

River Road Muses

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turkey facts

—Turkeys can have heart attacks.

—Domesticated turkeys can't fly. Wild turkeys can fly at 55 mph for short distances, and can run on ground at 25 mph.

—Turkeys have no ears but have excellent hearing.

—A mature turkey has approximately 3500 feathers.

—In English, turkeys say "gobble gobble." In Portuguese, they say Glugluglu.

—Some people believe many of the ideas for the way Thanksgiving is celebrated came from the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. This Biblical holiday was (and is) celebrated in the autumn, after the crops had been harvested.

—“Why do we have a Thanksgiving holiday?”
“So we know when to start Christmas shopping!”

River Road Muses is now available on-line at <http://peachythings.com> in PDF format. The on-line issue will publish about a week before the print copy.

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HEART AND SOUL OF YELLOW SPRING “THE POST OFFICE”



Sandra Spaid,
Postmaster



Carol Holliday



Dirk Kenney

There's probably nothing in the way of community services that we take for granted more than our Post Office. The Yellow Spring Post Office, first established in Virginia on June 22, 1839, has a long and rich history shaped by many people and circumstances. Not the least being West Virginia's entry as a separate state from Virginia into the Union in 1863.

The Yellow Spring Post Office, zip 26865, employs one full-time worker, Sandra Spaid, Postmaster, one Postmaster relief worker, Dirk Kenney, and one carrier, Carol Holliday.

Yellow Spring was originally part of Virginia, and the first Postmaster of the Yellow Spring Post Office was Abraham Secrist, appointed on June 22, 1839. Sylvester Rudolph was appointed Postmaster on May 21, 1857. On June 20, 1863, West Virginia was admitted to the Union by presidential proclamation, with Yellow Spring becoming part of the new state. Then, for reasons unknown, the Yellow Spring Post Office was discontinued in October 1866 to be reestablished in 1868, with Margaret F. Rudolph appointed Postmaster. The Yellow Spring Post Office has been in operation, uninterrupted, since 1868.

Following is a chronological list of Yellow Spring's Postmasters since 1868:

- Margaret F. Rudolph—Postmaster 1868
- Asa Cline—Postmaster 1875
- John F. Schaffenaker—Postmaster 1900
- David Giffin—Postmaster 1902
- Vause Whitacre—Postmaster 1909
- Caudy Davis—Postmaster 1919
- Asa W. Cline—Postmaster 1920
- Ilo D. Franks—Postmaster 1929
- Mrs. Lona D. Cline—Acting Postmaster 1931
- Winfred W. Orndorff—Postmaster 1932
- Cecil S. Long—Acting Postmaster 1941

- Cecil S. Long—Postmaster 1942
- Kenneth Elwood Seldon—Acting Postmaster 1957
- Kenneth Elwood Seldon—Postmaster 1958
- Mrs. Peggy L. Seldon—Officer-in Charge 1982
- Mrs. Peggy L. Seldon—Postmaster 1983
- Sandra M. Spaid—Officer-in-Charge 2006
- Sandra M. Spaid—Postmaster 2007

The location of the post office has changed many times too. We know it was located on Rt. 259 in a store at the same area as the burned down Yellow Spring Restaurant. Then it was moved inside the Yellow Spring (Riverside) store, and finally to its own building in the Riverside Service complex on Rt. 259. Peggy Seldon is credited with making a successful case for a larger facility.



Peggy Seldon

Two former and one current Postmaster are still living and residing in Yellow Spring: Kenneth Seldon, Peggy Seldon, and Sandra Spaid, current Postmaster. I owe a special thanks to each one, and to U.S. Postal headquarters for their hard work in researching and compiling old records and their graciousness and generosity in sharing their findings.

All agree that the biggest changes in the postal services have to do with moving from manual to automated systems, and a vastly increased population. Even so, for .44¢, the Post Office still goes to great lengths to deliver mail to intended recipients by forwarding to new addresses, at no extra charge. A pretty good deal!

The postal service also provides free priority boxes and shipping supplies, just for the asking, shipped to your door at no charge. Rates vary among the major carriers (Postal Service, UPS, and FedEx), but, the Post Office most likely will offer the least expensive, yet most guaranteed, service.

According to Sandi Spaid, the Yellow Spring Post Office serves 175 route customers and 85 postal boxes. Only a few are summer residents. “The post office is the ID of the community, and reaches out to every household, whether they use the post office or not; and, the Postal Service provides the most secure avenue of communication the United States has,” so says Sandi. According to Postmaster General Jack Potter, “customer satisfaction scores

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Dave's Musings

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN
NOVEMBER 1955



I recall being pulled out of school at age 10-11(?), unusually by my father. This was the week before Thanksgiving. My dad took me and our dog, "Dutch," Alsatian Shepherd, about 65 lbs. in an old canvas top civilian jeep (J-2A), on a slow 35-40 mph trip (-40°F) to Yellow Spring. The cause of this emergency would be made unknown as we had sleeping bags. I do not remember food. Upon arrival, I saw six large pump fire trucks from as far

radius as 40+ miles. A mountain fire was raging behind the Evan Cline/Farmhouse on the mountain. It would seem that an errant spill of unknown origin, mower/brush cutter/cigarette had ignited fire in the brush on the mountain. The only way to get to it was back pack with river water being pumped by pumper truck in series (1/8 mi±).

Smoke was heavy, 3/4 mile away at our family cabin. It was bitter cold below 40°F with a strong wind. The fire lasted 5 days at least, my family had to pay for damage/cost of 5 companies (food, lost wages, etc.) exceeding \$5,000 (big money in those days).

After about 4 days of smoke/fire/wind/cold temps/5 fire companies at least hope was waning for a good conclusion of this event,

including dwellings. On Thanksgiving Thursday, my dad woke me up to tell me that it was snowing hard (final total 12") which should snuff the dry tender/flames on the mountain. Providential indeed. We were told that if the snow hadn't come (not predicted), then nothing would have stopped the fire until Rt. 50, miles away. We were happy to drive home in the snow and cold, and Dutch, I think, was the happiest of all to get back to a warm house in Winchester.

(David Dunlap was born in Winchester, VA, and currently lives in Yellow Spring, WV. He is known for his prolific writing & telling of many events past and current.)

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started strong and finished the year at record levels," and "customers rated the Postal Service one of the three most trusted companies in America—the only delivery company in the top 10."

My experience with the Yellow Spring Post Office backs up the high satisfaction rating the Postal Service receives from its customers. For example, Carol has, on many occasions, gone above and beyond by bringing packages too large for our mailbox to our front door, up a flight of stairs. She could have just left the packages under the carport, but she walked the extra 12 steps up.

Sandi has also gone above and beyond. In my other, very part-time work, I ship items all over the world, and positively could not handle this were it not for Sandi. She's guided me through the process of international shipping (customs forms and all) as well as saved me money by suggesting different, more reasonable methods, of shipping. She's also helped me learn about several post office services I didn't know existed, such as domestic and global priority flat rates.

Thank you Sandi, Carol, and Dirk!

Post Offices all over the United States, small and large, have always participated in local and national volunteer efforts. For instance, during WWII, Post Offices sold war bonds to help with the war effort. Today, Yellow Spring Post Office participates in the "Harvest for the Hungry" food drive. Nationwide offices participate in the "Operation Santa" program. Postal Service employees have been responding to Santa letters for nearly 100 years making a difference in the lives of children and families

throughout the country.

To read more about the fascinating history of the Post Office, including the first Postmaster, Benjamin Franklin, go to the following web site maintained by the United States Postal Service—

<http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub100.pdf>

KENNETH SELDON REMEMBERS



Kenneth worked for his brother, Lester C., at the Highview Store and Post Office for 9 years from 1933 to 1942. In 1944, Kenneth bought the Highview store and ran it until 1952 when he bought the Yellow Spring store (Riverside). The Post Office was inside the store, just as it had been at Highview.

When Kenneth took over duties as Postmaster, John Schaffenaker, Postmaster from 1900 to 1902, called Kenneth every day to check up on things! That's dedication!

Kenneth is a great caretaker of Yellow Spring, and still operates the Riverside Store, offering everything from milk and gas to screwdrivers and bread!

—When did 5-digit zip codes start? answer: 1963

—When did 9-digit zip codes start? Answer: 1983

—Camels were once considered for delivering mail. Ponies, however, won out and hence, the Pony Express

—Pony Express began in 1860, and lasted for 19 months.

—You can create real postal stamps personalized with your photo: <http://www.usps.com/postagesolutions/customizedpostage.htm>



HAPPY
80TH
BIRTHDAY
WILLETTA
DAVIS!

The lovely Mrs. Willetta Brill Davis of River Road, Yellow Spring, celebrated her 80th birthday in October 2009. In honor of this joyous event, her family threw a soiree at the Capon Valley Ruritan Club on October 11, 2009.

Willetta's son, Kevin Davis, was Master of Ceremonies, and spoke to the gathering about, and to, his mother. He also played a touching recording by Jimmy Dean titled I.O.U., which was well received by Willetta and all present.

Willetta received many gifts of memorabilia, documenting her life. One gift was a beautiful framed embroidery of a man on a tractor with the name Forrest embroidered under the picture. Forrest is Willetta's late husband.

There was food in abundance on the buffet, as well as a "hot dog stand," manned by Sue Davis and others.



Willetta & Forrest

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Bob looking at the advance copy!

LONG TIME COMING

Bob Flanagan and Julia, his wife of 52 years, live in Yellow Spring; and as Yellow Spring proper leans on the Cacapon River, he can be thought of as an "interested party," vis-a-vis our Muses. Bob, who works with The Fort Edwards Foundation in Capon Bridge, drives River Road enough to qualify as a citizen of the stream.

Between docent tours at the Ft. Edwards visitor center, Bob finds time to write a little. For more than ten years, he has written the weekly "Bits & Pieces" column in the *Hampshire Review*.

He has two earlier books in print — one a collection of short essays, entitled "Bits & Pieces," culled from several years of his columns in the *Review* and *The Winchester Star*; and a collection of short fiction, *Peripheral Visions*. Within the past month he finally realized the culmination of some 45 years' writing when his new

novel, *Involuntary Tour*, hit the market.

This first book of a trilogy of the Viet Nam war has been a long time coming. The author began the work in 1964 in Viet Nam. During and following a military and two subsequent careers, he continued the writing, simply, as he is fond of saying, parroting Hemingway on a similar theme, "Trying to get the words right." It might appear a given, but there's many a slip between intent and printed word. And children to raise, and a living to make. Thus the 45-year gestation.

Books II and III of the three-novel set are written; only technical conversion yet to be done for typesetting. The trilogy follows two protagonists, career Army personnel — one a warrant officer, the other a sergeant; longtime friends who have served together a number of times — on a challenging path from the US to Eritrea (Ethiopia), to Viet Nam, to northern Germany, to Bavaria, back to Viet Nam, with side trips to Hong Kong, Bangkok, Korea, and a few other stopovers. His cast of characters rivals that of *War and Peace*.

Bob is already more than 100 pages into a new novel, this one about the Korean War. And there's no end in sight for this writer. Think of all the wars he has yet to work through.

For Bob's books, go to his website: <http://connemaraexpress.org/>

HUNTER'S MOON

The November full moon is often referred to as Hunters Moon, and is often confused with the Harvest Moon. This moon phase will be right on schedule this year—November 2. It is usually the first full moon after the Harvest Moon; however, there seems to be no lack of opinion on what this moon is called, and when it occurs. I've read that it's the "blood moon," or the "red moon." The pictures seem to vary from orange to bright white to red, so I'm including them all. Take your pick. The color you like is your Hunters Moon



Autumn Leaves

Fall winds blow, leaves dance,
pirouetting, sailing high.
Caressing first frost.

By Linda Norby



River Road looking across field toward Cacapon Mountain, 2006



Base of Cacapon Mountain on River Road, 2006.



Real Men Eat *this* Quiche and Love it!



Tomato, Bacon & Cheese Quiche
(Thank you Carol Concetta, litl' sistah)

I love this recipe 'cause it's so easy & delicious, and it makes me feel like a gourmet chef!

Preheat oven to 350°

- 3 lg. eggs (or 4—I use 4)
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 can (10 ounces) Ro Tel original diced tomatoes and green chillies, drained.
- 1/2 lb. bacon, cooked crisp & crumbled
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/3 cup thinly sliced fresh basil
- 1 frozen 9-inch deep-dish pie crust

Whisk together eggs & cream until smooth
Layer drained Ro Tel, bacon, basil & cheese, ending with cheese on top in pie shell.
Pour egg mixture over all.
Bake 60 min. Allow to stand for 10 min.

I also sprinkle parmesan on top (before baking) for a nice golden color (optional). Substitutes can be made for bacon—shrimp, veggies, anything your heart desires..



TIME TO BRING HOME THE BACON—OR, SHOULD I SAY VENISON?

GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY HUNTING!!

If you'd like a picture of you and your kill to appear in River Road Muses, give me a holler! I know next to nothing about shooting a deer, but I can shoot a picture! Have Camera, Will Travel!

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The Davis family (too many to mention individually) organized this event, and what a wonderful event it was. Near the end of the celebration, Kevin asked various questions about Willetta, with the ones with the correct answers awarded a potted plant of purple or yellow mums.

All in all, there were 125+ loving family and friends present. It was a grand day for everyone!



YAMS VS SWEET POTATOES

"In the United States, the term "yam" is usually mistakenly used to label orange-fleshed sweet potatoes. Yams—thick, white tubers with little flavor—are actually not related to sweet potatoes at all. Sweet potatoes originated in South America and come in dozens of varieties; the orange-fleshed ones in question are only eaten in the United States. Yams, on the other hand, are rarely available in the United States, though they are popular in South and Central America, the West Indies, many Pacific islands, and parts of Asia and Africa. Orange-fleshed sweet potatoes have a rich, sweet flavor; yams are particularly bland, starchy vegetables that are best used as a background for more flavorful accompaniments. Sweet potatoes typically have a smooth skin, while the skin of yams is rough and somewhat shaggy.

In the supermarket, you will generally see what is technically a sweet potato labeled as a yam. You are unlikely to find a true yam at your average supermarket, so if you are shopping for sweet potatoes, you should be safe putting a "yam" in your cart. When our recipes call for yams as substitutes, we are referring to red-skinned, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes that have been labeled as yams—not the white-fleshed, bland tuber."

From Bon Appetit Magazine



The 2009 White House Historical Association Christmas ornament is now on sale for \$16.95.

To order, contact the Association at:
P.O. Box 27624
Washington, DC 20038-7624
or call 202-737-8292

To order on line, go to <http://www.whitehousehistory.org/>. If you purchase on line, please navigate ONLY to the url provided above. Many web sites try to lure unsuspecting people by using similar names. Other web sites are selling the ornament for more than \$16.95. Beware.

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How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb?
Only 1, but the light bulb has to want to be changed. (Thanks again, Randy)

"If people are good only because they fear punishment, and hope for reward, then we are a sorry lot indeed." — Albert Einstein

Thanksgiving is the perfect time to give thanks for all our blessings, although we should do this all year. I especially want to thank, Randy, my husband, for his support and encouragement and **patience. Lately, he's been fed more hot dogs than** any one person should ever have to endure. Thank you also to my family, friends, contributing editors and neighbors for supporting and encouraging me.

—Linda Norby

Happy Thanksgiving!