

THE ANDOVERS

\$4.95

North of Boston Living

**FOUND
FOR THE
HOLIDAYS**

16 pages of gift
ideas for everyone
on your list

**GET AWAY
AT HOME**

SHOP • PLAY • STAY

PLUS:

- BACHELORETTE
CONTEST WINNERS
- LIVE THE FANTASY
AT THE RENOVATED
WYNDHAM

DINING • PROFILES •
PARTY PEOPLE • MORE

FALL/WINTER 2009



6 89076 20722

STAFF & CONTRIBUTORS

AMY SWEENEY
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY



"I really enjoyed photographing the winners of our bachelorette contest," says Amy of her work on "Winning Bachelorettes," Page 46. "What a diverse group of women, from golfers, to bikers, to hikers."

Amy has been with The Andovers since its launch in 2008 and has really enjoyed getting to know the people in the Andover and North Andover communities. She has been a photographer and editor working with local newspapers for more than 25 years.

ROSEMARY FORD
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



In this edition, Rosemary got to tackle a wide range of topics – from holiday gifts (Found for the Holidays, Pages 18) to Boys Like Girls, the band with local roots that's gaining national acclaim (Page 68). Plus, she got to interview the top vote-getters for the first Andovers Hottest Bachelorette Contest (Page 46).

A graduate of Boston College and veteran reporter at The Eagle-Tribune, Rosemary has been working for The Andovers since its first issue in 2008.

JOCELIN JOHNSON DAMIEN
CHIEF DESIGNER



Working on the holiday gift guide has given Jocelin a number of ideas to jumpstart her Christmas shopping.

Jocelin graduated from Susquehanna University with a degree in journalism and started her design career at The Telegraph in Nashua, N.H. She has been at The Eagle-Tribune since 2005 and The Andovers since it launched last year. She lives in Ayer with her husband, Ray, and cat, Oatmeal.

ROGER DARRIGRAND
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER AND WRITER



Roger photographed a "fantasy stay" at the Wyndham Hotel ("Welcome to the Fantasy," Page 60) and shared his thoughts on winter camping (Page 40), along with other contributions to this edition of The Andovers magazine.

Roger grew up in Sutton and studied photography at Southern Illinois University. He worked with newspapers in southern Illinois and North Carolina before joining the staff at The Eagle-Tribune and The Andovers.

TIM JEAN
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Tim enjoyed having the opportunity to shoot bachelorette Bethany Bogiatto for this edition of The Andovers. All the elements came together – beautiful girl, beautiful location and beautiful day.

Tim, a Methuen native, started his career in photography at the Andover Townsman and has been a regular contributor to the Andovers Magazine.

JILL DIVER
STAFF WRITER



While tackling the finer points of reporting and writing, Jill, a newbie Andovers contributor, also learned that quick thinking and persistence go a long way toward getting what you want – even when it's getting a celebrity's attention (Catching Up With, Page 38). Then she got to go shopping for great holiday finds in downtown Andover (Found for the Holidays, Pages 18).

Jill is a native of Boxford and looks forward to writing more stories for the magazine.

CRYSTAL BOZEK
STAFF WRITER



Crystal loves food, especially when she doesn't have to make it herself. So hanging out at Burtons Grill, chowing down on a Burtons Burger and interviewing the culinary director (Dining Out, Page 36) didn't seem like work at all. A Lawrence native, Crystal is a graduate of Boston University and has worked at newspapers throughout Massachusetts. Today she is a North Andover reporter for The Eagle-Tribune and contributes to The Andovers.

ELIZABETH DAIGLE
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



Beth is a freelance writer living in North Andover with her husband and two daughters. She has written for several local publications and enjoys discovering the plethora of extraordinary people, places and experiences that exist so close to home.

When asked to find a local family with rich holiday traditions, it did not take Beth long to come up with the Downer family of North Andover. She hopes you enjoy reading about their unwavering holiday spirit ("Up With Tradition!" Page 52).

SARAH DURRELL
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



A graduate of Suffolk University in Boston, Sarah has been working at The Eagle-Tribune for the past three years and joined The Andovers in 2008. In this edition she writes Then and Now (Page 80) and Those Other Andovers (Page 79).

Sarah began her writing career at the age of 14 when she launched her own magazine and has since contributed to various publications. She lives in Newburyport.

UP WITH



Nicole and Chris Downer with their four daughters: Alivia, 3, Michaela, 6, Abbie, 7, and Grayson, 6 months. In the foreground is a Swedish holiday doll.

TRADITION!

The Downer family holds dearly to old and new customs

Holidays and traditions classically go hand-in-hand. Yet regrettably, today's busy lifestyles often make it difficult to uphold the family customs that for so long have been so dear.

We may not mean to, but in the face of frenzied daily responsibilities it can be easy to let the precious practices of the past fall by the wayside.

In North Andover, the Downer family refuses to be deterred from its traditions. In fact, even while juggling work, home responsibilities and parenting four daughters aged 7 and younger, Nicole and Chris Downer have managed to stay true to the many traditions they enjoyed as children, while also creating new customs to carry on through generations.

Nicole and Chris, both 36, grew up in North Andover. Chris moved here from Vermont when he was 10 years old and began fifth grade at the Franklin School. That is where he met Nicole.

It would be a long while before they would recognize the spark between them as college students, begin dating, and ultimately marry in 1998.

Today, Chris owns the local company Downer Brothers Landscaping. Nicole assists with the business, as well as teaching spinning classes at Yang's Fitness Center in Andover. In the 11 years since their wedding, they've welcomed Abbie, 7, Michaela, 6, Alivia, 3 and Grayson, 6 months.

Abbie and Michaela attend Franklin School, where their parents once walked the halls. But that's just one in a long list of traditions that are alive and well in the Downer household. ➤

By ELIZABETH DAIGLE •
Photos by ROGER DARRIGRAND





Michaela Downer, 6, plays with the Swedish Christmas dolls, called Tomtegubben, that her family has collected over the years.

You are invited



to make every occasion memorable

A large selection of glassware, chinaware, table linens, silverplated equipment, music, tables & chairs, tents & canopies



Special Event Equipment Rental

Proudly serving the Merrimack Valley since 1978.

637 Andover Street | Lawrence | 678.475.7550 | www.ipartyunited.com

"Traditions are important to us," Nicole said. "It wouldn't be Christmas without them."

Chris is Swedish and inherited a family collection of Tomtegubben - holiday dolls. They have about 100 of the little elves, many of which Chris recalls receiving and playing with when he was a child.

The elves have multiplied from generation to generation, as Chris' parents, Steve and Linda Downer, passed them on and extended family members brought more back from their travels.

"My Mom had them growing up. Her mother had them, and her grandmother, too," Chris recalled. "They come from a long list of family members."

Each holiday season, the growing clan of Downer girls and their parents enthusiastically welcome the Tomtegubben. As the story goes, at night the tiny elves scurry around the house to take care of chores and other activities.

"They move around and play and have parties," Abbie said.

The girls write notes to the dolls. And they have begun their own tradition; transforming their personal doll house into a home for the Tomtegubben. ➤

A Better Life.

ATRIA SENIOR LIVING

We offer much more than just a place for older people to live. We build vibrant communities that give seniors companionship and possibility. When people come to Atria, they lead a better life.

*Call today to
schedule a tour*



ATRIA MARLAND PLACE

15 Stevens Street | Andover, Massachusetts

978.475.4225 | www.atriamarlandplace.com

736-37833

Be Sure...

- ... your child will learn, grow and thrive in the important early years of education.
- ... the school you choose will be a good fit for your child and your family.
- ... teachers will truly know and support your child.
- ... your child will become confident, ready to meet life head on.
- ... this will be the best decision you ever made.

How can we be so sure?

Because we're Shore. And you can be, too.



Be Shore.

Smart. Strong. Sure.

545 CABOT STREET • BEVERLY, MA 01915
SHORESCHOOL.ORG • 978-927-1700

“WHEN I WAS A KID,
I WOULD HELP MY MOM MAKE
THE PANCAKES. JUST LIKE THE
GIRLS HELP ME. IT WAS ALWAYS
SOMETHING SPECIAL.”

CHRIS DOWNER

Abbie said they like to write and ask their names, reporting that one elf responded as “Ava.”

“Sometimes we write to all of them,” Michaela said.

Another holiday treat that Chris introduced to his girls is Swedish pancakes.

Chris’ great grandmother came to the United States from Sweden in 1915 and the family recipe was passed down from there.

“When I was a kid, I would help my mom make the pancakes,” Chris said. “Just like the girls help me. It was always something special.”

Every Christmas morning he prepares delicate, crepe-like cakes topped with syrup, powdered sugar or Nutella. Together, the family begins their day with the breakfast that brings back memories for Chris and now for his wife and children, too.

Nicole loves that Chris shares this part of his identity and heritage with their children.

“It gives them a sense of self and helps them define who they are,” she said.

Nicole has cherished traditions from her childhood, too.

To capture each Christmas morning, just as her mom and dad did, Nicole takes a photo of the family sitting on the stairway before everyone rushes to the tree to unwrap gifts.

She says she can remember posing for this photo with her two older brothers, Dave and Lou, each and every year even up until college.

Today, Nicole still loves looking at those pictures.

“It gives me such a warm feeling, seeing my brothers sitting on the steps with the world’s worst case of bed head and wearing some ghastly nighttime outfit,” Nicole said. “They aren’t pretty, but they are always fun.”

With her own girls, Nicole has learned another important thing about that moment when everyone stops for the photo.

“It gives you the chance to take ➤



Nicole Downer crafts gifts that she and her husband, Chris, give their daughters on Christmas Eve. Over the years she has made hand-painted jeans, personalized photo albums and hand-sewn pocketbooks. The gifts are designed as keepsakes for her daughters to carry into the future as a reminder of the holidays of their youth.

a breath before getting into the craziness of the presents," she said. "To stop to pose for that picture - it's a nice moment."

Many of Nicole's other fond holiday memories and traditions were passed down from her mother, Karen Belliare, who sadly died this past June. Karen was a librarian at the North Andover library for 15 years, and a traditionalist at heart, Nicole said.

Every year, Karen, like her own mother before her, would give each grandchild a new keepsake ornament for the Christmas tree. This year, Nicole's father, Bob Belliare, will continue to give ornaments to the grandchildren, now from the very collection that he and Karen used to decorate their own tree.

"Having my dad pass on those ornaments will be his way of carrying on my mom's tradition and keeping her memory alive," Nicole said, "It will be a comfort for all of us."

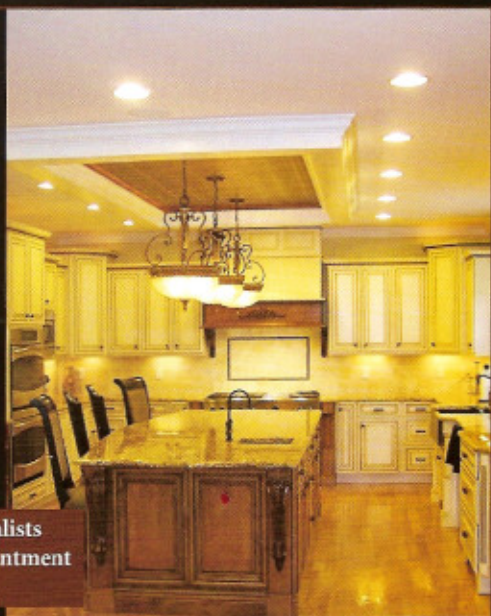
The beauty and pleasure of old customs is enhanced by the fun and excitement of new ones in the Downer family.

Several years ago, Nicole began crafting handmade gifts that she and Chris give to the girls on Christmas Eve. She allows the children's latest interests ➤

Upgrade your Kitchen & Bath...

UPGRADE the Value of Your Home.

Invest in your home with a beautiful new kitchen and bath designed to improve the quality of your life and increase the resale value of your home.



Stop by and have one of our design specialists assist you, or call today to set up an appointment for a **FREE IN-HOME CONSULTATION.**



KITCHEN & BATH

Home Design Center
by CYR LUMBER

Complete Kitchen Remodel Service - Concept to Completion

2 GREAT LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU:

Windham, NH
Route 28 | 603-898-5000

Manchester, NH
545 Hooksett Road

Elegance... on your special day.

For more than 80 years, the Andover Country Club has been providing the Merrimack Valley with a picture perfect setting for weddings. Our recently remodeled function rooms make a beautiful setting for your special event. We provide for you magnificent views, superb cuisine and an impeccable attention to every detail.

The club boasts three large function rooms, each with floor-to-ceiling windows and elegant earthtone decor, overlooking the manicured golf course. The Victorian Gardens are perfect for an outdoor ceremony and incredible pictures. Whatever your desire, The Andover Country Club wishes to make your dreams come true.



978-475-1263 • WWW.ANDOVERCOUNTRYCLUB.COM
60 CANTERBURY STREET • ANDOVER, MA 01810

CoCo
COLLECTION

Boutique
shopping at
its best!

Marc Aurel at
CoCo Collection

93 Main Street Andover, MA 978.470.0632



EXCEPTIONAL HEALTHCARE.
EXTRAORDINARY HOSPITALITY. RIGHT NEARBY.

Bright, spacious rooms. Beautiful décor, gracious dining and engaging activities. There's even a Concierge ready and waiting to send out for a favorite magazine, find (or replace) a pair of eyeglasses and fulfill the role of family liaison. No wonder the adjustment to long-term care is easier at Wingate. No wonder it's easier on both of you.



WHERE HEALTHCARE AND HOSPITALITY MEET

For more information or to schedule a tour, please contact
Donna Ray, Director of Admissions, at (978) 470-3434 X.13

WINGATE AT ANDOVER
80 ANDOVER STREET, ANDOVER, MA 01810
1-800-WINGATE • WINGATEHEALTHCARE.COM

to inspire her. Among gifts have been hand-painted jeans, personalized photo albums and hand-sewn pocketbooks.

Chris and Nicole also have made it a tradition to plan a special occasion for the family to enjoy together. They call it a "memory gift."

Last year, Chris decided to surprise the family with a limousine ride into Boston and Nicole arranged for great seats to "The Nutcracker."

There was a lot going on between Nicole being pregnant with Grayson and the stomach flu creeping into the household.

"We rallied just in time," Nicole said.

In fact, they rallied a bit too early. Upon arrival at The Wang, they were stunned to realize that their tickets were for the following evening. To rebound, they decided to purchase new tickets for that evening, and gave away their original tickets as a gift.

"We loved it, even with the terrible seats," Nicole said.

Nicole understands that it is not always easy keeping traditions alive, but it is important.

"The traditions keep it simple," she said. "Our traditions give structure to our holidays. It's like an outline that we fill in with the beautiful colors of life and family." **A**

WANT TO ADD SWEDISH PANCAKES TO YOUR HOLIDAY TRADITIONS?

RECIPE

- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup water
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 teaspoon sugar

Whisk all ingredients until blended. The batter will be runny, unlike typical pancakes. Pour the batter into a non-stick pan coated with butter. The batter will spread to the edge of the pan. The finished product will appear much like a crepe. They are ready to flip when they become opaque and formed at the edges. Serve with syrup, powdered sugar, Nutella, or even a favorite jam. Makes approximately 8 to 10 pancakes.