

Hello!

Thank you for your interest in my clips published in *The Duxbury Clipper*. When I interned at this Massachusetts newspaper from June to August 2014, I wrote announcements, news, features, and other copy.

As the Clipper is primarily a print newspaper, I am unable to provide links to these pieces. To give you a sense of my work, this file contains a limited selection of my writing from that time (in no particular order).

Please be aware that the documents enclosed herein are copies of first drafts, and they are not representative of my editing and proofreading skills. Spelling and grammatical errors, if any exist, were corrected by me ahead of publication.

Thank you again for your interest. Enjoy, and have a great day!

Respectfully,  
Ian McCourt

Schools 'ahead of the game'  
School Committee celebrates successes, plans for future  
By Ian McCourt

The final school committee meeting on Wednesday, June 18 brought forward discussion of what has worked this past year and what can be improved upon.

When referring to their updated school handbooks, there are overall no major changes to the rules, just minor changes in language to make things more clear, said Principal Andrew Stephens of DHS and Principal Blake Dalton of DMS. However, four years of mathematics are now required at DHS in order to further ensure students develop the skills necessary for college and work.

Lisa Dembowski, Coordinator of Guidance for Duxbury Public Schools said Duxbury has been "ahead of the game" in terms of maintaining a strong code of conduct. Rather than just reporting grade 6-12 suspensions and conduct issues to the state, it is now law to report all issues K-12. Suspensions for students in grades K-3 have to be approved by the superintendent. Additionally, parents have to be contacted in at least two different ways to be a part of the conversation when a suspension is being considered. Students cannot drop out of school before the age of 16, even if there is a job lined up, and parents need to be notified about tardiness and absences.

With all of these things, Dembowski said that these are not changes of practice for the district. She said that Duxbury already contacts parents about tardiness and absences through the Connect-Ed phone call system.

Athletic Director Thom Holdgate said the athletic department is attempting to bring crew on as a spring sport next year. As it is currently under the supervision of the Duxbury Bay Maritime School, bringing it into the school program will allow kids to receive the recognition they haven't been getting, he said, pointing out how under the current system, crew athletes cannot get varsity letters from the school.

The athletic department will not fund the team, as it is still supervised by the maritime school. Athletes will still pay the same fee to the maritime school "just as they do now," Holdgate said. "This just integrates it under the school program."

The committee said they overall approved of Superintendent Tantillo's work over the past year. Anne Ward said she would like to see more district-wide goals rather than school-specific ones, and Mary Lou Buell said she would like to see our programs modeled more for other districts. Dr. Tantillo took a moment to thank everyone on the committee. He said, "We have a good team in place right now...I can't say enough about the teamwork...we have a good thing going." He said that the new assistant principals have helped tremendously, how the new teacher evaluation system has weeded out some non-tenured people and put others on a directed improvement plan, and how new technology with the 1:1 laptop program and the new school will really improve the environment of the school system.

Watch your legs: Knowing which plants are poisonous  
By Ian McCourt  
Clipper Intern

It happens to everyone: you go for a relaxing walk in the woods only to return to red skin and that unbearable itch. Poison Ivy, poison oak and sumac are well known to cause summer woes, so it's important to know what you're up against. Avoid the plant and you will avoid the itch.

The Food and Drug Administration has an article online about how to do just that. Poison Ivy grows as a vine or shrub, crawling along the ground and up trees and poles. On each leaf are three glossy leaflets, which can have either smooth or toothed edges. During the summer, these leaves are green. If there are flowers or berries on it, they will be a green-white or whitish-yellow color, respectively.

Poison Oak also grows as a low shrub and has fuzzy green leaves in groups of three. These leaves are lobed or toothed, with rounded tips. Yellow-white berries may also be growing on the plant.

Poison Sumac grows a bit differently: it is a tall shrub or small tree with green leaves during the summertime. These leaves each have groups of seven to 13 leaflets with smooth edges. There may be yellow-greenish flowers and whitish-green fruits.

Contrary to popular belief, these rashes are not contagious: in other words, they will not spread from one person to another due to contact between those two people. However, if the oil from the plant is on a pet or clothing, it can be picked up from there, so it is just as important to keep man's best friend away from these plants. While most dogs will not react to the poison, it is important to wash a pet with pet shampoo and water with rubber gloves so as to prevent you getting the rash after petting your canine family member.

If you come in contact with one of these plants, wash your skin with soap and cool water as soon as possible. The earlier you cleanse the skin, the less-likely it is you will get a rash.

If however, the rash comes, don't scratch the blisters. Bacteria from under your fingernails could cause an infection, which would be a much larger hassle. To relieve the itch, baking soda or colloidal oatmeal may help. Aluminum acetate will help the rash.

But if the rash spreads to your eyes or mouth, covers one fourth of your body, develops pus or soft yellow scabs, or lasts more than a few weeks, see a doctor. You also should see a doctor if you develop a fever of over 100 degrees.

The best way of course to avoid this is to wear long clothes that cover the skin, but make sure to wash the clothes carefully in order to get the oil out of them.

If you can't take the heat...  
By Ian McCourt

Tennis, golf, biking, running, going to the beach, swimming in a pool, sailing and baseball are only some of many things one can do during the warm summer months. The warm weather also means yard work, mowing the lawn and growing gardens are common chores to be maintained. However, anyone who is outside, whether for entertainment or for home improvement puts themselves at the same risks for sunburn and heat stroke. Luckily, these can be easily prevented and the activities can continue.

While easy to prevent, going to the store and buying the first sunscreen you see won't be enough. In a May 2013 article, *The New York Times* explains the best types of sunscreen to get are ones with the label 'broad spectrum protection,' as that means it protects against both UVA and UVB rays. Many sunscreens only protect against UVB, which causes sunburn, but UVA rays are related to aging, skin damage and skin cancer, according to the *Times*. Cancer.org says that SPF 30 is best, and while higher levels means better protection, the difference is actually minimal.

It is also suggested by the *Times* to not use spray sunscreens, as the FDA worries spray sunscreen does not supply enough coverage and also gets inhaled into the lungs. A golf-ball sized amount of the more cream-type sunscreen should be used. It also reports that endorsements and seals of approval on the bottles should be ignored, saying "The Skin Cancer Foundation gives a "seal of recommendation" to sunscreens, but only if their manufacturer has donated \$10,000 to become a member of the organization."

It is also as important to re-apply, as it is to put it on in the first place. Sunscreen should be re-applied every two hours, or after swimming, toweling off, or sweating. Cancer.org explains that any sunscreen that claims to be water-resistant is required to say if it lasts for 40 or 80 minutes, so be sure to check the label.

Even so, the less you are exposed to the sun, the better. Wear long clothes when possible, as well as a large hat and sunglasses. Being in the shade is a much healthier idea.

This is also true for preventing heat stroke, which can occur when exercising too strenuously in hot weather. *The Washington Post* suggests working out less often and less seriously during times of hot weather. It is also important to hydrate—water is great and Gatorade also helps bring back vital electrolytes. Starting off with water and refreshing yourself afterwards with Gatorade ensures you get the necessary water and salt intake your body needs.

Don't think that you can't take a break to cool down and rehydrate. You will get the job done more quickly if your body is at its best, rather than trying to power through the heat.

Students' health making progress  
Health Advisory Council presents findings  
By Ian McCourt

The final school committee meeting for the 2013-2014 academic year was held on Wednesday, June 18. At this meeting, the School Health Advisory Council presented their findings based upon the bi-annual Youth Risk Behavior survey that all students from grades 7-12 took in the spring of 2013. The survey asked students questions about drugs, alcohol, stress, suicide and sexual activity.

Two different surveys were delivered to students: one for seventh and eighth graders, another for all high school students. It is therefore noted that 'DMS students' in this article do not include sixth graders.

The council compared this year's statistics from those from the other surveys in 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2013 (Note: In 2011, no survey was administered due to budget constraints). These comparisons showed good news: the percentages of kids who said they have never drank alcohol, have never smoked a cigarette, have never smoked marijuana, and have never abused prescription drugs all were at their highest points since the survey was first administered: meaning Duxbury students are making healthier choices.

This continues, as the number of students who reported participating in any of those activities within the past 30 days (before the survey) was at its lowest since 2005. Fewer students are therefore making risky decisions.

However, the subject cannot be immediately dismissed. Principal of DHS Andrew Stephens said that it is worth noting that 43% of High School students reported having "at least one drink" within the past 30 days and 23% of students reported that they had engaged in binge-drinking within that timeframe. 53% of those respondents reported that they had had their first drink between the ages of 13 and 16.

In comparison to Massachusetts and national levels, DHS is "fairly comparable" in terms of the percentage of students who drink alcohol. DHS is about half the Mass. and national levels when it comes to tobacco use and slightly lower than the Mass. and national levels when it pertains to marijuana and prescription drug use. On the other hand, DHS is slightly above the Mass. level when it pertains to abusing non-prescription drugs, such as cough syrup.

What perhaps is more interesting than the previously mentioned statistics is that while 43% of DHS students reported having a drink within the past 30 days, students believed that 93% of students had actually done so. In terms of marijuana, 22% of students had actually smoked marijuana, but students believed that 88% of their peers had likely done so within the past 30 days. This, according to Principal Stephens and Head Nurse of Duxbury Schools Kathy Carney, demonstrates the idea that students believe "everyone is doing it", when in reality that is hardly the truth.

The survey also addressed stress and suicide-related issues. With about 500 DMS students surveyed, 12% reported in 2013 that they had thought about suicide as opposed to 23% in 2005. However, Committee Chair John Heinstadt said that means 18 students had thought about killing themselves.

At DHS, 11% of students had suicidal thoughts—with a pool of about 1000 students, roughly 100 students had such thoughts. These statistics concerned committee members but also raised questions about how accurate the statistics may be—Superintendent Tantillo said he would be surprised if the numbers were truly that high and the school nurses had no knowledge of it.

New to the 2013 survey were questions pertaining to stress: 35% of DMS students and nearly half of DHS students reported feeling stressed “most or all of the time.” Principal Stephens said that this does not surprise him, “knowing how many things kids do” at the schools: 75% of DHS students and 81% of DMS students participated in athletic activities within the past year, 45% of DHS students and 48% of DMS students participated in music or other performing arts activities, and 26% of DHS students and 12% of DMS students participated in community organizations. These stats, Stephens and Carney said, speak well to the shrinking drug and alcohol abuse statistics, but also surely factor into stress levels.

Superintendent Tantillo pointed out that this fall, the school committee will be working with the teachers’ union to create a break during the day to help students relieve stress, while also giving teachers time during the day for collaboration. This design would be applied during the 2015-2016 year.

Lastly, the survey addressed sexual behavior. In DMS, 96% of the students surveyed reported that they have never had sexual intercourse. However, of the 4% who had, less than half of them used a condom. In DHS, 67.5% of students have not had intercourse, but the use of condoms dropped dramatically from 71% of students using condoms in 2008 to 62% of students in 2013.

What the council pointed out as the most important fact of the sexual behavior portion of the survey was that while 125 students in grade 12—meaning the class of 2013—reported having sex, only 79 of those students used a condom.

The council wrapped up their presentation by suggesting to the committee that they move the Physical Education/Health curriculum review from 2016-17 to the 2014-15 academic year and that health education in physical education classes be increased to more widely cover the topics outlined in the survey. The council also said that they will be creating a health and wellness website this year to further provide families access to health-related information.

Big Paws to Fill  
New K9 Police Dog Delta is latest member of Community  
By Ian McCourt  
Clipper Intern

When Zar, the police dog that served Duxbury for 10 years, retired last year, there was a hole to fill in the Duxbury Police Department. That hole has been filled by Delta, a young Dutch Sheppard who was ready to serve his community from the moment he was born.

Delta was a part of the fourth litter from a breeding program designed specifically for police dogs in Massachusetts. But while most dogs don't begin training until they're about 18 months old, Delta was ahead of the curve. A strong and mature leader from the beginning, he was selected to replace Zar at only 11 months old. After beginning his 16-week training program in September, Delta joined the force officially on January 28, 2014—and he's already a part of the Duxbury community.

"He's my partner," said Duxbury's K9 Officer, Ryan Cavicchi, who sat down with the Clipper fresh from the gym, a tattoo of footprints and paw prints crawling together up his left arm. "He's a part of the department."

When posing for a photo, Cavicchi spoke to Delta like any human would a close friend. Playing around in front of the police station, they got still for a photo and a smile almost crept across Delta's face.

Cavicchi worked with Zar for a decade, always in each other's presence--from just driving to work in the morning to facing gunshots. Now the legacy will carry on with Delta, and Cavicchi wants Duxbury's citizens to love and support these dogs as much as he does. "My main goal is to have him be a community dog," said Cavicchi. "Everyone loves dogs."

But as with anyone, human or canine, transitioning to a new job takes some work. To help maintain the program and protect the community, officers, and the dogs themselves, the police departments of Duxbury and Marshfield will be holding a fundraiser on July 25 from 7-11 p.m. at Haddad's in Marshfield.

"Having a dog is a tool for the community for a lot of different reasons," Duxbury's Chief of Police Matthew Clancy said. "For finding missing children, or if an Alzheimer's patient gets lost, having a dog is tremendous in a search environment. From the law enforcement side, if there's a burglary in progress, for example, we're able to get a dog in and rectify a situation where you might not initially want an officer."

But with the added benefits a dog brings to our little town, there are added costs. "With a new dog, there come some equipment issues we need to take care of. Protective vests and things aren't always something that can carry from one dog to the next," Clancy said. "Just like your pair of shoes, they don't necessarily fit everybody."

While police officers get salaries and pensions, police dogs can't exactly pay for their own expenses. The department is looking for the community's help: not only do they have to fund equipment, training, and medical expenses, they also would like to set up a retirement fund, so that retired dogs like Zar can maintain a standard of living.

Delta, on the other paw, has to stay in-shape for work. "They're pro-athletes. Just like humans, they have to be physically fit to get the job done... Like us, they have to keep training, otherwise they'll get lazy," Cavicchi said. "No table-scrap," he said with a chuckle.

But the Officer wants to stress that they're not junkyard dogs. People worry that police dogs are vicious, he said. That's not true. They'll only bite on command on very rare occasions. They're very self-controlled and quiet. When they need to work, it's on, he said. But they're still dogs. Both Zar and Delta live at home with his wife and kids. "I wouldn't trade it for the world," he said.

"I want to point out that historically, the residents have been extremely supportive," Chief Clancy said. "When we've had a need, the response has always been outstanding. We're cautiously optimistic that this fundraiser will be equally as successful."

"We don't know how much crime a dog has deterred. Many potential criminals could just see the dog and decide we're not a place to mess with...It truly is a great fix for the community," Cavicchi said.

The fundraiser for the K9 program at Haddad's Ocean Café on July 25 costs \$25. There will be a live band, "Second Chance," many raffle prizes, and food. 100% of the funds go to the K9 program, and while Delta will not be there, Officer Cavicchi will gladly answer any questions. If you cannot attend the fundraiser, donations can be mailed to the Town of Duxbury, 155 Mayflower Street, Duxbury, MA, 02332 with attention to the Marshfield/Duxbury K9 Fundraiser, or can be submitted online, at [marshfieldduxburypolicek9fundraiser.myevent.com](http://marshfieldduxburypolicek9fundraiser.myevent.com).

Middle of the road  
Sidewalk/Bike Path Committee discusses plans for Alden Street  
By Ian McCourt

On Tuesday June 8, the Sidewalk and Bike Path Committee met at the Senior Center to discuss their efforts to install a sidewalk on Alden Street. The Committee presented this plan to the school committee in April. The plan, according to an April 16 article in the Clipper by Editor Gillian Smith, "aims to provide pathways along Alden Street between the school campus and the Art Complex Museum to provide a safe route for students to get to school." But with the completion of the new school and fire and police stations, questions of funding arose. The committee is looking into non-publicly funded sources, but at this time, no definitive sources have been confirmed.

Committee members Nancy Johnson and Michelle Hatfield met recently with Town Manager René Read to discuss the project. While no confirmed sources of funding were reported, Read will be attending the committee's next meeting on Tuesday August fifth.

Committee member Nancy Johnson also had discussions with Eric Arbeene, the Community Planner with the Old Colony Planning Council. Arbeene is helping conduct the Hall's Corner traffic study that originally began in May. The study is evaluating the number of cars that go through Hall's Corner as well as pedestrian traffic in the area. According to Johnson, Arbeene will also be attending the committee's meeting on August fifth to present findings from the traffic study. Johnson said that the Old Colony Planning Council's report from the study will include a list of funding sources for actions they recommend taking after the survey has concluded. While the study is covering only Hall's Corner, members of the committee noted that the council's report could bring back discussions of a sidewalk on Depot Street, a plan that failed in 2011.

The Rewards of Riding Safely  
RIDE PHAT promotes helmet use with raffle for Red Sox tickets  
By Ian McCourt  
Clipper Intern

As the summer winds to an end and kids prepare for fall sports like football and soccer, the talks about concussion prevention are sure to pick up. But what many young kids don't acknowledge is that you don't need to wear a uniform to risk a concussion; riding a bike or longboard without a helmet is just as, if not more, dangerous than taking a hit on the field. RIDE PHAT is a program that aims to alleviate this risk by encouraging helmet use.

In 2010, Selden Tearse saw one of her kids' friends riding his bike---his helmet resting on the handlebars. When the boy saw his own mother approaching, he put on his helmet, as if it had been there the whole time. As Tearse watched the boy fabricate good habits, she realized that if safety wasn't enough, young kids would need more of an incentive to wear their helmets.

She then worked with a committee of 12 to come up with a plan. They thought of a reward program: give kids coupons to their favorite Duxbury stores if they wear a helmet.

But Tearse didn't know what to call the program. She discussed it with her friend Karen Grey, who informed her of a program in Vermont called "RIDE PHAT: Protect your Head at All Times" which encourages helmet use in sports ranging from skiing to skateboarding. Tearse contacted the founder, Dr. Robert Williams, a neurosurgeon at the University of Vermont Medical Center. Tearse said Williams urged her to use the same name. With that, Duxbury's RIDE PHAT was born.

Through RIDE PHAT, Duxbury Police officers stop kids who are wearing helmets to hand them a small \$2.00 business card that they can use at Duxbury's popular small businesses, like Farfar's, Duxbury Pizza, French Memories, and more. If the kids sign their name on the back of the card, they will be entered into a raffle for even greater prizes: the rewards include Bern helmets, \$25 gift certificates to the local stores, and---most exciting of all---Red Sox tickets. This year, the deal is even sweeter. Four Green Monster seats to the Sox' game against the number-one Boston Orioles on September 8 are up for grabs.

"Kids' faces light up when we hand them coupons," Tearse said. "This year, we have about 150 tickets in so far, so chances to win are really high."

And kids can win---if spotted with a helmet on, kids will be given a coupon by Duxbury Police, or perhaps even Tearse herself, who says she loves giving them out. As long as the name is signed on the back of the coupon and it is cashed in before Saturday, Aug. 30, the name will be entered into the raffle.

The businesses are fully in support, too. Thanks to fundraising through social media, RIDE PHAT is able to reimburse the stores for the coupons that are cashed in.

"It's a town-wide effort. People donate to the effort, the police help, the stores are happy to be a part of it," Tearse said. "We love the idea of a mom saying, wear your helmet, you might get a coupon...if you can be safer, why not?"

Dysfunction at its Finest  
Bay Players present 'Moon Over Buffalo'  
By Ian McCourt

The Duxbury Bay Players debuted Ken Ludwig's "Moon Over Buffalo" this past weekend at the First Parish Church, with Stasia O'Brien at the helm on her maiden directorial voyage for the show. Yet before the curtains even opened at 8 p.m., producer Phil Markella said that "Moon Over Buffalo" was not the show the group had originally intended to perform. In fact, the Bay Players had planned to perform a musical—and when that didn't work out, those involved jumped into "Moon Over Buffalo" with much less rehearsal time than the average show. They were behind schedule. But you would never even notice.

"Moon Over Buffalo" tells the story of a married pair of actors, Charlotte (Laura Howerton) and George Hay (Ted Lillys). They're running low on cash and morale, and their relationship is further complicated when Charlotte finds out that George and one of the other actresses, Eileen, (Allison Porter) have gotten to know each other very well: Eileen is expecting a child. This prompts Charlotte to run away with her lawyer, Richard (Michael Whalen) and George to drink profusely. Things grow further complicated when George and Charlotte's daughter, Rosalind (Paulie Devlin) visits with her fiancé, Howard (Chris Soule). Rosalind's visit makes Paul (Chris Hrivnak), the stage manager and her former fiancé, very uncomfortable. Finally, watching these relationships tangle and increasing the confusion is Ethel, (Marie Miller) Charlotte's nearly deaf mother.

But this isn't the half of it—Frank Capra is visiting to see the matinee of George and Charlotte's show, which gives them their last chance at stardom. But it is impossible to get it together in time. Disorder is guaranteed; it is a family affair, after all.

The ensemble works together beautifully, reacting to each other's choices like dominoes: every aspect of their lives falls apart. Each character is so self-motivated that they each forget how they rely on one another in order to reach the success they so crave. It's similar to watching a good friend make all the wrong choices and being the one to clean up the mess. But cleaning up the mess to one problem only causes another, and it goes on and on. The show is anything but predictable, something to be thankful for. Lillys' performance as George especially entertains as his drunken antics cause misery for his family and hilarity for the audience.

As an audience member, it is easy to see the selfishness of each character and to criticize it. But the relatable nature of the show to the family gatherings, workplace relationships and foolish choices that we all witness and endure in our lives makes us see ourselves in George and Charlotte, Paul and Rosalind. And while none of us perform for Frank Capra for a chance at stardom, we all have goals that constantly seem out of reach.

In this way, individual ambition actually damages the characters. The drive for success causes them to hurt each other and themselves. Relationships are damaged at the price of success, but the success cannot be reached without those relationships. It is a stunningly subtle statement on our workaholic American lifestyle—still relevant almost twenty years after the show was written. The end of the show perfectly demonstrates this moral: that having strong relationships is the true success we should be striving for in life. It is the classic 'money doesn't buy happiness' motif, but the play is not quite so typical—and that is one of many reasons to see the show.

There are two more chances to catch “Moon Over Buffalo” at the First Parish Church: on Friday June 27 and Saturday June 28, grab a friend and share some laughs. Get your tickets at the door or on line at [bayplayers.org](http://bayplayers.org). Chaos is always funny.

The beautiful Duxbury Bay is a place for many water activities, like sailing, boating, and kayaking during the summer months. But it is important to be as safe as possible out on the water. Here are some things Harbormaster Don Beers would like boaters to keep in mind:

- Be sure to watch the weather. If there are predictions of rain or thunderstorms, it's best to save the water activities for another day.
- Similarly, it is advised to not go out on the water if wind levels are exceeding five-ten mph.
- Have enough lifejackets with you at all times. Even better, wear them at all times when on the water, as the harbormasters do.
- When boating, watch your speed and your wake. "Wakes are deadly," Beers said. You don't want your wake interfering with other boaters' ease of travel.
- Always stay away from the shoreline. Most beach areas in Duxbury are bathing areas, meaning people will be in the water. You legally have to be 150 feet away from anyone in the water, even when anchored. Beers said that residents don't always follow this rule: "At Bluefish River and bridge, kids jump off. We don't like to see boats in there. It's impossible to legally and safely operate a boat when [in that area]."
- Beers also said that many boaters travel out to Captain's Flat and Brown's Bank at low tide. He recommended people not ground their boats out when visiting these areas. Especially in this time of year, he said, when bad weather can kick up again, grounding out the boat prevents people from escaping a storm.

'Twas December twenty-second...2014.  
The Town of Duxbury was a sight to be seen.  
College students were home with friends visiting  
to see concerts in the PAC, where students did sing.

I sat by the fire, eating a Farfar's cone.  
Because ice cream isn't meant for the summer alone!  
I was home from the Clipper...the paper was done.  
The articles were written, the printer did its run.

I almost fell asleep on the couch late that night  
When all of a sudden, I jumped with a fright!  
I heard a "bang" outside, what do I do?  
Do I call Officer Cavicchi and K9 Delta, too?

I grabbed my coat and sprinted outside  
My loafers slipping on the snow like a ride.  
The lights were twinkling, the wreaths hung low  
But what is that there in the driveway below?

An old man emerged from behind my Jeep Wrangler  
I called out to him, hoping for an answer.  
"Are you all right? Are you hurt?" I nervously said.  
And, what do I see, but St. Nick turns his head!

"I'm fine, dear boy, my sleigh hit a tree."  
"But, Santa, why are you here? You're two days early!"  
And the jolly old man said, full of chipper,  
"Why, I need my Duxbury Clipper!"

So I gave him a copy, wrapped in another,  
But he said "wait," and he started to mutter,  
"Remember this, dear boy, this town is a treat.  
Whether you win or lose, Duxbury can't be beat.

Spend time with family, laugh with friends  
Because soon enough, vacation always ends.  
It's not about the gifts, or candy, or snow  
It's about love. That's one thing I know."

And before I can respond, he sprinted away.  
He grabbed his sleigh from out of the bay.  
He looked at me, and gave a slight wink  
And flew off...in a Grady-White, I think.

So I sat by the fire, again, all alone.

And I turned to my desk and grabbed the phone.  
I dialed the number, and away it rang,  
"Mom?" I said. "When can you get on a plane?"