

Rita Norander Remembers Her Father on Armistice Day

Benne LaPlante served in World War I

Rita Norander, Andover

Each year on Armistice Day, I am especially reminded of my father, Benne LaPlante, and his service to our country during World War I. (The name Armistice Day was changed to Veterans Day in 1954, so as to honor all veterans who fought in US wars.)

When the United States entered World War I in April of 1917, my father was living and working in Franklin. He turned 28 that month, which meant he wouldn't be among the first to be drafted into the service. Even though he did not "have" to serve his country at this time, he "wanted" to serve, and thus do his patriotic duty.

Still single, and more or less "foot-loose and fancy free," as the old saying goes, Benne decided to enlist. When he went before the Enlistment Board though, his enlistment was denied because he had false teeth.

Much annoyed, my father responded, "I am going overseas to fight the enemy, not to bite them!" Still wanting to serve, Benne told the board he was willing to fill in, if someone failed to show up at their appointed time.

Sure enough, over a year later, in August of 1918, my father received a call, with orders to report for duty, as a replacement was needed for just such a person who had not appeared when notified. After all, enlistment quotas had to be met, and the number of eligible men was declining, so apparently false teeth were no longer an issue.

Benne joined the US Army and was sent to Syracuse, New York for his basic training. From there his unit was sent to Norfolk, Virginia for further training, and then on to Newport News, Virginia to await departure for the war in Europe.

Finally, the day arrived and the men began boarding the ship, as preparations were made for the journey across the ocean. My father and his unit were on the ship for only half an hour when word was received that the Armistice

Treaty had been signed at the 11th hour, of the 11th day, of the 11th month. The war was now over, and the men marched back off the ship!

Corporal J. Benjamin LaPlante was discharged from the US Army on December 8, 1918, after only four months of service, but he had been ready, willing, and able to serve from the very



Rita Norander's father, Benne LaPlante, dressed in uniform for service in World War I.

beginning. He was disappointed at not having the opportunity to fight the enemy, but our family has always been very thankful the Armistice Treaty was signed when it was!

My father, Benne LaPlante, and my mother, Dorothy Hersey, were married in 1927, and spent most of their 58 years together living in Andover.

Andover Garden Club Holds November Meeting

Future programs and mission discussed

Mary Lou McCrave
Andover Garden Club

The Andover Garden Club was pleased to host Advanced Master Gardener Ruth Axelrod at its November meeting. Ms. Axelrod presented an information-filled talk on "Gardening in a Climate Change" to a room of Club members and guests. She discussed expected global changes in climate and the impacts on our state of New Hampshire.

Future programs will focus on how we can as individuals manage our gardens and environment in such a way that lends support to our Club's mission – to connect like-minded individuals; to promote civic beautification; and to further the education of members in the fields of horticulture, landscape design, and ecologically sustainable conservation practices.

Members enjoyed refreshments and a lively reception preceding the talk, hosted by our new Hospitality Committee.

A brief business meeting was held following the presentation, and the formation of club committees was announced. Keeping true to the Club's mission mentioned above, committees are: Programs and Education; Special Events and Fundraising; Community Beautification; Outings; and Hospitality.

A big round of applause goes to our

volunteer committee members and to all other members for their enthusiasm and support! It should be noted that several new members attended the talk, and we look forward to everyone's continued participation.

The Andover NH Garden Club is a



A homemade apple pie was delivered to the Greenwoods, who won the Andover Garden Club November raffle. Photo: Mary Lou McCrave

program of the Andover Community Hub and is free and open to all. For more information email AndoverNHGardenClub@gmail.com or call or text 603 568-4194.



Fable from page 14

dad, Stanley Mackey, as the model for Saint Nickolas. He loved animals, too, and I felt this was a fitting tribute to him."

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Christmas Fable at the Andover Thrift and Gift Shop during the month of December, located next to the Andover Elementary/Middle School. Shop hours are Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 10 AM to 4 PM, and Saturdays from 10 AM to 2 PM.



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