



The
Kimball Farms
Observer



Volume 28, Number 10

Happy Holidays!

December 2019

Ralph's Religious Art Gets a New Home

This is the happy story of a very personal collection of works of religious art, handed intact to an institution where it will be treasured and available to students and scholars, just as the donors intended.

The Reverend Doctor Ralph Peterson, a Kimball Farms resident, has presented his collection of modern religious art to Wesley Theological Seminary and its Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion at American University in Washington D.C. The donation was celebrated on November 19, 2019, at festivities at Wesley Theological Seminary.

Ralph and his late wife, Dr. Birgitta Peterson, assembled the collection, which includes original sculptures and paintings by Louise Nevelson, Brother Eric of Taizé, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt and Todd Siler, as well as works on paper by Marc Chagall, Henri Matisse, Georges Rouault, Georges Braque and pop-artist Sister Mary Carita. There's even a snowboard which Andy Warhol ornamented with his version of Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper.

The Petersons collected works by non-Western artists, too. There are Coptic icons, Ethiopian processional crosses, Navajo weaving and Latin American devotional paintings collected during the Petersons' travels. The collection also includes liturgical pieces Birgitta, a skilled and creative weaver, designed and wove.

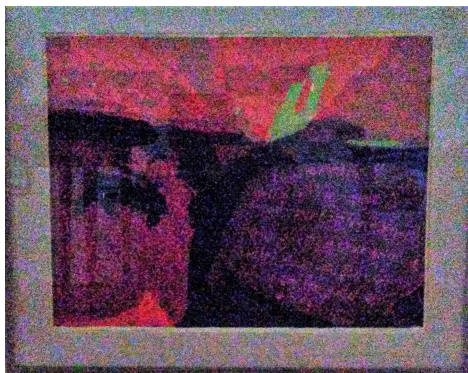
Their marriage in 1969 brought together their commitment to the arts and their faith.

Ralph's passion for the arts was honed by what he experienced in New York during the 1960s and 1970s, a time of ferment for the city. Ralph served as the Director of the Ministry Department at the National Council of Churches from 1962 to 1966.

In 1966, he was called to be Senior Pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in mid-town Manhattan at 54th Street and Lexington Avenue. The "Toy Gothic" style church (Ralph's term for the building) occupied valuable real estate (three blocks from the Waldorf Astoria and four blocks from Bloomingdale's) but functioned only on weekends.

Father Ralph warned the leaders of the church that if he came to be their pastor, there would be a ministry with contemporary art and jazz at the church. The church would become a weekend, weekday and night center, attracting different congregations with programming like jazz through the night.

After 10 years of exciting growth, in a real estate deal, the new St Peter's church became a partner in the Citicorp Center, with the sanctuary at street level. The new church, surrounded by the city, became an international center for music, especially jazz as Father Ralph predicted, but including art, dance, drama and the heart of Manhattan.



Sister Corita
Vision of Ezekiel 1-14

The crowning achievement was the commissioning of the Erol Beker Chapel of the Good Shepherd, designed by artist and sculptor Louise Nevelson. Radical for its time, the chapel is now celebrated as a new cultural heritage landmark. After a \$4 million restoration, the chapel will be rededicated in November 2020. Ralph is especially pleased to report that "a broad-based Legacy Council of community supporters representing every facet of the arts scene (the Whitney Museum, Museum of Modern Art, the Jewish Museum and the Yale Divinity School are some examples) will provide oversight for this treasure within St. Peter's and assure its future." *(Continued on next page)*

(Ralph, continued from Page 1)

The first commission for the Petersons' personal art collection was by Todd Siler, a young artist to whom the Petersons were introduced in 1972. The rectory apartment in which they lived on Park Avenue was spacious, but Ralph and Birgitta thought that works reflecting their lively interest in the arts would make the space even better, for themselves, their young son Kristofer and the dozens of guests gathered around their dining table. With the artist, they decided that a 28-foot-long mural for their hall, portraying the Biblical story of Jacob Wrestling with the Angel would be a good subject, but with a twist. When the mural, glowing with light and movement, was finished, "wrestling" was replaced with dancing, and one angel had become "a heavenly host."

When the Petersons moved from the apartment, they took the panels with them. The art work did not survive several more moves, but Todd Siler will recreate the spirit of Jacob Dancing with Angels in a new work for the Luce Center in Washington, to be dedicated next year.

The Louise Nevelson sculpture came from the artist's work on the chapel. The Henri Matisse lithograph



Warhol: Snowboard with Last Supper

The Preacher was acquired after a visit to the chapel Matisse designed in Vence, France. *The Holy City* by Brother Eric of Taizé and other works were gathered by the Petersons as they went along.

"The Nevelson is my favorite," Ralph says, "although the Matisse is close. None of the works is 'for show' but all for meaning."

And the snowboard? Ralph was in Marfa, Texas, on his 75th birthday, where he saw an exhibit of Andy Warhol works. "I've always been fond of Warhol, because he thought St. Peter's was the most beautiful building in the city," Ralph recalled. "Most of the work in the exhibit was far beyond my means, but the snowboard was possible, and I found Warhol's use of the Leonardo *Last Supper* very profound, so the piece became my birthday present."

The Petersons' collection of icons came from their travels in Romania, Egypt and New Mexico. A visit to a Navajo reservation for midyear Corn Dance celebration introduced them to the artist Charley Carrillo, famed for his simple and very moving icons called "retablos."

It took Ralph and a helper weeks to pack and ship all the works of art to the Luce Center, but Ralph confesses that he did keep two pieces which hang side by side in his apartment: a crucifix he acquired in Germany in 1960 during a tour of contemporary church architecture; it shows the body of Christ as strong rather than broken; and a "mandala," a guide for contemplative prayer, fashioned from the bottoms of tin cans and the pull tabs from soda cans, made by a young New York artist discovered by artist Elaine de Kooning, who advised Ralph on works for art shows at St. Peter's.

Ralph and Birgitta Petersons' art has moved to Washington, but Ralph is continuing his passion for celebrating the relationship between art and religion, following the quote by Dominique de Menil that

"Art is God's way of clearing the path to our hearts."

He is organizing programs celebrating Jewish artists in Christian spaces to "break the

boundaries," he says.

The next event will be a program with the Westchester Reform Temple of Scarsdale, New York. At the same time, Ralph is developing a series of lectures called *Sacred Traditions and the Arts* to take place in mid-town Manhattan following rededication of the chapel next year.

You'll have to ask Ralph to recount the story of a conversation he had with Louise Nevelson which sums up precisely the relationship between religion and the arts: her language was right on but inappropriate for a "family" publication like the Observer.

Susan Dana

President's Report: a Summing Up

Looking back over the past two years I am pleased to reflect on a great many changes and improvements, both completed and underway.

In an interview with Bernie Handler just after I was elected President, I stated that I was "shocked" when asked to run for the presidency of the Association, and I agreed because I felt there were questions I wanted answered. That was the dominant factor in my decision. I stated that I had no "grand plan."

Many changes have occurred since that time. The occupancy rate was a prime concern to me. That, in turn, made me question privately the financial stability longer term. I desired to make sure that the financials were strong, and that there were open lines of communication between management and residents. Both concerns have been answered over the past two years with a resounding "yes."

Rest assured that financials are strong, and with some key personnel changes, nearly 100% of the units are full. I have few concerns on these issues as I leave, and I have enjoyed a very open and positive relationship with Sandy and those in charge.

Do we still have unresolved issues and projects? Yes, certainly. We have lost key staff members that are very difficult to replace.

With record low unemployment, staff vacancies are increasingly difficult to fill. We had and still have repairs, upgrades and replacements necessary. Management and staff are working to achieve these. Have patience, and remember the world is far from perfect, and as is said, "Rome was not built in a day."

Thanks to all for their support and assistance, and to go out on a positive note ... My final offering! ...

After a meeting several days ago, I couldn't find my keys. I quickly gave myself a personal "TSA Pat Down." They weren't in my pocket. Suddenly, I realized I must have left them in the car. Frantically, I headed for the parking lot.

My wife has scolded me many times for leaving my keys in the car's ignition. She's afraid that the car could be stolen. As I looked around the parking lot, I realized she was right.

The parking lot was empty. I immediately called the police. I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car and that it had been stolen.

Then I made the most difficult call of all to my wife: "I left my keys in the car and it's been stolen." There was a moment of silence. I thought the call had been disconnected, but then I heard her voice. "Are you kidding me?" She barked, "I dropped you off!" Now it was my turn to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "Well, come and get me." She retorted, "I will, as soon as I convince this cop that I didn't steal your damn car!"

Welcome to the Golden Years!!

Hank Fenn

Up a Tree



Chef Bill Kuhlwein shows the tree of temptations he created for Kimball Farms' 30th anniversary party on November 15. Sumptuous food abounded as residents, staff and Berkshire Healthcare officials gathered for the celebration. Photo by Adelene Quigley

Count the O'Brien Kids: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7

And now meet Mary and Bob O'Brien, happy to be settling into Apartment 232, appreciative that many long-time Pittsfield friends live at Kimball, especially grateful that Mary's sister, Paula Byrde, is new here as well.

Mary and Bob have been Pittsfield residents since birth, with the exception of a three-year stint in Springfield. Mary was graduated from Pittsfield High School before she began to work as a medical secretary; Bob, a graduate of St. Joseph's High School, developed carpentry skills that eventually helped him to launch a business of his own which he managed with great success for 50 years.

Like many women of her era, Mary chose to be a stay-at-home mother; unlike many other women, though, Mary became mother of seven (that's 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7!) girls. "At home" hardly accounts for the busy, sometimes frantic pace of her days. Besides the constant domestic chores of cooking, cleaning, etc., she sewed for her girls; she was an active participant in their school lives; led Girl Scout troops; juggled church and community activities for the entire family, and, in short, was a one-person Booster Club for O'Briens large and small.



Anniversary party photo

Mary's energy knew few bounds. She ran a summer day camp for six years; packed up the family for yearly vacations at Cape Cod; led an active social life and had time, too, for downhill skiing with Bob and the girls.

The girls, inevitably, grew up and Mary wondered what would come next. She didn't wonder long. In 1976 she ran for public office and was elected Register of Deeds in Berkshire County. The headline in the Eagle read "43-year-old housewife runs for office." Mary took satisfaction in "beating four guys ... those were the days!"

In 2013, Mary was recognized as one of Pittsfield's "most politically active civic-minded citizens," and was designated Grand Marshal of its Independence Day Celebration. When you get to know Mary you might ask about her work with Hospital Auxiliary, Elder Services in Berkshire County, Zonta ... and a host of other organization our residents from Pittsfield will know and appreciate.

Meanwhile Bob's work demands expanded to include both private and commercial jobs. What his skills as a general contractor didn't include are easier to describe than what he did do. His work for G.E. is a good example: he could be called upon to set up a new heating or plumbing unit; he could be asked to build individual work stations; when someone got promoted he could be "hired to move the wall over three feet to expand the office space."

In 1959, his reputation well-established in the area, Bob decided it was time to establish his own firm, the Robert L. O'Brien Company. It flourished for 50 years. As a general contractor, he did it all: built houses from the foundation up; remodeled homes; repaired whatever wasn't working efficiently.

And what of the girls, you may be wondering. Sadly, one infant died of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), a tragedy that comes with no warning, leaving only heartbreak and anguish. The O'Briens lost another daughter in 2010, this time to cancer. Thrilled and delighted hardly describe the joy they feel that five daughters live relatively close to Lenox. The family has grown to include eight grandchildren, six boys and two girls, and three great grandchildren, all boys.

The O'Briens believed in making time for fun, too. Four trips to Ireland, land of their forebears, left them with many happy memories, as did trips to France and England. Now they're more content visiting their growing brood of progeny. Their six children claim 54 first cousins and have given up attempting to remember every birthday and anniversary. But they haven't given up holding close the family ties that nourish and support them constantly.

Dorothea Nelson

Gaining a Woman's Goals in a Men's World

Paula Byrdy, now in Apartment 219, has deep family roots in Pittsfield, which have kept her grounded even as she worked and lived from coast to coast in the United States and in many European countries.

She was the sixth child in a family of eight, born in the midst of the Depression. Her father's job at General Electric sustained the family, and Paula has happy memories of a community that was supportive, neighbors were friendly, and children had the freedom to explore Springside Park, ride bikes to the lakes and ski at Bousquet. The family lived in Morningside, then in the Elm Street area, when "There really were elm trees. And I walked to school from the early grades at Dawes Elementary through Pittsfield High School," Paula recalls.

At the same time as this idyllic childhood, women and girls were beginning to want more opportunities, like men had. At Pittsfield High School, Paula yearned to enroll in technical courses, but even math, science and physics courses were specifically for boys. It was her introduction to the challenges that she would face throughout her career. Fortunately, her teachers were supportive of her ambition, and helped her earn a scholarship to Smith College.

At Smith, she was assigned to the German House, where the students were expected to speak German when they were on the first floor. The Prussian housemother sternly enforced the rule, and the students even played bridge in German. For real conversations, though, they escaped to the upper floors. The experience was especially valuable for Paula, because German was the language of science. At Smith, she and only four other women majored in math and physics. "It was a time when girls were not taught to be independent, and able to support themselves," Paula remembered. Many of her classmates were married soon after graduation.

Paula's goal, however, was "to get into the world and make some money." Her mother hoped she would return to Pittsfield to work at GE, but when an interviewer told her that he thought they could "find something for her to do," she knew that wasn't what she wanted. She had interviewed with IBM before she graduated, and through a friend heard that there was an opening in the Bronx for a systems service

assistant, helping customers set up their new computer systems.

In reality, only the men were called Systems Service Assistants. The women, doing the same job, were called "System Service Girls." Paula's customers ranged from Columbia University, where the new computer was used to set up course schedules, to a meat processing company learning to program their system to produce sausage of consistent quality, flavor and cost. Punch cards were the way information was sent to the computer at that time.

Everything changed for her when one customer in the Bronx, an importer of British cars, including MGs and Jaguars, sent Paula to their San Francisco office to set up an inventory and distribution system. "Why," she asked herself, "was I in the Bronx when I could live in San Francisco?"



The ambitious Paula set about negotiating a transfer and lived in San Francisco for five years.

This was just the first of the bold career moves Paula engineered, leading to many years of travel and living in Germany and other European countries, in search of environments where her work was valued regardless of her gender and her pay equal to that of men doing the same work.

As a single woman, with no family responsibilities, Paula had the flexibility to make decisions about her career and her life. "In Germany, I was free from U.S. politics, and not responsible for Germany either. Germany was so well organized, but I thought Italy was the most interesting country in Europe."

Being single was not without problems. As she was moving to San Francisco, her customer arranged for her to buy a racy little MGA at a deep discount,

(continued on next page)

(*Byrdy*, continued from previous page)

but Paula couldn't get a loan for the car in California, in spite of a good salary, because she was single. She persisted and convinced a New York bank that she really did earn a good salary, despite being a woman. Paula and her brother drove the car to the West Coast. Along the way, they stopped wherever they found a good spot. They liked the Rocky Mountains so much that they drove back and forth across the mountains twice. Paula's snappy motor car attracted attention, especially in the Midwest, where it was an oddity.

There are many more adventures, all interesting, which we don't have room to document here, but Paula is a good story teller and is happy to share her story. Set up a dinner with her so you can hear the adventures for yourself.

Her status changed in 1978, when at age 43 she married Harold Byrdy whom she had known at Pittsfield High School. Harold went to Williams College and then to Johns Hopkins medical school, specializing in psychiatry. In 1965 he was drafted and sent to Vietnam with the first troops to be sent there. Paula and Harold rekindled their friendship and after his discharge decided to marry.

The newlyweds lived in Connecticut while Harold worked at Silver Hill Psychiatric Hospital, and Paula continued to work at IBM in New York State. It was a great comfort to know that family was close by in Pittsfield. The couple traveled to Paula's favorite European places and to Canada with friends. Paula and Harold moved back to the Berkshires in 2010. They found the "perfect house" in Lanesborough to accommodate Harold's needs from Parkinson's "caused by exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam," Paula recounted.

When he could no longer be cared for at home, Harold moved to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Northampton, Massachusetts. Paula visits several times a week, and is "grateful for the wonderful care he gets there. Kimball Farms is best for me now."

And don't forget family: Mary and Bob O'Brien, Paula's sister and brother-in-law, and parents of six daughters, moved to Kimball Farms in November too. See page 4 in this issue for their story.

Susan Dana

Entertainment

Monday Dec 2	7:30pm
Berkshire Hillsmen	
Tuesday Dec 3	7:30pm
Jonathan Miller, cello W/Marc Ryser, piano	
Monday Dec 9	7:30pm
Education Committee Program	
Tuesday Dec 10	7:30pm
Berkshire Sings	
Monday Dec 16	4:30pm
on the bridge Farewell Reception for Professor Ferraro	
Monday Dec 16	7:30pm
Professor Vincent Ferraro Foreign Policy Lecture	
Tuesday Dec 17	2pm
My City of Dreams reading & book signing by Lisa Gruenberg	
Sunday Dec 22	7:30pm
Kimball Farms Chorus Holiday Concert	
Monday Dec 23	7:30pm
Education Committee Program	
Monday Dec 30	7:30pm
Education Committee Program	
Tuesday Dec 31	time TBA
New Year's Eve Celebration	
Movies: Wednesdays and Saturdays	
December 4, 7, 11, 14, 18, 21, 25 & 28th	

A New New Year's Act

Put on your party hats, blow on your blaring horns; step into your dancing shoes: it's time for Kimball's annual New Year's Eve festivities. Molly Pomerance, our new director almost straight from the English stage, will direct her troupe in *Songs, Skits and Surprises*.

She's promising wit and humour (note, please, the English spelling) and fun. The fun is enhanced by your presence. Come, come, come!

Dorothea Nelson

Welcome to the Library: A User 's Manual

For those who are new to the Kimball Farms Library, and for those not so new, here are a few tips about how to use our library.

When you have found a book that you would like to borrow, please fill out the card in the back of the book: date taken, your name and apartment number. Put the card in the little brown box on the new book table. When you return the book, put it in the big brown box nearby. If you give the book to another resident, leave a note on the desk near the printer telling us who has it. Please do this so we know where the books are!

Do not take books from the big brown box. If you want to reserve a book, fill out the reserve slip next to the little brown box and put it in with the cards. We will let you know when it comes back.

The Book Selection Committee meets several times a year to buy new books for our collection. We choose from best sellers lists, mysteries, biographies, histories, spy stories and other books you might like. We welcome your suggestions – leave a note on the desk or tell me, Barbara Parker or Vivian Wise. We accept donations and if we don't have a copy and if the book is suitable for our collection, we will put it on our shelves. Otherwise, we donate it to the Lenox Library Book Sale.

We have a high incidence of books taken without being signed out, never to be seen again. This is unfair to the other residents who want to read them. Remember, we all contribute to the purchase of these books and they should be available to everyone.

Thank you for reading all of this. If you have any questions, give me a call.

Diana Redfern

Our New Pet



Kimball, adopted after our September tour of Highlawn Farm, rests in her stall, still bearing the name of her sire. The tag was changed to read "Kimball" the next day.

Photo by High lawn Farm

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

EDITOR	PRODUCTION
Andy Pincus	Ned Dana
	Michelle Rosier

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Stephanie Beling, Susan Dana,
Ned Dana, Virginia Fletcher, John Gillespie,
Bernie Handler, Loring Mandel, Dorothea Nelson,
Margot Yondorf

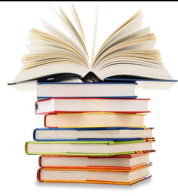
PHOTOGRAPHS:
Ned Dana, Stephanie Beling

CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH:
Charlie Haynes, Adelene Quigley, Diana Redfern



In Memoriam

Peter Reisewitz
Sept. 21, 1939 to Oct. 30, 2019



Library Lines By John Gillespie

Some Reading Tips from New Residents

About every six months, I poll new residents about their reading habits and interests. Here are three interesting replies (sometimes slightly edited) that I recently received.

Paula Byrdy (Apt. 219) writes: "The books I treasure most are art books. This love of books started with an art class where our textbook was *Art and Life in America* by our professor Oliver W. Larkin. Since those days of searching for the original paintings, my husband, Harold, and I collected books as we visited museums and libraries. Books I'd be happy to share include *The National Museum of Warsaw*, *Irish Art and Architecture* and *American Indian Art*, among others." Thank you, Paula, for that generous offer.

David Vacheron (Apt. 123) recommends three books that he recently read (all three are in our library):

1. *Becoming*, by Michelle Obama. "A beautifully written biography of a witty, devoted wife and (especially) mother who came to realize and appreciate the brilliance and dedication to public service of her inspired husband." 2. *The Greatest Generation*. "Tom Brokaw's very well researched and executed biographies of various men and women from different walks of life who served in the armed forces during World War II, including those who made the ultimate sacrifice to save the world from Hitler's evil. It is also the story of the families they left behind, often scrambling to eke out a living. A touching, humbling and important document."

3. *Educated*. "Tara Westover's heartbreaking, harrowing and very well written account of a young woman's struggle to free herself from dominating, controlling, religious fanatic parents. Not for the faint of heart." Great recommendations, David.

Sue Colker (Apt. 126) writes: "I have been a reader as long as I can remember. My earliest memories are of *Heidi*, *Little Women*, *Little Men* and of course, *Nancy Drew*. I was always surrounded by books. When my family was young, we lived in many states

and our first stop in a new city was the Public Library. When we finally moved to Pittsfield 55 years ago the old Athenaeum was our first stop. Later I volunteered there and served on its Board. Moving to Kimball Farms has taken up what might have been reading time but I would recommend *The Overstory* by Richard Powers, which won the Pulitzer Prize for 2019. Also, I always look forward to anything new by Ann Patchett and Richard Russo." (N.B. His latest novel, *Chances Are...*, has just been added to our collection).

Sheila Smith (Apt. 214) mentions that *The Secret Garden* (Frances Hodgson Burnett) was a favorite for her as a child, and later the works of Edith Wharton, Henry James and George Elliot, particularly *Middlemarch*. Highly recommended are such contemporary writers as John Williams for his *Stoner* and *Augustus*, Ann Patchett for *The Magician's Assistant* and the Canadian writer Robertson Davies for *Fifth Business*, the first volume of a trilogy. She ends with recommending "a wonderful mystery," *The Indian Bride* by the Norwegian writer Karin Fossum.

Thanks to all for these wonderful comments and recommendations.

Birthdays

Eighteen residents celebrate birthdays in December There is a 17-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant. December birthdays belong to:

**Jacqueline Crosky, Jeanne Crist, Charlotte Finn,
Catherine "Kissa" Guilsher, Pauline Meyer,
James Kresge, Eileen Henle, Norma Ruffer,
Edward Dinowitz, Stanley Feld, Ruth White,
Mary Anne Kirby, Joel Colker,
Constance "Connie" Montgomery,
Idamae Scaramuzzi, Louise Cella, Hannah Valles
& George Keator**

Happy Birthday to each of you!!



The Ford Engine That Wouldn't Start

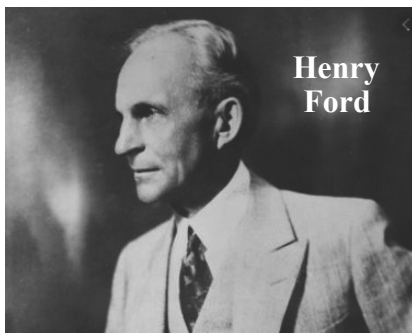
There are, at any given time, a very small number of writers in the film world who can indulge themselves by filming all their screenplays, or having them filmed by directors who advocate their work.

But in the world of screenwriters who actually earn some level of income at their profession, approximately 1,500 (or less) out of the 12,000 (or more) members of the Writers Guild can eke out a living, many by surviving on nuts and berries growing along the Los Angeles highways.

Here at Kimball Farms, one can find residents who have lived in this arcane world, mostly in the Producer side of the equation, a world where, like judgeships in law, they have been in positions of awarding a thumbs-up or thumbs-down to the submitted work of others. I've spent my life, my wife Dorothy beside me, on the Writer side of the equation. In the words of my orthopedic surgeon when viewing my spinal x-ray films, "it is not a pretty picture."

Though the satisfactions following the thumbs-up can continue to illuminate one's life for many years afterward, for the many projects, initiatives and screenplays that remain among the unproduced, certain respectful obsequies are in order.

The late and lamented Producer John Houseman, the equally 1-and-1 Director Arthur Penn, and I were engaged for several years in attempting to tell in film the true story of Henry



Ford. It, like my x-rays, was not a pretty story, but was well worth telling and infinitely dramatic. At moments in the effort to move this project into the thumbs-up category, the late and somewhat

unlamented David Susskind, and even the subject's grandson, Henry Ford II, joined in the effort.

The project began, as good ones often do, with an idea born of some arcane information. I had read an academic yet surprisingly provocative review of a two-volume biography of Ford, and decided to look further into the story. The journey began with books on Ford, of which I collected many, allowing me to construct a thousand-entry card file referencing citations from those books. I followed that research with a visit to Dearborn, Michigan, to the Ford Museum and a visit to the famed River Rouge plant where Ford had created a massively-integrated production line. I spoke to Ford executives, employees, and to veterans of the Ford battle against the UAW.

The stories and the cast of characters were remarkable. I sketched out a story line and brought it to Arthur Penn, who was equally enthusiastic. Then we took it to Houseman, who was then in a position to recommend a studio production to MGM. He did so. But MGM had many television properties as well as films, and the business side of the studio (what usually commands the creative side) pointed out the possible consequences of losing the Ford Motor Company as a sponsor of their shows. After several more attempts, Houseman admitted defeat.

A few years later, in conversation with Susskind, I returned to the Ford idea. David, a salesman to the bone, believed he could make the project succeed. And through the efforts of David's son, Andrew, who had roomed with a Ford great-grandson at college, we were offered a lunch meeting with Henry Ford II.

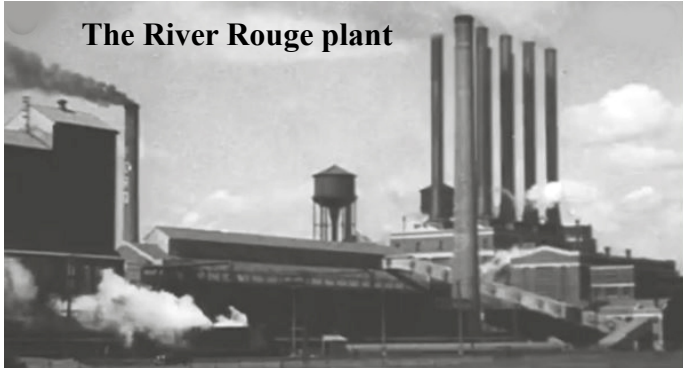
We met in a private dining room of the refined Links Club on East 62nd street in New York: David, Ford, and me. The room was conference-room sized, with a table that could easily seat 16, and Henry sat at the head, Susskind and I at the tail. It was Henry's club, after all.

Without stressing the various side issues of the story, the labor battles, the attempted murder of Walter Reuther, the revolt of Clara Ford, the Ford Peace ship debacle and the anti-Semitic *Dearborn Independent*, I told Henry the essence of the story I wanted to write: how Henry Ford created a giant corporation, but when his mental powers declined, allowed his son Edsel to take command.,

(Continued on next page)

(Ford, continued from Page 9)

Then how, paranoid and with the assistance of hired thugs, Henry wrested the company back from Edsel. When Edsel died, the grandson—the man we were sitting across the table from at the Links Club—conspired with his remarkable mother, Clara Ford, to wrest the company back from the old man. It was history, but it was a family drama with consequences for all.



At the lunch, Henry agreed that it was a true story and that he would see that the Ford Secret Archives would be available to us. He wrote a letter confirming that, and his support.

But no studio would touch it. Henry Ford II was in his 50s, he was limited to a human life span, but money from the Ford Motor Company could go on forever, sponsoring television and propping up the grand ideation of a wholly beneficent America. Even with the Ford family's remaining patriarch offering his assurance of support, my Ford project was dead.

Bits of the story, well-smothered in fiction, were in Sinclair Lewis's *Dodsworth* and (ye gods) Harold Robbins's overheated *The Betsy*. But not Mandel's *Ford*.

Though at least, in a way, I told it here.

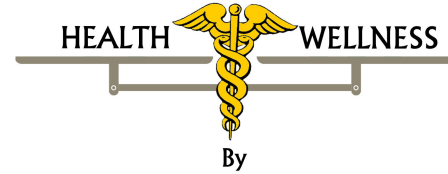
Trips

Saturday December 7, 5:30pm van

Lessons & Carols, Williams College

Sunday December 8, 1pm van

Ghent Playhouse



Stephanie Beling, M.D.

The Eyes Have It: Two Common Diseases **GLAUCOMA**

Among the many diseases that affect the eye, and may lead to blindness, glaucoma is one of the most severe. It is typically related to age and causes progressive damage to the optic nerve, the bundle of fibers that transmit signals from the eye to the brain.

Glaucoma affects more than 2.8 million Americans over the age of 40 and is more common after the age of 60. The two main types of glaucoma are:

Open-angle glaucoma

Acute angle-closure glaucoma

Primary open-angle glaucoma is the most common type. As the fluid pressure in the eye increases, there is a progressive loss of nerve fibers within the optic nerve. It usually develops slowly with few symptoms until significant vision loss occurs. It may start with peripheral vision loss but can progress to central vision loss, and if untreated, blindness may occur.

Acute angle-closure glaucoma is an emergency condition that requires an immediate consultation with an ophthalmologist. Vision loss can occur quickly. Symptoms include:

Severe eye pain

Blurry vision

Seeing halos or colored rings around lights

Risk factors for glaucoma in addition to age are family history of glaucoma, medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease, and long-term use of corticosteroids. Regular visits to your eye doctor can detect glaucoma in its earliest stages with a simple, painless test (after numbing the eye with an anesthetic eye drop) that measures pressure inside the eye. Medications and surgery (if needed) can slow or prevent further vision loss, but there is no cure and once vision is lost it cannot be restored.

(Continued on next page)

(The Eyes Have It, continued from Page 10)

CATARACTS

A cataract occurs when the natural lens in the eye yellows, becomes cloudy or even opaque. It's a natural process and happens with aging. The American Academy of Ophthalmology reports that by age 75, approximately half of all Americans have cataracts.

In parts of the world without medical care, cataracts are the leading cause of blindness, and in the United States a significant cause of vision loss. More than 28 million Americans 40 and older have cataracts in one or both eyes and, according to The American Academy of Ophthalmology, the total number of people who have cataracts is estimated to increase to 30.1 million by 2020.

Symptoms of cataracts include:

- Cloudy or blurry vision.
Double vision.
Loss of color sensitivity.
Poor night vision.

Cataracts almost seem inevitable as we age, but the best options for prevention are protecting the eyes from UV light, not smoking and controlling diabetes. Surgery is the treatment for this very common affliction and is one of the most reliable and effective surgeries performed. The National Eye Institute reports that in about 90% of cases, people who have cataract surgery have improved vision afterwards.

During cataract surgery, the natural clouded lens is replaced with an artificial lens called an intraocular lens, or IOL. There are many types of IOLs available and the decision about which lens would best suit your needs and your pocketbook should be a joint decision with your ophthalmologist. Types of IOLs include monofocal, multifocal and toric lenses. Not all IOL types are covered by insurance but Medicare and most insurance companies do cover the cost of the most traditional option, monofocal lenses. These lenses have been used for decades and are the most popular.

Monofocals are set to provide the best possible corrected vision at near, intermediate or far distances. Most people who choose monofocals have their IOLs set for distance vision and use reading glasses for near activities. Another option for monofocal lenses is to have one eye set for distance

and the other for near vision. This is called “monovision” and the brain adapts to give an intermediate vision that may be quite useful for most activities, but will not give crisp, clear distance vision.

There is another IOL, called multifocal. These lenses may enable wearers to see both near and distant objects and can also reduce or eliminate the need for glasses or contact lenses. But these lenses are much more expensive and often not fully covered by insurance. In addition, the ability to read and perform other tasks without glasses varies from person to person. Side effects such as glare or halos around lights, or decreased sharpness of vision may occur with these lenses, especially at night or in dim light.

Most people adapt to these effects, but those who frequently drive at night may be more satisfied with monofocal IOLs. If you have a significant degree of astigmatism there are “toric” lenses which have extra built-in correction for astigmatism. Remember that the ophthalmologist is your guide to which IOL is best for you.

Roses des Vents

the sand that sifts endlessly into the edges of the sea
the sea that suffs endlessly into the sifting edges
of the sand

the endless sifting and suffing
the endless energy of the in and out
the blue territories clipped to the brown territories
the sailing across and down the
limitudes and lassitudes
and winds blown fast blown slow blown cold
blown hot blown out

in the breeze correcting corners of the sheets
wait the final docking in waterages
like Oa-Oa
where Bogart's 80' Seattle-built lies bottomed
on the coral and where
the log says
"The dog, Duty, died seasick sixty days out."

Charlie Haynes

Past and Present Dissolve in Her Book

There comes a time in life when what you thought to be solid suddenly starts to dissolve.

Lisa Gruenberg, a Boston physician and educator, felt it happen when images from her father's past life began inhabiting her imagination. And changed her life. She became a writer.

Lisa, the daughter of Kimball Farms resident Eden Gruenberg, is still a Boston physician and educator, but writing for her has become a life-enriching process after years of learning how to put down the stethoscope and pick up a pen. Her essays and stories have been printed in various literary journals, and her memoir, *My City of Dreams*, has just been published. She'll be here to speak about it.

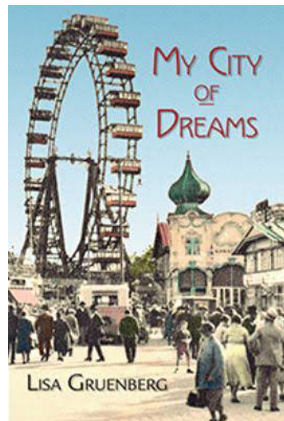


The book begins with Gruenberg and her family at their weekend home in New Hampshire. Her parents are visiting, and her father has a flashback about Kristallnacht, when Nazi sympathizers broke into their home in Vienna, kicking his family out, stealing some items, then ransacking the place. This was very different from the stories her father told her when she was a child. His story grows into a multi-layered drama of a family sundered by war, rich with moments of startling clarity from Lisa's elderly and disoriented father, a hymn to his beloved Vienna, the search for the others of his family as reconstructed or fantasized by Lisa, while she goes through her own personal catharsis.

Old men are inclined to repeat their stories, and Harry Gruenberg often unfolded his childhood tales. But like many who endured and escaped the Holocaust, he largely suppressed the horrific events that occurred before he fled to England in 1939 at the age of 18, and made light of what happened afterward: his long internship and imprisonment by the British and Canadians, and the loss of his parents and much of his family. It was only very late in life that he began erratically and inexplicably to relive scenes from his past, speaking suddenly in German, and yet moments later having no recollection of having done so.

At the same time, Lisa seems to immerse herself in her father's past to a degree that is sharpened by her own emotional journey, doing extensive research and, ultimately, reaching a point of emotional identity with her father's sister, Mia, who had disappeared into Germany in 1941 when she was just 15 years old.

The writing of a simple narrative is one thing: *My City of Dreams* is both more difficult to achieve and much richer in detail, because it tells several stories at once, with a variety of techniques. Harry Gruenberg's twisted tale becomes interwoven with that of Lisa's, told with fragments of song, personal letters, primary source materials, family dramas, scenes, stories, fantasies, and dreams that gain their own narrative force. Like the best collages, the whole becomes much more vivid than its components.



In the course of this fine book, we see the growth of Lisa's skill as a writer, the changing dynamics of her family, her husband, Martin, and their daughters, and the evolution of their own stories into the larger drama, which touches all aspects of a multigenerational family, diverse in characters, histories and dreams.

While one can talk about the complex technique by which Dr. Gruenberg has created this book, it seems far more pertinent to note the emotional heft *My City of Dreams* can evoke. Whatever it reveals of the lives of these characters, there is surely enough to touch at the history of any reader.

It's greatly to our advantage that Dr. Gruenberg will be here to speak about the book, the writing of the book, and perhaps the reverberations that may have grown from its release. She will speak of it here on Tuesday, December 17, at 4 p.m. The book is available at The Bookstore in Lenox, the Williams Bookstore in Williamstown and on Amazon.

Loring Mandel