



The Kimball Farms



Observer

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For Susan, Bagels and Her Mother, Too

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed a lot of things all around Kimball Farms: being tested, having temperatures taken at the Dining Room, using gallons of hand sanitizer, not leaving home without a mask. And now there's been another unusual development: the newest member of the Dining Room waitstaff is Susan Gordon, the daughter of Annette Gordon, who lives in apartment 247.

Here's the story of how that happened: in 1951, Annette and Milton Gordon moved their family, two-year-old Bob and two-week-old Susan, from New Jersey to live in the town of Lee, where Milton was starting a new job as a paper maker at the Schweitzer Paper Company (now Schweitzer-Maudit International, Inc.).

The Gordons settled into life in the Berkshires and a third child, Ruth, was born. A watershed event occurred for Susan (now 11 years old) when she was introduced to the wonders of baking.

When Robert was preparing for his bar mitzvah, the mothers and friends of the bar mitzvah class of candidates at Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield decided to bake refreshments for the celebration after the ceremony. The Gordons' next-door neighbor, a talented baker who knew the family well, asked Susan if she would like to come help with the baking, and a culinary star was born! Susan was fascinated with the whole process, but, she said, "The results looked gorgeous, and I was born a carbohydrate addict."



On the job, Susan doubles as daughter and waitstaff to Annette

From that modest beginning, Susan went on to graduate from Tufts, earn a certificate from the Cordon Bleu School of Cookery in London, and work for Alice Brock (of Alice's Restaurant fame) at Avaloch, an inn in Lenox now called the Apple Tree Inn, across the road from Tanglewood. In 1977, she opened Your Kitchen, a hardware store for cooks on

North Street in Pittsfield. Ten years later, she opened Bagels Too, right beside Your Kitchen, with a connecting door Her brother had been talking about opening a bagel store on Long Island, where he has lived since he graduated from college. But Susan was sure there was a market in Pittsfield for really good bagels, as well as other fast and delicious and inexpensive food like egg salad, lox and cream cheese. And of course, lots of coffee and soda. From her experience with Your Kitchen,

she knew already that good service was the secret to making people happy, as well as good food.

To help Susan learn how to make great bagels, the sales rep who sold her the equipment sent her, with her best friend and business partner, Donna Bills, to Rainbow Bakery in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, to learn the techniques of making good bagels, including a secret ingredient that Susan is not about to reveal.

Susan says she employed more than 100 people that first year. Most of them didn't last very long when

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they discovered that they were expected to work hard. “The baker, Bob Rothacker, was stable and really great,” Susan remembers.

The bagels were a big hit. The store would sell thousands of them every day, especially in the beginning, before competitors began to offer them, too. Camp Eisner in Great Barrington ordered thousands of them during the summer camping season. At first, cinnamon raisin bagels were the most popular, followed by plain, and then poppy and sesame seed. Later, “everything” bagels took the lead. The Atkins diet, a low carbohydrate fad diet which first became popular in the 1970s and 1980s, definitely did not include bagels, cutting into sales for a short while.

After many happy and successful years, disaster struck in 2018 when the landlord told Susan that he would not renew her lease. The space is now occupied by the Berkshire Juvenile Court.

It was an unhappy Susan who closed Bagels Too on October 1 four years ago, a painful day she remembers clearly. She couldn’t imagine staying home and not seeing people.

As for the Gordon parents, after Milton’s retirement Annette and her husband became “snowbirds,” wintering in Naples, Florida, and returning to the Berkshires for the summers. By 2007, Annette and her husband decided to move to Kimball Farms, she to Independent Living and he to the Nursing Care Center. Susan had remained full-time in the Berkshires, operating two successful shops, so by the time her parents returned, she knew more people here than her parents did.

As you can tell by now, Susan is a woman of action. One day in 2018, after the store closed, she was visiting a friend who works The Outlet at the Pine Cone Hill, the home furnishing outlet store in Pittsfield, and offered to pitch in when the store was short-handed. The friend texted her time slots that needed to be filled before Susan even got home and hired her as “casual labor” until she had a regular schedule. In that environment, she discovered that

she has a talent for arranging fabrics in ways that make fabric colors “pop.” She’s still working there, but for several months she had been talking about coming to work in the Dining Room at Kimball Farms, where she had many friends, including, of course, her mother. After Covid struck, she wasn’t able to visit. Susan and her husband, Jim, were used to visiting Annette five days a week.

(Pause for a Kimball Farms connection: Martha and Bill Selke, who also moved to Kimball Farms in 2007, were the in-laws of Annie Selke, the owner of the Pine Cone Hill businesses, the Annie Selke Companies.)

At the end of the summer, Susan decided it was time to apply to for a job at Kimball Farms. Although she joined the waitstaff at the end of October, she’s still learning the ropes. She went through all the orientation expected of every employee, learning the rules and documents that guide the functioning of the organization, not to mention the details of the functioning of the kitchen and dining rooms. She’s learned how to write an order so the chef knows what to cook, how to write orders quickly but in a way that still makes sense after she’s left the table, and she’s working on a system to identify which resident gets which meal. “The waitstaff have clever ways of the making that easier, and I’ve learned so much from them,” Susan said.

The biggest challenge was finding the correct apartments for delivery of meals, a problem all of us can relate to, given the geography of the Lenox and Stockbridge buildings. So far, Susan hasn’t had to make deliveries on her own.

In addition to her two jobs, Susan is still involved with community activities. She’s been on the board of the Elizabeth Freeman Center for many years, and

she and her husband, as part of their synagogue Knesset Israel’s social action committee, regularly deliver big boxes of food (“the produce is gorgeous”, she says) and household products to six families for the South Congregational Church’s food bank. How long will she stay at Kimball Farms? “As long as I’m needed.” That’s great news for all of us.

Susan Dana

Pearl Harbor: We Were There

December 7, 2021, will mark the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, which President Roosevelt described as “a day that will live in infamy.” Many of us remember that day in the Hawaiian Islands, what we were doing, the reaction of our parents and the world. Two Kimball residents, Elizabeth Lowe Myers and Garry Roosma, remember that day very well: we were there; we witnessed the attack. Elizabeth then 13, and I, nearly 7, were school kids living with our parents.

Elizabeth and her family were living in Honolulu. Her father worked for Combustion Engineering, a firm that was building a new steam-powered plant at Pearl Harbor. On that Sunday Elizabeth, her sister, Dorothy, 15, and their parents were going to visit friends on the other side of the island. As they were getting into their car they could see planes and puffs of smoke in the distance high over Pearl Harbor and assumed maneuvers were taking place. They continued on their way over the mountains. When they did make a stop, they spoke to people who had just heard on the radio that the Japanese were attacking Pearl Harbor. Elizabeth's dad quickly returned to Honolulu by way of the shore road, a route he knew would be quicker. When they returned home her father went immediately to see if there was any damage to the recently completed power plant project; he was greatly relieved that the plant was not damaged.

Elizabeth had a school friend, Nancy, whose mother had returned to the States for medical treatment. With her mother indisposed and her father away with the army, Elizabeth's family took in both the friend and her brother. After a week or so, with no further threat of attack, the Lowe family prepared to return to the mainland.

Since the power plant project was completed, they already had booked passage to return to the States. These plans were scrapped and the return delayed several months before they sailed on the *Aquitania*, a Cunard liner now converted to a troop ship. Elizabeth remembers that a Navy destroyer accompanied their convoy, sailing circles around them for protection from possible submarine attacks.

They ultimately returned safely and her father continued to work for Combustion Engineering in the war effort.



The 1941 Roosma Christmas card from Hawaii, taken shortly before the Pearl Harbor bombing: front row, from left: William, Garry, and John Jr. Back row, Marjorie and John.

My father, then a Major in the U.S. Army, was stationed at Schofield Barracks in June 1940. He was commanding a Battalion in the 21st Infantry Regiment. My twin brother William, our older brother John Jr. and our mother were about to have Sunday breakfast when we heard loud noises and rushed outside

to see what was going on. We could see large plumes of smoke coming from Wheeler Field, then adjacent to Schofield Barracks. An airplane flew over the barracks at the far end of the street and flew over our heads so low we could see the goggles on the pilot's head and the red circles on the wings. About that time an officer in uniform came running down the street, told us we were under attack, to get in the house and alert our father. Residents of all the houses were then directed to go to the barracks; these were safer buildings made of concrete.

When the all clear was given our family returned to our house to find a machine gun mounted on the front porch and our uneaten breakfast on the table. Later that evening families were evacuated to Honolulu; as we drove by Pearl Harbor in a bus we could see ships still ablaze. Our family spent the night sleeping on the floor of a school library.

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My mother knew a family who lived in the Honolulu area, and the next day we were invited to stay with them until we could return to the base. A week following the attack our family returned to Schofield Barracks. This time, in daylight, we saw the destruction in the harbor. At our home we found an air raid shelter dug into the ground of the front yard. Windows were blacked out with tar paper and we were issued gas masks.

Later, orders were received for military families to be evacuated to the United States. My family set sail in March 1942, without my father, who was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, made the commander of the 21st Infantry Regiment and remained in Hawaii.

My father returned to the States in October 1942 and our family moved to Fort Benning, Georgia, where my Dad became the commander of the First Student Training Regiment, better known as the Officers Candidate School (OCS). I moved several times with my family as my father's assignments changed. Eventually my Dad was placed in command of the 334th Infantry Regiment and deployed to Europe as part of the 84th Infantry Division.

Our family stayed with friends in Montclair, New Jersey, until the end of the war in Europe. My father returned to the States and was once again assigned to the 84th Infantry Division at Camp Claiborne in Louisiana. The division was preparing for action in the Pacific, but the war ended and the division was deactivated. My Dad was then assigned to Fort Jay on Governors Island, New York City. Initially, there were no military quarters available, and my family bought a house in Montclair, but the following year we moved to Governors Island, where we spent the next four years. My brother and I were able to be in one school for the entire school year for the first time since the attack on Pearl Harbor. World War II was an experience we can never forget.

Garry Roosma

President's Comments: Thanks for a Good Year

How fortunate we are to live in a place where an election produces undisputed winners and we can relax as we anticipate new leadership! And Garry can assume his presidential responsibilities on January first of the New Year confident in the full support of residents and staff. Thanks to everyone who agreed to be an officer or councilor; active support of residents is more important than ever as impacts of the pandemic maintain their grip on many aspects of our lives.

Despite misfortunes of the pandemic there is still time, and need, for celebration, and Kimball's began in November. A sumptuous meal prepared by Chef Mike and his capable staff acknowledged the 32nd anniversary of Kimball Farms Retirement Community on November 18 – proof, if we needed it – that we are a far cry from the time when the 63 wooded acres that now form our campus were home to a summer cottage, a horse farm and riding stable, and varieties of animal life. We still do see the occasional bear or deer or fox, and even more occasionally a nye (that word is **not** a mistake) of pheasants – but no horses.

Thanks to securing extra waitstaff for this special evening, we not only enjoyed great food, but we were so-o-o pleased to have linen tablecloths AND cloth napkins AND votive candles adorning our tables. We eat with our eyes as well as our stomachs!

Not surprisingly there were other food-centered treats as we entered this celebrative season. Several groups of residents enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner in the dining room; many others were grateful to invite family and friends to their own apartments where they could order their feasts from the kitchen or prepare their own; and festive foods didn't stop there. Hanukkah was celebrated on the 29th of November. The end of the food feasts came on November 30 when officers and councilors enjoyed a first: in recognition of their extraordinary efforts during the pandemic, Sandy Shepard requested that a luncheon be served to them prior to their Residents

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Council meeting. Again, Chef Mike and his crew came through, this time with a lovely buffet and dessert tray of many things sweet!

Another indication that the end of the year means celebrations is the beautifully designed Holiday Display Case near the Potting Shed. Co-chairs Sheila Smith and Lily Wayne's artistry provided us with imaginatively developed themes for each of the displays this year. While mentioning artistry, I must also point out the several photographs Lily has contributed to our front lobby. She's titled the current one "Stunning Roadside Sculpture," a design she spotted on Route. 41. Art is in the eye of the beholder, and Lily beholds a lot!

Along with food and parties and sweets and other assorted good things, I will include the good news that Kimball residents have all had their COVID booster shots. This wretched disease lingers on, but we do have the comfort of knowing compliance with regulations that we don't always like has kept the safety level here very good. There've been a couple of instances where a resident may have been infected but those have come from contacts outside of Kimball and have been quickly caught and contained with appropriate isolation measures.

Not only can we, as residents, take comfort in our safety, but people who are looking for a community such as ours are comfortable in coming here. We've had 16 new residents move in this year; there are more on the way for the remaining weeks of 2021 and the beginning of 2022.

We've been on the receiving end of many special events that have brightened our lives; that makes me especially happy to report that, thanks to the generosity of many residents, we fulfilled our Staff Appreciation Fund goal. This is the one time of year we're able to recognize the men and women who take care of us all year and offer them a gift to express our gratitude.

At the Residents Association Annual Meeting, a new slate of officers and councilors was approved. Posted in the Mail Room, on the bulletin board near

the bridge, and in the library is a list of all their names and apartment numbers.

I would like to thank all the officers and councilors who have worked so cooperatively with me for the past two years. It's no exaggeration to say that our tasks were compounded by the impact of the pandemic and some of the restrictions we had to maintain. Without the patience and goodwill of residents, what was simply difficult would have been mostly dreadful. None of us like to be messengers of bad news; each of you made that task easier for us by your compliance and goodwill. Soon you will be capably and fairly represented by Garry and his team; I look forward to their leadership in the New Year and thank each for your support during the past two years.

Dorothea Nelson

R.I.P., Music Committee

Kimball Farms has had a Music Committee for as long as we can remember. As Chair and Co-Chair for many years, I worked with the members in planning musical programs and identifying and contacting prospective programs and artists for appearance at Kimball Farms. We then made recommendations to Michelle Rosier, Director of Resident Services, who in turn used our input to contact suitable prospects and schedule performances. Over the years, as they began to know Michelle, musicians began dealing with her directly and it became obvious that there no longer was a need for a Music Committee.

It has always been the aim of the Committee to cater to the tastes of ALL residents, and we can be proud of having provided first-class entertainment for the enjoyment of all and establishing happy relationships with members of the musical world.

BUT institutions change and we must change with them. The Music Committee may be gone, but its legacy lives on.

*Margot Yondorf
Last Chair of the Music
Committee*

Various Ways to Relief Via Physical Therapy

Injuries to muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints and nerves often cause pain and loss of function. The most effective way to restore full function and decrease pain without medication is rehabilitation with physical therapy. Specific physical therapy modalities prescribed by a licensed therapist will enhance healing and decrease the likelihood of recurrence of the same injury. Modalities are therapeutic tools that are used to help patients recover from surgery, injury or a condition that causes pain and dysfunction, so they can return to their usual activities. A typical physical therapy protocol progresses through the following phases: pain control, restoring range of motion, restoring strength, neuromuscular retraining, and return to full activity. Modalities often used include ultrasound, heat, cold, electrical stimulation and passive and active exercise.

ULTRASOUND — Ultrasound is a deep heating treatment used to treat many musculoskeletal conditions like *sprains*, strains, *tendonitis*, muscle spasms and trigger points. It transmits sound waves into painful areas, relaxing and warming the tissues, reducing pain and increasing blood flow to the affected area. Ultrasound is administered by the physical therapist using an ultrasound machine. A wand called a sound head is pressed gently against the skin and moved in small circular sweeps near the site of injury. A small amount of gel is used so the ultrasound waves are absorbed into the skin and muscles.

HEAT — Hot packs are kept in a steamer and then wrapped in towels before being placed on the patient. The steam creates moisture, which, along with the heat, penetrates tight and sore muscles, relaxing them and increasing blood flow to the area. In many ways this modality is similar to ultrasound and is especially helpful for arthritis, muscle spasms and strains.

COLD — Cold packs are kept in a cold box and can be wrapped in either dry or wet towels before being applied to the patient. The cold reduces blood flow

and inflammation, thereby providing pain relief for the patient. It also reduces swelling and is very beneficial for post-surgical patients and those with acute strains and sprains.

ELECTRICAL STIMULATION – This modality uses an adjustable electric current to reduce muscle spasms and pain. It does this by regulating and modulating the rhythm of muscle contraction. It can help increase strength in a weak muscle and also help increase blood flow to the area as the muscle contracts to improve healing. E-stim (as it's often called) is an excellent therapy after surgery or injury.

TENS – Transcutaneous Electric Nerve Stimulation — A mild electric current is delivered by a small battery-operated device similar to electrical stimulation in the clinic, through electrodes applied to the skin. The patient feels a tingling sensation from the current which moderates discomfort by disrupting the pain signal sent to the brain. It is helpful for muscle spasms and chronic pain that is not helped by exercise or medication. This device is portable and can be used and adjusted by the patient anywhere.

EXERCISE — Exercise is a controlled, repetitive physical stress to the body that helps improve strength, range of motion, and flexibility. It can be passive or active. Passive exercise allows you to simply relax while the physical therapist applies the stress. One example of this is a hamstring stretch where your leg is lifted by the therapist to elongate the hamstring muscle on the back of your thigh. Active exercise is exercise that you are performing under your own power. Using a treadmill, exercise bike, or a rowing machine, doing lunges or squats or working with weights are all active exercises. If you experience physical therapy in a clinic, at home or while in the hospital, you will likely be engaged in some form of exercise to help improve your mobility. Many times you will be given a home exercise program prescribed by your physical therapist that you perform on your own. The home exercise program can be very important to help you return to normal function. Many people follow a strict morning exercise routine prescribed at some point in the past to maintain the benefits.

Stephanie Beling, M.D.

Going All In with Billie Jean King

A very substantial new book in our library is *ALL IN: An Autobiography*, by Billie Jean King, with Johnette Howard and Maryanne Vollers. It's really "all in" here — all anyone might want to know about Billie Jean King as tennis champion, empire builder, social activist and private person. Two seasoned writers worked closely with her to bring out a very complete personal story, while fully covering everything relevant to amateur and professional tennis. Casual readers may get a quick overview from 32 pages of photographs with detailed captions. Dedicated tennis fans may pore over 33 pages of tournament records, with scores for every set Billie Jean played. But all those who appreciate a well rendered narrative may settle down to over 400 pages of an honest, colorful and compelling record of her life and times thus far.

Many readers will relate to the initial thrill felt by 10-year-old Billie Jean Moffitt when she was introduced to the game of tennis. Few will have taken to it with such ferocity. By going every day for free coaching with Clyde Walker on the public courts of Long Beach, California, she soon earned a place in local competitions and began traveling to junior tournaments. When her name appeared on local sports pages, Billie Jean's parents forbade her to read the articles. Sixty years later, she discovered a vast collection of stories they had saved.

As a junior player, Billie Jean developed a serve-and-volley style that made it hard for her to defeat baseline-style players. By determination she made it to an eastern tour with the Junior Wightman Cup squad. In New Jersey she acquired a second coach, Frank Brennan, who told her, "You're going to be No. 1." While helping her polish her game, he also said, "You'll be good because you're ugly." Billie Jean reflects, "I got past the remark after I got to know Frank better. And anyway, I had more towns to see and bigger battles to fight."

ENTERTAINMENT

Sunday, December 12th – Musicians of
Ma'alwyck 7:00pm

Monday, December 20th – Randy Hodgkinson,
Pianist 2:00pm

At age 15 Billie Jean declined a sponsorship that would have helped her toward the Wimbledon matches; at age 17 she won first place there in the women's doubles. The following year she repeated the doubles win and progressed in the singles. Meanwhile, she was attending college in Los Angeles and starting to think about a future for women in professional tennis.

While a student, Billie Jean continued to play in major competitions, with a firm



goal of becoming No. 1 in the tennis world by winning the women's singles crown at Wimbledon. In 1965 she married a fellow student, Larry King. When she won her first world title in 1966 she became almost universally known as Billie Jean King. But on the Wimbledon scoreboard she was identified as Mrs. L. W. King.

The following years saw the beginning of the Open Era in tennis, with amateurs and professionals competing together. Several new leagues were formed. In 1968, Billie Jean King took on professional status. In 1973 she was instrumental in forming the Women's Tennis Association. A major event of that year was her legendary exhibition match with Bobby Riggs, fully described in this book. For Billy Jean, the 1970s held many tournaments, business ventures and some civil rights activity, as well as the end of a covert same-sex relationship and the start of another. An important part of this book is Billy Jean's firm retraction of misinformation and declaration of truth in these matters. A respected player and winner through the early 1980s, she has continued a career as a sporting, social and political activist. Part of her dedication to this book says: "To everyone who continues to fight for equity, inclusion, and freedom."

Mary Misch

Bill Loeb: The Man Behind Canned Bacon

Canned bacon. Who knows about it? Who's had it? Where can you get it? Try checking in with Bill Loeb, a longtime resident of West Stockbridge who moved to Kimball Farms in October.

I'm not sure what I was expecting when he commented, "There's something I'd like to show you." What I was not expecting was what looked like a very old weathered and worn soup can. A bit on the heavy side when I held it, its years had left it with a lustrous patina. I was both fascinated and puzzled.

The answer: I was holding in my hand a can of bacon that had been preserved from the days of the Vietnam War! The Army wanted bacon for the troops; MIT graduate Bill figured out how to fulfill this request using gamma rays. (This is a step beyond my canning skills, limited to filling mason jars with fruit, putting them in a heavy kettle and boiling them.) For those of you who seek to do it Bill's way, either contact him (7252) or try checking it on Google. He thought this might be a transferable skill with other products in civilian life. Alas, the FDA nixed the idea. Plus, the U.S. Navy wanted Bill for other purposes.

He was sent to Bikini Atoll, where he was in charge of radiologic safety, the "go-to person" with the dubious distinction of being put closest to the bomb site. The fact that he is here and healthy, some 75 years later, is perhaps the greatest testimony to successful completion of his mission.

Bill's been in this area for 50 years and can point to notable achievements with his local engineering firm. He was the first engineer on the Mass MOCA project; he marked the Massachusetts portion of the Appalachian Trail; he was Chairman of the early-on County Energy Conservation Committee.

His move to Kimball Farms was precipitated by a desire to "simplify my life" (a familiar wish for many of us!). With that in mind, he sold his homes in West Stockbridge and Santa Fe. As one who avoids highway driving, I was mightily impressed when he revealed that he drove the entire 2,300 miles from New Mexico to Massachusetts encountering stop lights only when he exited thruways. He's now settling into Lenox Apt. 252. (A personal aside: 252 was the first apartment I ever saw at Kimball; it was my sister Elaine Bowditch's home and was the impetus for my own move here in 2016.)



Bill shows a can of bacon from his invention 65 years ago.

Music has played a large part in Bill's life since he took up flute lessons in fifth grade, when his New Rochelle, N.Y., music teacher told him "It would develop good wind for the Swim Team!" All these years later, he continues to play ... all the way from bass flute to its highest relative, the piccolo. For many years, he's played these instruments in the Stockbridge Sinfonia. The group has an interesting history: founded in 1972, it is composed

of nonprofessional and retired musicians ranging in age from their teens to their 90s. This all-volunteer orchestra offers classical music concerts in many area venues. Bill has been a devoted supporter in several ways, including serving as its President. His musical contributions also extend to playing with today's Pittsfield Eagle Band. With luck we'll hear him perform at Kimball soon.

Bill's willingness to serve is evident in other aspects of community life, in both West Stockbridge and Santa Fe. In each setting he's been involved with the town's historical societies. In Santa Fe, that responsibility helped to stop development of an ugly gravel mine by finding the original 1680 Spanish land grant which specified that the chosen site could be used "for cattle grazing only." In West

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Stockbridge he persuaded the Town to give its 1854 Town Hall to the local Historical Society. He hopes to establish new recognition for West Stockbridge by reinforcing a connection between town native son Charles B. Boynton, first president of Howard University, and Vice President Kamala Harris, a 1986 alumna of that institution; join me in crossing fingers that her busy schedule will permit her to accept the invitation to visit. If and when that visit occurs, it will be one more of Bill's "notable achievements."

The Loeb family includes two sons: Jonathan, an engineer with Dell who lives in western New Hampshire, and David, an accomplished artist who lives in Fontainebleau, France (DavidLoebPaintings.com); and daughter Suzanne, a clinical social worker practicing in New York state. He told me that "along the way, I've acquired 'seven grands and four greats.'" His wife Marion passed away several years ago; she was the founding editor of Choice Magazine Listening, an online magazine for blind readers, as well as a columnist for the Eagle, focusing on specialty articles and book reviews.

On my way to Bill's apartment, I met another "newish" resident, Marilyn Wightman. When I mentioned my destination, her immediate comment was an enthusiastic "he's an amazing man!" I glimpsed too small a bit of that in my short visit with Bill and look forward to knowing him better. So will you!

Dorothea Nelson

Birthdays!

Eighteen residents celebrate birthdays in December. There is a 27-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

December birthdays belong to: Jeanne Crist, Charlotte Finn, Catherine "Kissa" Guilsher, Pauline Meyer, Sally Dunn, James Kresge, Eileen Henle, Norma Ruffer, Ed Dinowitz, Patricia Rohman, Stanley Feld, Ruth White, Elizabeth Brownlow, Joel Colker, Connie Montgomery, Natalie DeLuca, Cynthia Segal and Louise Cella.

Happy Birthday to each of you!!

Building a Life Together, and a Home



The route from Buffalo, New York, to Lenox was a circuitous one for Jim Weber, new resident in Stockbridge apartment 218. He came here via Buffalo, Texas, Kansas, Vietnam, Pittsburgh and New Jersey, ultimately settling

in the Berkshires, beloved by both Jim and his wife Carol.

The two met as teenagers. After high school they parted briefly, Carol to Vermont, where she studied art; Jim to Buffalo's Canisius College, where he majored in Economics as an ROTC student. Carol made it back to Buffalo in time to pin lieutenant bars on his uniform when he graduated in 1963. School days over, service in the Army to begin for Jim, they married in 1964. Jim had to fulfill ROTC responsibilities, so off the young couple went for 90 days of officer training in Texas before being sent to Fort Riley in Kansas. The luck of the draw meant Jim's division was the first sent to Vietnam, but not before their first child, Greg, was born.

Home again in 1966, promoted to captain, a successful interview at Alcoa launched Jim on a steppingstone to a great career. Before long, the company suggested yet another interview, this time to include a "shrink" brought in to assess his skills. The assessment indicated Jim's skills and personality would be great in sales; ergo, he became a sales engineer.

Soon a promotion took him, Carol, Greg and their second son, Jeff, to Kinnelon, New Jersey, where

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third son Eric was born. This was a town Jim describes as like “living in a storybook: a nice little Catholic church, Catholic schools for the boys.”

The Webers stayed in Kinnelon for 10 happy years before Jim was approached by National Steel in Pittsburgh, where he was offered a bigger job with more money and more responsibility. On the move again, now a family of five with the birth of third son Eric, the Webers set off for Pittsburgh, where they lived for five years.

Jim’s a person with both a remarkable ability to like where he is and what he’s doing while at the same time looking ahead to what might be better. It was during his time in Pittsburgh that he realized, with Carol’s assurance, he could actually be an independent broker of industrial metals running his own firm.

He took the leap and it paid off handsomely. Starting from scratch, he developed his own firm, jmw,inc. Word spread; Jim was approached by a former Alcoa colleague as well as a longtime friend; each wanted to work with him. Eventually he had a dedicated staff of five. “My firm really popped,” a smiling Jim recalled.

This is not an all-work man. Along the way there was always room for sports (Jim worked his way through college as a lifeguard); the family skied, hiked, climbed mountains and always maintained a love of boating. Luck was with them when they found a 30-foot Catalina sailboat; there were lots of sailing trips, especially after cell phones came into regular use. Now Jim could actually work from his boat.

That the family loved the Berkshires is an understatement. They wanted to settle here, establish roots for themselves and their boys. Their dream of building their own home was fulfilled when they constructed the three-story post and beam home in Richmond that is still theirs. The top floor, an art studio designed with two skylights to Carol’s specifications, was her favorite place for reading and simply enjoying this self-made bit of paradise.

Though she now lives at Sunset, Carol remains an intimate part of Jim’s life. His daily visits are restorative for him and keep alive treasured memories. A placard she printed for their home warmed my heart: “My Art Loft is the only way to run away without leaving home.”

I’ll add only a few snippets and let you become acquainted with Jim to learn more. I’ve mentioned they have three sons. Their oldest, Greg, lives in L.A., where he’s steeped in the world of contemporary music. Jeff retired from the U.S. Navy as a commander last month; he and his wife Nancy have three adult children, Emily, Nathaniel and Gabriel. Their third son, Eric, lives with his wife Tehri in Colorado; they, too, have three children, Samuel, Madeline and Benjamin.

Dorothea Nelson

December Trips

Wed, December 1st Bus at 3:45p

Bright Nights at Forest Park
w/ Dinner at Max’s Tavern
Springfield, MA

Sat, December 4th Bus at 12:15p

Met Opera in HD
Mahaiwe

Tue, December 7th Bus at 10:00am

Holiday Shopping
Colonie Center w/Stop at Trader Joe’s

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Finally, A Chance to Be at Home in Kimball

Karen Rizzardini and her husband Ed planned to move to Kimball Farms together, but her

husband, although he had been in poor health for some time, died unexpectedly in July and Karen had to move alone. Before her scheduled moving date, she fell in her house in Lee and broke her right shoulder. It was hard to make the move without her husband of 52 years and with her arm in a cast, but with the help of her loving daughters she still managed to arrive in apartment 220



and to make her new home comfortable and attractive.

Both Karen and her late husband were born and grew up in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. They met at Tolman High School when they were 18 and married at age 22. Karen graduated from the Chamberlain School of Retailing in Boston as a visual merchandising student and worked at the R.H. Stearns Company on Tremont Avenue while Ed received his degree from Providence College. The Vietnam War sent Ed to the Army and they were married after he completed basic training and was stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, where they lived for six months. He was later assigned to Heidelberg, Germany, and Karen joined him for the next two years. Taking advantage of their location, they traveled throughout Europe in their free time.

They returned to Rhode Island to be near their families, and their three daughters were born there. Ed worked in banking and, with the help of the GI Bill, received his master's degree from Providence College while Karen was busy with the children and worked part-time for the Outlet Company. A job for Ed with Berkshire Bank brought them to Lenox, where they lived for the next 11 years before moving to Lee, which became their home in 1999. They became active in many organizations, including the Lee Congregational

Church, where Karen started the Loaves and Fishes program which provided meals and community suppers. Ed was the church's treasurer, involved also with the Literacy Network of South Berkshires and other organizations. Though busy with their daughters, Karen also worked in visual merchandising and was the manager of the beloved McClelland Drug Store in Lee and found time for regular swimming at Berkshire South. Karen and Ed shared many adventures, beginning in the early days of their marriage, with many trips throughout the United States and Europe.

While in Lee, Ed started researching his family's roots in Italy in his quest to learn of his ancestry. Karen and he journeyed many times to Italy to find out more about his family's history. The result is a most attractive book entitled *Going Home - Journey to Find my Family Story*. After 30 years Ed retired from banking. The family was thrilled when he competed in the Josh Billings Triathlon a year after suffering a stroke, coming in not first but not last either. Taking care of Ed in his last illness Karen says was "a gift" and Hospice was of great help in making him as comfortable as possible. Karen is proud of her daughters, who have been there for her during Ed's illness, his death and with the move. Happily, all three live in Massachusetts and close enough to be with their mother often.

The oldest, Tara, a teacher, lives in Dudley and has a daughter in her last year of college and a son, a high school senior. Johanna is a nurse practitioner-midwife in Greenfield with a son in high school, while the youngest, Lauren, teaches art in Holyoke and is an artist, whose beautiful work decorates the walls of Karen's apartment.

These have been difficult times for Karen as she lived bravely through the illness and death of her husband and the move to Kimball Farms, which was to have been the home for both. She has her wonderful daughters, and we hope that in time, with the help of the Kimball Farms family, she will feel at home and cared for in apartment 220.

Margot Yondorf

Memories of a Slit Throat, by a Friendly Newbie

Thirty years ago, he slit my throat. No kidding. Neurosurgeon Gene Leibowitz, who along with his wife Gus was an October arrival at Kimball Farms, slit my throat with a scalpel to remove a painfully bulging disc in my neck. So imagine my surprise when I saw him outside the dining room here, his smile radiating his characteristic amiability.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., the son of Polish immigrants, Gene spent a good part of his young life in Albany, N.Y., to which his family moved when he was not yet in school. He graduated from Albany High School and then enrolled at SUNY Albany, where he planned to study business. But after a year in college, he enlisted in the Army and spent six months in active service at Fort Dix, N.J., followed by six years in the Army Reserves.

After active duty, Gene went back to SUNY, where he changed his major to chemistry, followed by medical school and residency at Albany Medical College. He also did a year in London at the National Hospital for Neurological Diseases.

He and Gus married after his first year of medical school. They had known each other since seventh grade. They had their first child, Henry, while Gene was doing his medical residency in Albany. Henry now lives with his wife in Sudbury, Mass., where he works in the computer field. Henry is the father of one of Gene's grandchildren, a girl, now 9, whom Gene described as "a pistol." Their second child, Michelle, who was a banker, moved with her husband and twin sons from Jamaica Plain, Mass., a few years ago to their Sugarbush, Vt., condominium. She is a ski instructor at Sugarbush. The boys, now 8, are "hot-shot skiers," Gene says.

Gene and Gus moved to Pittsfield in 1973, in a period when, he remarked, many young physicians who had gone to camp in the Berkshires came to work at Berkshire Medical Center. He enjoyed great success in his career, as well as in the nonprofit

world. In the course of his career, he was president of the Massachusetts Neurosurgical Society and of the New England Neurosurgical Society. Gus taught science in Latham, N.Y., and in London. She also ran in-service education for teachers at Massachusetts College of the Liberal Arts in North Adams and at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield.

After retiring from his office practice, Gene continued to fill in at the hospital when they needed him. He also became chairman of the board at Massachusetts College of the Liberal Arts for five years, a position he found both challenging and stimulating, and he remained on the board of the college for another seven years.

He and Gus went to concerts at Tanglewood and elsewhere and to the theater (Shakespeare & Company was a favorite) and supported them as well as other cultural institutions in the Berkshires. He likes to read. He has read a book about each of the U.S. Presidents, he said.



Gene shows his Inuit stone bear carving

"You can't have a sometime practice in neurosurgery," he said. "And you can't make a mistake." Unlike some other surgical specialties, he remarked, "there are no extra pieces [to fix an error] that you can put in the spinal cord or the brain." He said training in neurosurgery, not talent, "teaches you how to make it work."

He and Gus lived at the end of West Street in Pittsfield till now. She is residing in the LEP. As for Gene, in addition to theater (Shakespeare), music and reading, he enjoys fly fishing—from northern Canada to Belize—as well as sailing and tennis. And traveling.

Although a newbie at Kimball Farms, Gene says the staff and residents "have been wonderful" to him. "Life is with people," he said.

Abby Pratt