

ARE YOU READY TO COME ALIVE?

--N. Murdock

Will we be there? Yes! Will we all have fun? Yes! Do we know what we're talking about here? Yes! The Murdock Reunion, come Alive in '95 - August 19 at the Bacons' in Jordan, NY!

Activities planned for that one day would more than fill a 3-day event, so get a good rest and arrive the day before. For those who haven't yet finished a 6 1/2" quilt block, we'll have materials and ideas, but you may have to fit it in between Scrabble, horseshoes, and make-your-own Gazpacho.

Remember to bring (or send): a plant or seeds for the Reunion Garden; parcels for the Brown Bag Auction (to defray expenses); lawn chairs; cookies baked for the contest; old pictures; your camcorder/camera; and a musical instrument for the jam session. It's going to be a wonderful day! Questions? Call Sally Bacon 315-689-1745, Dotty Salminen 508-928-4005, or Teddie Doane 508-928-3347.

"LOVE IS THE SUNLIGHT"

--N. Murdock

Robert Foster Howlett and Willow Marie Rinne were married in a beautiful ceremony July 8. They wrote a lot of the vows, etc., so the words came from the heart. One minister, who described the purpose of marriage, said, "Our religion is all about love." Doug Howlett the Younger read Proverbs 31:10-31.

The title line above comes from one hymn, and the bulletin contained this message from the bride and groom: "Thank you for joining us on our wedding day. We hope your presence helps to solidify the bonds we are creating today. Please take some of the love here today home with you to share."

MONITORING HER DIABETES

--N. Murdock

Khendra Murdock, who just finished 4th grade, tested at 9th grade for math and 12th for reading in the TN basic skills tests. Khen is monitoring her insulin carefully. Her blood sugar should be 80-100, so if it's low, she eats candy bars and if it's high, she exercises. The average for 2 weeks was 100! She's gained 20 lb. since hospitalization (she lost 20 with flu, mononucleosis, and diabetes).

MUSE "COUSINS"

--N. Murdock

A couple of months ago, Muser Orrel Frost sent a fragment of genealogical history that shows she is related to the Murdocks. She said, "I'm sending it to you because of the Robert Murdock listed in the upper left corner." Gene is investigating.

CALLING ALL DOG EXPERTS

--Pam Clark

We have a new dog named Princess. This is our first dog ever, so we are pretty new. After the initial shock of all the work it takes, we are coping. But I know there's a lot of Muse dog experts out there, so if anyone wants to write in with some dog care suggestions, I'd really appreciate it.

Colleen's picture (which I reduced several times for the Muse needs) shows the 3 of us picnicking by a blanket with plates and silverware. The sun has glasses on and is saying, "Oh, Man." Several birds are picking up bread by the picnic basket.

ANOTHER TRIPLE TRIP

--N. Murdock

We had a great time on our circle of MA, ME, MA. We camped for the Howlett Reunion and visited Tom & family, Margie & family, and Dotty; put together a 3-dimensional jigsaw and ate international feasts at the Frosts'; and danced at the wedding. These action-packed trips could be addicting.

AUTHORING PARTNERS

--N. Murdock

The Murdock Muse has the honor of announcing a new work in progress: HERS AND HERS by Nancy Murdock and Valerie Davidson. A couple of months ago, Val said it might be fun to do a round robin book, with each person writing a chapter and passing it on. Having seen a round robin letter die on the vine when one member of the chain held the letter for a year, I suggested that we might want to make our first book a two-person round robin. We agreed that we would each think about a book for our shared writing experience, and we would go with either or both of us starting the book(s).

Last month I thought of the idea of a mother and daughter both writing journals. They would not be seen by each other, but of course there would be shared experiences because of the relationship. Then I read A VISIT TO HIGHBURY, Another View of Emma by a great grand-niece of Jane Austen, in which two sisters write letters to each other. That did it - I wrote the first chapter and mailed it off to Val.

Within a couple of days of receiving the start of HERS AND HERS, Val wrote her first chapter. We are on our second round already, with Val's on its way by our usual Pony Express mail. We both have the same story to report by phone: the chapter comes, we rip it open and read it, and we are so inspired that we give the next chapter the highest possible priority. Val wrote while she was redoing her house and creating the large medallion for the Murdock Reunion quilt. The next part is always frustration that snail mail takes so long. I guess we just have to consider how soon we can upgrade our computers!

FAMILY PROJECTS

--Charles Frost

Our own Rosalind Revilock-Frost was the Promotions Manager for Seed of Sarah, an opera and multi-media production presenting the horrors and consequences of the Holocaust to teenagers in a form adapted to their needs and understanding.

The computer has been much in demand for the publication needs of the whole family during the last three weeks. The project that Jeremy authored for her 8th grade English class has been somewhat of a family enterprise. She wrote the pieces, Orrel typed them, I did the formatting, Derek produced computer art work, and Jeremy did hand illumination of a number of pages. With NMSU experience in mind, I urged Jeremy to start her portfolio now. Supporting Jeremy's project was profitable as well as satisfying because I learned some things about Micro-soft Word that I didn't know were there!

More recently I have been helping Roz with an article she is writing about the Simply Opera company for a magazine on tolerance. Simply Opera produced a one-woman show about the Holocaust back in April.

NOTES FROM HIGH LEDGE

--Orrel Frost

Roz says she'll help me with the block for the reunion quilt. I designed it while the senior editors were visiting us, but now I can't recall how to do invisible stitching.

We have put up more pictures on our walls, along with the beautiful sampler wallhanging from the Murdocks, and the house begins to look more finished. The 3rd kite for the dining room wall is up now and looks perfect. When we bought those kites in Beijing 10 years ago, we had no idea where they would eventually reside. We are delighted with the results.

GOOD RECOVERY

--N. Murdock

Roy Murdock reports that he is recovered from a broken elbow. He cracked it on the basketball court but needed no cast.

IN ORDER TO GRADUATE

--N. Murdock

"I have a story," said Sarah Howlett as she arrived for the Howlett reunion. "In order to graduate, I had to camp in the snow, fall down a mountain, learn to play a guitar in 2 weeks, and bike 200 miles up and down a mountain." Wow, what a greeting!

Instead of a gym class, Sarah elected to take ROPE, a self-sufficiency course. They had to complete 4 weekend trips; Sarah missed one for medical reasons and had to learn guitar in place of it. In March they went winter camping: hiking on snow-shoes, tenting right in the snow, and pumping water from the stream. The last day they hiked up Mt. Sunapee.

Early May's trip was rock climbing at Mt. Monadnock (after practicing in the gym). It rained, but they camped under a tarp. "Some girls brought a stove but weren't allowed to use it," said Sarah. "They wanted us to build our own campfires for cooking." The hike up the mt. got progressively harder. Sarah hung upside down on a cliff, got wedged between rocks, fell, and ripped her clothing - embarrassingly.

Memorial Day weekend featured a bike trip starting at Jay Peak Mt. in VT. The first morning they rode up the mt. in the rain and saw a beautiful rainbow. After 70 mi. they spent the night in a Methodist Church, where they cooked "a giant spaghetti dinner." The next day they biked 77 mi. over a small mt., up on med. grade, down on steep grade. They saw a gorgeous waterfall. After a night at a car dealer's in Conway, NH, they went 78 mi. back to Concord. One boy had 3 flat tires in the first 10 mi.

In 15 yr. of this class, only 1 person had quit, but 2 girls gave up this yr. "But not me," said Sarah. "I was tempted, but I kept going." She's very proud of her ROPE patch, which she wore on her graduation cap.

Sarah will go to U.N.H. in the fall, where she will study mech. eng. (She wants to own a Harley Davidson repair shop.) The 1st semester, she'll take calculus, computer science, eng. graphics, and English. Two classes have jobs. "I won't have much time," she says, "but I plan to be in the chorus."

IT'S OFFICIAL!

--Bob Murdock

Dotty Salminen gave me a Gardner News clipping featuring our sister, Lennie Schlicke, who retired in May as the tax collector in Phillipston, Mass. The town gave a big reception for her. A citation from Rep. Robert Wetmore praised Lennie for "17 years of outstanding service." Congratulations, Lennie. Enjoy your retirement!

FISH STORY

--John Howlett

I like to cook trout in my iron skillet, but the ones I'm catching recently are too big for my skillet! I like to go to the state's remote trout ponds. I used to go to a really remote one, Simmons Pond, but since I hurt my back last year I can't climb the 1 1/2 miles up the mountain.

This yr. I found Adder Pond, only 20 mi. from the house. It's nice because you can drive up to it and put in your boat. But you can't park by the lake; you have to drive 1/2 mi. back out. I bought a 12' rowboat, 74 lb., light enough for me to slide it in and out of the back of my pickup.

You can't use any motors, even a trolling motor. If you ain't rowin', you can't be on it. If you are caught breaking a fish and game law in NH, they confiscate everything related to the crime, including the car you drove there in.

It's really BEAUTIFUL there. There is at least one pair of loons that is always around. There's a beaver lodge with a family of beaver. And I've seen both moose and deer come to the edge and drink. At Simmons I saw a black bear come to drink. Scared the crap out of me!

And if you think the fishing is not good, it took me 35 min. to catch my limit last time.

"ROBUST VEGETARIAN COOKING"

--N. Murdock

Our visit with the Frosts was a taste treat, with Charlie supplying apt comments as above. Orrel made Ukrainian, Thai, and Italian dinners, and Charlie made lemon sorbet and vanilla ice cream. To fulfill a '94 promise to Derek, we made Bob's "Three Cheese Potato Casserole." Derek said he hopes for a combined family reunion, at which he can challenge Roy to any sport. "When we came to Minneapolis I was 12 and Roy was 14. He whupped my butt at four different sports!" Derek recalled.

We toured the Rachel Carson Nature Center with its explanations of wetlands and drove by the resort where Teddy Roosevelt brokered the treaty to end the Russo-Japanese War. Bob loved the tidepools at Newcastle NH.

STAMP HAPPY

--Bob Murdock

You should have seen the manila envelope Gene used for sending his latest writings. 33 3-cent stamps and 2 1-centers! He sure didn't expect 32-cent ones any time soon.

ALABAMA UPDATE

--Gene Murdock

Chris and I were away from home for several days in June. Our granddaughter suffered a bad fracture of her arm, and her mother, who is in the service, had to go on duty in Germany for two weeks. So we went to their home to baby sit.

I have found a Murdock/Charlton link to a Pilgrim on the Mayflower, resulting in the adjacent article.

Recently I gave a talk at a Master Gardener meeting on cooking with herbs. The handout included data on 20 common herbs, gleaned from various sources. At one of our meetings we sampled a delicious tomato pie, and I'm sending the recipe for the next Muse Cookbook.

Earlier this year I took over the chairmanship of the City Tree commission, so now I have to deal with the problems of planning, managing, and budgeting, plus keeping up with reports. Until this year, Tree Commission activity has been fun, but this stuff is more like work!

Recently Chris's name was submitted at state level for Volunteer of the Year by two different groups: her own volunteer group, and the hospital professionals. The results from the volunteer group were that she ranked second among all the names submitted in Alabama, surpassed only by one nominee who had national connections. We, her beneficiaries, are quite proud of her accomplishments and recognitions, and she feels quite well paid for her efforts.

[Editors' note: We are proud too. Chris, the Murdock Muse salutes you for your staunch and unselfish service!]

IN MEMORY OF UNCLE KEN

--N. Murdock

Meredith Murdock gave the following remembrance: "Of course we have to say something about George the Poodle. And the fascinating lobster trap. And the split door - what do you call those? And I did not feel that I was not allowed to touch anything. I was made very comfortable; and if you remember, I was shy. [Meri was age 5]

Ken's son Ron wrote, "Enclosed is the bulletin from Dad's funeral. The funeral went well. Keith, Diane and I all spoke briefly." The bulletin contained a wonderful long eulogy by the minister, who said: "Throughout his life he was an enthusiastic student of the natural world. Being equally familiar with microscope and telescope, he observed the universe from the very small to the very large...In one day he could count as many as 134 varieties of flowers and 35 kinds of trees on his Thomaston property, which became a haven for wildlife."

PROFILE OF THE REVIEWER

--Charlie Frost

Jeremy Revilock-Frost, our granddaughter, is 13 years old and lives here in Maine at "High Ledge." She takes ballet classes in Portsmouth, NH and dances in Ballet New England productions. She graduated from York Middle School in June and will enter York High this fall.

Jeremy has seen a number of movies during the letup in her ballet activity. She saw Speed with a school friend. Since Jeremy is a very capable writer and rather ecstatic about this movie, I encouraged her to write the Muse review.

NEW MUSE READERS

--Bob Murdock

Welcome additions to the Muse mailing list:

Tim and Doris Howlett and family
Mary and Michael Reese and family
Gregg and Carla Howlett and family
Paulette Howlett, Scott's mother

We'll send new mailing lists soon, to all.

MORE FAMILY VISITS

--Nancy and Bob Murdock

Margie and Jack Aukstikalnis: Margie is thrilled by the relief from her gall bladder operation. "I felt better right away!" she says. Outdoors by the lake, we had a fine meal that included a vegetable casserole, her original recipe. Jack and Margie invited her son Patryck (whom we had not seen for at least 10 yr.) with his son Dyllon and Dyllon's mother, Darcy Lauber. Patryck, who works at Princeton Forest Products in Orange, is a loving, attentive father. Dyllon is a chubby, happy child, close to both parents. We observed him learning to walk. After each performance, he clapped his hands and watched for our reaction.

Mom: Mom is as sweet as ever.

Dotty: Between Scrabble games, Dotty served a lovely light lunch: pita bread sandwiches with chickpeas, sprouts, etc., and homemade honey dijon dressing; with Jello and kiwi dessert topped with a blend of sour cream and sweet Italian cheese. Delicious!

Tom and Marcia Howlett: They were celebrating Donald Lytle's 81st birthday. He has bought a fully loaded computer and says, "Reading the manual is like reading Sanskrit." Sanghee played two nice piano pieces. Marcia's current job is taking care of Sanghee - no bank job since Novembe

AROUND THE BEAT

--Bob Murdock

NEWS FROM GREGG & FAMILY - Carla took a course in Genders Issues recently. "It was a tough class, not much fun!" she said. Carla has 10 classes to go before getting a bachelor's degree in bus. administration. At the picnic, I talked with Adam, 11, who goes into 6th grade this fall. His favorite subject is Science. Favorite TV show: Home Improvement. Adam enjoys bike riding and swimming, and had a fun trip to Old Orchard Beach in June.

ROGERS REPORT: Lori will be going to school in September (CCRI, Community College of Rhode Island) to major in Nursing. She works in direct care at Wrentham Developmental Center and also at ARC of Northern R.I. Bill was scheduled for back surgery July 25. His problem is a ruptured disc, and a pinched sciatic nerve affecting the left leg. (Ouch!) Good luck, Bill. The Rogers kids are Amanda, 8, going into 3rd grade; Alyssa, turning 6 July 31; and Patrick, 3.

MEET SEAN HOWLETT: This summer he's working at Shop 'N' Save. In Sept. he starts his last year at NHTI majoring in criminal justice. Goal: to be on the COPS show. Realistic career: probably with the Concord, NH PD. Sean already has an associate's degree in human services. Sean is driving a VW Golf III GL. At the wedding reception, we noticed he wasn't eating salad or veggies. "No, I'm a "meat-a-tarian," he said.

RUPTURED APPENDIX: Lori Leary spent 2 weeks in the hospital when her appendix ruptured and caused peritonitis. She had a rather rocky recovery period and was unsure whether she would need to return to the hospital. Fortunately, Polly Soberg was able to use vacation time to take care of the children.

FEASTING TIME: Polly brought Shannon Leary, her granddaughter, to the reception after Rob and Willow's wedding. Shannon and her soul mate, Amanda Howlett, made several trips to the appetizer buffet. Then Shannon ate her full meal of meat, potatoes, and veggies! After all this, she decided to sit quietly for a few minutes before dancing with her great-aunt Nancy and then her grandma. (I had to sit quietly for a few minutes after rock & rolling with Nancy)

HOWLETT REUNION 1995

--Bob Murdock

On Sunday, July 2, 1995 a lot of the Howlett family and friends gathered at the old corral, which was of course Gregg and Carla's camp in Templeton, Mass. The theme was Western/Southwestern, as you could tell by some of the wearing apparel. Nancy made her own Western shirt. Some of the men wore cowboy hats, but only briefly.

The food met the mood: we found fajitas with all the fixin's (including guacamole) along with 2 kinds of chili and some homemade salsa. Sure Hand Steve was once again the grillmaster.

It was a pretty sedate picnic. This time Jamie Arsenault didn't break the staircase, but he arrived with his hand bandaged up anyhow. "Got my finger smushed in a press at the furniture plant," he explained.

Attendance was down a bit this year. I counted about 50, compared with 63 last year and 65 in 1993. Included among those who came:

Steve and Terry Howlett
 Stephanie Howlett and Jamie Arsenault
 Gregg and Carla Howlett
 Adam, Jayson, Eric
 Denise and Bill Chapman
 Michael, Nicholas
 Foster and Susan Howlett
 Ashley, Amanda
 Missi and Jason Morgan
 Richie
 Scott and Regina Howlett
 Casey
 Doug and Carol Howlett
 Chris and Angel Howlett
 Brittany
 Bob Howlett (no Willow)
 John and Cathy Howlett
 Sarah
 Lori and Bill Rogers
 Amanda, Alyssa, Patrick
 Nancy and Bob Murdock
 Herb Adamson, Carla's dad
 Jimmy Kendall
 Glen Eckert
 Bob Romanson
 Other friends.

My apologies if I missed anybody or misspelled a name.

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The editors also thank all who call each month with news.

To become a member of the Murdock Muse staff, submit three offerings: letters, articles, cartoons, pages of jokes, etc. You may get on the mailing list by submitting articles, etc., by sending a donation, or by telling us how wonderful the publication is and how much you would like to receive it each month.

QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

"I like to cook trout in my iron skillet, but the ones I'm catching lately are too big for my skillet!"--John Howlett

AUGUST CELEBRATIONS

--Bob Murdock

Anniversaries: Aug. 2, Eric (Marcia Howlett's son) and Lisa Johnson; their 9th. Bill and Sandra Hiscock celebrate on the 7th. For Randy and Carol Salminen, it will be 4 years on the 10th. Aug. 22 is the big day for Cheryl (Tom Howlett's daughter) and Mark Aliquo. On the 25th, John and Cathy Howlett will honor their 28th anniversary,

Birthdays: Robin Murdock, Uncle Gene's daughter-in-law, has her big day on the 1st. Mark Aliquo shares Aug. 2 with Becky Murdock, whose husband Ian celebrates on the 4th. That's also a birthday for Sally Bacon. Dyllon Heald, grandson of Marge Aukstikalnis, will see one candle on his cake Aug. 8. Cory Winslow, grandson of Jack Aukstikalnis, shares the 9th with Ethan Harvey, grandson of Orrel and Charlie Frost. They will both turn 6 that day! Pete the Elder DiStefano will party on the 10th. Aug. 11 is the big occasion for Rose Martz. Toy Oman's birthday is the 12th. Also on the 12th, Mildred Marie Monreau Pratt will turn 85, bless her heart. She is Carol Howlett's mother. On Aug. 14, Richie Morgan will be a whole year old!

Sean Murdock will turn 14 on the 17th. It will be 29 years for David Leskinen, Barb DiStefano's son, on Aug. 19. This is also a birthday for Lisa Howlett, wife of Doug the Younger. Ben Doane turns 21 on Aug. 20. Rejoice! The 21st is a birthday for Lisa Johnson (see anniversary, above). Casey Howlett, Scott and Regina's daughter, will be 2 on the 24th.

Steve Howlett celebrates doubly on the 30th: birthdays for his wife Terry and granddaughter Ashley, whose parents are Foster and Susan. Ashley turns 6. Penny Hawke winds up the month grandly with a birthday on the 31st.

IN THIS ISSUE

--N. Murdock

We have a new contributor, Sanghee Johnson, 9, granddaughter of Tom and Marcia Howlett. She did a fine portrait of the senior editors, being very careful to get the patterns of our S/W shirts. Colleen Clark's drawing, "Picnic Fun," is on the front page, along with a reminder of the Murdock Reunion. Pam Clark asks for ideas on raising a puppy. We have excellent articles from Orrel and Charlie Frost, Gene Murdock, and John Howlett, and a report from Sarah Howlett about her unusual graduation requirements. We welcome a surprise movie reviewer, Jeremy Revilock-Frost, and Gene announces a Charlton connection with the Mayflower.

SEE YOU IN JORDAN, NY ON AUGUST 19!