



Three Rivers News



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SPONSORED AND PUBLISHED BY THREE RIVERS KIWANIS CLUB AND THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
TO PROMOTE AND SERVE THE TOWNS OF BROWNVILLE, MILO, LAGRANGE, MEDFORD, AND ORNEVILLE

Monday, April 24, 2006 Volume 5 Number 33

BUSINESS OF THE WEEK: NORTHERN REFLECTION SALON & DAY SPA



"Pampering in the north woods"

Cosmetologists/owners Gingar Dow and Sheila Dow are not newcomers in their specialty; they have 27 years total experience. After working in other locations they decided to go into business for themselves and opened a shop at the Sebec four corners 1 1/2 years ago. They moved into their new, beautifully decorated salon just a mile up the road on January 16, 2006.

Sheila says, "We are an upbeat salon offering hair care, manicures, pedicures, massage, tanning, hand and foot paraffin treatments, and body waxing. Our shop is very relaxing with a great atmosphere; our clients love our new location!"

They offer a full service salon for men, women, and children with professional hair products and other retail products. "Spa Days" are booked for birthday parties or just for groups of friends to enjoy a day of relaxing together. They also specialize in wedding parties and proms. To get the ultimate tanning experience they offer a turbo bed with a maximum time limit of 12 minutes. Their gifts certificates are an excellent way for you to pamper someone special.

Sheila and Gingar continue to take classes to stay updated on the newest services and products. Rounding out the staff are massage therapists Susan Lancaster and Kristin Gilbert and nail technician Courtney Shorey.

Northern Reflection is open Tuesday through Saturday. They may be reached at 564-7200.

Milo Rabies Clinic, Saturday, April 29

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Milo Town Hall

Rabies..... \$6.00 Distemper..... \$12.00

Cash only, no checks will be accepted!

Sponsored by the Town of Milo and Foxcroft

Veterinary.

FIVE GENERATIONS TIMES TWO

It may not be unusual to have five generations gather in one place but it surely must be rare for both sides of a family to enjoy this longevity.



Seated: great grandmother Carol Davidson, great great grandfather Calvin Lyford, and Sydney Graves.

Standing: Grandmother Dawn Gallant and father Ryan Graves.

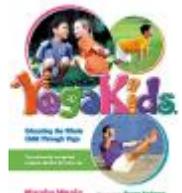


Seated: great great grandmother Faye Lundin, Sydney Graves, and Grandmother Dawn Gallant.

Standing: great grandfather Donald Lundin and father Ryan Graves.

MILO REC. TO OFFER LITTLE PEOPLE'S YOGA!!!

Heather Webb will be offering a basic Yoga for Children and Families program that will focus on children between the ages of 2-11. The group will meet Saturday mornings from 10-11am at the Derby Community



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Hall. The session will run from May 6-June 10. Each week will have a theme and include story time, pose sequence and art activity reflecting the week's theme. Some themes/pose sequences include ABC's, Pattern & Rhythm, Animal Friends, etc. The fee will be \$7 per class, per child or \$30 for the full session with a sibling/family discount. The purpose of this program is to encourage children and families to learn the benefits of "down-time" together. Yoga combines storytelling, physical activity and play in a fun, non-competitive and accessible way for every child. The differently themed classes enable children to self-regulate and bring themselves from "crazy to calm" in a healthy, positive way.

Heather is a mom, teacher and yoga enthusiast. She has worked for more than 4 years at the Children's Museum in Bangor.

Call Murrel at 943-7326 to sign your child up.

Thanks, again for your help. You can reach me at (303) 437-5685.

GRAMMIE McCLEARY'S WEATHER

APRIL 1966

24-Rain-38° at 7 am. 25-Cloudy-34° at 8:30 pm.

26 & 27-Clear cold windy. 28-Sunny cool am

Cloudy pm. 29-Cloudy-30° at 10 pm.

30-Sun am cloudy pm-32° at 6:30 am.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Three River News is published weekly by Three Rivers Kiwanis. It is available Mondays at the Milo Farmer's Union, The Station Market, Graves' Service Station, Robinson's Fuel Mart, Reuben's Farmer's Market, The Restaurant, Milo Exxon, Rite Aid, Valerie Jean's, Milo True Value, and online at WWW.NEWS.TRCMAINE.ORG. Donations can be mailed to Valerie Robertson, PO Box 81, Milo, Maine 04463.

All items for the paper are sent to us; we are not reporters, and we rely on the public for our articles.

Letters to the editor, social news, school news, items of interest, or coming social events may be submitted NO LATER THAN FRIDAY NOON to the following addresses:

Valerie Robertson, PO Box 81, Milo, Maine 04463 or e-mailed to, val04463@verizon.net or call 943-2324.

Nancy Grant, 10 Belmont St. Milo, Maine 04463, e-mailed to Nancy2310@adelphia.net or call 943-5809.

Please drop suggestions and comments into a donation box or contact one of us. We welcome your ideas. All opinions are those of the editors unless otherwise stated. We will not publish negative or controversial comments. The paper is written, printed, and distributed by unpaid volunteers. Donations are used to cover the expense of printing, paper and materials.

Valerie Robertson Nancy Grant Virgil Valente Kirby Robertson
HOW TO RECEIVE THE THREE RIVERS NEWS BY MAIL

We have received many inquiries from readers as to how they can get the Three Rivers News delivered to their mailbox each week. The news is available by subscription in 30-week increments. For each 30-week subscription we ask for a donation of \$25.00 to cover the cost of printing and mailing. If you would like to sign up to get the news delivered, send your name, address and a check for \$25.00 to:

Valerie Robertson
P.O. Box 81
Milo, Maine 04463

Nancy Grant
10 Belmont Street
Milo, Maine 04463

WANTED: Reporter for Three Rivers News

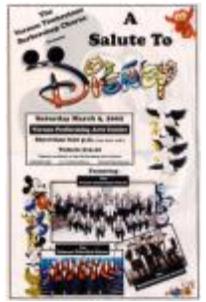
We would like to add more local news to the newspaper. We are looking for a volunteer reporter to cover meetings, community activities, etc. News items would need to be e-mailed to Val Robertson or Nancy Grant, our editors. Please contact Val, Nancy or Chris Beres if you would be interested in doing this. REMINDER:

It is only a few months until the Kiwanis Auction. If you have items that you wish to give to the auction, you can arrange to have them picked up now. You can call Murrel Harris at 943-7326 or Joe Zamboni at 943-2271.

All auction proceeds go to serve the children and families in our community.

Disney on Parade

Community members interested in singing in the Variety Show are asked to meet at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday in Stephanie Gillis' classroom at Milo Elementary School. The name of the music is "Disney Dazzle." Anyone interested in having an act in the show may contact Kathy Witham at 943-2112 or Chris Beres or Stephanie Gillis at Milo Elementary School. We're looking for a variety of acts...they don't have to be Disney related. The show is May 12th and 13th at the Milo Town Hall. All proceeds of the show go to extra curricular reading programs in the community...such as RIF, the Kiwanis Reading Program at the library, and Brownville Elementary summer reading program. **All are welcome!!**



BINGO...BINGO...BINGO!!!

THE MILO AMERICAN LEGION POST 41 HAS BINGO EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT
A MEAL IS SERVED FROM 5:00PM UNTIL 6:15 PM

BINGO STARTS AT 6:15 AND ENDS AT 9:30.

SEE YOU THERE!

TEEN DANCE

For 7th and 8th graders @ Penquis Valley Middle School on Friday May 5th from 6 - 9 pm. This is to benefit Student Ambassador Dylan Flagg to help raise money for his trip to England, Wales and Ireland this summer. There will be a D.J., hourly prizes and refreshments on sale. Come and join in the fun, hope to see you there.



LOBSTER AND STEAK RAFFLE

To benefit Student Ambassador Dylan Flagg
4 Lobster and 2 Porterhouse Steaks



Choice of 2 Homemade Salads (Coleslaw, Potato, Macaroni)
Drawing will be held on May 24, 2006

Price for tickets is .50 each or 3 for \$1.00

For tickets contact:
Suzy Ricker @ 943 - 2692
Debbie Flagg @ 943 - 8821
Terri Noke @ 965 - 7821
Staci Beaulieu @ 943 - 2889



*Valerie Jean's American Bistro
Main Street, Milo
will be featuring a Mother's Day
meal, by reservation only.
Check next week's Three Rivers News
for more details.*

"Beemee" Book in the Works

Brownville historian Bill Sawtell is now writing on four books, one of which, Ebeemee, North Brownville and the Prairie will be out some time this summer and is a history of the three areas with more than 125 photos and illustrations and a color cover painted by Suzette East.

Maine Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc.
592 Sawyer Road Email; debranj@aol.com Greene, Maine 04236
Phone/Fax: 207-375-8184

Early Brain Development Conference

The Maine Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc. is pleased to announce its 19th annual conference on May 5th, 2006 in Lewiston, Maine. Ross Thompson, Ph.D. will present Early Brain Development: Implications for Parents, Practice and Policy. Ross Thompson is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Davis, and a contributor to the document From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. Ross Thompson has written "A growing body of scientific evidence tells us that emotional development begins early in life, that it is a critical aspect of the development of overall brain architecture and that it has enormous consequences over the course of a lifetime. These findings have far-reaching implications for policy makers and parents, and therefore demand our attention".

A panel of Maine experts will respond to Ross Thompson's ideas. Panel members are: Sheryl Peavey, Director of Early Childhood Systems Initiative, Steven Rowe, Attorney General, Carolyn Drugge, Director of Office of Child Care and Head Start, and Laurie Bertulli, Director of Child Development Services. Participants will be able to:

1. Identify early influences that build or damage the structure of the developing brain.
2. Describe how young children learn about their psychological world (feelings, concept of self and others, etc.).
3. Identify disruptive effects of stress on developing brain.
4. Describe policy initiatives in Maine that support healthy brain Development.

Early Brain Development will be held at the Ramada Conference Center in Lewiston from 8:15 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. For more information and/or registration materials for this conference please contact Debbie Nugent Johnston at (207) 375-8184 or at DebraNJ@AOL.com. For information about the Maine Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc. see www.vv.infantmentalhealth.org.

Central Maine Republican Women will meet on Sunday, April 23rd at the home of Jane Young, in Guilford at 6pm. The speaker will be Mrs. Paul Davis from Sangerville. Call for info or directions. Miriam McArthur 564-0856 or Leilani Stites 564-8739.

PENQUIS GIRLS TOUGH IN SEASON OPENER



Mindy, Morgan and Erica lead the pack as they go over to shake hands with Schenck. Penquis plays their first home game Monday, April 24th at 4:15 against Guilford. Good luck and great job girls.



Front Row: Christin McKenzie, Erica Lyford, Britnee Genthner, Lynn Corson, Kayla Webb and Sheleshia Clark
Back Row: Mindy Dolley, Kylie Palmer, Ana Rodriguez, Kelsey Ottmann, Morgan Royal, Amber Benoit, Kasey Sherburne and Coach Larlee

Coach Rachel Larlee was more than happy to capture her first win at her home town of Schenck on Saturday for their season opener. The Lady Pats took a lead in the first inning and never looked back, bringing home an 11-4 win. The girls scored in every inning except the 5th.....Erica Lyford had some tough shoes to fill with Danny Graves graduating last year. She did GREAAAAAT: striking out 10 and giving up just a few walks. Ana Rodriguez played a strong second base, making many key outs, while getting on base 3 times with 3 singles. Morgan Royal led the hitting with 2 singles and a triple and I believe 3 RBI's.

Mindy Dolley had 3 singles and a nice high pop fly catch to get them out of an inning which was huge. Kylie Palmer bunted herself a couple of singles and hit away for another. Kylie also tallied up 2 RBI's. Lynn Corson made contact with the ball and got a triple off a fly ball to left field. Lynn also did a good job behind the plate catching. Britnee Genthner and Amber Benoit were the most patient in the box, getting on with a total of 7 walks and 1 single between the two.....but crossed the plate a

combined total of 6 times.....so patience made a big difference, it put runners on which means runs that will score. Great job you two.

Kasey Sherburne also got on with a single and made the last out of the game with a beautiful running catch out in right field to end it.



Do you remember these "Big Hair" girls of the 80's? Look for this picture on the Ellen Show in the near future. It's been submitted for consideration to be used on the show. Even the sexy "Calendar guy" had big hair!

Traditions of a Milo-ite

By Kathryn Witham

It never fails that the week of our wedding anniversary is fraught with trauma and filled with grief. Usually the grief is of a national or global nature....only occasionally a personal nature. This week was no different. It began with the murder of Joseph Gray, right under our noses in this bucolic little community, and ended with the personal loss of my beloved little Aunt Grace who died and was buried over in Lincoln this week. The incident at Waco, Texas; the Columbine High School shootings, and the Oklahoma City bombings, all took place in different years over April's school vacation...which happens to be when we celebrate our wedding anniversary.

Thirty six years of never knowing if we'll get through the occasion without a disaster. Probably few of you have that to worry about. The joyous celebration of your anniversary is probably not predictably marred by disaster or grief. In this day in age when people actually look at you like you're a freak because you've lived with the same person for thirty six years....still love him, get along with him, and can't imagine life without him...it is cause for celebration to have "lasted" as long as we have. We have learned it makes more sense to mark our anniversary privately, with cards and dinner out together. The cards express the loving sentiments that we often don't mention out loud, and the dinner out is just something that we love to do. It hasn't paid for us to make elaborate anniversary plans in the past.

Our 25th Wedding Anniversary celebration...marked by both a huge party and then a cruise...was marred with the Oklahoma City bombing. I'll never forget it. We arrived in San Juan, Puerto Rico that day, and I called home to touch bases with reality. My daughter said, "Mom, have you been able to watch television today?" I hadn't, but outside the little phone booth in Royal Caribbean's reception center, there was a television tuned to CNN....there was the horror staring us right in the face. We had a hard time dragging ourselves away from the news. That day we were foreigners in a strange land with miles of ocean between ourselves and home....we felt, to say the least, a little vulnerable.

As for the tragedy that this community experienced this week, how did that handsome little boy that has stared back at us from the newspaper pages become such a hateful person. He hated anyone with the name Bill? What's up with that? What dysfunction went on in that boy's brain that would cause him to have such sick "hates" at such a young age? We need to be careful....because there are more of those sick young boys (and

girls) out there lurking around in all of our communities. There are probably way more of them than we care to imagine. Kids are getting these sick ideas from everywhere....and I say this (for what it's worth): If our kids have to search friendships and relationships out through the internet....because they live in a stagnant community that offers them little else in the way of constructive and safe activities....we are getting what we ask for. This is a sick nation; and if we aren't doing anything to fix it, then we are a part of the problem.

If interviewed, I would never say, "We never expected it to happen here." Why not here? Our children are just as tuned into the world outside Milo as children anywhere...because they are as tuned into the internet as children anywhere. If you're getting the impression that I think that the internet is evil, you're very close to correct. A news media that relishes reporting the bad news...and only pays lip service to good news...is another culprit. Do I think there is any turning back? Parents limiting kid's time on all electronics would be a good start. Paying strict attention to your kid's whereabouts 24/7 would be next. Asking yourself if you are doing all you can to stimulate positive behavior in the children you are associated with, would go a long way in turning things around.

We need to come face to face with this generation's demons. Perhaps technology has advanced faster than our brains have. We know for a fact that it has advanced faster than our conscience has. Technology precedes decency and decorum almost all the time. After all, we've got those pesky civil rights to consider all the time. If you do a little research into former civilizations, you'll find that this path has just one end... and it isn't pretty.

On a lighter note....my friend Mary Moore Clark sent me this wonderful recipe this week. I'm going to copy and paste her entire recipe...with all of her annotations.

Ruth Kaye's Birthday Cake

Serves 16

Cake:

Solid Crisco for greasing the pan
Flour for dusting the pan
1 pkg. (18.25 oz) plain yellow cake mix
1 pkg. (3 oz) lemon gelatin (like Jell-O)
2/3 cup vegetable oil
2/3 cup hot water
4 large eggs

Glaze:

1 cup confectioner's sugar, sifted
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice (One large lemon should do.)
2 tsp finely grated lemon zest
1. Position rack in the center of oven. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 12-cup Bundt pan. Shake out excess flour. Set pan aside.
2. Place the cake mix and gelatin in a large mixing bowl, stirring with a whisk to break up any clumps. Add oil, water, and eggs and beat with electric mixer on low speed for 1 minute. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Increase the mixer speed to medium and beat for 2 minutes more, scraping the sides down if needed. The batter should look thick and well blended. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, smoothing the top with the spatula, and place the pan in the oven.
3. Bake the cake until it is light brown and just starts to pull away from the sides of the pan, about 45 minutes. Test with a toothpick; it should come out clean. Remove the pan from the oven and place it on a wire rack to cool for 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, prepare the glaze. Combine the confectioners' sugar, lemon juice, and lemon zest in a small bowl. Stir with a wooden spoon until smooth and of pouring consistency, adding a few more drops of lemon juice, if needed.
5. **Carefully run a sharp knife around the edge of the cake** and invert it onto a serving platter. Do not force the cake out of the pan as it may tear. Spoon the glaze evenly over the warm cake so that it drizzles down the sides and into the center. Slice and serve warm or let it cool before slicing. Store cake, covered

in plastic wrap or placed under a glass cake dome, at room temperature for up to 1 week. Or freeze it, wrapped in aluminum foil, for up to 6 months. Thaw the cake overnight on the counter before serving. May substitute orange or lime, if preferred.

Milo Free Public Library News

By Judith Macdougall

What a windy week this has been! I have been trying to hang out clothes while I do spring cleaning, but it is hard to fight the wind. No matter how many clothes pins I use to attach the clothes to the line, I still pick some clothes off the ground at the far end of the yard. The fresh air is wonderful, but too much fresh air is a nuisance.

I read an interesting non-fiction book over the last few weeks-1776 by David McCullough. It has been in circulation for several months, but I just got around to reading it. I'm not a history buff, but I found this more detailed side of the American Revolution very interesting. That war had previously been to me scenes of George Washington on a horse, our patriotic Rebels fighting and winning in Boston, and Red Coats blindly marching in rows to be shot easily by our patriotic Rebels. From the descriptions in this book, I realized there were no superheroes-just ordinary men fighting for a cause and very often retreating, but there were also Colonials to whom this war was treason for they were loyal to King George III. I must admit I had to make up a "cheat sheet" to keep track of the names of the British and Colonial generals. This book humanized the figures of George Washington, Joseph Reed, Nathaniel Greene and a later-to -be Maine man, Henry Knox. Knox was a book seller in Boston who took upon himself the momentous task of bringing the cannons from Fort Ticonderoga overland to Boston in the dead of winter. One cannon even went through the ice on the river, but was raised again and taken to Boston. Losing battles and heart, but continuing on often without adequate clothing, shoes and food, our rabble in arms fought to our country's independence. The weather often worked for our benefit which helped to convince the Colonials that God was on our side. Miracles and mistakes, courage and persistence won our country's freedom.

A student of history who would like to know the human side of the Revolution would enjoy this book based on letters and papers of the time. One fact that young people would find interesting is the ages of the youngest soldiers. The youngest member of the Colonial army who went along with his father was 10 years old Israel Trask. Fifteen year old soldiers were not uncommon. As I said in the beginning, I enjoyed this book for humanizing the American Revolution.

While we are on the subject of history and presidents, I'll mention that the library just acquired a 2 volume set of American Presidents. It features all the presidents from George Washington through George W. Bush. Not only does the set supply the usual personal information, but it also states the members of the president's cabinet, information on the first lady, his vice-president, events that occurred in the president's term and also has suggested readings for even more material for each president.

We have also received two more juvenile books from the Junior Library Guild. They are Something Invisible by Siobhan Parkinson. Jake's newborn sister, Daisy, changes everything in Jake's life and brings quirky Stella and her family into his world. This is a story of family, friendship, loyalty and loss. The other juvenile book is Johnny and the Dead by Terry

Pratchett. Johnny is the only one who can see the inhabitants of a cemetery that the town council wants to move. Johnny's new friends won't take that lying down. Johnny becomes the voice for the lifeless in this entertaining and irreverent tale. This is a sequel to Johnny's first adventure which is also in the library-Only You Can Change Mankind.

We also had a preview box come from the American Library Preview, and we selected these books.

101 FACTS ABOUT GOLDFISH

101 FACTS ABOUT PARAKEETS

101 FACTS ABOUT TROPICAL FISH

I am your pet-CAT

I am your pet-DOG

I am your pet-HAMSTER

I am your pet-RABBIT

(The above 4 books are unique as they are written from the pet's point of view)

CHIMPANZEES

LIZARDS

POISONOUS SNAKES

SHARKS

Library Winter Hours

Mon.-Weds.-Fri. ---2:00-8:00

Saturday 2:00-4:00

Telephone 943-2612

PAULINE L. THOMAS

BROWNVILLE - Pauline Lillian Thomas, 73, died April 17, 2006, at a Bangor hospital. She was born Aug. 30, 1932, in Brownville, the daughter of Kenneth G. and Clellie M. (Arbo) Ellis. Pauline worked at the Brownville Public Library for more than 20 years. She was the only woman member of the Brownville Volunteer Fire Department. Pauline is survived by her loving husband of 47 years, Hugh Thomas Jr. of Brownville; children, Heidi Thomas, Patrick Thomas and Daniel Thomas, all of Brownville; a sister, Annette Ellis of Brownville; two brothers, Donald Ellis of Brownville and Clarence Ellis of Bradford; and also missed by Kathy Smith and many other special friends. She was predeceased by a brother, Kenneth Ellis Jr. A graveside memorial service will be held 2 p.m. Saturday, May 13, at Brownville Village Cemetery, Stickney Hill Road, Brownville with the Rev. Darren L. Morgan, pastor of the Brownville Community Church officiating. Gifts in her memory may be made to the Brownville Public Library, P.O. Box 687, Brownville, ME 04414. A service of Memorial Alternatives, Bangor.

JOSEPH L. GRAY

MILO - Joseph L. Gray, 57, husband of Janice Gray, died unexpectedly April 16, 2006, in Milo. He was born May 4, 1948, in Franklin, the son of Marilyn Kidder. Joseph had served in Vietnam with the U.S. Army and was a member of the DAV. He is survived by his wife, Janice of Milo; his mother, Marilyn Fernald of North Attleboro, Mass.; a daughter, Wendy Colby and her husband, Clifford, of Attleboro, Mass.; a stepson, Brian Dymont of Randolph, Mass.; a brother, Leonard Gray of Pawtucket, R.I.; a sister, Raye Devaley and her husband, Sean, of Plainville, Mass.; two grandsons, Nicholas and Nathan Colby. He was predeceased by a son; Joseph L. Jr. Friends are invited to call 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, April 19, at the Lary Funeral Home, Milo. A service with military honors will be conducted 9 a.m. Thursday, April 20, at the Maine Veterans Cemetery, Mount Vernon Road, Augusta.

Joel Cyr in Iraq

By Izzy Warren (taken from the Penquis Forums Message Board)

Joel Cyr is currently one of the civilians at work training the people who will eventually be the police force for the country of Iraq.

He is a special person to me.

He was once one of the "little kids" living just down the street from my family in Derby. He has written simple and touching columns for what was then our local paper, The Milo Town Crier, which was run by another family, the Brigham's, who once lived just down the street in Derby.

The work done by Joel as an officer here and the work he is now doing in Iraq make him special as well.

This topic is started in recognition and appreciation of Joel and his courage and selfless service.

At the end of this topic you will find his writings which share his experiences in Iraq with us all.

Please remember Joel in your prayers along with all our others who are in service to our country.

Add your own greetings here also as replies to this topic.

Dover-Foxcroft man at work in Iraq writes of Baghdad's pervasive noise

Article from Bangor Daily News, Vol. 117, No. 126, November 11, 2005 By Joel Cyr

Special to the Bangor Daily News

The worst here, I guess, is the constant noise. I can spray for the bugs. I can wash away the dust for a bit. I am armed - should the need arise. But there is never any silence. None.

There is no place to go for quiet, as there is no quiet, no favorite spot in the woods, under the spreading pine or the shade of maple. There are no woods.

The closest one can get to undisturbed respite in the forest is some sort of exotic bird that flits around the palm trees, whose call is that of a woman or a child screaming in pain or fear, with a timbre that sets the teeth to a tinfoil-upon-filling induced edge. Gunfire, jackhammers, explosions. The rapid rat-a-tat of my heart when a mortar or RPG lands close by.

I am a civilian teacher of police cadets, one of the good guys, not a military target. Why are you trying to kill me?

The frequent sirens outside our blast walls, oftentimes only a VIP being escorted by convoy. Still, the sirens never seem to cease. Endless and repetitive questions from hundreds of anxious cadets. More gunfire and incessant, low-flying helicopters, night and day. The rattling of my tin billet as they race overhead, only 100 feet off the ground, always with a sense of urgency and emergency. Black. Unmarked. Mysterious.

Unending construction and demolition. Multiple, innumerable languages all around, an English word here and there, massive diesel generators, more hammering, honey wagons and water trucks.

The firearms range, three dozen-plus weapons firing at once, AK-47s spitting fire, people shouting. About the shouting - where seemingly agitated voices at home raise an alarm or signal that trouble is brewing, here it is an accepted mode of communication. I no longer look in the direction of the yelling, much of it heated, emotional, meaningless.

Some construction workers play with the Americans, whistling just to make them look, a game. Some beg. More than once I have tossed my half-finished bottle of water up to the second story of building, where a skinny, dirt-poor construction worker in blue coveralls steps out on the ledge, deftly reaches out and greedily snatches it from the air. More noise rises up as others on his floor gather round and clamor for their fair share of the small drink, an argument that rises in crescendo and quickly fades as I walk away with determined step, putting distance between me and more beggars.

One bottle of water is never enough. Why bother? Two more Black Hawks rattle the sky at 100-plus mph, low and intimidating. They always come in pairs.

It's a constant cacophony that never lets up; Humvees, diesels, air-conditioning units, inside and out, small and large, working overtime, and running 24-7. At night, in the windless starry night, it is the muezzin - "the calling of the devout to prayer" - from competing minarets. Two, three, four or more, each with their blaring electronic barrage, spreading their prayer calls all at once. As a child of the 1950s, I think it sounds like a Disney cartoon from 45 years ago, the Arabian nights, stuff dreams were made of. Stand in almost any spot inside the compound and the discord assaults from every direction; we are surrounded. Our quiet words of English, as we sit in the soft darkness and talk of the muezzin, sound so foreign, so out of place. Intrusive. More gunfire. Heavier caliber. Occasional tracers light up the night over our heads. We compare the merits of one barrage against another. Should I step out of character, and ask for God or Allah, would he hear me?

The noise continues inside, there is absolutely no respite. The clatter of dishes and 100 conversations as 200 people sit down to eat in the chow hall. And through the thin tin walls of my room, to my left, is the sound of a movie playing that I didn't want to see or hear when it was hawked in the theaters. At the same time, eight feet away, through the other wall, a heated exchange on a cell phone with family at home in Austin, Texas. I need not know that most private of business, but there it is for my consumption. Slamming doors, heavy footsteps in the hall, dark cursing as the word of "No water in the ***** bathrooms again" goes angrily from room to room. The sound and proximity of the ever-present roommate, coughing, the scraping of his chair on the floor, unceasing and irritating personal habits.

Yesterday at 12:30 p.m., it was the unwelcome clatter of the medevac chopper, dropping into the landing zone to pick up the grievously wounded MP who got at least one limb blown off when his Humvee was blasted by a roadside IED (improvised explosive device) 20 minutes earlier. Today, from the gigantic wrecker that hooked onto that same Humvee that got blown all to hell yesterday, it was the hiss of the truck's massive air compressor in accompaniment with the squeal of tortured, twisted metal as the Humvee bounced behind the tow hook, bound for parts unknown, away from prying indigenous eyes. Slamming doors, the ring of cell phones, the continuous racking sound as weapons are loaded and unloaded, and loaded again.

The dull throb of the kettledrum in the distance keeping cadence, cadets marching on the parade ground in the early morning, with a step more crisp as they near graduation day. Caterpillar-brand excavators, sledgehammers, tile cutters, front-end loaders and masonry drills. Construction orders being shouted in Iraqi. Military orders barked in an American voice.

Pile drivers, water pumps and fuel tankers. Information crackling over hand-held emergency radios, small-arms gunfire, again. Another car bomb in the distance. The music in my ears as I try to escape all other noise with noise of my choosing, headphones turned up loud to cancel the life dance of the others around me. The hair-raising yowl of a stray cat under the billet at 2 a.m., an unmistakable Southern drawl from Alabama, the multiple sounds of a busy classroom.

I need some time in a quiet space. I will have to wait until I leave this place. I think I can.

The whine from the spy drone as it circles overhead, and circles overhead, and circles overhead

Article from Bangor Daily News, Saturday, April 08, 2006
Mainer recounts experience of turmoil in Iraq

**Article from Bangor Daily News, Saturday,
April 08, 2006**
By Joel Cyr

Introductory note: I live in the Red Zone. I train Iraqi police officers at the Baghdad Public Service Academy, also known as the Baghdad Police College. The campus shares a property line with an infamous slum, the Sadr City section of Baghdad - home of the radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and his Mahdi Militia.

I am not in the military nor do I pretend to be. I have not been in combat nor do I claim to have "been there, done that." However, I have seen and heard enough in this city to know what I'm talking about when I write generally of gunfire, mortars and car bombs.

One mortar in December, fired from the adjacent swamp by "Nine o'clock Charlie," struck several rooms approximately 30 feet from my own.

On my first mail run, I did see an Iraqi police vehicle obliterated by an IED (improvised explosive device), with some of the debris raining down on the armored Chevy Suburban in which I was a passenger.

In December, I was not far away when two suicide bombers killed 43 of our cadets.

The following essay was put to paper one recent and particularly violent day here in the city. Yet it matters not what date this was written nor when it is read by anyone. Simply adjust the numbers accordingly because the news remains essentially the same, day in and day out.

This is not a political commentary, only a record of what I've seen and heard for myself.

Fifty-six people died in Baghdad today. Not from natural causes. Not from car accidents. Not from heart attacks, old age or natural disaster. No, their lives were snatched from

them in seven or eight gratuitous bombings, ostensibly in the name of a deity and an accompanying pious crusade.

I heard all the explosions and saw two of them - at least the dust and the roiling black smoke of the aftermath. I lost an accurate count after the city shuddered for the sixth time. I was not close to the scene of any of the incidents, but I was shaken in more ways than one.

Fifty-six people: 21 waiting in line for kerosene; one at a Sunni mosque - a mortar attack; four at a Shiite mosque - a car bomb; and several police officers on patrol. Others I couldn't keep track of in the media. One day's violence simply blends into another. More blood, more photos and footage of funerals. Weeping men, wailing women, dead children.

Baghdad is no longer a faraway place in a newspaper or on the television anymore. From atop the flat roof of my classroom building, I watched the city reel again and again: Film at 11, commentary on the editorial page tomorrow.

I've known some of the dead; particularly on Dec. 6, when two cowards walked onto campus with vest bombs, stepped into two separate groups of police cadets, and blew everyone around them all to hell.

Forty-three was the official death toll. I think there were more. The Medevac helicopters kept coming and coming - giant, powerful, temporary emergency rooms that stop only long enough to snatch up the bleeding and the twisted, then fly away again to a safer place.

And yet, in the midst of it all, day after gory day, there are still the children.

I managed to grab a photo of a little Iraqi girl one day as we literally raced through the city in a convoy, on a mail run. Her home, behind a blanket covering a ragged hole in the wall, sits at the edge of the Tigris.

As we cleared the crown of the bridge that joins the north and the south of the city, she watched the several thundering Chevy Suburbans that followed behind us with their ear-splitting sirens, bristling with AK-47s.

We move hard and fast, swooping and darting, hoping to avoid those that would lie in wait with improvised roadside explosive devices and small arms fire. For me: So far, so good.

However, it breaks my heart to be ensconced in an expensive, armored, American vehicle, protected by helmet and vest; tearing through her city streets at highway speeds, when she lives behind a blanket, stepping out onto the brutal streets, trying to be a kid. So much innocence in the midst of so much sectarian violence, kidnapping and revenge killing.

It should not matter whether she is Shiite or Sunni, she is just a little girl. But then, I am not a resident of Baghdad nor am I a Muslim. I've never lived with virulent religious intolerance, anger and retribution. I've read analysis after learned analysis about the strife, but I still do not understand.

Scant protection, that blanket.

And then there is the 12-year-old boy who spends his days at a construction site near the outer fringes of the campus. I live on a small military base within the confines of 13-foot-high cement walls, where I sleep, eat, write and listen to gunfire and bombs. Each morning, as I leave the relative safety of the walls and begin the half-mile walk to my classroom, I listen to the satisfying "clack" as I ram a live round into the tube of my automatic rifle.

The boy lives outside my walls. Several days ago, I needed some crushed stone to fill in an irritating and persistent mud hole near my billet. I got tired of waiting for the maintenance chain-of-command to fix the problem, so I took it upon myself to make the repair. I commandeered an appropriate vehicle and, shovel in hand, pulled up beside a pile of unused stone that had been dumped beside the ramshackle trailer that the boy calls home.

There was a dirty blanket lying in the bed of the utility vehicle. We use it to cover equipment to protect it from the dust. It was obvious that he wanted or needed the blanket.

Communication between people of different languages is easy if you pay attention. Hand gestures are universal. I swapped the blanket for some crushed stone over which he had no proprietary interest. It seemed like a fair trade to me. The bright patterns of the blanket were a stark contrast to the dull, dusty, gray patina of his daily life. I care not if he is going to use the blanket to keep warm or sell it to buy something else for himself.

He said "Thank you" in accented English.

Back to the wanton murder of several dozen Iraqi cadets on Dec. 6. I was 500 feet away in a cement building when the first blast hit at 12:33 p.m. About 30 seconds later, there was another, as strong as the first. We knew it was within our protective walls, and we knew it was bad, real bad.

In the next few moments, our radios began to scream. Someone was sobbing into a microphone that they needed help. I went 500 feet up around the corner. It was horrible.

I could see what I estimated as 30 bodies lying all over the place - the blue uniforms of cadets scattered about. Most of them were blackened and in grotesque positions. Instantaneous transition from living, breathing police cadets, out on a break between classes, to portions of half-clothed mangled bodies, to be photographed and measured over the next few hours as pieces of evidence lying in the dirt.

I've never smelled that much death in the air. I've never been to war. This is my war, in a manner of speaking.

Immediately after the blasts, it was chaos. Burnt, torn bodies. The screaming on the radio. The smoke. The screaming of the wounded. The slaughterhouse smell. Blood. Conflicting orders being yelled in two languages; the wailing of cadets who had escaped the blast and were trying to get to their dead classmates. I stepped on a piece of skull and flesh - about 200 feet from the first blast - on my headlong rush to the scene. The rest is more graphic than a public newspaper can print.

The uncertainty at the scene was as bad as the reality. Our experience has been that these events now come in threes. Where is the third bomber? Is there a third bomber? We do as we are trained as cops and secure the scene - forming a ring of tense, armed officers suspecting everyone who is not an American, our backs turned to the already dead.

Multiple sirens converged as ambulances arrived from the community. Orders are given not to let them in. We can't take the chance that the provocateurs have loaded a public safety vehicle with more explosives, taking advantage of the throng of frantic American and Iraqi officers to create more carnage - to send more bodies flying into the air.

What a feeling of helplessness and self-preservation, a damnable position to be in. What kind of society has created this implausible situation where rescue vehicles are suspect?

The blast near a ministry building a couple of months ago was an example: three bombs, two of them timed to get as many police and medical personnel as possible after they responded to the initial blast.

Shots fired behind the adjacent building. There was a siren there just before the shots. Nerves ratchet up another notch. Is it the third bomber?

Shrapnel damage on the walls of the adjacent building. Broken glass. Twisted auto body parts. Limbs separated from bodies. Bodies separated from heads. Unidentifiable body parts. Identifiable body parts, separate entities both.

The ground is littered with small ball bearings - a favorite destructive missile of the local vest bomber. They are referred to as suicide bombers. They are not. They are homicide bombers.

The military arrives in force. We are ordered to relinquish control of the scene. We walk slowly back to our building to regroup and decompress. We go to the rooftop and watch the unending assemblage of helicopters evacuating the wounded; the agitated dust from the makeshift landing zone on the parade ground hurled violently upward, casting a surreal pall over it all.

The next day I found two heads that had been propelled about 80 feet into the walled sanctuary of the cadet classroom area. Two headless torsos, then, had been removed the day before.

What will tomorrow bring, for all of us, visitors and citizens?

Joel Cyr is a former Dover-Foxcroft police officer who is helping train police recruits in Baghdad.

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