



AUGUST 7, 2004

Thoughts to a friend on hurricanes and skeet

YES, I HAVE CANDLES, OIL LAMPS and a pretty fabulous battery-operated flood light that I can read by. I've been through enough ice storms in Wayne to have "the drill" down pretty pat. Also, I've spent at least 35 years entertaining at White Gates Skeet Club on at least one Sunday a year in the original setting, located in the woods at the south end of Rick Haskins's farm. Those were, without a doubt, the most fabulous of times. The camaraderie was incredible. The ages of members spanned the years from shooters as young as 20 to as old as 80.

The club house was no more than a small wooden shack. The floor was raised above the frozen ground level and sported on its planks a Harbor Island Bahamas license plate, which covered one of several mouse entries. The only plumbing was "au natural" around the back of the cabin in the woods. We had a wood stove for heat. It also served as a warming spot for soup. Each member took a turn serving lunch each week, and it sometimes got pretty elaborate. Several members, including my in-laws, the Stones, as well as the Doles, still had cooks and butlers to oversee their lunch-serving obligations. Those of us who didn't have such help sometimes tried to outdo them. I can remember Barbara Farwell staying up all night making shrimp creole. Sue Groenings's spread was always fabulous. On our first assigned Sunday, my husband, Bill, insisted on doing it all himself. He got Tony at the Brass Fox to cater our lunch with a sumptuous Italian feast.

I'll never forget after Bill died, several years into widowhood, when I drew the Sunday date of New Year's Eve in 1979 to provide lunch. Dick Lightfine was president at the time and had really slipped up the assignment of lunch

responsibilities. He had assigned that day to Mike and Jean Orr as well as to me. We discovered the error three weeks in advance and decided to create an unforgettable array. My main contribution was a huge smoked turkey from Drymiller & Kray in Hampshire. Mike and Jean chose to do a whole standing rib. I don't remember what we did for nibbles, but I do recall Jean's homemade bread. We both chose to serve as elegantly as we would in our own dining rooms, complete with silver platters. I brought four of the incredible Irish silver candle sticks from the Stone family compound, Stonewood. It was a gala in the woods!

Not even that now-fabled New Year's Eve blizzard of '79 could stop us. We began around 10 or 11 in the morning. We had plenty of members with jeeps and plows to clear the path from Dunham Road to the cabin. We called all the members and urged them to come in spite of the storm, and we had such a grand crowd! Shooting on that day was slim to none, but there was plenty of celebratory sipping and a grand time was had by all. Dick Lightfine arrived with a bearskin rug and Bob Cave declared that it was a day fit for nothing more than booze & sex. A lot of the former took place, but I noticed none of the latter. Those were the "good old days" in our town. We were truly more than just friends.

– NANCY STONE