



The

Kimball Farms



# Observer



Volume 29, Number 2

Spring, Wherefore Art Thou?

February 2020

## Potting Room Blooms Anew

For many years, the brick planting boxes at the entrance to the Megs and Dick Dunn Potting Room, at the intersection of the hallways connecting the Lenox and Stockbridge sections of Kimball Farms, made a bright, cheerful focal point with an extensive collection of foliage plants and flower arrangements. They also framed the view into the room itself, revealing flowering plants, seedlings and more foliage.

Temporary walls, built several months ago, signaled the beginning of a complete renovation of the space, although numerous delays in the project made some residents wonder if the walls weren't so temporary after all.

The walls finally came down in December, revealing an all-new space from the studs out for the display and cultivation of plants. The

walls and ceiling are new, the heated ceramic tile floor (which looks like wood) is smooth and safe underfoot. The counters are easy to clean, the cupboards are sleek and efficiently organized, and wheeled bins for potting soil and peat moss glide in and out of their special spaces at the touch of a hand. New lighting is energy-efficient and can be adjusted so that plants can have the particular wave lengths of light that will make them thrive. The leaky glass walls and ceiling on the east side of the room have been replaced, too, and a humidifier blows moisture to keep the plants happy.

Two surprising special features have been added to enhance your experience with indoor nature: a small

waterfall at the entrance makes soothing noises as the water cascades from rock to rock, and, from time to time, you may hear bird songs or crickets chirping from a corner of the room.

According to *Kimball Farms: Twenty Years of Memories*, a book of reminiscences produced in 2009, the Potting Room was originally designed to

be a working area at the entrance to a greenhouse. Building the potting room and the greenhouse was too expensive to do all at once, but to quote the book: "the board of directors of Berkshire Retirement Community elected to build the Potting Room alone, since it would be an essential part of any future greenhouse."



**Jeanie Fenn at work**

And this is where Megs and Dick Dunn

enter the picture. The Dunsns had been the first to reserve a unit in the new Kimball Farms retirement community. There's even a photo in *Twenty Years of Megs* pushing the detonator to begin the ground breaking for Kimball Farms.

Megs was an enthusiastic gardener. Her dream was to have a potting room at Kimball Farms. The couple donated about a third of the cost of the potting room to make her dream come true.

Now that the renovations are complete, the Potting Room committee, chaired by Jeanie Fenn, has replaced and enlarged the collection of plants housed in the space. *(continued on next page)*

*(Potting Room, continued from page 1)*

Each member of the committee is responsible for overseeing the plants in particular locations: in the Potting Room and the brick planters and the window boxes on the bridge between Lenox and Stockbridge.

All the plants are new, thanks to support from Kimball Farms administration and a grant from the Special Projects Committee.

Jeanie and the committee have chosen both familiar and exotic plants for the collection. None of the plants are for sale but are intended to help residents learn to choose and buy plants that would grow well in their apartments. "Most plants have been labeled," Jeanie noted, "and some have watering instructions and light requirements on the back of the label."



**The waterfall**

The African violets, for example, need frequent watering and filtered light while the succulents, being desert plants, can tolerate more sun and less water. (Don't miss the intriguing "Dragon Bones" succulent near the east windows.) And some ferns can tolerate temperatures as low as 30 degrees Fahrenheit. Cuttings of geraniums are being rooted so that there is always a source of fresh plants to keep the bridge window sills blooming.

This winter, the committee experimented with ways to persuade paperwhite narcissus to grow less tall and "leggy." Adding a bit of whiskey to the water has made the plants grow less tall but still produce the same number of flowers.

Jeanie urges residents to come in and browse among the plants to learn about the exotic and familiar additions to the collection. She invites residents to look through the extensive collection of reference books to help expand your knowledge of light and water requirements so you can purchase plants which will thrive in your apartment.

If you already have plants that need to be divided or repotted, you are welcome to use the supplies in the Potting Room, or someone on the committee can help you. Please notice the box on the wall to receive your donations for the pots, soil and pebbles you use.

Members of the committee are usually available for consultations every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to noon, and later on some days. However, someone is often there to field your questions at other times and other days.

The committee asks that residents not leave plants in the Potting Room without a name and telephone number attached. They cannot "babysit" your plants, and any that are left without special instructions will be considered donations.

Please enjoy the renovated Potting Room, and remember that plants are not for sale, and none should be removed from the room.

*Susan Dana*

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## ***In Memoriam***

**Sylvia Marcus**  
**Jan. 21, 1922 to Dec. 14, 2019**  
**Jean Wilson**  
**May 15, 1923 to Jan. 24, 2020**  
**Margaret Loga**  
**March 13, 1925 to Jan. 21, 2020**



## ***President's Report: We're 97% Full***

Several new residents have moved into Kimball, increasing our numbers to 171 in our 150 Independent Living apartments, or 97% capacity. Our population rose slightly; interestingly, our average age lowered to 87. If anyone sees meaning or message in that statistic, share it with me, please!

First and second vice presidents have already begun their work as outlined in our By-Laws. You are encouraged to request a copy of that document, if you don't have one, for your own review. First VP Garry Roosma has met with Committee on Committee leaders, who will incorporate new policies for committee selections for the 2121 term; no changes in membership will take place this calendar year.

Charlotte Finn, Second VP, has already met with new councilors to acquaint them with their responsibilities. The calls made to many residents to remind them of the Association meeting on January 6 worked: there was nearly a full house! So, thank you to Charlotte and the councilors.

Thanks to Michelle Rosier, there's a fine opportunity for residents to suggest new activities that they'd like available at Kimball. Sign-up sheets in the mail room for her focus groups are getting full, but there's room for many more to take advantage of this method of insuring you'll have available what you want. Some of the new residents I've met want a book club; others want a game night; still others want small discussion groups.

We've lived through lots of changes the past few months and your patience is very much appreciated. The wi-fi system, dare we say this, is working ... or at least working a whole lot better. And, praises be, the men's restroom may be functional again by the time you read this. Personally, I think it's great we all adjusted, at least on a temporary basis, to a unisex restroom. Maybe that can be part of the 2020 New Year's Eve skit.

Do you know who your councilor is? Check the list in the mailroom that gives the names of Lenox and Stockbridge councilors and the residents for whom they're responsible. Your councilor is your "go to" person for questions and concerns.

And, lastly, two reminders to everyone: please return pillows to the dining room after each meal; and the plants in our lovely remodeled potting room are to admire but not to borrow.

*Dorothea Nelson*

## ***Kimball-made Afghan Awaits Raffle Winner***

The gorgeous afghan shown in the photo has been knitted by Kimball Farms residents who are members of the Knitting Group, and it could be yours!

Raffle tickets are now on sale in the Pinnacle Store and at the main reception desk: one ticket for \$5, and three for \$10. The proceeds will be donated to the Elizabeth Freeman Center, the Pittsfield-based agency that provides emergency shelter and services to abused women and families.



The afghan measures four feet by five feet, and contains approximately 96,500 stitches, in 20 different blocks. A cabled border surrounds and highlights the blocks. The knitters used 100% Superwash Merino wool, so the coverlet can be machine-washed in cool water, and then laid flat to dry.

The drawing will take place on February 14 — Valentine's Day. Don't miss this opportunity to win a treasure for yourself or as an extraordinary gift for a special person.

*Susan Dana*

## Identical in “Twinship,” But Not in Birthdays

What’s in a name, you may ask. The name for our new resident in 223 is familiar, the bearer of the name less so. Give her time: soon our Betty Davis will be a familiar figure to many of us. Friendly, interesting and interested, Betty came to us a few weeks ago to join her long-time companion, Frank McCarthy.

Born and raised in Maryland, Betty likes to recount the story of her “twinship.” She and sister Sue are unique identical twins. Sue, first born, arrived late one night; quite a few minutes later and very early the next morning, Betty appeared.



Identical they were ... but they claim different birthdays! Premies, they remained in the hospital for a couple of months, long enough for their startled parents, who had no idea there were two babies in utero, to prepare. Since birth, the sisters have been extremely close, a relationship that became even stronger when their mother died at an early age.

Betty praises her maternal grandmother for the love and loyalty showered on the twins as they reached young adulthood, helping to orchestrate weddings, provide guidance for new mothers and always being available for Betty and Sue.

Not long after high school, Betty married and, not long after that, she became the mother of five children. At the young age of 32, Betty was widowed ...with five young children to support. She managed by finding employment as manager of the building complex in which she lived. That was fortunate since she was able to monitor her young family while fulfilling professional responsibilities

Sadly, son Rick died in 2011; she still mourns that loss. Richard, his father’s namesake, is an ordained

pastor in the Church of Christ; he, his wife and four children are in Maryland, as are daughters Sheri and Karen. Betty is especially pleased that one daughter, Teri, lives in nearby Richmond.

Betty is devoted to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and she has quite a few of them: 13 grands and six great-grands. It might be fun, sometime, to put together a count of Kimball descendants.

Life carried on for 11 years when love came calling again. Through the good offices of a friend (there were no match.coms then), she met and married Jim Davis; together they shared nine children. It was, Betty smilingly stated, “a wonderful time, with the two families blending well.”

She mourned when she was widowed again at 72 but was consoled by the support and love of her children, each of whom was hopeful that Cupid would strike Betty again. And he did when Frank McCarthy came into her life. You won’t be surprised to learn that another big family became part of the picture.

Frank didn’t enter the scene alone but brought with him five children and 14 grands. The reaction of one of Frank’s sons when Betty came to Kimball was to send them a 2020 Tanglewood schedule and urge them to pick the concerts they wished to attend ... at his expense. We Tanglewood lovers know this is the gift supreme!

It isn’t just music that these two enjoy together; they love movies and sports and are avid football watchers. Games, cards and line dancing are other favorite pastimes. They’d be especially pleased to meet other mahjong players at Kimball.

At first reluctant to make Kimball her home, Betty’s now comfortable with her decision, “happy to be here with Frank, happy to become acquainted with so many friendly people.”

*Dorothea Nelson*



## Five Trips with Five Grandchildren

It was my good fortune to meet last month with Ann Cashen, one of Kimball Farms' newer residents now at home in Apartment 151. Ann came to us from Westchester County in New York, her home for 54 years. She was born in Washington, D.C., the second of four children, and grew up in Arlington, Virginia, and Washington, where she attended local schools.

When it was time for college, Ann went to Cornell, where she earned a BA degree; courses in the liberal arts were always her favorites. After graduation she married and lived in suburban Chicago as well as many towns in New York state, including Columbia County, where she became familiar with many aspects of the Berkshires. While raising her family, she developed skills in gardening, making draperies and refinishing furniture (I saw a beautiful example in her apartment of a chest she had done).

For practical and personal reasons she was attracted to more study and returned to college, this time to Manhattanville, for a Master of Arts in Education. With this credential in hand she taught nursery school at St. James the Less Church in Scarsdale, New York, eventually becoming its director and head teacher.

Later Ann became associated with the MAC group, whose mission was to supply photographers and filmmakers with image-making products. The firm imported professional photographic equipment, a field totally new to Ann. It wasn't new for long! As secretary to both the president and vice president, Ann was tasked with office management, development of a data base system and all sorts of other tasks, even doing calligraphy for 400 name tags; she remained with the firm for 17 years.

Did I mention that along the way she also raised three girls as single mom!? Daughter Annie lives in Manhattan, working for sales in cablevision. Sara, with husband and two grown children, makes her home in nearby East Chatham in Columbia County and is on the Board of the county's Land Conservatory, while Linda, at home in the

Adirondacks with her husband and three grown sons, teaches earth science at Saranac Lake High School.

Ann's family includes five grandchildren, aged 24 to 32. Ann was determined to build something unique into her relationship with each of them. What was it? She took each one on a trip alone. When the oldest, Brendan, was 12, they went salmon fishing in Alaska. Next came a trip with Celia, her only granddaughter, with whom she took off for Hawaii. They swam; they hiked; they cruised from one island to another.

There's more: Corey loved horses, so off she went with him to a dude ranch in Wyoming near Yellowstone; that adventure included attending two rodeos. Next in line was grandson David, the baseball boy. Wrap your head around a trip to five days in California and then imagine the stamina required to go to five baseball games at five different ball parks!

The saga ended when she and 12-year-old K.C. went to Disney World. Can you guess what the highlight of that trip might have been? If you're thinking iconic attractions in Fairyland or a wild ride on Slinky Dog Dash, you don't know the indefatigable Ann Cashen. They went swimming with sting rays! Who's for getting Ann to serve on the Kimball Trips Committee!?

Each of these trips was planned collaboratively between Ann and her grandchild. Safe to say the memories will be cherished forever.

A movie buff, Ann used to go movies "all the time." It was no surprise to hear her say her favorite one is *The Great Escape*, a film that illustrates determination, pluck and adventure ... words that well describe Ann Cashen's life.

*Ruth Bemak, with Dorothea Nelson*



## Neighbors Back Then, Neighbors Now

Synchronicity is the word that came to mind when new resident Joyce Hovey shared salient facts about her before-Kimball years. Can you top this for illustrating “six degrees of separation?” She reconnected here with former school classmate Marilyn Rossier. Not only were they schoolmates ... they actually lived on the same street before attending Ardmore Avenue School in Lansdowne, Pennsylvania!

As Joyce revealed more about her family, synchronicity popped up again: her son has lived for some time in Syracuse, New York (my home for over 50 years), in a neighborhood close to my own and familiar to me, where he works in computer technology.

But let’s go back to her early days. Born in Pennsylvania, she moved around in that Commonwealth several times. When it became time for college she chose Westchester State University where she earned a BA in elementary education, training she put to good use when she taught at the Brookline School in Haverford Township.

Teaching was interrupted when she married a “wonderful man,” Lee Hovey, whom she met at the Flanders Hotel, where she taught swimming and he was the locker room manager at a pool in Ocean City, New Jersey.

The couple headed for Millinocket, Maine, where Lee worked in the paper industry. That was home for three years; during that time the family increased by two when a daughter and son were born.

Eager to return to their roots, they headed back to Philadelphia, where Lee studied for an MBA and Joyce busied herself with children and home. Then came the big break: a headhunter told them there was a good job opening in Berkshire County, a remote spot where you “perhaps could get hardship pay!”

While Lee was interviewing and negotiating job options, Joyce toured Stockbridge with her toddlers. She fell in love with the town, declaring it the place

she wanted to live, and live there they did for 55 years.

Joyce returned to teaching, this time at the Berkshire Hills Regional School District, where she taught second grade for 25 years. When her husband’s health became compromised, she retired to care for him. After his death, she again became involved in teaching, but in new ways. One of these ways was teaching reading at Berkshire Country Day School and tutoring individual students from first through eighth grades, while also volunteering at the Literacy Network of South Berkshire. She retired from school tutoring when she reached age 80, but still maintains her responsibility with the Literacy Network and is happy that other Kimball residents contribute their time to this important group.

Sadly, Joyce shares a sorrow common with other Kimball residents. Her daughter, Sherrie, died in 2008, leaving two young sons, Leland and Nathan, behind. Joyce has tried to

play an active part in their lives. She visits them in Salem, Massachusetts, and they visit her here. After coming to Kimball Farms for Christmas, the “boys,” now 25 and 23, declared that “Granma’s new setup” was good for her. Kimball Farms passed another important accreditation test!

Joyce has also mentored BCC students through OLLI. She was thrilled when one of her students, at the conclusion of her sophomore year, was successful in earning a full scholarship to Smith College. She said, “I’ve really been lucky to have these joyful opportunities!”

Her zest for learning has led Joyce to explore many things. She loves to read and especially enjoys historic fiction; one of her favorite books is *A Gentleman in Moscow*. For 20 years she was part of a book club in Stockbridge (Connie Montgomery and Vivian Wise were, too) and nourishes the hope that a similar group may become part of life at Kimball.

*(continued on next page)*



*(Hovey, continued from page 6)*

Travel is another pursuit she enjoys. Her pleasure was clear when she described spending time in Austria, Holland, England and South Africa. She and Lee made lasting friendships with a Viennese family and a South African one.

Kimball is fortunate to have so lively and alert a woman as Joyce with us. She is grateful to be in a place where "everyone is friendly." She's especially pleased that people gather for conversation in the small seating areas near many apartments. You could be part of such a gathering; just call Joyce at 7265 and arrange a time to meet.

*Dorothea Nelson*

## ***Entertainment***

Sunday Feb 2	6pm
<b>Super Bowl Party</b>	
Wednesday Feb 5	7:30pm
<b>Edward Arron &amp; Jeewon Park</b>	
Monday Feb 10	7:15pm
<b>Education Committee Program</b>	
Tuesday Feb 11	7:30pm
<b>Williams Chamber Players</b>	
Friday Feb 14	10am
<b>Annual Valentine's Day Party in The Pinnacle Store</b>	
Monday Feb 17	1:45pm
<b>Drumming Circle</b>	
Monday Feb 17	7:15pm
<b>Education Committee Program</b>	
Monday Feb 24	7:30pm
<b>Education Committee Program</b>	

**Movies: mostly Wednesdays and Saturdays**

**February 4(Tue) 8, 12, 15, 19, 22, 26 & 29th**

## ***Poor February***

February feels it's unimportant  
just because it's been foreshortent.  
Clipped of days has been its onus.  
Given leap year as a bonus,  
February's not delighted  
to find itself discretely slighted  
(a single day is almost none  
of fourteen-hundred-sixty-one).

In consequence, it seeks your praise  
by being a heady month of days  
each named to hype some noble cause  
to gain your loving warm applause.  
Canned Food Month and Candy Day,  
Days for Rare Diseases, for Ballet,  
Grapefruit, Chocolate Mints to savor,  
Day to Do a Grouch a favor,  
Ground Hogs, Mailmen, Carrot Cake,  
Handcuffs, Hippos (no mistake).

Tortellini, Sleep, Dog Biscuit,  
Proposing marriage (should you risk it),  
Chowder, Sticky Buns and Cherries,  
Pies, Umbrellas and Tooth Fairies,  
Flirting Week, and by the way,  
Wave At All Your Neighbors Day  
(or days to that effect), Lost Penny,  
Strawberries (when there aren't any),  
Lame Ducks, Weddings, Staying Single,  
Polar Bears, Toothaches that tingle,  
Public Speaking, Vacuums, Romance,  
Pistol Patent Day and, bonne chance,  
Tortilla Chips, World Thinking, Kites,  
those Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday Rites,  
Pets, Gum Drops, and it's OK  
to Eat Ice Cream For Breakfast Day.

Congressmen who seek financing,  
do this voter group romancing,  
naming months and weeks and days  
because politically it pays,  
and February, so endorseful,  
finds itself much less remorseful.  
Short of stature, lousy climate,  
who can blame it? Who can rhyme it?

*Loring Mandel*



By

Stephanie Beling, M.D.

## ***Neuropathy: Getting Diagnosis and Treatment***

*(Last of two parts)*

Peripheral neuropathy has many possible causes. Some of them are diabetes, vitamin deficiencies, exposure to toxins including medications and alcohol, a weakened immune system and a family history of nervous system diseases. A complete medical history, a neurological examination and various blood tests and imaging studies can help point to a cause and potential treatment. The neurological exam is especially important in that it checks your reflexes, your muscle strength, your posture and coordination, and your ability to feel certain sensations such as pain, heat and cold and vibration.

If necessary, after your history and physical exam are complete and blood test results and imaging studies are available, your doctor may want additional information to detect nerve damage and may order nerve function tests. Electromyography (EMG) records electrical activity in the muscles as you contract the muscle. A nerve conduction study is often performed at the same time by placing electrodes on the skin and sending a low electric current to stimulate the nerves. The response can be measured.

Treatment goals are primarily to manage the condition causing the neuropathy and to relieve symptoms such as pain, numbness and tingling. Because neuropathy is so often associated with diabetes, management includes monitoring your blood glucose levels to maintain good blood sugar control and possibly improve neuropathy. Taking care of your feet is essential as blisters, cuts and calluses can become infected with serious consequences.

If vitamin deficiencies are present a good supplement program (recommended by your physician or nutritionist), together with a healthy diet

of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts and lean protein can help restore normal levels. Smoking and excessive alcohol can worsen peripheral neuropathy. Walking at least three times a week can lessen neuropathy pain, improve muscle strength and help with blood sugar control. Other forms of gentle exercise such as yoga and tai chi are also helpful.

In addition to any medications used to treat the underlying condition, medications are often used to relieve symptoms. These include:

- Pain relievers – nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen are often prescribed for mild symptoms. For more severe symptoms painkillers may be prescribed, but opioids are a last resort because of the potential for addiction.
- Anti-seizure medications such as gabapentin (Neurontin) and pregabalin (Lyrica) may relieve nerve pain but possible side effects include drowsiness and dizziness.
- Topical treatments include lidocaine patches or capsaicin cream applied directly to the skin. For some people side effects may include some burning or irritation at the site of application.
- Antidepressants such as the tricyclics amitriptyline, doxepin and nortriptyline help relieve pain by interfering with central nervous system processes that allow you to feel pain. The pain of peripheral neuropathy caused by diabetes may be eased by the serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors Cymbalta or Effexor. Side effects may include dry mouth, drowsiness, dizziness and gastrointestinal symptoms. Your doctor will help decide if there is an overall benefit to these medications.

There are a variety of other therapies available such as TENS, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation, physical therapy, acupuncture, herbs, amino acids, or possibly even surgery if it is found that there is pressure on nerves from discs or tumors. The most important aspect of care is a proper diagnosis, treating the underlying condition whenever possible and then finding a practitioner to help and guide you to the best therapeutic regimen for pain relief and freedom from side effects.





## ***Taking the Measure (or Not) of LBJ***

*Lady Bird Johnson was asked by a brave reporter, "How do you deal with your husband's numerous reported affairs?" Her answer: "Honey, they just get the icing. I have the whole cake."*

Lyndon Johnson was bigger than life: tall, strong, assertive and vulgar. When he talked to you, with an arm around your shoulder, you didn't know whether he would hug you with approval or strangle you.

I met him in 1959, at the Majority Leader's elaborate office in the Capitol Building. This was a meeting prearranged by Allen Drury, the author of the novel *Advise and Consent*, which I was adapting for the stage. The book had won the Pulitzer and Allen suddenly had more D.C. heft than when he was merely a stringer for *The New York Times*. Johnson took my hand, a small thing in his huge grasp, and shook it. Wrapping an arm around my shoulder, he led me into a small ante-room, and we sat cheek-by-jowl for an hour.

Johnson was criticized for not firing J. Edgar Hoover, the satrap of the F.B.I., who was known to have amassed a massive file of derogatory information on almost everyone. Johnson kept him on because, as he said, "I'd much rather have him in the tent pissing out than outside the tent pissing in."

I was, I thought, well prepared. I had worked on a list of 10 questions, intended to elicit the kind of background and color that I would need for the play. I asked the first question. He cocked his head and began.

An hour later, he was still answering that first question, masterfully adding funny stories, sharp-pointed opinions, philosophical ramblings and hilarious apothegms.



By then it was just short of 10 a.m., and the day's Senate session was about to start. He guided me into the Senate chamber, patted me on the back and I was dismissed.

*Advise and Consent* turned out to be a story to tell, perhaps in another column, but it was a long adventure in the world of New York theater, its culture, characters, frauds and fantasists. It took me to many places, and left me more streetwise than before (the street being Broadway).

And then, in the late 1970s, I was back on LBJ's tail. I was commissioned by David Susskind to write an eight-scene, two-part mini-series on Lyndon Johnson, who in 1973 had passed away down in the Bluebonnet State, where fields of those flowers surround the Johnson ranch. This is what Texans call "The Hill Country," as relentlessly tabletop flat as the rest of the state.

After a period of research, talking to my D.C. contacts from *Advise and Consent* days, hours spent in the archives of the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas, and interviews with Lady Bird Johnson in the slightly miniaturized replica of the Oval Office, on the top floor of the library, I had a number of dramatic incidents fleshed out in dialogue form. They began with the ugly battle for choosing JFK's running mate at the 1960 Presidential Convention in Los Angeles. It was there that Kennedy overruled his brother Robert and chose Johnson for his VP. Bobby Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson were enemies ever after.

And the structure I chose for the mini-series was a series of critical moments, from that nominating convention to Johnson's television address years later, in which he announced his decision not to run for reelection. In between those two episodes, there were scenes of Johnson's arrogance, anger,

*(continued on next page)*



**LBJ with J. Edgar Hoover**

(LBJ, continued from page 6)

humiliation at the hands of the Kennedys, his manipulation of Congress, his handling of J. Edgar Hoover, the deceit of the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

Of course, no production entities were interested in LBJ as a subject; the opinion was that no one was interested in the man who misled us into Vietnam, and the completed scripts went unproduced.

But it did give me lasting memories of the visit Dotty and I had with Lady Bird Johnson at the LBJ ranch. She was more gracious than you would have believed, the perfect hostess, reminiscing in the study, serving us cool drinks out by the pool. She had a natural southern way of saying sharp-edged things with a honeyed and totally un-sarcastic voice.



I asked her about the deep feud between LBJ and Bobby Kennedy, and Bobby's decision to run against Johnson in 1968, had Johnson chose to run for reelection. She thought for a moment, then nodded: "Let me just say, Bobby was not a team player."

## Loring Steps Down

Loring Mandel, recently voted in as Resident Council Secretary, has found it necessary to resign that position due to emerging medical problems. He thanks you all for the chance to serve, and is left with the honor if not the responsibility.

Molly King has accepted the appointment to replace Loring.

## Birthdays!

Twelve residents celebrate birthdays in February. There is a 16-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant. February birthdays belong to:

**Edward Mordia, Nelli Van Batavia, Ruth Bemak, Anne Lagarce, Dorothy Mandel, James Magner, Gloria Pixley, Michael Bacha, Betty Simmons, Max Silver, Julia Smith & Reed Hand.**

**Happy Birthday to each of you!!**



## Library Lines

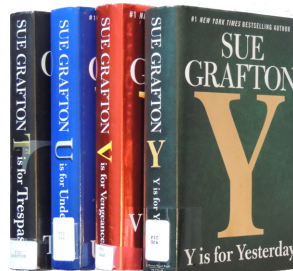
By

John Gillespie

## Prolific Authors Make Most Popular Authors

Some authors are very well represented on our library shelves — some with more than six different titles present. Our librarians said that these authors represent the most sought-after by our patrons. I think you might be interested in becoming acquainted with some of these popular writers.

I fully expected that the prolific Agatha Christie would be one of them. Not so, but two other established female masters of suspense were — Sue Grafton and Mary Higgins Clark. Sue Grafton, who died in 2017, wrote a series of "alphabet" thrillers



beginning with *A is for Alibi* and *B is for Burglar*. She would have ended the series with *Z is for Zero*, but didn't live to write the last installment — the series ends with *Y is for Yesterday*, which appeared in 2017.

Each features, in a first-person narrative, private investigator Kinsey Millhone, who operates in the fictional city of Santa Teresa, California (a thinly disguised version of Santa Barbara).

Mary Higgins Clark (born 1927) has written over 50 best sellers, beginning with *Where Are the Children*, which was first published in 1975 and is still in print in its 75th edition. Ms. Clark was forced into writing to make a living for her family when her husband died suddenly of a heart attack. She now makes over a million dollars in advance for each of her novels. The subjects "children" and "mental telepathy" are featured prominently in her work. Her recent novels include *I've Got My Eyes on You* and *Kiss the Girls and Make Them Cry*. At age 92, she is alive, well, and writing in the Bronx.

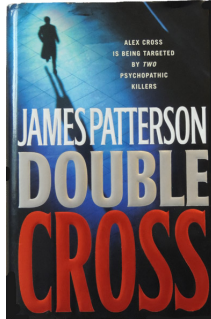
Very different in the audience they attract are the 19 books that make up the Aubrey-Maturin adventure novels by Patrick O'Brian (1914-2000).

(continued on next page)

**(Library Lines, continued from page 6)**

They are set roughly in the period of the Napoleonic Wars of the early 19th century. Many of the events and the characters are drawn from real life. The novels follow chronologically the public and personal lives of the two protagonists — the English naval captain Jack Aubrey and the Irish-Catalan physician Stephen Maturin. In the first, *Master and Commander*, Aubrey has just been promoted in rank to master commander, and he appoints Maturin, a destitute physician, to be his surgeon. Together they face fierce naval action in the Mediterranean. The last novel in the series, *Blue at the Mizzen*, takes place after the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars. In it, our two heroes set sail for the coast of Chile on a two-fold mission: to chart the coastline and to help those who seek freedom from Spain

The most prolific writer of mystery thrillers is James Patterson (born 1947). With over 230 books to his credit, his novels account for about 6% of all hardcoverd books sold annually in the United States. He has written many books with co-authors. Scores of his books are in series. One of the most notable is the Alex Cross series, which now numbers almost 30 titles. Alex Cross is a former forensic psychologist who is now a private psychologist and government consultant. The series began with *Along Came a Spider* in 1993. The most recent title is *Criss Cross* (2019).



In the Women's Murder Club series, each title begins with a number, starting with *1st to Die* of 2001 and ending with this year's *The 20th Victim*. The Michael Bennett series now numbers about 15 titles beginning with *Step In a Crack* in 2007 and ending (so far) with this year's *Blindside*, which deals with the mayor of New York City, whose daughter is missing and in great danger. Patterson's most famous co-author is former President Bill Clinton. Together they wrote *The President Is Missing*, published in 2018. In it, enemies are planning an attack on the USA., cyberterrorism is afoot, and the president goes missing.

Nora Roberts is known as the best-selling romance writer of her time with about 500 million of her books printed around the world. On our library

shelves, she is better known by her pen name, J. D. Robb, and the many futuristic suspense novels she has written, all with "Death" in the title. The initials J.D. were taken from the names of her two sons, Jason and Dan, and Robb is short for Roberts. The series features Eve Dallas, a New York City police lieutenant. Now numbering 50, the series began with *Naked in Death*. It takes place in 2058 when a senator's daughter who has been leading a double life as a prostitute is killed and Eve investigates. This novel also introduces Roarke, the handsome, wealthy man Eve is attracted to and later marries.

Next month, a few more prolific writers (including Danielle Steel) and their work. In the meantime, happy reading!

## ***Nursing Care Center Rated Among Top 19%***

Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center is among the 19% of U.S. skilled-nursing facilities that have been recognized as a Best Nursing Home for 2019-20 by *U.S. News & World Report*.

The home earned Best Nursing Home status by achieving a rating of "High Performing," the highest possible rating, for long-term care. *U.S. News* gives the designation of Best Nursing Home only to those homes that satisfy its assessment of the appropriate use of key services and consistent performance in quality measures.

"We are honored that Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center has been recognized in this new long-term care rating for U.S. News this year," said Bill Jones, president of Berkshire Healthcare. "Our caregivers strive to provide the highest-quality care, and we are gratified that an unbiased assessment came to the same conclusion – that we are among the best in Massachusetts."

Now in its 10th year, the *U.S. News* Best Nursing Homes ratings and profiles offer comprehensive information about care, safety, health inspections, staffing and more for nearly all of the nation's 15,000-plus nursing homes. The Best Nursing Homes ratings reflect the publication's exclusive analysis of publicly available data, using a methodology that evaluates factors that most greatly impact safety and outcomes.

*Healthcare News*



## A Muddy Night on Planet Kimball

I, the great I.M. Nutz, was induced by the promise of food to fly again from Planet Futz to Kimball Farms to review their so-called New Year's Eve show.

The food was as delectable as promised, but I am not a critic of cuisine, only a humble master of the dramatic art like their George Bernard Shaw. And I must say, as in my two previous New Year's Eve visits, I found these Kimball people mysterious beyond compare.

Who, for example, is this Eve they celebrate at New Year? I know she is the beloved of their Adam, but if the fruit whereof she and Adam eat is forbidden, how are mountains of shrimp, salmon and meats going to gain heaven's consent? I can only conclude that the show is homage to the goddess of food, who becomes a different nutrition chairwoman every two years.

But homage to this fickle creature was nothing compared to the Kimball show I caught on intergalactic TV a couple of weeks later. Men were lined up outside the ladies' room, pounding on the door to get in. Women were fighting off the marauders with bare hands.

*"It's ours!"* the women cried.

*"Emergency!"* the men shouted.

At the height of the scuffle an angel appeared. "Ye shall share," she declared. "Henceforth, until renovations are completed upon the men's room, ye shall be – unisex!" She tapped the ladies' room door with her walking stick. Lo! a unisex proclamation appeared.

"Unisex! Unisex! We love unisex!" the crowd howled, as dissenters scurried off to the Pub's lonely half-moon door.

Now that, ladies and gentlemen, is a show worthy of I.M. Futz' genius. I ask you, why wasn't the great critic invited?



The New Year's show, as always, was full of strange customs and deeds. In the act named *Hippopotamus*, for example, three singers sang an ode to mud, mud, glorious mud. Apparently these people wallow in the stuff to show love.

Another trio conducted a TV interview in a language that went like

this: He: *"eflmsoemjhs."* She: *"fumakemndsuk."*

A TV host-translator explained that she was there to interview the couple about the secret life of toads on a far-off island, in the language of that island. But we Futzians understand strange languages – how else should we know what people in places like Planet Kimball are saying?

Allow me to translate these amphibians' true conversation:

He: "What're you doing tonight, Frog-eyes?"

She: "What's it to you, Flat-head?"

He: "I thought we might snuggle in a bit of mud."

She: "I'd sooner croak."

As you can see, for these Kimballites mud is the highest honor. They even gobble mud pie as ice cream.

In the act named "Yma's Dream," a singer named Yma hosted a party for faded celebrities like her whose first name ended, like hers, in the syllable "a." One by one, Yma introduced Uta to the arriving guests. The thrilling dialog went: "Uta, Yma; Uta, Ava; Uta, Oona; Uta, Ona; Uta, Ida ..."

Sadly, Minnehaha never appeared to deliver a ha-ha. I heard that she was in Utah. I hopped into my spaceship and hurried back to the mud-free comforts of Futz.

*photo by Lorraine Roman*