



# December News Highlights

## FROM THE EDITOR'S PEN

We will soon enter the doorway of 2013. Make 2013 your best year yet! Here are three suggestions for the New Year:

**1) Invite good luck with grapes!** I've read that folks in Spain and South America celebrate the new year by eating 12 grapes at the stroke of midnight—one for every chime of the clock! The tradition is said to guarantee success in the year ahead. Whether you believe the success theory or not, grapes are loaded with healthy minerals, so consider it a ritual that's good for you!

**2) Pat yourself on the back!** Why? For the things you accomplished in 2012! Make a list of healthy habits, smart choices and everything else you did right during the past 12 months. We tend to remember only what we did wrong; seeing some of your achievements, however small, in print will help ignite self-confidence for the New Year.

**3) Spread kindness!** Studies show that every time you do something nice—holding the door open for someone, smiling at the grocery clerk—you feel happier. Positive actions will boost your mood. It's worth a try, don't you think?



I enjoyed the memories Jim Klobuchar shared at our recent library committee program. When he shared his Nepal adventures, memories overflowed for me. It was back in the 70's that Doreen and I ventured forth on a three-week stay in Nepal, Tibet and India. I can't possibly share all those memories here; however, some experiences were similar to those of Klobuchar.

Nepali is the official language of Nepal, and *Namaste* is the customary greeting when individuals meet or part ways. We learned to use it often—quite

a lovely salutation. When spoken to another person, it is accompanied by a slight bow with hands pressed together, palms touching and fingers pointed upward, in front of the chest. This gesture can also be done wordlessly and carries the same meaning.

Klobuchar made reference to the Sherpa people, an ethnic group in the eastern region of Nepal, high in the Himalayas. They are elite mountaineers and experts in their local terrain. Doreen and I went “up” to visit friends in Ampipal. I say “up,” because it involved a 7½-mile hike up a mountain. As we huffed and puffed our way up, three Sherpas passed us carrying a baby grand piano on their heads. It was quite an interesting sight.

Indeed, Klobuchar's memories evoked many for me also. My visit in that part of the world was a monumental experience.



Not many days ago, we were involved in giving and receiving gifts. Soon those gifts could simply become possessions of which we will take little notice. That's the way it often is with gifts—they soon lose their significance and become commonplace.

In *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Annie Dillard tells of a young woman who had been blind since birth and was given the gift of sight through the skill of a brilliant surgeon. When her bandages were removed and she opened her eyes, what she saw was so magnificent that she closed her eyes and refused to open them for several days. When she finally had the courage to open them again, she repeated over and over, “Oh, God, how beautiful, how beautiful.”

Our most priceless gifts often become so commonplace that we take them for granted until sickness or accident takes them away from us—sight, hearing, taste, smell, good health, hands and feet that work, even the ability to have a good night's sleep. It is

only in their absence that we become aware of their value.

The admonition “Don’t forget” can be expressed in a positive way by saying “Be forever grateful.” Gratitude should not become uncommon. Keeping gratitude as something common will allow each of us to live life as a perpetual Christmas.

Oh, be sure to reread your Christmas cards/letters before you put them away (or throw them away). Take time to once again read the messages of love and friendship that you received during the Christmas season.

## **FOUNTAIN VIEW DINING ROOM**

*Food Service Committee*

My shoulders have begun to ache, and I realize it’s from doing the Minnesota shuffle and from all the odd positions we put our bodies in as we walk slowly on the icy parking lots of our city. Be careful! Be ever so careful, because we don’t want to fall. The beautiful ten- inch snowfall we had was a delight to the eye, but it’s a comfort to know that our staff takes care of clearing the snow away. Winter is so much easier to deal with now that we no longer live in our own homes. Weren’t we smart to move here? It’s great to see so many new faces here at the Square. They’re smart, too. It’s good to see many of our new people using the dining room.



music, from the 30–50s, jazz, standards, and broadway shows – everything from Doris Day to Glenn Miller to the Andrew Sisters. Liz has a passion for entertaining seniors, and she has performed at cooperatives and other senior residences in the area. Refreshments will be served following the program.

The Activities Committee extends a Happy New Year to all our friends at the Square, and we wish to thank you for your past support of our committee and its activities.



### **NEW YEAR QUOTATIONS**

“A New Year’s resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.” (Author Unknown)

“An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.” (Bill Vaughan)

“We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year’s Day.” (Edith Lovejoy Pierce)

“One resolution I have made, and try always to keep, is this: To rise above the little things.” (John Burroughs)



## **AROUND THE SQUARE**

**Talents — Taxes —  
Adventure — Advice —**

A treasury of **Talents** resides among us, and some are found in the Residents’ Workshop. If you are not acquainted with it, take a look on your way to the north garage entry. You may find Merrill Engquist crafting stained glass ornaments, or Gordon Kanten turning raw wood into swinging doll cribs for grandchildren. Others may be repairing household items for themselves or for Nokomis Square neighbors.

As some **workshop members** have dropped out over the years, new residents have come in, often pleased to find that this facility is a fine replacement for the shops they reluctantly left behind at their former homes. When not in use, the shop is locked for safety, but interested residents, both men and women, may have their key fobs coded for access.

### **BIRTHDAY LUNCH**

**Noon on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup>**

Sandwich on Dark Bread

½ Ham    ½ Egg Salad

Pickles and Chips

Cake and Ice Cream



**This lunch is a fun gathering.  
Give it a try. I think you would like it. (MH)**

## **ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE**

Please join us at 7 p.m. on Monday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, in the Community Room for an evening of music. Singer and pianist Lizz Timm performs a variety of

As a convenient service for residents, Workshop Committee members assure an open door Thursdays from 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. for items needing repair to be brought in. There is no charge for service, but needed supplies and equipment are provided from contributions.

**Taxes. Over the cliff? The wise humorist** Will Rogers, who was born 1,598 months ago, had words still valid today. *Taxation is all there is to government. People don't want their taxes lowered near as much as the politician tries to make you believe. People want **just** taxes more than they want **lower** taxes. They want to know that every man is paying his proportionate share according to his wealth.*

**Adventure. The wise explorer** Roald Amundson who on December 14, 1911, with his team and dog sleds, was the first to reach the South Pole. He said *Adventure is just poor planning.* (From Writer's Almanac.)

**New Year Advice from your Kindly Kounselor.**  
*Q. My spouse complains that my workshop is a disgraceful mess. I think, but wouldn't dare comment, that her laundry is inefficiently disorganized. In my shop I can always find what I'm looking for because, whatever it is, at least part of it sticks out of the pile. Favorite wife says she likes the laundry room the way she is used to. How can I assure peace in our home?*  
*A. This is a tough one I've never before heard, but you have several options. (1) Let her do the fixing things, and you launder, so long as it doesn't require hauling it to the river and beating it on the rocks. (2) Lock her out of the shop and buy yourself new clothes and towels a couple times a year. (3) That's life; live with it. If you trade a troublesome car for a new one, and treat it as you did the old one, it will soon feel the same. (4) Write to some other advice columnist.*

**Old thoughts echoing anew:** Behind a successful man is usually his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.

**You do not need** a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

**If you are reading this, CONGRATULATIONS!** You survived the December 21 Mayan Calendar End of the World.

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## ***KEEPING YOU INFORMED***

### **WHAT'S NEW AT THE NOKOMIS LIBRARY?**

#### **Writing Group**

This group meets on Thursdays at 6:30 in the evening on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> and February 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Join other writers for encouragement and feedback and to help each other take writing to the next level. Bring works in progress, paper and pen. You will explore different ways to think about writing.

#### **Diabetes Support Group**

If you are diabetic or pre-diabetic, this is a group for you. It meets Fridays, January 4<sup>th</sup> and February 1<sup>st</sup>, at 1:00 p.m. Share experiences with others living with diabetes, and get tips and advice from a health care professional on blood sugar management, diet and exercise. Nokomis Health Seniors is a co-sponsor of this group. Call there at 612-729-5499, to make arrangements for a free ride.

#### **Fearless and Friendly Knitting Group**

Evening and daytime groups – other needlecrafts are welcome. The evening group meets from 6-8:00 on Tuesdays, January 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, and February 12<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup>. The morning group meets at 10:00 on Wednesdays, January 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, and February 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The knitting group is for men and women at all skill levels. Drop in, or stay the whole time. Learn how to knit or practice new techniques. Bring your own needles and yarn.

#### **Author Talk: Larry Millet**

Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m.

Minnesota author Millett will discuss his latest Shadwell Rafferty and Sherlock Holmes mystery, *Magic Bullet*, and his other new book, *Once There Were Castles*, which features lost mansions of the Twin Cities, including the Dow House in Hopkins. Books will be available for purchase and signing.



We're fortunate to have a public library so close to the Square. There are also a lot of wonderful offerings for children – a wonderful place to entertain your grandchildren or great-grandchildren.

**DUST BOWL DAYS**  
**The “Dirty Thirties”**

Well, this certainly wasn't a popular theme about which residents could write personal experiences. Only three of you responded. Woe is me!

**Gordon Kanten #218** – I can remember those days on the prairies of western Minnesota. Russian thistle was the only vegetation, and it would blow along with the drifting dirt over the fence lines between farms (fence lines were natural divisions at that time). One afternoon, the hired man was in the field with a team and harrow, in an attempt to reduce the drifting. Because it was so dark, Dad had to take the lantern and go out to find him.

**Eleanor Koch # 310** – I was living in southern Minnesota, only 10 miles from the Iowa border, where the land was very flat, and the wind could really blow the dirt. To sleep at night, we wet bath towels and put at least two around each window. That helped some to keep the dirt out of the house. There was plenty dirt to keep everyone busy trying to keep everything clean. Those days were really tough for everyone, especially those with breathing problems. There weren't masks available like there are now.

**Rose Trachy #522** – I lived in a small town in South Dakota during the 30's. It really took an effort on everyone's part to keep the house clean, with a dust storm all around us for days. Russian thistle blew into all the fields and into town. I remember the terrible dust storm on a particular Saturday. It was dark like nighttime in the middle of the day, and we were concerned for my dad, who had gone away on business. He did make it back home okay. The dust storms gave me a horrible feeling like the end of the world was coming.



Ernie Pyle, a roving reporter in Kansas, just north of the Oklahoma border, June 1936, wrote “If you would like to have your heart broken, just come out here. This is the dust-storm country. It is the saddest land I have ever seen.”

A resident of Oklahoma would say of the devastation, later published in *Reader's Digest*: “In the dust-covered desolation of our No Man's Land here, wearing our shade hats, with handkerchiefs tied over our faces and Vaseline in our nostrils, we

have been trying to rescue our home from the wind-blown dust which penetrates wherever air can go. It is almost a hopeless task, for there is rarely a day when the dust clouds do not roll over. Visibility approaches zero and everything is covered again with a silt-like deposit which may vary in depth from a film to actual ripples on the kitchen floor.”

One of the best literary descriptions of the time is John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, published in 1939. Awarded both the Nobel Prize for literature and the Pulitzer Prize, the novel focuses on a poor family of sharecroppers who travel from Oklahoma to California during the dustbowl days of the 1930s, trying to find a better existence for themselves. If you haven't read this novel, it is one that you might enjoy.