



The Kimball Farms



Observer



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A Musical Reunion, After 63 Years

On the morning of January 30th, 2022, in Hudson, Mass., Linda Palmer was pampering herself, staying in her warm bed longer than usual. It was her birthday, and she was enjoying the indulgence. She was on her phone, randomly Googling the names of people she knew, when all at once she came across an article about the Berkshire Concert Choir and its director, John Cheney.

John Cheney! She was thrilled to find out that he was still alive and where he was: in the Berkshires, not that far away. Looking further, Linda found that John had retired as the organist and choir director of the Church on the Hill in Lenox, so later that day she called the pastor of the church and learned John's phone number as well as the news that he was living at Kimball Farms. Then Linda called her brother Kenneth, now living with his wife Marissa in Pacific Grove, Calif., with the news. They decided to make a pilgrimage to visit John in Lenox, which actually took place at the end of July.

It had been 63 years since Linda and Ken had last seen John, at James Connally Air Force Base in Waco, Texas. From 1956 to 1959, Linda's father, Captain Thaddeus Kobylenski, was stationed there with his wife Rae, and their three children: Eileen age 12, Linda, 10, and little brother Kenneth, 6 years old.

John had completed two years at Ohio Wesleyan when he enlisted in the Air Force for a four-year tour

of duty. He was stationed in Oklahoma and then in Waco. He liked Waco so much that he decided to become "indispensable" to the base by learning to type, but when it was discovered that he could play the organ, he was reassigned to the chaplain as the organist at the base chapel.

Now John became indispensable through music: He organized a glee club for the Air Force cadets on the base, and another for the WAFs (Women in the Air Force). He was the only man on the base allowed on the second floor, where the women were housed and the WAF chorus rehearsed.



Ken Kobylenski, Linda Palmer and John Cheney at the Kimball piano, singing Gilbert and Sullivan songs.

He also sang in a barbershop group and performed with a drama group. There came a time when he was to be sent overseas, but the Chaplain intervened to keep him at the base, and another sergeant was sent instead.

When the news of John's musical talents spread, families on the base asked him to give piano lessons to their children. Among the first was the Kobylenski family, whose daughters Eileen and Linda were signed up right away. Eventually, John had 16 students.

When his Air Force enlistment was over in 1956, he stayed in Waco, went to Baylor University to finish his undergraduate degree in the music department, and continued to give lessons to children on and off the Air Force Base.

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(Cheney, Continued from page 1)

Linda Palmer has vivid memories of those lessons. “It was in 1956. The piano was in Ken’s bedroom,” she remembers, “and John would come after school to work with Eileen and me, but after a couple of years, Ken insisted that he wanted to have lessons too, even though he was only 6. John would sit in a chair next to the piano. He didn’t wear his uniform while he was giving lessons.”



From left, Ken Kobylenski, mother Rae, Linda and Eileen in 1956.

“As a teacher, John let you do the work. He would ask what you had practiced and then said, play it. My last lesson with John was very bad. I was embarrassed because I hadn’t practiced. John was the greatest influence of our lives, even more than our school teachers. We had two years of sitting with him and wanting to do well – except for that last lesson.”

John’s swan song was a recital by his pupils at an auditorium at Baylor. Linda and her sister played, but Ken was too young to participate.

Music has continued to be a focus of Linda’s life. Her husband, the late Anthony Palmer, was a conductor of choruses throughout his career and was professor of music at Boston University, and now Linda has bought a “clavinova,” an electronic keyboard instrument, so she can resume taking lessons. Coincidentally, John Cheney was at BU for four years, earning a Master of Sacred Music degree, after leaving Texas.

Ken was an enthusiastic student too. He can still sing many of the pieces he learned to play, and he brought the sheet music for several of them with him. “Once you have a love of music,” he says, “you never forget it. Our family almost always had a piano.” After John left Waco, the children didn’t take lessons until four or five years later at another military base.

One of John’s vivid memories of the lessons was that Mrs. Kobylenski thought he was too thin, so she made him a peanut butter and jelly sandwich each time he came to the house.

When Linda, Ken and Marissa arrived for their visit in the Berkshires, they had a full schedule planned by John. “When they arrived, I recognized them right away, even though it had been more than 60 years, when they were children,” said John. “There were lots of shared memories and reminiscences while we got reacquainted. It was quite overwhelming.”

He had planned dinner at Zinc in Lenox, continuing with a Tanglewood concert by English pianist Paul Lewis playing Beethoven concertos. The next day, the group visited Naumkeag in Stockbridge, the former home of Joseph and Caroline Choate and now a property of the Trustees of Reservations, which has extensive gardens designed during the first half of the 20th century by Boston landscape architect Fletcher Steele working with Mable Choate, who inherited the property from her parents, Joseph and Caroline Choate.

“We spent an afternoon in the auditorium at Kimball Farms, where we played the piano and sang Gilbert and Sullivan songs. I was bowled over by his skill,” John raved, “Ken plays beautifully, and wanted to sing through the whole of ‘HMS Pinafore! It was a lot of fun. His career was in finance, but he has continued to play since we were in Waco.”

The visitors departed with notated volumes of Beethoven sonatas from John’s library, but leaving promises to stay in touch, and memories to tide them over for another 63 years.

Susan Dana

President's Report: A Talk with Mike Paglier

Mike Paglier, our Director of Food and Nutrition, is a chef in his own right, but he does not do the daily cooking at Kimball Farms as he is responsible for the kitchen staff, the wait staff, menus, ordering food and supplies and the overall functioning of the dining room to include its ambiance. Mike has stated that his goal is culinary satisfaction.

After a one-year period of dining in our apartments and a long year and a half of experience requiring reservations, the Independent Living residents are now dining with no reservations required, using a buffet style service. Mike has made this change to allow for more tables to be available and eliminate the reservation requirement. Many residents have made favorable comments with this change. The buffet service will most likely continue until such time as the kitchen and wait staffing reach the desired level for full service.

During the height of the pandemic some kitchen and wait staff decided to leave for various reasons. This depletion led to a reduction of tables and the requirement for reservations. The hiring of new staff has been challenging and difficult for Mike. This condition is pervasive across the nation with no end in sight. Mike says he receives a stack of applications regularly but only a few show up for an interview. The Kimball Farms administration has ramped up its recruiting efforts by hiring a full-time recruiter and increasing advertising. This has been a frustrating process for all the departments at Kimball Farms.

Mike has a small, dedicated staff and, together with new hires, they are able to provide a satisfactory dining experience. To further complicate the staffing, several of our younger wait staff will be leaving to attend school this fall. Mike feels confident he can maintain the present level of service

as a few new hires have come in and, hopefully, the increased recruiting efforts will bring in more.

Opening the dining to full capacity of 100 seats and pre-pandemic hours, and opening the Pub, will come about as soon as the numbers reach the desired level. As Mike states, the key is adequate staffing in both the kitchen and the dining room.



Joelynn Lauterwasser and Austin Martin await diners at the buffet line.

Mike also points out that while staffing is improving, inflation and supply chain issues are making his job even more difficult. The IL (Independent Living) residents' dining room serves 125-plus meals daily and a total of 325 every day, including to IL residents, Pine Hill, LEP and the staff.

The pandemic brought about many problems and Mike wants to thank all the residents for their patience and understanding these last two and a half years. He tried to make life more bearable under stressful conditions. His Tiki Bar that traveled to various spots in the building was one example of a welcome break. Enlarging the patio outside the dining room was another innovation, which is well used and

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Ode to the Kitchen

All hail Lori, Mike and Barry!
 What a burden you carry.
 You do your best
 And we're truly blessed
 To savor the flavors you marry.
 So, while comments may vary
 From scrumptious to ordinary
 Don't be wary
 Cause at your dining room it's a privilege to tarry.
 So thanks from us all –
 Every John, Judy, Connie and Garry.

Dave Vacheron

(President's Report, Continued from page 3)

appreciated during the summer months. Mike said he is initiating a cocktail party for Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. which will include beverages and appetizers. Residents will have been enjoying this event for several weeks by the time they read this article.

Mike is dedicated to keep improving our dining experience. We look forward to getting back to pre-COVID operations. We can help Mike in his quest to fully open the dining room by continuing to be patient and courteous to all the staff as they do their utmost to make our dining experience enjoyable. Mike asks that we use the comment cards as they are useful to him and his staff as he strives for his goal of culinary satisfaction.

Garret Roosma

In Memoriam

Sally Block

July 5, 1929 to May 27, 2022

Ralph Peterson

April 12, 1932 to June 6, 2022

Frank McCarthy

July 12, 1935 to June 8, 2022

John "Mike" Brown

January 16, 1947 to June 15, 2022

Joyce Hovey

March 6, 1935 to July 20, 2022

Jeanne Crist

December 2, 1922 to August 3, 2022

Norman Moskowitz

May 23, 1928 to August 5, 2022

Gwendolyn "Gwen" Sears

January 9, 1928 to August 12, 2022

July 12, 2022

What a blast, what a blow –
Wind, rain, even hail,
Trees fall, lights fail.
The storm passed fast,
But the darkness, no.

A microburst, the weather guy said.
Not like the rain in Spain
That stays mainly in the plain,
But the honest-to-goodness bane
Of a genuine micro-hurricane.

No power by the hour,
As winds scream, trees shatter.
As lights go out,
Folks raise a shout:
What about our dinner platter?

Flashlights and lanterns emerge
To turn back the scourge.
The generator powers up,
The kitchen feels the surge,
The buffet opens up,
We sit down to sup.
Sing ye no longer the darkness dirge!

Dark the night, dark the day,
Until linemen come out to play.
Next afternoon, on the second day,
Like on the First Day,
Behold, light!
So the story ends
With everything left right.

Poet Nauseate II

What Was That, Dear?

My spouse says I have two faults. I don't listen
and ... something else.

Never laugh at your spouse's choices. You are
one of them.

"Dammit I'm mad" is "dammit I'm mad"
spelled backward.

Glad to Meet You, Say Carolyn and Kiwi

It's a pleasure to introduce you to Carolyn Vandervort, who became a resident of Kimball Farms on July 8. She and 9-month-old Kiwi, her tea-cup Yorkshire Terrier, are happily adjusting to their new home in apartment 268. Kiwi's affectionate nature is demonstrated with loving licks; Carolyn's equally outgoing nature embraces visitors with an all-encompassing smile.

Born in Central Falls, R.I., Carolyn moved as a youngster to Washington, D.C. Upon graduating from high school, she continued her education at D.C.'s Strayer College, where she earned a diploma in Secretarial Science.

That certification opened a door to work on the Hill, first at the Pentagon and then at NATO. This was the late 60s when NATO was headquartered in Paris, the perfect spot to satisfy her urge to explore new places, new things, new customs. After a two-year stay in Paris, Carolyn was ready to move on.



Many readers will remember their early excursions to Europe, set to take on the world guided by a copy of Arthur Frommer's *Europe on \$5.00 a Day*. That "Bible" in tow, Carolyn and an equally enthusiastic friend, fitted out with backpacks, managed on a more meagre sum most days during their year traveling through Europe and the Middle East. She was a determined adventurer and continued on her own when her friend was lured away by a friendly motorcyclist!

There was still more to do when she decided to make Spain her home for two years. She found all kinds of jobs, including one as a short-order cook on Ibiza Beach. I'm crossing fingers, hopeful that we will one day be treated to pictures of Carolyn on her travels. The travels ended, as did her marriage, and Carolyn returned to the U.S. in 1966, this time with her young daughter, Lara. After a series of secretarial positions Carolyn opted to pursue a career in nursing. Her Associate Degree in Nursing from

Northern Virginia Community College launched a lengthy and satisfying career.

Starting as an operating room staff nurse with Fairfax Hospital in Falls Church, Va., she went on to accept a similar position with Hollywood Memorial Hospital in Florida for several years. She concluded her nursing career at a regional hospital in Florida, this time as an Assistant Nurse Manager.

A woman of many skills, she added data processing to her resume with an 11-month training course that enabled her to train hospital personnel on the use of computer terminals.

New England called to her next, partly because Lara had moved to this area with husband Roger and their two children, Elena, 22, and Ryan, 23; the family makes their home in Tyringham.

Carolyn has plunged into many activities since her move to the Northeast. She participates in an OLLI knitting group as well as OLLI's Special Events Committee, volunteers at both Tanglewood and Barrington Stage, and finds time every Monday evening to serve dinner at Berkshire South Community Center. During the height of the COVID epidemic she volunteered with the Medical Reserve Corps to process individuals seeking vaccinations. And she's hopeful to continue new activities here; one idea is to take Kiwi to visit residents at Pine Hill.

During our conversation she commented, "I love my apartment," and "I'm very glad I made this move," at which point I made a silent comment, "We are lucky to have you here."

Dorothea Nelson

A Super Housewarming for the Dalheims

“Wow!” says Zoë. “There were about 50 people – four generations, all different kinds of interests!”

Recently settled in Kimball Farms, Zoë and Stu Dalheim hosted a family reunion over the Aug. 6-8 weekend. The gathering was one in a series by Zoë’s family in a round robin across the country. Activities centered on the Black Swan Inn, where many of the guests stayed, and the Dalheims’ house in Lee, which they’re fixing up in anticipation of selling. Conveniently, the house is within walking distance behind the inn. Both are on the shore of Laurel Lake in Lee.

Zoë and Stu made the move to Kimball after 52 years in the house. In their professional lives, Zoë focused on working with dyslexics and training teachers of adult learning in western Massachusetts to help such people. She started the Learning Connection in Pittsfield in 1979 for that purpose and in 1991 moved on to co-found the Literacy Network of South Berkshire (LitNet). After seeing it off to a successful start, she retired in 1994.

Stu, meanwhile, spent his professional life in the papermaking industry, retiring after 18 years as vice president of research at currency maker Crane & Co. in Dalton. One of his innovations was an invisible stripe on currency above \$1 that prevents it from being visibly counterfeited. On a fake bill, “you end up with a blank thread,” he says.

From old papers, Zoë traces her family roots back to Becket in the 1600s. “It’s amazing,” she marvels, but the papers lose track of the family (named Kingsley) after Becket. Descendants of those settlers, the reunion guests came from all over the country – many from California – and included the couple’s four children; some relatives Zoë had never met before. Most stayed at the Black Swan but some stayed in daughter Laurie’s weekend home in Richmond. The bash was organized by a California cousin, Eleanor Frank. The Dalheim children arranged for the food.



Laurie “took me to the Big Y and we went from department to department ordering food,” Stu recalls. A welcoming dinner was held in the parish house of the Lee Congregational Church. The guests were on their own after that. When not eating or socializing, they hiked and took in the Berkshires’ cultural attractions.

Zoë is originally from Syracuse, N.Y. Stu emphatically proclaims his birthplace to be “Staten Island, New York!” They met while attending Syracuse University..

“I lived at home,” Zoë recalls. “Stu, of course, lived on campus. There were Friday night dances. I had a boyfriend that I met at the dance, and he didn’t show up one night and Stuart showed up. I danced with him and then he pursued me.” They were married in 1957.

Most of Stu’s old golfing buddies and other friends have died, so he sold his clubs and plays no more. Instead, at Kimball he works a raised garden bed, plays bridge, goes to Lynn’s exercise classes and is catching up on World War II history. Zoë is trying various activities such as poetry class. Both praise the services and attention given by the Kimball staff and are slowly adjusting to the move from their Lee home of 50-plus years.

In Lee, Stu was chairman of the Conservation Commission, and Zoë served on the Library board. They are members of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Housatonic.

The four children: Laurie Rouslin, who lives in Brooklyn, is a psychiatrist in private practice. Karen Baker is an attorney with the Department of Defense in Washington. Diana Thomas is a French pastry chef in Seattle and tutors young children in French. Stuart Dalheim, based in Silver Spring, Md., is vice president for conscionable environmental investment at Morgan Stanley.

Andy Pincus

Ursula Reflects: "This What War Does"

Ursula Ehret-Dichter arrived at Kimball Farms only in mid-July but when we visited in her apartment for this interview a short month later, it was clear she had already put her personal claim on it. An elegant claim it is. She is settled in apartment 133; her space, overlooking a courtyard, echoes the serenity and grace so evident in speaking with her.

Born in Karlsruhe, Germany (bordering the Black Forest), she spent the years 1938-45 in Prague. Not easy years, but she survived and then faced an arduous journey by cattle car to leave that place. Classified as a "refugee," she endured a return complicated by the country's division into American, British and French zones. Only the Americans would accept refugees. Karlsruhe happened to be in that zone; consequently, Ursula returned to the town of her birth.

The postwar years were difficult, marked by shortages of basic needs such as food, clothing, housing. Ursula's reflection on those days was calm: "This is what war does." Just a few words, but a clear insight into her ability to accept and move on.

Part of moving on was to continue her education. She enrolled at nearby Heidelberg University, where she earned a degree in Economics. Interest in learning English was important to her and she signed onto a Pen Pal program with a family in Bath, N.Y. Her correspondence was fortuitous, culminating in their sponsorship of her when she came to the U.S. on Sept. 6, 1957.

Did I mention that her actual pen pal was teenager Gordon Stuart? Can you figure out what happened next? Yes, they did marry and went to Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, where Gordon pursued a Ph.D. in engineering. It wasn't an easy transition to settle in such a conservative area after her early experiences in war-torn Europe. The birth of her two children offered happy diversion. Daughter Christina Blom now lives in Tacoma, Wash.; son Nils Stuart and his wife live in Bucks County, Pa.

The next chapter of Ursula's journey was of particular interest to me. She and her family moved to Syracuse, N.Y., where they spent 20 years. That city was home to me for 52 years before I moved to Kimball. It was a delight to share stories when we realized how many of our associations and friendships were similar. My assignment to meet her was part of Kimball's policy of welcoming "newbies"; I left her apartment thinking she was welcoming me to precious memories!

Besides the typical parent involvements with children's schools, Ursula found time to work at S.U.'s Carnegie Library, where she catalogued rare books, and at the dean's office in the School of Music.

When her marriage ended, Ursula left university employment in favor of working at GE, transferring from their Syracuse office to Pittsfield in 1980. She retired from her position as Sales Administration Specialist in 1992.

Many new pathways opened for Ursula when she moved to Pittsfield. A major one was marriage to Channing Dichter in 1982. He passed on in 2012 but she remains connected to his four daughters.



Ursula and Maisie

Her years here have been busy. She's served on the Board of Berkshire Children and Families and has been an active Tanglewood volunteer. One of her special contributions there was to chair, from 1996 to 2005, an extensive flower project at Seranak, the estate purchased in 1939 by Serge Koussevitzky, and then in 1979 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Ursula remains an Advisor Emerita of the world-renowned orchestra.

Her lifelong custom of "looking forward" continues with her plans to return to Karlsruhe in October for immersion into opera. That will be followed by a stay on Paris's Left Bank, where she plans to stay at her favorite hotel, Montalambert.

Dorothea Nelson

What Fingernails Can Tell Your Doctor

Once upon a time, a visit to your doctor, especially if it was a first visit or an annual exam, was pretty straightforward. It consisted of taking a comprehensive history including present and past medical issues, family history and a review of systems – an orderly evaluation of body functions from head to toe. This would be followed by an actual physical exam. A medical assistant would first get “vital signs” such as height, weight, blood pressure, heart rate, possibly respiration rate and oxygen level. The doctor would have those available when you met. Then before the actual “physical,” a conversation with the doctor about your general state of health could begin.

If it was a first visit you might have filled out a questionnaire about past history and current symptoms and the doctor could use that to fill in more details. If you’d seen the doctor before he or she might ask questions such as “How have you been since I’ve seen you last?” Is there anything going on right now? Your particular concerns, one or more, would be addressed. All the while the doctor would be looking at you and not at a computer screen. This changed in 2009 with the passage of The Electronic Medical Records (EMR) Mandate that required healthcare providers to convert to and maintain all medical charts in a digital format. The unintended consequence of this mandate was that the doctor now began the visit armed with a computer on which to take notes while talking to you instead of writing or dictating the notes after the visit.

The comprehensive history would almost always be followed by a physical exam, especially if it was a first visit or even an annual visit. Together with the history and review of systems, the physical findings could lead to follow-up lab tests or procedures for diagnostic or preventive purposes.

Dr. Burt Miller, a Kimball Farms resident, suggested a review of fingernail changes as providing a window into the health of the body. This may be overlooked in a physician visit, especially today when most visits are fairly short. Nails change over time and some of those changes are totally benign. Others can indicate a disorder or condition. Doctors as well as patients can learn a lot from noticing the

color, thickness, ridges and any other changes to their fingernails.

Color Changes - Nails that turn completely white can indicate liver or kidney disease, and more rarely, congestive heart failure or diabetes. Yellow nails may mean a fungal infection or chronic bronchitis, and more rarely will point to diabetes, liver disease, psoriasis or thyroid disease. Blue nails are a sign that the body is oxygen deficient. It could also be a side effect of medications. Other possibilities include lung disease like emphysema, heart issues or a bacterial infection of the nails. Blue nails can also be a symptom of Wilson’s disease, which is an overabundance of copper in your system. Pale nails can mean anemia or congestive heart failure. It is also common with malnutrition.

Marks on Nails – Injury to the nail can lead to spots and discolorations. Red streaks may be indicative of trauma, psoriasis, fungal infections, blood vessel inflammation or a heart valve infection. Dark lines beneath your nails can be a sign of a hidden melanoma. It should be treated as soon as possible. Other, less serious considerations for nail streaking are trauma, moles and side effects of various medications. Dark lines and spots are common with darker skinned people. Ridges on nails are also an indication of a possible disorder. If the lines are parallel to the fingers, it could be due to aging, constant hand washing, lack of vitamins or improper nutrition. If the ridges are vertical, the cause may be diabetes, an injury or previous illness.

Changes in Nail Shape – Nail clubbing is when a nail curves under at the tip of the finger and is not specific. It could indicate heart disease, inflammatory bowel disease, lung, liver, or thyroid disease. Puffy redness near the cuticle can be caused by a bacteria or yeast infection, lupus, or other connective tissue disease.

Other Abnormal Changes – When a nail lifts up and separates from its nail bed, it can indicate psoriasis, a fungal infection, pregnancy or thyroid issues. Curved nails going outward is called

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spooning. The curve can be deep enough to hold a drop of water. It may indicate anemia, hypothyroidism, problems with blood circulation, a liver disorder or lupus. Split, cracked, or brittle nails may be due to thyroid disease, psoriasis, frequent hand washing or medications. When this symptom is accompanied by yellowness it can also indicate a fungal infection.

Healthy nails should be smooth and have a consistent color. If changes occur to your nails, they are only one possible symptom of a disorder and should be properly evaluated before a definitive diagnosis is made.

Next month – what our eyes tell us about our health.

Stephanie Beling, M.D.

September Trips

Sunday Sept. 4th - Bus at 2:15p
South Mountain Concerts – 3p

Wednesday Sept. 7th - Bus at 10a
Clark Art Institute

Sunday Sept. 11th - Bus at 2:15p
South Mountain Concerts – 3p

Sunday Sept. 18th - Bus at 2:15p
South Mountain Concerts – 3p

Wednesday Sept. 21st - Bus at 9:30a
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum
Boston

Sunday Sept. 25th - Bus at 2:15p
Barrington Stage – 3p

Wednesday Sept. 28th - Bus at 9a
New Skete Monastery

Birthday Wishes to our residents!

Ten residents celebrate birthdays in September. There is a 20-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

September birthdays belong to: Dorothy Bacha, William “Bill” Loeb, Eileen Potash, Carolyn Vandervort, Mildred “Millie” Tenenbaum, Jeannie Fenn, Shirley Barton, Dietrich Meyerhofer, John Gillespie and Rodney Palmer

Happy Birthday to each of you!!

The Kimball Farms Observer is written and published by and for the residents of Kimball Farms

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Oh, for a Bacon Plant

I'd grow my own food if only I could find bacon seeds.

Losing weight doesn't seem to be working for me, so from now on I'm going to concentrate on getting taller.

Day 12 without chocolate ... lost hearing in my left eye.

Some people are like clouds, once they disappear it's a beautiful day.

Some people you're glad to see coming; some people you're glad to see going.

Honors Pile High for This Critic

(Editor's note: Susan proposed this article and I decided that I would publish it as I would for any other resident who gained such recognition.)

"People aren't supposed to say nice things about critics," claims Andy Pincus. In spite of his belief, many people are saying very nice things about Andy's work as music critic for the Berkshire Eagle for the past 46 years. He retired this year from that role, but fortunately for the residents of Kimball Farms, he will continue to serve as the editor of the Observer.

Andy's long career was celebrated by The Berkshire Eagle with a three-page spread of articles and photographs beginning on the front page of the July first "Weekender" edition of the paper. Titled "A coda for a critic," the spread began with Andy's own story covering his philosophy, career and work. He had already been an editor at The Eagle for seven years when he began to add Tanglewood and other musical events to his responsibilities. His beat covered BSO directors Seiji Ozawa, James Levine and, currently, Andris Nelsons, plus Leonard Bernstein.

As Tanglewood expanded its campus as well as its programming, Andy chronicled it all, not only in the pages of the Eagle but in a series of books about the venue and its denizens: *Scenes from Tanglewood*, with a forward by Seiji Ozawa, in 1988; *Tanglewood: The Clash Between Tradition and Change*, in 1998, and *Musicians with a Mission*, in 2002, as well as several works of fiction and collections of essays which are available in the Kimball Farms library.

A combined article and interview by Eagle correspondent Clarence Fanto included the remarkable statistic that there have been only two critics writing classical music reviews for the Berkshire Eagle for the past 101 years: Jay C. Rosenfeld of Pittsfield from 1919 to 1975 and Andrew L. Pincus for the next 46 years.



Photo by The Berkshire Eagle

The Boston Symphony Orchestra hosted a gathering honoring Andy before the concert on Sunday, July 31, on the Press Porch at Highwood Manor on the Tanglewood grounds.

There, Tony Fogg, who has worked for the BSO since 1994 and now holds the title of Vice-President, Artistic Planning, said about the long-time critic: "Andy's love of Tanglewood – its traditions, its lore – is palpable. Over the years, he's seen and chronicled everything about the festival: the shifting emphases and tastes of three different Music Directors, the morphing of various educational and training programs, the growth of the campus, the big celebrations, the comings and goings of major personalities. Through all of this, he's remained true to a set of criteria that always puts absolute musical values at the core,

regardless of fads or fashions or commercial appeal. One didn't always agree unreservedly with his viewpoint, but one always respected his conviction and the honesty of his responses."

"On a personal level, getting to know Andy and his beloved late wife Kate over the years was a great privilege. Their life together was one of quiet domesticity: their beloved dogs, the landscape of the Berkshires, the rituals of the seasons. And, always, music was their companion and North Star."

Jeremy Eichler, Boston Globe music critic, noted in his review of the Sunday concert that the program book acknowledged "the retirement of longtime Berkshire Eagle music critic Andrew Pincus who has covered the orchestra and the Berkshires cultural scene with care and conscience for 46 years."

Accolades also came from Ronald Feldman, artist in residence at Williams College and director of the Berkshire Symphony, and Jeffrey Borak, Berkshire Eagle theater critic and former Eagle arts editor.

Susan Dana

Poet Don Barkin Opens Up for Us

A lucky group signed up this summer for weekly poetry reading sessions with Don Barkin, a widely published poet as well as an instructor at Yale University. We were immediately plunged into a rich selection of verses, broadly spanning centuries and cultures. With Barkin's guidance, we were able to "open them up" in terms of the authors' intentions and our own reactions.

The poems we read were relatively short, and Barkin pointed out their "compression" as an essential attribute of genuine poetry. He also mentioned "restraint" as important to poems, even though "they all hit you over the head." Contradiction or conflict was an important theme in the first six weeks' selections.

We were made aware of the basic structure each poem had, whether in a traditional form or modern free style. After a few requests, Barkin brought in a sonnet of his own, which included a clever reflection of a Wordsworth poem we had studied.

As our meetings continued, we became more aware of how and why a poet might choose a certain form. At times Barkin pointed out how the search for a rhyming word might actually advance the poem's message. In an original six-week program and a five-week extension, Barkin's theme statement was, "We dig the narrow shaft of a poem to hoist a shimmering bucket."

To get more information about this gifted master of words, a few questions were sent to him and a few replies came back. Among Barkin's responses were: "I enjoy talking about poems with lively, thoughtful people It has been very interesting at Kimball." Also, "I'd be happy if you enjoyed the conversation in class. I'd also be pleased if you found it more pleasurable to read poems on your own." And: "My teachers have been the poets from all periods in history whom I admired." His list of favorites included Robert Frost, John Keats, John Milton, Emily Dickinson, Thomas Hardy, and Wallace Stevens.

From some examples of Barkin's published poems, he appears to have moved from personal viewpoints to more universal approaches. But his voice is unique, as in these lines from "What We Look at Hard":

*At dawn the street looked like a barren shore
the tide had tugged the sea from like a sheet.*

In a joint conversation after class with this writer and fellow attendee Stephanie Beling, Barkin revealed more details about his background. We learned of his growing up in New Hampshire, degree from Harvard, long stint as a news reporter, and degree in literature from Cambridge University in England. We also heard revealing statements, such as: "Poetry is active — like music. Poetry is an act of life."



Stephanie notes that in this series she found new illumination and clarity in the works we studied. She liked the way Barkin gave us just the most pertinent information about each poet. We left the meeting ready for more.

Barkin is currently at work on a new collection of poems, to be called *Elegy in a Puddle*. He will soon return to Yale to conduct writing seminars, but arrangements are being made to have him back here for a new series later this year.

Credit goes to Sharon Lazerson, our Community Outreach Coordinator, and Michelle Rosier, our Resident Services Director, for making this rewarding connection and arranging all the details.

*Mary Misch
Stephanie Beling*

Don Barkin's poem "A Tennis Court in Winter," from his book *The Rail Stop at Wassaic*, appears on the following page. It is reprinted by permission.

A Winspear War Mystery Takes Flight

Our library now has *A Sunlit Weapon* by Jacqueline Winspear, the 17th in her meticulously researched historical mysteries featuring Maisie Dobbs, Psychologist and Investigator. This one takes place in England under siege, in the autumn of 1942. The “weapon” in question is the legendary Supermarine Spitfire fighter plane. Besides Maisie, featured characters are Jo Hardy and Diana Marshall, flight officers in the all-female Air Transport Auxiliary. Their duties are to ferry bombers and fighters between air bases and repair stations.

When Jo flies the “Spit,” her favorite craft, low over a rural area, it is grazed by a rifle bullet. She can see the shooter near a barn. Easily maneuvering away, Jo notes landmarks and resolves to investigate. Next, she and Diana drive to the scene and rescue an American soldier imprisoned in the barn. Soon after that, another woman from their group dies in a Spitfire crash in the same area. This tragic event brings Jo to the office of Maisie Dobbs.

The Maisie of 1942 is a distinctly more mature version of her earlier self. She has recently married an American diplomat, and before that adopted an Italian orphan girl. No longer using her sporty roadster, Maisie drives a substantial sedan on a limited petrol allowance. Despite wartime austerities, she still manages to host country weekends with loyal friends.

As always, Maisie relies on her inherited sixth sense as well as training in human behavior to solve cases. She still uses a batch of colored crayons to chart her cases on the backs of wallpaper rolls. She will still put on sturdy walking shoes, carry a knapsack containing an electric torch and a Swiss Army knife, and proceed to the scene of the crime.

A subplot features English and American security agencies preparing for a visit to England by Eleanor Roosevelt, identified as “Rover” in secret communications. There is a plausible scene,

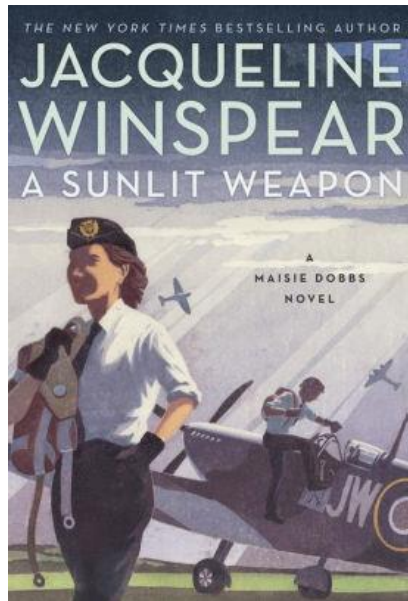
mercifully short, in which she and Maisie exchange ideas and ideals.

At the story’s climax, main plot and subplot merge in ways only possible through Maisie’s unique insight. Then, to the satisfaction of faithful readers,

Maisie takes a victory ride in the old roadster, newly serviced by George, the same mechanic throughout the series. Winspear writes, “Behind the wheel of the MG, Maisie felt as if time itself had melted away and she was just starting out again.”

In the epilogue, Jo Hardy flies low in a salute to Maisie and her daughter. “Jo laughed. It felt good to laugh, and it was a very good day to fly a Spitfire.”

Mary Misch



A Tennis Court in Winter

The nets are gone – even
the posts that hold them are gone.
Someone is making it plain,
tennis season is done.

The faint lines on the clay
are like ghosts in old plays.
A man with a racquet and balls
would stand like a rusted pump.
while boys breezed in on bikes
making their big figure-eights.
No one need shoo them away.

Only God in his froth
foresaw a topspin lob
in this desert place.

Of course, it was just for fun.
Still it thickened the summer months
with a shuttling of white shorts,
and made the dead air *ponk*.
But the season for tennis is done.

Don Barkin