

Honoring Veterans in Deed and Not Just Word

Rick and Christopher will lead a conversation on citizenship & service Nov. 12th

By Christopher Holshek

It's gratifying to hear someone thank me for my military service, but after a while it begins to sound like what West Point professor Elizabeth Samet calls the "catechistic utterances of a mantra of atonement" – a sort of admission of personal and collective guilt. That's because, when it comes to patriotism and service in America, there's been too much talk and not enough walk – more of waving the flag than standing up for what it represents.

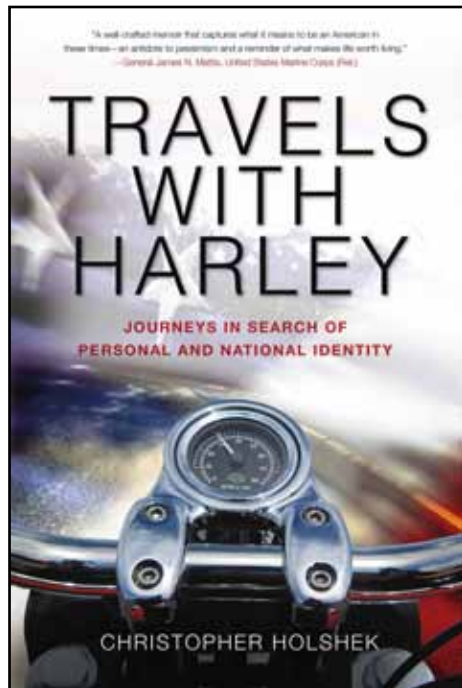
According to the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, only 136,000 of 33.4 million Americans between 17 to 24 are either qualified or willing to serve in the Army. This alone reflects the vast and dangerous chasm in our society between what many Americans most admire but themselves can't or won't do. Freedom, indeed, is not free – but what is enjoyed by many cannot long be upheld by a few. As in sports: talk is cheap; you have to play the game.

Thanking people for their service is not enough.

Giving back or paying it forward

If Americans truly wish to honor veterans and others in public service, in and out of uniform, many who have given the last full measure of devotion, then they should strive to make this a country worth their sacrifices. Whether giving back or paying it forward, the service of one gives value to the service of others, no matter how large or small.

Another way to support those who serve to secure us is to make sure they are a part of us and not apart from us. Soldiers, quite frankly, would much rather be socialized than idolized. This is the aim of Woodbury Senior Center Director Rick Walls' Town-



s4Troops initiative, which helps meet the social needs of local members of the military and their families in our community.

It's clear to me, as a former citizen-soldier, that we need to come to a more expansive and inclusive national narrative of service to face the complex and dynamic challenges of our interconnected world. Service doesn't require a uniform. When we become better citizens, we become a better country – because, when you serve your community, you serve your country. That's what the *National Service Ride* is about.

A conversation on citizenship and service

So Rick and I are teaming up this Veterans Day weekend to lead a conversation on citizenship and service at the Monroe-Woodbury

Honor2Serve Service Learning Expo on Sunday, November 12th from 1:00-4:00pm at the Woodbury Senior Center in Highland Mills.

And you're more than welcome to join us.

The event will go beyond showing how service to others is the best way to honor those who have put their lives on the line. It will explain how you can get ahead by giving back – and by doing so, help move a divided nation forward, starting right here at home. Our long-standing penchant for charity, volunteerism, and bottom-up change is one of the biggest strengths of this great country. And like charity, citizenship begins on the block.

Honor2Serve will identify pathways to service learning and point out how doing good work for others benefits everyone including ourselves, helps us compete in the 21st century economy, and become more empathetic and connected to others beyond our social media and smart phone worlds.

Service to others - Identity

Service to others gives us a better sense of who we are and what we're about, as individuals, members of our community, and as Americans. Another word for that is identity. Without it, you'll fall for anything because you stand for nothing.

And it will help put the *unum* back into *E pluribus unum*. Although we may not agree with each other's opinions, we should respect each other's commitment to community and country—creating common ground for much-needed civil dialogue on the issues of our day.

The presentation and mixer to follow will help residents from all walks in our community in search of something meaningful to do

and organizations looking for volunteers to hook up for mutual benefit. Representatives of municipal services and community service and charitable organizations, as well as other public leaders, will be on hand to help find matches in service learning and professional enhancement opportunities.

Honor2Serve is ideal for everyone

Honor2Serve is ideal for everyone from high school students looking to fulfill their community service requirement to local business owners that want to expand their networks and improve community relations. Community organizations of all kinds can use it as a public information and recruiting event. Let's hope we're just getting started.

Organizations looking to set up a table at no cost for public information and recruitment should contact Rick Walls, founder of Towns4Troops, at the Senior Center by calling 1.845.928.9225 or sending an email to forwalls@optonline.net.

For more information and to register on the EventKeeper, visit the Woodbury Public Library's website at <http://woodburylibrary-ny.org/> or call 1.845.928.6162, ext. 102.

Editors note: Christopher Holshek, Colonel, U.S. Army Civil Affairs (ret.), is the author of *Travels with Harley - Journeys in Search of Personal and National Identity*, and founder of the National Service Ride project, which you can see more about on the Facebook page or at www.nationalserviceride.net. After the presentation, Holshek will sign copies of his book, on sale (cash only) at the Rushmore Memorial Branch of the Woodbury Public Library adjacent to the Senior Center. He will donate half of the day's proceeds to Towns4Troops.



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Sunday, OCT. 29, 2017

2-4pm • Gatehouse Learning Center

We are going to raise the flag!!

Thanks to all of our supporters.

WE MET THE GOAL! Time to celebrate and dedicate... AND THEN SOME: Tom Poutsma, Troop 4 Eagle Scout Candidate. TOM'S PROJECT Outstanding Creative Tribute to Veterans

All Are Welcome!

Veterans, We Honor You. Join Us!

BOY SCOUTS The flagpole will be dedicated to Scout Leader John Simons

COMMUNITY Come together to honor Woodbury

Find us on Facebook: The Gatehouse

Colonel Chris Holshek taught at Honor2Serve Seminar



Christopher Holshek, US Army Civil Affairs (ret.) and founder of The National Service Ride Project, spoke on the importance and value of Community Service. Col. Holshek wrote the book, *Travels with Harley* and the event was sponsored by The National Service Ride Project and Towns4Troops. Photo by Ben Meyers

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Woodbury Public Library

December 2017 Adult Events

By Anita Baumann, Adult Services

Come and share some time with us during this busy holiday season... Wishing all of you a festive and healthy December!

NEW! Meet the Artist Reception ~ Artist of the Month: Judith Askinazi

Saturday, December 2nd, 12:00-2:00 PM

With experience as a designer of giftware involving floral display with fresh and silk flowers, Judith continued her artistry in floral themes using the medium of acrylic painting. Her work will be on display at the Rushmore Branch of Woodbury Public Library throughout the month of December.

NEW! Mixed Media Holiday Card Workshop

Saturday, December 5th, 6:30-8:00 PM at the Woodbury Senior Center (adjacent to the Highland Mills Branch of the Library)

Impress the special people in your life with hand-made, one-of-a-kind mixed media holiday cards! Pat Foxx will lead the workshop, instructing participants in watercolor, pastel, and other techniques to guide you in creating unique cards for your relatives & friends. Materials will be provided. Participants are invited to bring along their own art supplies as well. [Class size is limited to 15 participants aged Teen to Adult; a waiting list will be established.] REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

NEW! Winter Songs and Sing-Along featuring Harpist, Kathleen Finnegan

Sunday, December 10th, 1:30 - 3:00 PM at the Woodbury Senior Center (adjacent to the Highland Mills Branch of the Library)

Enjoy the lilting strains of the harp and raise your voice in song! An instrumental and vocal program of seasonal classics open to Adults and Children - bring your family for a lovely afternoon. A song-book will be provided with the lyrics for the contemporary favorites to be featured in the Sing-Along. Sweets and beverages will be available. Please remain with us from 3:00 to 4:30 to help stuff stockings for distribution to our Troops. [This event is co-sponsored by WPL and the Woodbury Senior Center.] REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

NEW! Writers' Club Session

Thursday, December 14th, 6:30 PM

Share a personally created work of a favorite holiday memory about someone from your past to be read aloud - poem, dialogue, character sketch - you choose the format. The piece should evoke an emotional response from the Club, whether it be laughter, melancholy, sympathy or downright joy!

NEW! Healthy Holiday Eating conducted by Carley Baulick, Registered Dietitian

Sunday, December 17th, 1:00 -2:30 PM at the Woodbury Senior Center (adjacent to the Highland Mills Branch of the Library)

Celebrations can be heavy on rich, caloric foods. Learn about alternatives you can prepare that are tasty and healthier for you, too! Come enjoy Carley's demo of finger-foods, canapés, and hors d'oeuvres that fill you up without "filling you out"! REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

ONGOING! Free Continuing Educational Courses & Online Resources to WPL Patrons

WPL offers over 500 courses and languages through our database system. Access newspapers & magazines; learn a new language; research your genealogy + scores of other resources! See our library website under Databases. For an overview and/or assistance in registering for classes, please contact the Library. Available to Woodbury Residents only.

General Information

Registration is mandatory where stated. You may register for any of our programs on EventKeeper from the Woodbury Public Library's homepage by clicking on the calendar image: <http://woodburylibraryocny.org> or in person at the Rushmore Memorial Branch, 16 Route 105, Highland Mills, NY 10930 (HML). You may also register by telephone @ (845) 928-6162.

Events are held at the Rushmore Memorial Branch in Highland Mills and all programs are open to Adults & Young Adults (ages 16 years and up) unless specified otherwise. Check with the library's website and our Facebook page for current offerings and/or newly added programs. Inclement weather changes and holiday closings will be posted, when applicable. For any questions, contact Anita Baumann at extension 102.

Honor2Serve Looks at the Meaning of Service

The connection, then, to Veterans Day became clear

By Christopher Holshek

The Honor2Serve Service Learning Expo at the Woodbury Senior Center over Veterans Day weekend was revealing in many ways. It showed us what a great community we have. And we learned a lot about the real meaning of service. Although we are now closing in on Christmas this is timeless; and for those who weren't there, let me explain what you missed.

True to the form of a typical National Service Ride presentation, we started off with what my fellow former Army special operator Ben King calls a "mindful moment of gratitude." From data largely supplied through his Armor Down initiative, three teens read aloud, in addition to the names of the firefighter we lost on 9/11, the names, ranks, hometowns, and dates of when 11 military service members from our area were killed in the performance of their duties since. This grounded everyone in the realization that service entails sacrifice, particularly in its ultimate measure.

The connection, then, to Veterans Day became clear. As I explained my last Gazette write-up, if we truly wish to thank these neighbors and other veterans for their service, beyond flag-waving and bumper sticker, then the compact the citizen shares with their uniformed compatriots – military, police, firefighters, and first responders – is to give them a country worth their sacrifice. Service, indeed, begets other service but also validates it – actions, after all, speak more enduringly than words.

What service is about

In exploring the question of what service is about, what it looks like, and what its many forms are, we came to some other interesting discoveries. One was that service does not always require a uniform, nor need to be formal, and can be as common as a random act of kindness – holding open a door for a person struggling to get through it. Service is simply helping others, an act of kindness and compassion.

Another thing about service is that it's the ultimate connector. If people in today's information-overloaded and hyper-connected world are going successfully navigate its complexity and ambiguity, a person has to have a strong sense of who they are and what they're about – identity, or values in action. That moral compass can't come through a smart phone or social media alone.

And by bringing people together, it seems, we can start to move beyond our divisiveness and the self-isolation of our echo chambers. When we see the common denominator of shared values as much as the numerators of our opinions, we can learn to respect each other for what we do and not just say.

Beginning with Rick Wall's riveting account of why and how he came to found the event's sponsor, Towns4Troops, which helps meet the social needs of local members of the military and their families in our community, others stood up and told their own stories of service in their lives, why they have served, and what they got from it personally. It's in helping others that you can most help yourself.

Pathway to personal & professional development

Then came the testimonials from the youth in the audience about their own involvement in the community and we learned that "community service" should go beyond the stigma of punitive assignment from a judge or a high school graduation requirement. For a generation struggling to understand what's in it for them, service is a pathway to personal and professional development.

Community service, it turns out, is the best way for someone to prepare themselves for the networked economy of the 21st century, because people find jobs less by sending in resumes and going to interviews than by personal referrals of character and not just capability. Community service builds confidence and interpersonal skills like leadership, collaboration and communication, and team-building. The greatest equal opportunity employer requires only two prerequisites – humility and courage. There's a place for anyone – the varieties of service learning opportunities are limited only to ambition.

While we were discussing all this, the Boy Scouts were outside laying bricks in the ground for an outdoor reading patio to the Library. Then they came in and told us about their project.

Where municipal & community service organizations came in

That's where the representatives of municipal and community service organizations came in – in addition to the Scouts and Towns4Troops, the Woodbury Lions Club, the Woodbury Fire Department, the Town of Woodbury Police Department, and Woodbury Ambulance Association. The latter three explained youth service learning opportunities, for example, in working right alongside fire, police, and first responders on the job. Then the event broke into a mixer for one-on-one discussions between those looking to help and those looking for it.

In nearly 50 countries, I shared

In my experience in nearly 50 countries abroad, I shared, one of the unique ways of life many Americans overlook is the large ratio of public services performed pro bono than by

professionals. Along with charity, volunteerism is stronger in the United States than in most other countries.

In addition to American identity grounded in an ideal rather than in religion, race, or other human categories, as well as in being a nation of nations augured in an immigration and assimilation culture, this bottom-up exercise in self-governance stands among our country's greatest strengths. It's not its capital that makes the United States of America great; it's communities like Monroe-Woodbury.

The Service Learning Expo was a

great start to what we hope will grow into something bigger. The consensus there was that we need to scale this up, get it into our high school next spring and institutionalize it as a vehicle for both older members of our community to give back as well as for younger members to pay it forward. In that way, we can turn what recently elected Town Board member Jacqueline Hernandez called a "very inspiring" event into a game changer in our community.

And in service to our community, we serve our country and help move it forward.

Woodbury Public Library

December & January Family Programs

By Linda Geissler, Youth Services

Family Movie Night at Highland Mills

Friday, December 29 6:30 to 8 P.M. Highland Mills Branch
Families will vote for and view their favorite holiday film. Register online or call 928-6162. **All ages welcome;** Under 11 with an adult.

Friday, January 26 6:30 to 8 P.M. Highland Mills Branch
Families will enjoy a computer-animated action comedy with popcorn and treats! Register online or call 928-6162. **All ages welcome.** Under 11 with an adult.

Easy * Fun * Raw

Sunday, January 7 2 to 4 P.M. Highland Mills Branch
Professor Sophia explains how to create raw chocolate cakes, burritos, burgers and even candy! Try zoodles with meatballs and a delicious chocolate dessert. **Grades 3 through 12 and their families welcome.** Call 928-6162 or register online.

Programs for Grades 3 through 5

Bits 'n Pieces

Wednesday, December 27 2 to 4 P.M. Highland Mills Branch
Learn strategies for assembling jigsaw puzzles including creating a workspace, sorting, starting and completing a challenging team project. **Grades 3 through 5 welcome.** Call 928-2114 or register online.

World of Reading Travelers

Wednesday, December 27 through January 31 Highland Mills Branch
"World of Reading Travelers" reading logs will be available at the library for those who want to expand their horizons during cold winter months! Register online or call 928-6162. **Program for grades 3 through 5.**
Sunday, January 7 2 to 4 P.M. Highland Mills Branch

Programs for Grades 6 through 9

Introduction to Babysitting Workshop

Saturday, January 20 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. Highland Mills Branch
Learn the skills for successful babysitting from Educator Denise Schirmer. Discover how to babysit safely and responsibly, and how to succeed at the business of babysitting. Certificate awarded. Register online or call 928-6162. **Grades 6 through 9 welcome.**

Woodbury Public Library 2018 winter program schedules will be available in mid-December at the library. Please stop in and pick one up or visit the website at www.woodburylibraryocny.org. Check out our new teen webpage for program information and our new volunteer form.