

HERE'S A THOUGHT:

"The best thing to do with the best things in life is to give them up."

-- Dorothy Day, American social activist (1897-1980)

## Making a habit of kind words

I love words. As a writer, that's a good thing, right? But, as a writer, I'm also aware of the power of words.

My sister and I have been writing together for nearly 20 years. Before the advent of e-submissions (and rejections), I'd say we're probably responsible for a small forest's worth of rejection letters. We're making progress, though. Instead of the "Dear Author, ..." form rejection, we're getting personal responses now. Still no big acceptance, but at least it's "Dear Judith and Brenda, ..."

Surprisingly, some of the kindest rejections have come



**BRENDA J. NORRIS**  
VOICES

from secular publishers who took the time to make thoughtful comments and offer helpful suggestions on marketing our material. One of the most callous rejections, however, came from a

Christian house. The publisher had written (in red ink, no less!) on our original submission letter: "Why would I even want to get to know any of these people?" How rude! Did he never read Ephesians 4:15 "... speaking the truth in love ..."? He could have fallen back on the standard, "Thanks for your submission, but this doesn't fit in with our guidelines ...," or any other number of pat rejection responses. He should have known better. Or maybe he *did* know better, but should've *done* better.

When I was growing up, parents touted the phrase "Sticks and stones may hurt my bones, but words can never harm me" to their children. But it's not true. We all know that words can hit harder than a fist, and verbal abuse is on the rise.

Whatever happened to, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything"? I used to ask my Sunday school kids, "If Jesus was sitting beside you, would you say that? ... do that? ... go there?" They'd hem and haw and give me a, "Well, no, but ... " and I'd hit them with the zinger, "Guess what; He is beside you, everywhere you are."

It's a sobering truth, but one easily forgotten in the heat of a battle of words. If I had a penny for every thoughtless word I let fly from my lips, I'd be set for life. James likens the power of the tongue to that of a ship's rudder — small, but mighty enough to turn a monstrous boat; and a horse's bit — tiny, but able to control a huge animal. In James 3:10 we're told, "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." (King James Version)

Why is it so easy to see faults in others, and feel free to criticize and condemn them, yet fail to recognize the very same ones in ourselves? Are we too close to the problem? My father says we were given two ears and only one mouth for a reason: twice as much listening, half as much talking. Another adage goes "21 days a habit to break; 21 days a habit to make." If everyone got into the habit of saying something nice, every day, even only once a day, it would surely help make the world a better place.

Proverbs 25:11 says, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." I remember working in a busy ophthalmologist's office many years ago. Several patients had been fitted in between regular appointments during the afternoon, and, as 5 o'clock approached, there were still a number of people in the waiting room. We were in for a long haul. The doctor buzzed back and forth between exam rooms, dictating into his handheld recorder as he went from patient to patient. On one of his trips past the office door, he stuck his head in and said, "I'm so grateful to you ladies for being here. I surely couldn't handle it all without your help."

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"At camp, I found I could be myself. There, my opinions were challenged, but respected, and matters of faith were taken seriously. ... It's hard for kids to talk about faith in the secular world. At this place, it's the norm."

THE REV. BRYAN BREAULT, DIRECTOR OF OUTDOOR MINISTRIES AT PILGRIM LODGE IN WEST GARDINER

# a summer place for the spirit



Sara Godfrey of Oakland, Mass., a dean at Pilgrim Lodge, helps lead the "All Around Me" camp of sixth- and seventh-graders in the hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful" during a recent morning chapel at Pilgrim Lodge in West Gardiner. The youth camping program of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ has been based at the lodge since 1956.

## Pilgrim Lodge in West Gardiner gives young people a haven for religious exploration, a place where many say: 'I can be myself'

BY JUDY HARRISON  
OF THE NEWS STAFF

WEST GARDINER — Most people make their New Year's resolutions on Jan. 1.

Kelsea Trefethen uses a different calendar:

"Summer at Pilgrim Lodge is my New Year," the 15-year-old from Westbrook said last week. "This is where I start over."

Pilgrim Lodge has been that place for members of the United Church of Christ for more than 50 years. Nestled on the western shore of Lake Cobbosseecontee, the camp is one of more than two dozen religious-affiliated camps in Maine.

The Maine Conference of the UCC owns Pilgrim Lodge, but campers do not have to be members of that denomination or churchgoers to attend.

Many camp staff first stepped foot on the shores of Lake Cobbosseecontee as young campers, the Rev. Bryan Breault, the camp director, said last week. Adults from UCC congregations around the state spend vacation time working as counselors.



Hannah Ruh, 17, of Lincoln relates a meaningful camp experience to fellow camp mates at "Senior High Manitou," an encampment of high-schoolers on Manitou Island, part of Pilgrim Lodge in West Gardiner.

One Oakland family's connection to Pilgrim Lodge spans three generations.

Peter Godfrey's grandfather helped build the camp cabins in the mid-1950s. Godfrey, 53, attended as a child,

and his three daughters also were campers. The father and his middle daughter, Sara, 26, of Westbrook, spent last week at the camp serving as worship leaders.

"As I've gotten older," said Sara

### History of Pilgrim Lodge

**Late 1800s** - American camping movement begins.

**1924** - Balbrook Lodge is built on 85-acre plot on Lake Cobbosseecontee.

**1925** - Congregational Christian Conference of Maine begins holding church camp weeks at a YMCA camp, then, at other sites for two decades.

**1956** - Conference gives \$35,000 to buy property. Congregations, individuals and youth groups raise \$95,000 for purchase price and renovation.

**1958** - Pilgrim Lodge purchases two islands in Lake Cobbosseecontee for \$600.

**1997** - The Rev. Bryan Breault becomes director of outdoor ministries at Pilgrim Lodge.

**1999** - Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ acquires 15 acres of adjacent property to house camp staff.

Godfrey, who works in the health care field, "I've found it's important to me to be surrounded by people with the same faith and values. I find that here."

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## Garlic scapes used florally inspire summer salad of edible flowers



Edible flowers add color and contrast to summer salads. Johnny-jump-ups, for instance, add a mild wintergreen flavor not only to salads, but also to drinks, soups, desserts.

In the wake of my column on garlic scapes came several motivating e-mail messages. Kenn Chandler of Mount Desert shared his experiences growing garlic and informed me of the 10th annual MDI Garlic Festival in Southwest Harbor on Sept. 15. Marjorie and I have marked our calendars. According to Kenn, it is always a fun gathering with lots of good food and a chance to rub elbows with local garlic aficionados. Readers interested in attending can find information at [www.nostrano.com/garlic.html](http://www.nostrano.com/garlic.html).

Sharon Lendvai of Brooklin wrote that she uses garlic scapes in floral arrangements. "They last a long time," she wrote, "have very interesting

shapes and the color goes with just about everything. Tonight I'm going to a friend's for dinner and taking an eatable centerpiece, nasturtium, basil leaves, asparagus fern, tarragon, mint, lemon balm and of course, garlic scapes!" Sharon's message

REESER C. MANLEY

inspired the idea of making a summer salad using the edible flowers in our garden. A neophyte in this area, I relied on Marjorie's knowledge and experience, following her around the garden on Sunday morning,

filling a basket with fresh blossoms.

Snapping off a bright yellow day lily flower, she offered a crisp petal — only the petals of day lilies are edible — tasting much like buttery lettuce, slightly sweeter and melting on the tongue. We sampled the many varieties in the garden, finding more differences in petal color and texture than flavor. Note: Don't make a whole salad out of day lily petals; they act as a laxative when eaten in excess.

From potted plants on the porch steps we picked nasturtium flowers, dark red, orange, yellow and white. After quick scrutiny for hiding insects,

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REESER C. MANLEY PHOTO

# Camp

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Travis Hall, 19, of Orono, is a lifeguard this summer at Pilgrim Lodge. Hall began attending the camp with his family when he was 5 years old. A member of All Souls Congregational Church in Bangor, he has spent some part of nearly every summer at the camp since 1993.

"I love the atmosphere and being outdoors in nature all day," he said. "It's wonderful."

One of the things Hall said that he has learned at the camp and worked to pass on to a new generation is the importance of being their brothers' and sisters' keepers.

"Looking out for your neighbor is an amazing quality to take back into the world," he said.

Breault, whose official title is director of outdoor ministries, has spent 10 years at Pilgrim Lodge. He works full time for the conference and spends the rest of the year getting ready for the summer.

As he sat down to put together this summer's camp brochure, Breault thought long and hard about what he had learned over the years about the Pilgrim Lodge experience. He spent several hours honing his thoughts for a new introduction about the camp.

**"When you unplug young people, there's an unsettling period they experience that first Sunday they're here. It takes until about Tuesday for them to emerge from it."**

THE REV. BRYAN BREULT, DIRECTOR, PILGRIM LODGE

"Pilgrim Lodge must be experienced to be understood," he wrote. "The natural beauty is beyond words, surrounding and filling the souls who take part in its ministry of connection. ... Inspiration is infused into lives through the power of love, nature and God."

The camp helps campers make those connections by:

- Teaching stories from the Bible and critical thinking.
- Finding creative and fun ways to bring meaning and enjoyment to worship.
- Celebrating and exploring the power of story and metaphor.
- Encouraging and empowering people to listen for God.

Getting kids to unplug is becoming more and more important, Breault said. Electronics such as iPods, cell phones, laptops and portable CD and DVD players are not allowed at Pilgrim Lodge.

"When you unplug young people, there's an unsettling period they experience that first Sunday they're here," he said. "It takes until about Tuesday for them to emerge from it. That's the moment of grace when the Holy Spirit begins to move in a way that it didn't before."

"Jesus lived in community with his family as a child and with the disciples and other followers as an adult," Breault continued. "But he always went off into the wilderness alone to pray. Here, we're trying to do both."

During the summer, Breault, his wife, the Rev. Deborah Breault, 49, and their 7-year-old son, Eric, live at camp. His position is full-time and he spends the rest of the year getting ready for the summer. She is the interim pastor at High Street Congregational Church in Auburn, and the couple resides in southern Maine most of the year.

Breault earned his undergraduate degree in psychology and theater from Drew University in Madison, N.J., before earning his Master of Divinity from Yale University in New Haven, Conn.

Ordained at age 27, Breault served churches in his home state and in Washington state, but the call of the outdoors was strong. When the position in Maine opened up, he applied.

Unlike most of the people on his staff, Breault did not attend Pilgrim Lodge as a camper. He was raised in Stratford, Conn., where his family attended the local United Church of Christ. He spent seven summers working at a UCC church camp in his home state. Camp is where his discernment process that led him to become a minister began.

"At camp, I found I could be



BANGOR DAILY NEWS PHOTO BY JOHN CLARKE RUSS

Counselor Danielle Sullivan (lower right) of Saco leads her group of young campers through a labyrinth designed for walking meditation at Pilgrim Lodge in West Gardiner.

myself," he said. "There, my opinions were challenged, but respected, and matters of faith were taken seriously. It was a safe place for me to explore who I was and what I believed as well as being outdoors."

Every year, as young people

describe their experiences at camp, he hears an echo of his own experience.

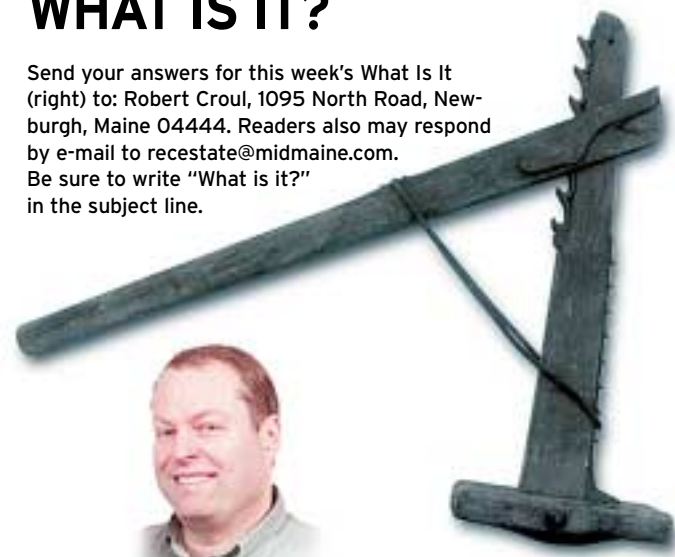
"At Pilgrim Lodge, I can be myself," they say," Breault said. "I hear that over and over and there's tremendous gratitude in that statement."

"It's hard for kids to talk about faith in the secular world," he added. "At this place, it's the norm."

For information about Pilgrim Lodge call 724-3200 or e-mail PL@pilgrimlodge.org.

## WHAT IS IT?

Send your answers for this week's What Is It (right) to: Robert Croul, 1095 North Road, Newburgh, Maine 04444. Readers also may respond by e-mail to [recestate@midmaine.com](mailto:recestate@midmaine.com). Be sure to write "What is it?" in the subject line.



ROBERT CROUL



Impressively, 91 readers correctly identified this What Is It item from the Aug. 4 edition of the BDN as a shingle froe, a wedge-shaped cleaving tool that was used to split shakes from a block of cedar to make shingles. The answer to this week's What Is It item will appear on Sept. 1.

*"Remember that time at the drive-in?"*

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