

Derby Historical Society celebrates Twelfth Day of Christmas

By Patricia Villers

ANSONIA - Bah, humbug!

I'm sure no one who attended the 'Twelfth Night' celebration Sunday at the David Humphreys House would say that.

Each year the Derby Historical Society's event offers us a taste of what it was like to mark the Twelfth Day of Christmas in generations past.

Humphreys, a Revolutionary War hero who was aide-de-camp to General George Washington, was born in 1752 in the house at 37 Elm St. The house is operated by the Derby Historical Society.

Sunday's celebration culminated with a reading of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, featuring the historical society's vice president, Albert 'Duke' Misiewicz, portraying Ebenezer Scrooge.

The character is best known for saying bah, humbug! to show his disdain for Christmas.

Kudos to all who participated in the delightful reading of the classic tale in Lady Humphreys' Parlor.

The event also featured tours of the house led by costumed docents, and demonstrations of spinning, weaving, and open hearth cooking.





Characters from an upcoming SHAPELS© winter story, *The Littlest Snowman*, are on display at *The Ice Cream Shoppe* in Shelton.
- Contributed photo

Writer continues search for answers to mobility issues



By Ralph Villers

ANSONIA - Last August, *I gave a lot of thought* to my physical needs, especially my diminishing ability to transfer in and out of my wheelchair. I never wanted to utilize any mechanical device as an assist.

I finally acquiesced though, and admitted I needed some sort of assistive technology device to retain a level of independence.

So, I addressed my transfer issues by obtaining a Hoyer Lift.

Actually, *I thought* I addressed those issues...

However, the difference between the theoretical and the practical in my case cannot be overstated. How it should work vs. how it actually works is what stymies me.

Why the Hoyer lift (*pictured below*) failed me:

I'm close to 190 pounds, and so we'd need two aides (not an affordable option) to place the sling under me for a safe lift. Such a device only works

well in a nursing facility with lots of staffing.

Since I value my independence I'll skip the Hoyer-style lift.

It had been donated to me and happily I was able to pay it forward to a local woman who can use it with her disabled child.

So on to the next device -a sit-to-stand lift (*pictured above*).

The theory here is the patient can be lifted and moved by one person. Based on the manufacturer's video, it's a snap.

It has not worked after multiple attempts even when assisted by able occupational and physical therapists and aides (and I am working with great people working for a fine agency).

The sling shifts to wherever as it fails to comfortably move me in and out of the wheelchair. Nobody can say why even after working with clear drawings and videos. One of the company's instructional videos ([HERE](#)) shows the seated person wearing high heels - disabled? It appears not.

It can be a little disheartening that certain assistive technologies may not necessarily be a means to the end.

So I will continue to learn and/or experiment with other ways to make for safer transfers. Be it technique or other assistive equipment, I have to continue the quest to increase my independence.

It is a frustrating task of course, yet...

I know many disabled persons who have it much worse - so no whining is allowed. Ever!

