

Dear Barb,

Before the big snow this weekend, let me treat you to comfort food, some fascinating history, and more at my favorite restaurant!

**Yes, we have found our happy place to dine—The Common Man in Merrimack**

How could we have a favorite restaurant already, you might ask. It has only been a few months since we moved from Texas to New Hampshire.

Actually, we found it quite by accident. We were taking a load of furniture to a climate-controlled storage locker we rented in Merrimack. As I told you on the phone, we had no idea how much stuff just wouldn't fit in our new apartment after living in a big house for all those years.

Anyway, The Common Man is located in an interesting New England-style building just a mile before the storage facility. We had driven by it a few times and wondered what it was. Was this a shop of some kind? It certainly looked interesting, and there were always many vehicles parked around the place.

Then one day, I noticed a sign advertising dinner specials for Halloween. Aha--A restaurant! Tom and I decided we must try it. We planned our next trip to the storage locker to coincide with lunch time.

And what a treat! We were hooked from the moment we walked up to the front entrance and saw this sign:



You know what a history buff Tom is—you're one, too. He put a note in his phone to find out who James Thornton was. ***But more on that later.***

The hostess seated us in what has to have been the main part of the old tavern. The furnishings were Early American, **the style I know you love**. The waiter was wonderful—quite helpful and attentive. And it was such fun when he presented the check as a bookmark in an old volume of poetry.

## But the best thing of all was the food!

The management calls it comfort food for a reason. I had grilled salmon that was as good if not better than what I had in Seattle. With it came the most delicious, creamy mashed potatoes and a big serving of fresh green beans—think of those beans we had to pick all the time as kids and how delicious they were when your mom cooked them. My meal was so good, I do not even remember what Tom had!

Since that first experience at The Common Man, we have been back **twice**. Each time we were seated in a different part of the restaurant. The smaller seating areas were former rooms of the restored house. Tom liked the library the best. Here he is trying to look serious.



I loved the solid wood floors and the beautiful staircases which led to a separate lounge area above. We checked that out, too.

On our way out of the apartment with Daniel the day after Thanksgiving, we met a young couple in the elevator. We all parted company in the garage.

Imagine our surprise when we got to The Common Man and were seated right across the room from them! We discovered that the young woman had driven up from Boston to go with her boyfriend to **their favorite restaurant**—you guessed it—**The Common Man!** Cool.

Back to comfort food. A few of the most popular menu items are pot roast, a homemade chicken pot pie, and a tempting casserole of mac and cheese with barbecued pulled pork. I may try that last one next.

One dish I have tried for lunch is the grilled chicken tzatziki wrap. Delicious. Oh, and then Tom tried something I know you like—the French onion soup. He said it made him remember how much he loved to order it as a kid when his parents took them out to dinner.

The wine list is very nice—**there is plenty of Chardonnay for us, Barb—even your favorite**. And if I were a consumer of cocktails, I would be on Cloud 9 with all the interesting concoctions offered.

THEN THERE IS DESSERT...I will just let you be surprised.

But back to the first picture. We wondered who this James Thornton was, so Tom did an online search. And this is really neat!

James Thornton was actually the father of Matthew Thornton, the former owner of the house that was restored to be part of the current restaurant. They all came from Limerick, Ireland.

But get this—**Matthew Thornton was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.** This is truly a historical property! Good material for a novel set in New England, right?

Oh, and I almost forgot. I remember how much you loved ghost stories when we were kids. I read online that some of the employees of The Common Man think the place is haunted. Maybe they told some stories with their Halloween specials!

**So how does all this tie in with a tavern? Remember the plaque in the picture above?**

If you want to hear more, join me for dinner Thursday night at 5 right here in Merrimack.

*And bring your toothbrush just in case.*

The Weather Channel is predicting that snow storm to move in by Friday night. Even if you spend the night with us, you can still make it back across the Maine border before it hits.

**I am so glad we are finally living within driving distance of each other, Dear Cousin!**

Until Thursday,

Carolyn