

## **Painting Harman's Store**

*Teaching English as a foreign language involves lots of writing, reading, speaking, listening and correcting papers so I enjoy doing something that is physically challenging during my vacation. During two different summer vacations, I've scraped and painted my parents' two-story wooden house on Martha's Vineyard. When I learned that my friend, Brenda, was painting Harman's Country Store, I invited myself to Sugar Hill for part of my vacation.*

*I really enjoy the challenge of climbing ladders and scraping off the old paint, it makes me feel young again. I like the smell of spreading fresh paint on wooden shingles and as I'm perched on the ladder with a paint brush in hand, the warmth of sunshine is very relaxing. There is real satisfaction to see the barn-red walls with sparkling white trim when we finish a section. When working on the front of the store, we often had local characters stopping to give us advice or make amusing comments on the progress of the painting.*

*Every morning and evening of the painting adventure we kept an eye out for moose or bear. But the wildlife of Sugar Hill were shy of making an appearance. Perhaps the aroma of fresh paint kept them away. I began to tease Brenda that moose were mythical creatures that New Englanders invented like the Loch Ness monster; just to entice the tourists. On the morning of my departure, Brenda made a brief prayer for my safety on the road and added a request for a moose sighting! Driving to the bus stop, we were amazed to see a huge Bull Moose standing in the middle of a misty meadow. He did appear like a mythical creature with a fine rack of antlers, as he slowly turned his head to gaze at the humans in the car.*

*We never solved the conundrum of whether to use a primer-coat or two coats of the same paint, to make the color last longer. Opinions varied about what was the best thing to do. But seeing that moose, not a mirage, was a great culmination of a wonderful visit to Sugar Hill and Harman's Country Store.*

Memory from: Jean Baird – JainZha, Qinghai Province  
People's Republic of China

Jean did offer a recipe but her skills with words and a paintbrush far outweigh her kitchen skills so I chose the memory over the recipe.

It took me three years to paint the store so more than one friend ended up with a paintbrush. I worried a few people with my pink primer paint and had to hurriedly cover it with red to keep things calm. I also lost a few years when, unbeknownst to me, a customer climbed the ladder and then startled me as he voiced his opinion! It took several days before I could concentrate on painting again. All in all, it was an interesting experience to paint a building that so many people like you, have an attachment to.

– Brenda