows us to remain very close to our grandchildren. There being only two

of us at home now, we find we need only shop for groceries every other week, and we average \$150 each trip. The following is an account of a typical day in the life of the LaBries:

“August 18, 1997: It is 6:00 A.M. when the alarm awakens us to another beautiful summer day. While I have breakfast (an English muffin and a cup of coffee) and make the beds, Phil is busy getting ready for work. Then we trade places and Phil has breakfast (a bowl of Cheerios and a glass of orange juice) while I shower and ready myself for work. All the while our TV is on Channel 7 News followed by the ‘Today Show.’ Phil leaves for work at 7:10 and I leave at 7:55.

“My morning is filled with a variety of chores: opening the mail, posting charges and receipts from the previous day, answering the phone, dealing with patients with a multitude of problems and questions. As usual there are people calling me on town matters because I am on the board of selectmen. Today the town manager called to ask that I stop by to sign a document that needs the signatures of the board. At noon I went home for a quick lunch (a bowl of Habitant pea soup and a glass of water). By 12:30 P.M. I was on my way to the Town Office for the remainder of my lunch hour. Phil does not come home for lunch and prepares his own lunch (a ham and cheese sandwich) the night before. As you can see, we are a rather modern family with Phil preparing his own breakfast and lunch. I am in charge of dinner.

“My afternoon at work is filled with a variety of tasks interacting with the patients. I work until 4:00, and upon returning home I enjoy a short visit next door with our grandson, Trevor, age two. Phil works until 5:00 and is home by 5:20. After a few minutes of relaxation and conversation, it is time for me to prepare dinner. Because it is such a lovely day, I prepare steaks on the gas grill on our back deck. Our dinner menu is steak, salad, potato chips, and a few chocolate cookies for dessert. We always watch the evening news and by 7:00 I am off to the selectmen’s meeting. While I am gone Phil has some hardware items that he needs to deliver to our son-in-law. While there he also visits with our two granddaughters, Renee and Nicole. Upon his return home he watches the Red Sox game on TV.

“Our meeting tonight is rather routine. At our last meeting we had three appointments, a discussion on a citizen survey, a group of

residents from the Squantum area complaining about excessive noise from Monadnock Forest Products, and the president of the Chamber of Commerce enlisting our help to continue the beautification of the downtown area. Tonight's meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

"Upon my return home I find that once again some trash has been scattered in front of our house by an apparently disgruntled citizen. This happens periodically, and it is suspected that it is one individual who is responsible. It is a nuisance, but thank goodness no worse. In the news this week, a selectman in Columbia, New Hampshire, was shot to death because of a long-standing land dispute, and another's home was broken into by the same man, although fortunately he was not there at the time.

"While Phil finishes watching the Red Sox game in the living room, I watch 'Dateline NBC' in our bedroom. We then both retire at 11:00 P.M."

#### WAYNE AND MARCIA DESROSIERS

Wayne and Marcia (Moore) Desrosiers live in a five-room brown ranch house on Tyler Hill Road. Wayne (49) is a manager at Atlas Advanced Pyrotechnics, Inc., a small but successful fireworks display company. Marcia (50) works part time for a temporary employment agency.



*Wayne and Marcia Desrosiers*

They have two daughters, Carrie (20), and Holly (18). In May 1996 Carrie finished her first year at Middlebury College in Vermont where she is studying languages. Tuition for her first year was \$28,850. When she graduated from Conant High School she received a \$1,000 scholarship from the American Legion, \$1,000 from the Chamber of Commerce, and \$1,800 from the Henry Lord Foundation. She also received a grant for \$18,300 from Middlebury because she was a financial aid student. When Holly graduated from Conant she received \$10,500 in scholarships: \$5,000 from Sarah L. Boynton, \$1,000 from Teleflex, \$1,000 from the 25th In-

fantry Division, and \$3,500 from the Henry Lord Foundation. Thirty-eight organizations gave out awards graduation night and many students received more than one. Holly attends Syracuse University, and tuition her freshman year was \$25,706. She also received from Syracuse a \$6,000 chancellor's scholarship, a \$5,150 Syracuse Grant, and a \$650 Pell Grant (federal government funds).

Marcia writes: "Today being the last day in May 1997, Wayne gets up as usual at 6:30 A.M., showers, dresses, and drives to Mrs. Murphy's for breakfast. His breakfast consists of toast and coffee at \$1.30. Then he goes to work. He spends most of the morning answering voice mail messages from the previous day and works on sales proposals between calls from shooters, fire chiefs, and customers. The phone does not stop ringing.

"I get up at 8:00 A.M. at which time I shower, dress, and eat breakfast. My breakfast consists of orange juice, cereal, and milk. After breakfast I shop at Market Basket and Wal Mart where I pick up half gallon of milk @ \$1.99, half gallon of orange juice @ \$1.69, Raisin Bran cereal, a 15-ounce box costs \$2.29, and Cheerios Honeynut cereal, a 27-ounce box @ \$4.29. Upon returning home I do some housework.

"At lunch time Wayne picks up a tossed salad (\$3.02 including tax) at B&B's, a convenience store, and returns to work because he has to meet with two shooters and complete training paperwork for shooters who missed the spring seminar.

"I eat lunch alone while watching television. In the afternoon I read the local papers, *Monadnock Ledger* and *The Peterborough Transcript* (\$.50 each), take a nap, and watch a little more television.

"Wayne is going to dinner at the Peterborough Pizza Barn with a friend tonight so I prepare supper for myself. I have a few chicken tenders (\$3.00 a package), potato (\$1.59 for five pounds), Bird's Eye green beans (\$.89 for a 10-ounce package), cranberry sauce (\$.90 per can), Shake & Bake coating mix (\$1.70). After cleaning up from supper, I watch a movie that costs around \$3.00 on the VCR. Movie rentals are \$3.00 for recent films and \$2.00 for older films. I turn out the light at 11:00 P.M. for tomorrow is another day.

"Since it is the weekend, Wayne relieves the day nurse at his mother's house and stays both Friday and Saturday night. His mother is blind, bedridden, and requires care 24 hours a day."

## WILLIAM AND DAWN OSWALT



*William and Dawn Oswalt*

The Oswalt family lives in a garrison house on 43 Prospect Street within walking distance of the downtown business district. There are five in the family. William (40) is originally from Collins, Iowa (a small community, population 350), and is currently a patrolman for the Jaffrey Police Department. Dawn (Sawtelle) (41) grew up in Jaffrey and has been tax collector for the past eight years. They met while both were serving in the United States Navy and flew from Iceland to Jaffrey

to be married in July 1979. They have three children: Nathaniel (Nate) (15) is a freshman at Conant High School; Elizabeth (Betsy) (13) is in the 7th grade at the Jaffrey-Rindge Middle School; Joseph (Joe) (11) is in the 5th grade at the Jaffrey Grade School.

Dawn writes: "A day in our life is busy, harried, and sometimes hectic. Not all days are like this, but a vast majority are. Nathan's and Betsy's alarm clocks went off around 6:00 A.M. This started the mad rush to get ready for school. (I am thankful for a home with two bathrooms.) Betsy decided to have Frosted Flakes for breakfast, and Nathan had his usual four pieces of toast with butter and sugar cinnamon. A box of flakes at \$3.98 lasts about three days, if we're lucky, and we buy eight loaves of bread every two weeks at \$1.69 each. It has to be Nissen bread or no one will eat it. We also go through three gallons of milk every two days. (At \$2.19 it is cheaper to drink soda). Nathan and Betsy watch Channel 4 news while eating their breakfast. School starts at 7:35 A.M. for both of them, so they catch the 7:05 bus at the Monadnock Center Store.

"Bill arrived home from work shortly after 7:00 A.M. having

worked a double (16-hour) shift, changed out of his uniform, and sat down to have toast and chocolate milk for breakfast before going to bed. While he was eating, I was waking Joe up. Joe dressed for school and then came down and had Frosted Flakes for breakfast while I had a cup of French Vanilla Coffee (\$3.13 per can).

“After breakfast Bill went up to bed, and Joe and I cleaned off the table. I grabbed a Diet Pepsi to take to work while Joe grabbed his backpack. We jumped into the car (Ford Aerostar) by 8:20, which is enough time for both of us to make it to work and school on time. I let Joe off in front of the Woman’s Club because he likes to walk to school from Main Street. I then round the corner onto Goodnow Street to get to the Town Office.

“The children have hot lunch at each of their schools which saves on our grocery bill (currently about \$160 per week). The current cost of a meal at Conant is \$1.50, the middle school \$1.25, and at the grade school \$1.15.

“Bill woke up around 2:30 because my father (Don Sawtelle) had asked him to go with him to Keene to pick up a Jeep he had bought. Nathan and Betsy arrived home from school at about that time and headed for the snack cupboard for chips or snack cakes. Dropping his backpack in the hallway, Nathan decided to go with his father and grandfather to Keene because he did not have homework and the next thing on his schedule for the day was basketball practice at 8:00 at Pratt Auditorium.

“Joe got off the bus after school at the end of Prospect Street and walked home, also looking for a snack. I got home at 4:00 after finishing work at the Town Office. Betsy and Joe sat down to watch TV. I changed clothes and headed for the kitchen to make supper. I decided to make goulash because it was quick and easy and I could freeze the extra for another meal. Looking at the calendar (grease board where everyone has their own colored pen so we know who has events on certain days), I realized we had several things pending this evening. Betsy was trying to throw together a bag for both basketball and softball; I had not been aware she had both sports on the same evening. She had basketball practice at Pratt from 6:00 to 8:00 and would have to leave practice in order to get to Humiston Field for her softball game at 7:30.

“I was just getting ready to dish up the goulash when Bill and Nate arrived home from Keene. Not realizing how late it had gotten,

Betsy informed me that she had no time for supper and that she needed to be at the gym for AAU basketball practice at 6:00. Bill said he would take her to the gym if I would get everyone moving. While he was taking her down to basketball practice, Nate ran upstairs to change for basketball practice, and Joe was upstairs putting on his Yankee uniform for his baseball game at the Legion Field.

“Bill arrived home from dropping Betsy at Pratt, and the four of us wolfed down the goulash and a glass of milk. I put the extra in a casserole dish and stored it in the freezer for a later date, keeping some in the refrigerator for Betsy. Betsy had informed Bill as he dropped her off at practice that she had forgotten her water bottle. Bill asked if I would make sure to get it down to her and get Joe to his game on time because he had work detail at the fire station at 6:30. I grabbed the water bottle, Nathan, and Joe, who had to be dropped at the ball field a half hour before the game started, and then went on to Pratt to drop off Betsy’s water bottle. I let Nate drive to the gym so that he could have practice driving before driver’s education class started.

“When we arrived back at the Legion Field, I informed the head coach of Joe’s team that Bill (assistant coach) had work detail at the fire station and would be there to help out as soon as he could. I told the coach that Nathan was available to help out until 7:45 if needed, at which time Bill should be back from the detail. Nate was put to work coaching first base. Joe had two great plays at second base. At 7:45 there was still no sign of Bill, but Nate could wait no longer. We both jumped into the car, Nate driving, and headed to Pratt for his basketball practice. While all this was going on at the Legion Field, Betsy had left basketball practice early and walked to Humiston for her softball game.

“Bill arrived at the Legion Field ten minutes before eight and took over coaching first base. After dropping Nate at Pratt, I headed back to watch the rest of Joe’s game. I watched until the top of the sixth inning. Realizing how late it was getting, I decided I had better run down to Humiston to catch some of Betsy’s game. I arrived at Betsy’s softball game just as she was getting up to bat. She crushed the ball. Thank goodness I arrived for that hit. Bill arrived shortly after 8:00 at Betsy’s game. He needed to go home and get some sleep before the midnight shift. Instead, we all stayed at Humiston and watched Betsy’s team play until the game was

over at 9:30. Her team won!

“Bill jumped into the station wagon (1985 Chevy with 140,000 miles) with Joe and Nate and headed home while I waited for Betsy to get all her things together. As soon as we got home, everyone headed for the shower, Bill first since he had to go to work in less than an hour and a half. Betsy helped herself to some of the goulash I had saved for her.

“Bill slept for a half-hour before leaving for a midnight shift. The rest of us were in bed by 10:20. All I had originally done was jot down some notes on June 10 so that at a later date I could put this together. I don’t remember any one of us being overly tired that day, but I do know that, looking back, I am exhausted. We are very glad that as a family we are involved in the community and athletic activities. Not all days are like this one. Once in a great while we do get to sit down as a family and have a meal together.”

### SHEILA GIRBACH

Not a native of Jaffrey, Sheila Girbach was born and raised in Michigan. Here she shares some of her experiences in her new home.

“I came to the state to do an internship with the New Hampshire Department of Probation and study for a master’s degree at Antioch New England Graduate School in Keene. Since 1973 I have been a resident of Jaffrey even though I spend most of my time in Peterborough working as a probation officer for the Monadnock Region. The position was self-created and initially financed through federal grants and later by local communities.



*Sheila Girbach*

“In 1988 I became self-employed as a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and since January 1990 have worked full time. My office was originally at home, but is now on Vernon Street in Keene. A typical day might include going to court, in-office appointments, home visits, telephone work, and lots of writing. It usually is a combination of some or all of these activities. Three times a day I check my e-mail and before leaving at day’s end I send an e-mail to a friend in Bel-

lows Falls who has been a GAL for several years and been very supportive of me. Around 1:00 P.M. I usually take a lunch break at The Stage that is within a block of my office.

“Because my work is tremendously stressful, I cherish my time at home. In May 1992 I bought a Cape Cod house on Burrington Court. The time I spend there is precious because there is so little of it and so many things I want to do. I enjoy working in my flower beds, crocheting, and working on a wool punch rug that will probably be completed about the time the mortgage is paid.

“A couple of years ago I became quite active in the Jaffrey Chamber of Commerce, which I find very gratifying. I feel I am giving back to the community, and people appreciate even the smallest contribution. Joining has also enabled me to meet the wonderful people of Jaffrey and make friends in addition to the others I’ve made in the area.”

#### JOHN ZIMARDO AND ELIZABETH SMITH

“My name is Elizabeth Smith and I am 34 years old. My husband,



*Elizabeth Smith, John Zimardo  
with their two children*

John Zimardo and I are relative newcomers to Jaffrey, having moved here only four years ago. At that time we were living in Fairfield, Connecticut, and were both working for large corporations in Bridgeport and Stratford. We decided to make the move to a small town when both

our companies became caught up in the ‘Merger Mania’ of the 1990s and we felt our jobs were unstable. In anticipation of starting a family, we sought an area where we felt our children would have a safe and uncomplicated life. Strangely enough, as I write this, I have just received the December 8, 1997, TIME Magazine, with the cover article ‘Why Americans Are Fleeing to Small Towns.’ With a murder rate of approximately 60/70 per year in Bridgeport,

not to mention other crime rates, high housing prices, and the other stresses of life in Fairfield County, we were quite enthusiastic at the prospect of moving to Jaffrey.

“We fell in love with and subsequently purchased an antique farmhouse that is described in the early Jaffrey town history as the Parker Farm. We have been spending a great deal of time renovating it, which, though it has been updated, still contains many of the original historic features unique to the house. Within a year of our move we had our first son, John, who is now two and a half, and two months ago had Brian, our second son.

“I am currently on a three-month maternity leave from my job as a banker for CFX Bank. I started with the bank as a commercial loan officer, but have since become a loan workout specialist, which is indicative of both the economy in the region as well as the current banking climate. The Monadnock Region has had a tough recovery from the real estate crash of the early 90s. As a result of the depressed real estate market, many of the local business people have found themselves overburdened with debt. This condition, as well as a tight regulatory environment, has forced banks to concentrate more on working out these problems than making new loans.

“My husband, John, works as an engineer for Markem Corporation in Keene. The company is a family-owned company that manufactures printing systems for many applications and markets its products worldwide.

“As do most families our age, we currently own two cars, one a ‘family car’ (Subaru Station wagon), and the other a sport sedan (also a Subaru, as four-wheel drive is essential in New Hampshire). I usually dress up for work in a dress or business suit because the dress code for bankers is fairly rigid. My husband’s company has adopted a ‘business casual’ dress code and John is able to wear things like khaki slacks and collared shirts to work. He is not required to wear a tie.

“Our daily routine is probably not unlike that of many two-job families. Mornings are very rushed as we leave the house by 7:00 A.M. John generally has time to have a quick breakfast of cereal before he heads to Keene. His morning routine includes getting John Jr. ready for day care. My job is to take young John to Monadnock Community Day Care before I go to work in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. I do not have time to eat breakfast and usually stop for coffee

and a bagel at one of the local markets on my way to work. The routine will probably be even more hectic in three weeks when I return because we will now have two children to settle in at day care.

"Lunches for both of us are either leftovers from last night's dinner, or most often something purchased from a deli near to work. Dinner during the week is anything fast and easy to prepare, generally something like pasta, as our preference during the week is to spend time with the children in the evenings. Cooking is one of my hobbies, and we do try to make time for more elaborate meals on weekends. I am generally home with the children by 5:00 P.M., which allows only three hours to prepare, eat, clean up, give the children baths, and prepare clothing for the next day. We spend a lot of time reading and playing with the kids during that time, so a normal family meal is not currently a priority.

"Our weekend activities are also somewhat changed since the arrival of our children. We used to spend a good deal of our time working on our house, and we were also active with such activities as skiing and hiking. I anticipate that we will begin to do more of this again as the family grows up, but for now our activities consist of things like going to children's museums, shorter walks or hikes, or going to the local lake or playgrounds.

"As I read this article it appears to me that our daily life would seem pretty dull to the reader. The reality is that in a working family household, the weekday routine is fairly chaotic and very routine. There simply is no time for much out of the ordinary. A life such as we have chosen does provide fulfillment in spite of the hectic pace. There are elements of life that cannot be described in a short article, such as the details of our work and the achievements there that provide John and me with satisfaction for ourselves and for each other. There are also a million small ways our children make life exciting. Even in the limited hours we spend with them during the week, there are countless ways they fill our lives with happiness, laughter, and sometimes frustration. Friends and family also contribute to a well-rounded social life beyond our immediate home routine. Despite how this may read, life is never dull!"

#### BRIAN ROBINSON

Brian (27) is single and lives at home on 39 Aetna Street with his parents, Herbert and Marion. He has been working for W. W.

Cross as a customer service representative for seven years.

Brian writes: "I woke up at 4:45 A.M. and dressed for bow-and-arrow deer hunting. Thirty minutes later I had reached my favorite hunting area. I arrived at the tree stand, got situated, and readied myself for whatever was to follow. Every hunter knows the legal shooting time is one-half hour before sunrise, and it was already five min-



*Brian Robinson*

utes after six. No sooner had I noted the time when I saw a doe and two fawns eating acorns that had fallen to the ground. I didn't fire at the doe even though the season is open for both does and bucks because I was looking for a big buck, and that is what I was out to find. About 25 minutes later the deer disappeared from sight. Suddenly I realized I must leave because it would soon be time to go to work. I left as quietly as possible so as not to spook the deer.

"After showering, dressing for work (Fridays are casual, Dockers and a golf shirt), and eating breakfast, I left for W. W. Cross where I work. My day began by turning on computers and entering new orders and inventory. During the morning I ran reports and prepared the shipping papers for orders to ship. Between those jobs I talked with customers on the phone.

"At noon I ate lunch at my friend Herbert's house. We each had a grilled cheese, ham, and tomato sandwich along with a soft drink. Lunch is only a half-hour so I hustled back to work because I had lots to do. As soon as I sat down at my desk, I called the trucks in for shipments. Soon after that I entered new orders off the fax and by mid-afternoon took the billing to D. D. Bean's accounting office. After a stop at the bank I returned to work. It was late afternoon when I shut down the computer and copier and turned out the lights. I locked the doors and my weekend began.

"I went home, changed and prepared for my second hunt of the day. I arrived back at the hunting area and still-hunted, which means, for those who do not hunt, trying to mimic the deer by taking two

or three steps then stopping instead of taking a stand. After being in the woods for almost two hours and not having heard or seen any trace of a deer, I decided to go home and get ready for my date. I picked up my date a little after eight and went for Chinese food because that is one of her favorite meals.

“When I returned home and went to bed it was after 11. Saturday will be another early day because I’m going out to hunt again, hoping this time to come home with that big buck.”

