



Volunteers *Delivering the Gift of Human Kindness*

Issue 8

Spring 2003

10th Anniversary – A Decade of Delivering

Holiday Express wrapped up its 10th season with a number of notable accomplishments. Our first-ever **Press Party** was held at PNC Bank Arts Center Reception Hall just before the season's start. Aimed at building awareness and support for the HolEx mission, it was a rousing event with holiday décor, full band, volunteers, crafts and visiting speakers. Panelists included: Father Bob Kaeding of The Center in Asbury Park, Father Jim Finnerty and Barbara Maran of St. John's Soup Kitchen in Newark, Kathleen Dell of CPC Aberdeen and Marly Martinez of Special Olympics of NJ. Also on hand to lend support were Big Joe Henry, Kevin Spence of PNC Bank, plus Greg Arnold and Robyn Stevens of Comcast.

The press kickoff was quickly followed by the **Annual Fundraising Dinner Dance** at the Ocean Place Hotel. Always a rocking good time, the elegant black-tie affair launched the season

with that special Holiday Express flare and fun. Traditionally held the Sunday following Thanksgiving, it was changed to the Sunday *before* Thanksgiving to accommodate the increased number of shows on the Holiday Express schedule.

Better Beginnings, a family outreach program based in Stamford, CT, marked the **10th Anniversary** of our first Holiday Express show. The program is still run by the Junior League of Stamford.

HolEx Trustee **Big Joe Henry and NJ 101.5 FM** certainly know how to throw a party! The Holiday Extravaganza at Jenkinson's in Point Pleasant, with the help of the Rock and Roll Music Fund, was electric and full of memorable live performances by Southside Johnny and The Candle Brothers. The Holiday Express band played over two hours to a packed house and over 1,000,000 listeners on NJ 101.5 FM. HolEx volunteers gathered early

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Spring Time TEE TIME!

Manasquan River Golf Club, one of the most beautiful and exclusive courses in the northeast, is graciously hosting our 1st Annual Holiday Express Golf Classic on May 12, 2003, as one of the club's events this spring.

We cannot yet mention names of our special guests, but we can say that we have commitments from several people from the NFL, TV, music, Broadway, radio personalities, and three major news columnists. Plus we have an impressive "possible" list! To add to the glory of the day, there will be a golf clinic presented by Brent Studer of the PGA. And some lucky person's name will be drawn for a chance

to shoot for \$1,000,000 on behalf of themselves and Holiday Express. Amidst all of this, there will be the NJ101.5 Big Yellow Van and plenty of promotions, give-a-ways, prizes and collectible auction items.

Sponsorships are still available, as well as limited seats for "Dinner Only," featuring performances by members of Holiday Express. Please visit www.holidayexpress.org for more details.





A NOTE from the Director

This November 15th marks the 10th Anniversary of the first Holiday Express meeting (when we actually considered calling ourselves the "Traveling Jingleberries"). Since that initial gathering we have now appeared at 308 events and brought at least some measure of holiday joy to tens of thousands of deserving people.

There is so much more for us to do. I can only guess that the overwhelming cost of warfare is going to deprive the groups we see even more. So it is up to us to be ready to accept this challenge.

2003 will bring lots of new developments, among them: a golf outing, another warehouse move, a new CD. We even own a van! But it will also bring 50 events and we're counting on all of you to get us ready.

Thank You,

Tim McLoone

It is the mission of Holiday Express to deliver music, food, gifts and friendship to the mentally disabled, those living with illnesses such as cancer and AIDS, the homeless, the isolated elderly and others in need of the gift of human kindness during the holiday season and throughout the year.

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Special Thanks to Bessie Halsey, H.E. Webmaster
Photos by Scott Longfield and HolEx friends

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968 Shrewsbury Ave, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

Tel: (732) 544-8010 Fax: (732) 544-8020

email: halex@monmouth.com

<http://www.holidayexpress.org>

A Decade of Delivering

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to setup and offer fun activities to the children. The event benefited St. Clare's Home for Children with AIDS, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation and Children's Miracle Network.



Big Joe was awarded the **Holiday Express Crystal Star Award** on the air, for his many years of help with HolEx. Peter Cancro and **Jersey Mike's** were also awarded the Mary Robinson Crystal Star Award. This new award was created to express our appreciation of those

individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to Holiday Express and is named in memory of the Robinson family's recently deceased mother.

Further on in the seasonal roadshow were the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Boys & Girls Club of Newark. The Make-A-Wish Foundation was new to the schedule, but it didn't take long for the children to warm up to every song and activity offered. The Boys & Girls Club show was done in conjunction with the **New Jersey Nets** and the **Seton Hall Men's and Women's Basketball** teams. The kids had so much fun, they weren't sure what to do first. Nets players signed autographs and both teams' players joined into the hilarious singing and a unique event: the tallest Disco Santas with the shortest pants!



The visit to the Floating Hospital was cancelled, as the shipboard-medical facility was forced to move from its South St. Seaport location. Please visit www.thefloatinghospital.org for ways you

can help them get back to their business of providing medical care to society's most needy.



The annual **WPLJ benefit for Blythedale Care Center** with the Scott & Todd morning team included performances by Joan

Osborne, John Mayer, Dave Matthews and Rob Thomas of Matchbox 20. Thomas was particularly impressed with the Holiday Express back up. Bob



Boyd, Gerry Carboy, Ralph Notaro, Tim McLoone and Roger Taylor tested their true musical mettle when they





quickly learned Rob's holiday tune and played it beautifully, complete with guitar solo by Ralph!

From this star studded performance we were prepped for the **NJ Salutes Our Heroes Concert** on Comcast and two sold-out public performances: at **Count Basie Theatre** in Red Bank and the **Tradewinds** in Sea Bright. The Count Basie show was filmed and included the largest number of people to date

singing the Twelve Days of Christmas. Should somebody call Guinness? No longer a newcomer, Melissa Chill answered the call – or was that Calling Birds, running through the aisles, finally ending with the Drummers Drumming, who encompassed the entire balcony of the theater. This show was attended by those who know Holiday Express best; friends, family and as always new fans. *The Tradewinds show was bittersweet as it was most likely the last performance in the legendary venue.*



The season finale took place on Christmas Eve with the annual visit to St. John's Soup Kitchen. With more attendees than ever, approximately 700, the St. John's and HolEx staff had their work cut out for them. Care packages of food and needed items were compiled; food was prepared and served; tables were cleaned and all moved smoothly as the band played on. Familiar faces danced and sang and family members joined in for a day of giving and thanks.



There was no doubt on this last day of a very full season that this was the place to be; sharing, laughing, crying and being thankful. Hopes are it

is a place carried in the heart and soul throughout the year. *Thank you for making the Holiday Express mission possible.*



Save The Date – 2003 Special Events

Monday, May 12	Holiday Express Golf Classic	Manasquan River Golf Club
Saturday, April 19	Sgt. Pat's Run and Fitness Walk	Long Branch
Sunday, November 23	Annual Dinner Dance	Ocean Place, Long Branch
Friday, December 19	Count Basie Theatre	Red Bank

Giving Partners

As Holiday Express celebrates its 10th anniversary of supplying music, food, gifts and support to the less fortunate among us, we are proud to continue our "Giving Partner" program. Over our first 10 years, we entertained at over 300 venues, and were continually struck by the profound needs and desperate conditions we encountered.

We have been equally impressed by the enthusiastic willingness of both small businesses and large corporations to participate in the mission of Holiday Express. We wondered if we could somehow bring our supporters the opportunity to witness their generosity in action. So often, these companies are asked to make cash donations to charities and while most are certainly beneficial, they don't embody the personal touch that has been the hallmark of the Holiday Express tradition.

The solution to our dilemma was resolved with the idea of establishing a Giving Partner Program. We asked our charities to provide us with "wish lists" of items they could use, but which never seem to get into the budget. The response was immediate. A homeless shelter needed a microwave oven. A soup kitchen requested a stereo system and 50 overcoats to enhance the quality of life for its clients. The lists grew.

We then partnered small businesses and corporations with these charities through their "wish lists." These professional partners would purchase the requested items, then accompany Holiday Express to present the gifts and get to know the people we are all serving. Each time, the result was a mutual exchange of joy and thanks-giving.

As always, we invite small businesses and corporations to join us in the mission of Holiday Express through our Partnering program. If you'd like to get involved, please email Executive Director Tim McLoone at halex@monmouth.com or call (732) 544-8010.

Look for profiles of previous Giving Partners in upcoming issues!

Volunteer Spotlight

When you're talking about Holiday Express and what it does for people, you're talking about volunteers who are secretaries, bank officers, musicians, teachers, doctors, pet sitters, runners, insurance brokers, homemakers, engineers, carpenters, nurses, drivers, retirees, flight attendants and many more very special people.

Volunteers come to Holiday Express because of their drive to make life better for others; others who have little or nothing. Some volunteers are seasonal, some year-round; they draw from their skills and knowledge and their hearts to get the job done.

What an extra special blessing to work along side someone you love, someone to whom you just happened to be married. Bringing happiness often tends to be contagious. When a person gets involved with Holiday Express, it's not unusual for close companions to get into the spirit too.

Here's a look at some very special couples who are working together to make sure that "Holiday Express delivers." Our "Michaels" and "Maureens" tell you about their lives together, and their lives volunteering with Holiday Express.



For many years, Michael Gribbroek and Maureen McCrink-Gribbroek have given much to Holiday Express. Here's a little of what they have to say about their journeys, which always lead to putting

smiles on people's faces and in their hearts.

Maureen McCrink-Gribbroek

HolEx Position

Since joining Holiday Express in 1996, I have volunteered as a singer; and, for the last two years I've worked for the Dinner Dance Committee. In 2002, I worked as an Event Manager. Michael and I also spend a lot of time working at the warehouse.

Aside from HolEx, I am a singer with the *Shirleys*, my second family. I also perform in a piano/guitar duo with Michael in which we showcase our original music. We've found a home base at Tim's restaurant in Sea Bright. Since taking a break from teaching at "Music Together," I give beginning guitar lessons to adults and also rely on my old occupation of plant care, which enables me to spend pockets of time in an environment of symbiotic

nourishment. Yeah, as usual, there's more there than meets the eye.

HolEx Responsibility

As one of my favorite songwriters, Jeff MacPherson put so well in paraphrasing our creator, "Look for Me in Everyone."

Career

I was asked to join the band *Odyssey* in sophomore year at RBCH, by my now dear friend, David Chiarella of Creative Kitchens in Red Bank. Odyssey members included Dave Murphy, formerly of *Black River Circus*, a band enjoying a local comeback today (Rich Cali, also a HolEx volunteer and designer of our fine logo, was in BRC) and guitar player Bob Severini. Bob was my connection into the group *Goodship*, formed as I graduated high school. Goodship included Bob, his brother George, and Dave Murphy's younger brother, Mark (yet another HolEx-er) – all dear friends for life. My association with the incredibly talented George Severini has been a high point and an inspiration in my life.

When I was 21, a friend gave me a guitar, and started me on a journey of song writing, which I continued on. I've been blessed all my life to work with talented and engaging musicians who have helped to spark my own creativity.

While living in Houston, Texas, I sang in the same little pubs as the now famous Lucinda Williams, who I have to count as an influence to some of my writing. I would also cite the influences of Ella Fitzgerald (one of her records was given to me by my high school boyfriend's Dad), Joni Mitchell (revealed to me by my second-cousin Steve), Wendy Waldman (Danny Connair – gentle soul), all the musical comedies and operettas played by my parents, and all the musicians I've known personally or through a vinyl disc.

Family

Dad: Mike McCrink – fine artist and appreciative retiree. Mom: Frances Stafford – life force, my personal vocal mentor, and childcare expert. Brothers: Michael – fine artist, songwriter, house renovation specialist; James – indispensable specialty carpenter and Cirque du Soleil stagehand; Timothy – inventor, carpenter, drummer and songwriter. Sisters: Maggie – CPA and general dry humor queen of the family; Mary – brilliant singer, songwriter and HolEx member; Patricia – AT&T engineer, soulful singer and peach.

How did you get involved in HolEx?

I have known Tim McLoone for many years, going back to the old days (circa 1971) at Lock, Stock, and Barrel in Fair Haven where we both performed – Tim on the grand piano by the fireplace and I with the group Goodship at the same piano. I was invited to join Holiday Express after moving back to New Jersey in the summer of '96.

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Michael and Maureen Staub are one of those couples who, if you blink, you'll miss them. Constantly on the run (as are many HolEx families), the whole family gets involved at the HolEx events and at the warehouse too.

Maureen Staub

Position

I am on the Board of Holiday Express, event manager, assistant event manager and volunteer.

Responsibility

I consider myself a Holiday Express cheerleader. When I see an opportunity to promote Holiday Express and find a potential volunteer or sponsor or group we should be visiting, I don't hesitate to ask.

Career

I am president of Shore Rentals, Inc. We own and operate Avis Rent A Car in 12 locations in Monmouth, Ocean, Mercer and Middlesex Counties and we've been doing it for 43 years. It's a family business that my father began in 1960. My father, husband, two brothers, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, two nephews and a cousin are all part of our staff. Nothing like family togetherness!

Family

Michael and I met while being students at Notre Dame, though our dating did not start until the end of our senior year. Michael says I wouldn't have survived his college years! We have two boys. Timmy is 14 and is a student at Cedar Drive School in Colts Neck. He is looking forward to attending CBA next year. Danny is seven and is a second grader at Oak Hill Academy.

How did you get involved in Holiday Express?

I believe it was 1993 and I was in charge of a Christmas Party for the *Boys and Girls Club of Newark*, which I had been running since 1987. We were hosting 1000 children at Seton Hall and I was looking for something new for the party. I read about Tim and Holiday Express so I tracked him down and asked if Holiday Express would come. They came and I got hooked.

What do you find the most challenging?

The biggest challenge for me is juggling work, family and wanting to do as many Holiday Express events as I can. I find myself coming into work early so I can sneak off on my lunch hour to work a noontime event and get back in time to finish the day and be home for our boys.

What is your most memorable Holiday Express moment and how has it affected your life?

Holiday Express puts my life in perspective. If things in my life get to a point where I am contemplating a personal pity party, all I have to do is go to a Holiday Express event, and I remember how good I have it.



If we're not in season, it's not too hard to remember what I've seen and experienced. I might be overwhelmed because I've over-scheduled myself, but then I remember our guests at Matheny who are prisoners in their bodies and wish they could have my schedule to pass the time.

I was fortunate enough to attend the event at Columbine High School. I say I was fortunate because my life has been changed because of it. I learned what a "gift to mankind" Holiday Express is. The musical cheer we brought to the Littleton community helped ease them into the Christmas season. They discovered that it was okay to sing and smile and dance again. Each year we visit so many people in our 30-day season who are victims of unfortunate circumstances; for some it's health problems, for others just a turn of

bad luck. Regardless, we are able to spend two hours with them and give them a "vacation" from their every day lives. Hopes are, the memory of their time with the Holiday Express elves will keep them going.

Holiday Express is a Christmas gift I give to myself.

Michael Staub

Position

Assistant event manager, volunteer and whatever else needs to be done, picked up or delivered.

Responsibility

Anything that needs to get done. I'm a go-to guy.

Career

Vice President of Shore Rentals – a franchise of Avis Rent A Car.

Family

I've been married to Maureen for 20 blissful years. We have two terrific sons, Tim age 14 and Danny age 7.

When did you get involved?

When my wife got the bug for Holiday Express it was contagious. I was helping her with a Boys and Girls Club Christmas Party in 1993 and that's when Holiday Express came into our lives.

What do you find most challenging?

Saying no to Maureen. Amy or Joan will call Maureen to get a truck and the next thing you know I'm the truck driver!

What is the most memorable Holiday Express Moment?

The event held for the 9/11 families in 2001 is one of my most memorable. The event had snafu written all over it. The guests were unsure if they should celebrate Christmas. Most of the Holiday Express volunteers were walking around on eggshells. Then the Holiday Express magic kicked in. Tim and the band were able to get the children involved and slowly but cautiously the adults joined in. I honestly believe that many of the guests did not want to go home when the event was over. One of the moms came over to my wife and thanked her because we showed her it was okay to celebrate Christmas.

Volunteer Spotlight (continued from page 5)

What do you find the most challenging?

Filling out forms such as this one, and the ones Amy is still waiting for from last season. Keeping my voice intact and staying genuinely focused on achieving our purpose.

What is your most memorable HolEx moment and how has it affected your life?

When we did the Count Basie show immediately following 9-11-01, I found myself affected in a unique and profound way. After all the shows we've done for others, this time, we were singing for ourselves as much as anyone else.

Michael Gribbroek

Position

1st (and only) trumpet with the Atlantic Coast Band, featuring the Shirleys and part of the HolEx horn section.

Responsibility

Live up to the musical standards set by Miles Davis and Bill Evans. Check the surf every morning and surf if necessary.

Career

I have been a professional musician most of my life. My first paying "gig" was with the "Golden Horseshoe Revue", a seedy burlesque show that single-handedly killed burlesque. My mother was mortified. Things got better after that and while in college (at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN), I played behind such notables as Johnny Mathis, Andy Williams and their ilk. In the late 70's, I came to New York where I lived and worked for 18 years playing with everyone from Larry Elgart to Paul Butterfield. In 1995, I fled NYC for the pastoral bliss of the Jersey Shore. I earned my Master's Degree in Jazz Performance from the Manhattan School of Music in 2001 and am now officially overqualified for any number of jobs, at least one of which I hope to get soon.

Family

I have one sister who lives in Rochester and is the County Clerk. She's a conser-

vative Republican who likes Wayne Newton and Cher. Yes, we actually did come from the same parents. Try and figure that one out!

How did you get involved in HolEx?

I was kidnapped by Rick Brunermer, HolEx sax player in 1977 (just kidding). Actually, I did a "gig" with Rick and despite having heard me play, he asked me to join.

What do you find the most challenging?

Explaining to people why I surf all winter.

What is your most memorable HolEx moment and how has it affected your life?

Holiday Express to me is a fabric of so many marvelous moments that I would find it hard to distill it down to just one. Let's just say I am glad to have been a part of it and consider it one of the truly worthwhile things I have ever done. Obviously, meeting Maureen doing HolEx is probably the highlight, not only of my HolEx career but my life in general.



2002



A NOTE to the Volunteers

Holiday Express is comprised of extraordinarily talented and dedicated people...you! Our schedule of 50 shows (thanks, Tim!) has stretched our volunteer base very thin. Although most of our weekend and weeknight shows are adequately staffed, we are *in need of more weekday volunteers*. We also need more people ready to step up and become event managers. Quite frankly, we keep asking the same people to do more and more shows.

We also need more volunteers *with specific talents*. We need writers, marketing and advertising experts, face painters, balloon animal creators, and more.

Our clients are counting on us. We're counting on you.

Thank You as Always,
Beth McLoone, Volunteer Coordinator

Holiday Express CDs – Still Available OnLine!

Choose from the following CDs...or order both!

- ✓ Holiday Express Live at Columbine CD (recorded live in December 1999)
- ✓ Holiday Express Greatest Hits (all your favorites on one lively CD)

www.oglio.com



A Decade of Delivering

Holiday Express



Delivering Year-Round

Holiday Extensions is underway and needs your help! As many of you already know, Holiday Extensions is what Holiday Express does in its "off season." We have food drives at various locations such as churches, schools, businesses, etc. to collect food for distribution to many of the places we visit during our "on season."

Some places we go to are: The Center in Asbury Park, St. John's in Newark, Lunch Break of Red Bank, Eva's Kitchen and St. Paul's of Patterson, St. Mark's, and many others.

If you have a location that you think would be willing to do a food drive, please contact me as soon as possible and we can discuss the details. We usually like to do these drives at the beginning of a month so that the food can be sorted here at the warehouse, and then delivered to it's designated location by the end of the month.

Thanks so much for your support!
Amy Robinson,
Executive
Administrator

Sgt. Pat's 5K Run and 2 Mile Fitness Walk

On Saturday, April 19, 2003 the Jersey Shore Running Club will hold its Fourteenth Annual 5K Run on the promenade and boardwalk in Long Branch. Since 1998, the event has honored and remembered slain Long Branch Police Officer Sergeant Patrick King, husband of HoEx Volunteer, Maureen King.

The 5K race course is completely flat and fast. There is also a Two Mile Fitness Walk along the same course, and kid's races of various distances. T-shirts will be given to participants. Everyone will enjoy the post-race refreshments while awaiting the awards ceremony, raffles and grand prize drawing. All are then invited to a free post-race Pasta Party at the Celtic Cottage in Long Branch.



Portions of the net proceeds will benefit two Patrick King Scholarship Funds awarded to local high school graduates at Long Branch High School and Shore Regional High School; and a portion will also be donated to Holiday Express.

Post-Registration will take place the day of the race beginning at 9:30 am. Entry forms can be downloaded from the website: www.jsrc.org. Contact Race Director Philip Hinck, 732-571-2162 for further information.

We deeply appreciate your generosity – without it, Holiday Express could not deliver.



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