



Irene McKinley (l) and Natalie Lively show off some of Irene's button collection. Photo: Rose Tilton

New Hampshire Circle Of Home And Family

By Judy Perreault
NHCHF

Button, button, who's got the button? In our group, the Halcyon Seekers, the lady with the buttons is Irene McKinley. She has been collecting buttons since the early 1970s. They are all on cards assembled into various books. She shared the collection with us at our last meeting. Natalie Lively and Irene compiled some information on buttons and presented the program to the group

There are several types of buttons – a shank type that has a small ring on the back, fabric covered buttons, flat sew-through, worked or cloth buttons made by embroidering or crocheting over a form, and mandarin buttons which are knobs made of knotted strings.

Buttons come in all sizes and shapes and are made out of all different types of materials: glass, gems, jet, ivory, silver, gold, shells, wood, pewter, and brass, to mention a few. Irene had many samples of these in her collection.

Buttons have a long history and show up as early as 3000 BC, but not as we know them today. There was a buttonmakers guild in France in 1250 AD, and by the 18th century France was the center of the button industry. By the 19th century England became the leader in button making.

Some interesting facts about buttons.

- At first, only the aristocracy could wear fancy buttons. Commoners

had to wear cloth or thread-covered buttons

- After the death of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria only wore black jet buttons on her clothes
- Buttons on the sleeves of military uniforms were to keep the soldiers from wiping their noses on their sleeves. I guess handkerchiefs were not military issue.
- Young girls used to collect buttons for "charm strings." Supposedly once she had collected a thousand buttons, Prince Charming would come and claim her for his bride. (Boy, is she going to be disappointed!)
- Men were first to decorate their outfits with beautiful buttons, especially their waistcoats. Women used hooks and eyes to fasten their clothes and used a few as decorations, mostly on the sleeves.
- During World War II in England, "blackout buttons" radiated light and were worn in the lapels.
- The zipper was a big cause of the button's demise.

Buttons are very collectible, and some cost thousands of dollars. There is such a large supply that some collectors limit themselves to one type, such as military. One expert suggested that a varied collection was more interesting.

Before you get rid of Grandma's button box, you may want to do a little research. You could have some valuable collector items.

COA Needs Volunteer Drivers

By Karen Lester
Kearsarge Area Council on Aging

Do you like to drive?

Turn something you enjoy doing into a way to help others! Many of the people who live in the nine towns served by the Kearsarge Area Council on Aging in New London rely on our Transportation Program to help them meet the daily needs of their lives.

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If you enjoy driving, love to meet new people, and are looking for a way to help others in your community, please give Karen Lester a call at 526-6368. We are happy to work with your schedule and your availability.

Kearsarge Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

By Sally Bergquist
KUUF

The Kearsarge Unitarian Universalist Fellowship held its annual meeting on May 15 at the New London Historical Society Meeting House. It began with a potluck dinner followed by the business meeting.

The incoming Board for the 2008-2009 year includes Tom Maloof, President; Marion Allen; Bob Bergquist;

Ken Preston; Lizzie Klingler; Mike Meller; Sally Bergquist, Secretary; Sandy Wells, Treasurer.

The current church year will end with a service on Sunday, June 22, at Proctor's Stone Chapel. There will be no services in July and August. Services will resume on Sunday, September 7, when we look forward to seeing all our old friends back and welcoming new ones.

Kearsarge Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Reverend Emily Burr, Minister
Stone Chapel of Proctor Academy, Andover
11 AM Worship
526-8213 • kuufnh.org

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