

Concord woman shares her memories

By Nancy Bean Foster
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Open up New Hampshire.

Joan Day fondly remembers her childhood growing up on a farm in Bath in the 1940s, and now she has collected those memories in a book that she hopes will encourage people of her generation to wax nostalgic about their own lives. Day, 66, was born in New Hampshire in the midst of World War II. She and her siblings, including Executive Councilor Ray Burton, grew up on a farm in Bath, a northern New Hampshire town that sits midway between Franconia and the Vermont border.

"I grew up in a time when life was simple, a time when family togetherness was important, a time we'll never see again," Day said.

For years, Day has also been visiting folks in nursing homes and senior centers, sharing memories of her idyllic childhood and hoping spark a few memories in the minds of the people in her audience.

"I always encouraged people to write down their memories, to leave them as a legacy for their children and grandchildren," Day said.

And when she retired after 36 years working in Human Resources for the state Department of Employment Security, Day decided it was time to do some writing of her own, and so far, she has published two books.

In 2004, she published "Sylvan, The Gift of Unconditional Love," a story focusing on the bond between a pet and its owner that she wrote following the death of a beloved cat.

Day's most recent work is "Thinking of Yesterday Today," which chronicles her life growing up on the farm.

For information about the event, call the Milford Toadstool Bookshop at 673-1734. For information about Joan Day and her books, visit www.joandaymemoirs.com.

"I have chosen to record my memories so I can laugh about all the things we used to do, both with my family and with complete strangers," said Day. "The fact is that if you grew up during that time, you probably did a lot of the same things we did."

Capturing her memories in book form has become a whole new career for Day.

"I had never done anything like this before in my life," she said. "I have learned so much, and it has been such a joy learning something new."

But "Thinking of Yesterday Today" has also been a way for Day to reconnect with her mother, who is in a nursing home and suffers from dementia. People read to Day's mother from the book every night.

"It has become a very special gift to my mother," Day said. "It helps her stay connected to us."

Day will be in Milford on Saturday for a book signing at Toadstool Bookshop in Lorden Plaza on Route 101A. The free event will begin at 11 a.m.

"We are excited to have Joan share her book and memories of farm life with our readers," said Brian Woodbury, co-manager of the bookshop.

"She can provide valuable insight into the process of memoir writing and getting published. I hope people will want to come and find out what New Hampshire was like 50 or more years ago and the impact farming had on the region, if not the country. People like Joan are a treasure."