



The Kimball Farms Observer



Volume 30, Number 2

Meet your Councilor, p.3

February 2021

Open Mic: My Coming to America

Leaving Scandinavia in 1947 for a new life across the Atlantic was quite a momentous experience. My father had decided that he had had enough of wars – not to mention the unspeakable Holocaust – having lost almost all of his family in the former Austria-Hungarian realms and then fearing the expanding Russian hegemony. America beckoned as the most enticing destination to consider, if not also the safest for his four growing children, I at 17 among them.

My dad, an opera-trained chief cantor in Copenhagen, had received a six-month fellowship to study “advances in liturgical music” in the USA back in 1947. His only close contact in New York was the former organist at Jewish funerals, Borge Rosenbaum (known in the USA as Victor Borge, the pianist-comedian). It was, indeed, Borge who helped arrange a Town Hall concert for my dad, after which he was offered an attractive position as Chief Cantor in Montreal, Canada. And so, after some transatlantic phone calls with my mother and an OK from his Danish congregation, the decision to emigrate was cemented.

(Borge came to the USA in 1940, following the German occupation of Denmark. He had been on Hitler’s most wanted list because he poked fun at the Führer in his many cabaret shows in Scandinavia. He was asked to change his name when, as a totally unknown comedic pianist, he quickly became a hit as the “warm-up” performer on the Bing Crosby radio show.)

All I knew of Canada was from a couple of pages in my Danish geography book. My dad had jokingly referred to Canada’s name as “keiner dah”, meaning “no one there” in German. He was struck by Canada’s tiny population of just some 10 million in a landmass size much larger than the USA. All I knew was that Montreal was the second largest French-speaking city, after Paris of course. And that Canada

was a Dominion of the UK where one was required to sing “God Save The King” after the last movie.

In late 1947 I, along with my mother and two younger brothers, sailed to New York aboard the Swedish Drottningholm from Gothenburg. An



Leo and his mother at sea unforgettable experience in itself: We traveled first class as everything else was booked and thus we ate at the captain’s table, the boys wearing the required tuxedo, and hobnobbed with the rich and famous, among them one of New York’s Mayor William O’Dwyer’s sisters and the celebrated Swedish film star Edward Persson, on a film shoot on the boat, with many of us serving as extras. And, yes, even Greta Garbo was aboard – though rarely seen as she wanted, famously, “to be alone”; her meals were brought to her cabin.

After a few days aboard, enjoying the pool and nightly dancing, a rather awkward situation occurred when my mother observed a young woman who seemed visibly anxious and ill at ease ... always wearing the same clothes and ill-fitting kerchief, moving from one place to another. My mother approached her after several days and learned that she was a “displaced” Holocaust survivor, an eighteen-year old Orthodox Jew – and a stowaway! She spoke only Hungarian, which my Hungarian-born mother did as well.

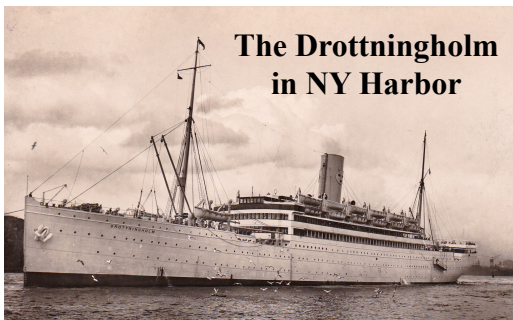
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(America, continued from page 1)

At my dear mother's suggestion, we began a routine to provide her with some daily food (hidden in a napkin from our luxurious dinners) and suggested that she sleep on the floor near my bed – safer than roaming around at night, hiding here and there (though not my ideal bedfellow, for sure.)

And then, days later came the much anticipated, wonderful sight, the Statue of Liberty, as we rounded a corner along the Hudson River to dock at 56th Street ... And there, joyfully, we were met by my father after some nine months of separation.

However, less joyful was the unfortunate fate of our Hungarian stowaway young lady. Walking down the



gangplank, closely intermingled with us, she was nevertheless noticed by a guard at the base of the gangplank steps as she failed to produce the required landing pass. Thus the game was up for her! Nothing we could do for her helped at this point, other than notifying the HIAS (Hebrew Immigration Aid Society) representative along the landing site to possibly help her. Yet she was taken to Ellis Island and presumably deported back to the Displaced Persons camp in Switzerland.

Epilogue: Some 15 years later, she appeared at our home in Montreal, now married with a child, living happily in Brooklyn. She came to convey her thanks! Quite a wonderful ending!

Leo Goldberger

Hoping for Another Year of Song and Joy

(The following is a holiday letter that John Cheney sent to members of his Kimball Farms Singers.)

I truly miss seeing all of you singers. This is the first Christmas at Kimball Farms since it opened that we will not have a Hanukkah/Christmas Concert. I have

been a part of this program since the beginning. Allie Holmes formed this chorus and hired me to be the accompanist. Bill and Allie were wonderful people and started many of the activities at Kimball Farms. When Allie could no longer see she asked me to be the director.

This is supposed to be a joyful and thankful time of the year. When I lived in Sturbridge I was the organist at the meeting house for special occasions at Old Sturbridge Village. Thanksgiving was a wonderful event with candles lining the walkway and a service in the meeting house. It was led by a grand old man, a retired minister. He always ended the service by saying, "Thanksgiving is Thanks Living." That's good advice for us.

We are lucky to live here at Kimball Farms. Think of the many people who have lost their homes, their businesses, their jobs and even family members. We are lucky to have a staff that is looking out for our best interests. We don't have to shop and when we want something that they don't have Michelle shops for us. The van takes us to the doctor. We don't like all the restrictions; however, they are in our best interest.

I am looking forward to 2021 and peace, joy and happiness, and once again we can gather for singing. Thank you all for the many years of singing at Kimball Farms. God bless you all.

Love, John E. Cheney

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

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"Your Councilor Is Now Someone Else"

"Quick! Can you name your councilor?"

"My councilor? Hmmmm ... I could tell you the name of my third-grade teacher,* but my councilor? No idea ..."

"Well, that's understandable, because whoever was your councilor last year is now someone else. Let me explain..."



Arlene



Molly

The Kimball Farms Residents Association has the usual officers (president, first and second vice presidents, secretary, treasurer) and also eight councilors: four represent residents in the Lenox apartments and four in the Stockbridge apartments. The councilors' role is, to quote the Residents' Association by-laws, "... acting in the interests of all Residents at Kimball Farms ... (and) each councilor shall represent, in particular, the interests of those members who reside in the area that the councilor has been elected to represent."

Councilors are elected for a one-year term. A councilor may serve a second term if s/he is willing.



Suzanne



Dorothy

This year, of the eight councilors who were nominated and elected in November, six are new to the role and two are serving a second term.

The two who will serve a second term will represent different groups of residents than they did last year. In Lenox, Judy Glockner will represent apartments

158-175. Suzanne Bach will be the councilor for apartments 210-218 and 128-138. Last year, both councilors represented apartments far from where they live. "It's hard to keep track of how people are doing when you don't live nearby," Suzanne commented about her role last year. This year, she will be in the middle of her flock. Judy agrees with Suzanne's observation.



Judy G

In addition to Judy, the new councilors for Lenox are Arlene Potler, Nancy Curme, and Dorothy Mandel.

New councilors for Stockbridge are Judy Levin, Molly King, and Paula Byrdy with Suzanne serving another term. Here's the complete list with phone numbers and apartment assignments

Lenox:

Judy Glockner (7163) Apts. 158-175

Arlene Potler (7157) Apts. 142-157

Nancy Curme (7273) Apts. 242-257 (no photo)

Dorothy Mandel (7259) Apts. 258-275

Stockbridge:

Judy Levin (7204) Apts. 101-118

Molly King (7127) Apts. 119-127, 139-141, 201-209

Suzanne Bach (7213) Apts. 210-218, 128-138

Paula Byrdy (7219) Apts. 219-241

How can your councilor help you? If you're just moving in, your councilor will be your main problem solver and information provider. If you've been in residence for a while, your councilor should be the first person you consult to guide you to the best way and/or the right person for solving a problem or exploring a concern. They're eager to hear from you.

*Her name was Miss Bemisderfer, a name that was longer than she was, so she was called Miss Bemie at the Penn Wynne School in Wynnewood, Penn.

Susan Dana

President's Comments: Longing for Better Days

It may have taken gnashing, grinding, gritting of teeth but we made it. Ten months of Covid-19 and its many restrictions have bedeviled us but Kimball's residents have drawn upon reserves of resilience to emerge a lot more aware of the central place relationships assume in our lives, eagerly anticipating a restoration to whatever the new normal may be.

Until that time, we'll have to deal with the present abnormal, and that leaves lots of questions unanswered, for old as well as new residents. Each of us, when we move in, is handed an Independent Living Resident Handbook. Well-intentioned as it may be, it's a lot of information for a "newbie" to absorb and often gets lost among the myriad pressing issues of the move. By the time the need to know how a particular Kimball practice presents itself, the whereabouts of that helpful Handbook is a mystery.

It will come as no surprise that the great majority of concerns, questions and issues relate to food. Sandy Shepard, Mike Paglier, Garry Roosma, Barbara Liebert and I met recently to review meal choices, preparation and costs. Answers to many of your questions can be found on pages 26-27 in your Handbook; information on costs for guests is under Appendix A, page 45.

Mike explained that if a resident chooses only a portion of a menu, the full cost of the meal is charged to his/her monthly bill. And, if someone decides to choose two entrees, the cost of the meal will be doubled.

You are encouraged to contact kitchen staff if you do not like/want/approve your meal and you will be offered a replacement. The choice may be limited, but Mike emphasized that his main concern will always be to offer something satisfying to you. Further, he's open to menu suggestions. I plan to follow through on that and send in recipes for casseroles that my family of six especially enjoyed and that are easily reheatable.

Mike also reported that he can help with concerns about reheating of food. Many residents have told me they weren't sure how long to microwave something, what kind of dish or plate to reheat food on, how to adjust microwave power levels. Call 7010 or 7011 for help.

Next to food, Housekeeping Service questions are among those asked frequently. Again, please refer to your Residents' Handbook, pps. 30-31, for a detailed description of what is included. Some housekeeper absences have been due to the Covid-19 crisis. Every effort is being made to maintain a regular cleaning schedule. If you experience difficulty call 7090 for advice and clarification.

Transportation is another frequent concern. When I spoke with Michelle recently she was quick to acknowledge the problem. A new driver has been hired but is not ready yet to assume full and independent driving responsibilities. She urges all residents who have medical appointments to let her know dates and times well in advance. Although your Handbook stipulates a 24-hour notification time, that may not be sufficient now.

Councilors, as well as their assigned residents, raised questions about their responsibilities. Especially during the pandemic, counselors are expected to maintain close contact with all residents on their assigned list. For "newbies," that means (when quarantine restrictions permit) a tour of the facility; delivery of a food basket (prepared by kitchen staff); and explanation of committees and other aspects of community life. For residents who've been here a while, it's recommended that counselors keep in touch on a less frequent basis. As Second Vice President, Lorraine Roman is the liaison between counselors and the Residents Council, and she can clarify the important role these helpers play.

I've waited until the end of these comments to mention the most frequent concern, question and issue I hear, because there is no answer. We are all lonely; we all yearn to have visitors; we all long to see our children, our friends. We know we will see them will but we want to know when. We've had one vaccine shot; we'll have another later this month. M-A-Y-B-E sometime in March restrictions can ease up a little bit.

For now, we must all simply do whatever we can to connect. Call a friend ... better still, call one of our "newbies," introduce yourself and talk about life at that happier Kimball that will someday come again. My nickname isn't Pollyanna; I'm just trying to survive, as are we all.

Dorothea Nelson

Betsy McKearnan: To the Theater Born

New resident Betsy McKearnan has always been drawn to the theater and especially to acting. Growing up in Glens Falls, N.Y., the gateway to the Adirondacks, she acted in every high school production. In her senior year at Wellesley College, she decided to head to the City looking for opportunities to act professionally. After leaving Wellesley, she moved to a boarding house in Cambridge, NY, where she met her late husband, David. She did return to Wellesley, however, and finished her degree, majoring in theater and literature. In Cambridge, Betsy acted in the local community theater, the Gallery Players, with then aspiring actor Sam Waterson.

By a lucky accident, Betsy met a lighting designer at NYU and asked to study with him. She was told, "Well, change your clothes and get in here!" Betsy was accepted as assistant lighting designer to a top student, Anna Marie, who was not very happy about the arrangement at first.



Fortunately, they later became good friends, and after graduation Betsy directed her in a production of *Antigone*. Following that, Betsy landed a job at the Brooklyn Academy of Arts as a prop manager and got to know some of the actors working with Joseph Papp. As a result, she was offered a position with Shakespeare in the Park doing props. Betsy also continued working with the Gallery Players doing everything from acting to directing to sweeping the stage until she and David left the area.

In the meantime, David, who had been off to business school and returned to the City, had not been able to forget Betsy. After contacting her parents, whom he had met, he located her and they resumed seeing each other and married, moving to White Plains, NY, to live.

In the 90s, after moving to Stockbridge and purchasing a "fixer upper," which they turned into a

sun-filled, charming home, Betsy was hired by Dick Dunlap at the Berkshire Theatre Festival to do props and some lighting. She arrived at BTF about the same time as the actor James Warwick and they have remained good friends. Shortly after that, Betsy was asked by Jane Fitzpatrick to join the board of directors. When Betsy expressed some reluctance, Jane urged her, saying she really needed someone who knew theater because not one other member knew anything about it!

Those years became very busy ones for both Betsy and David, as they helped raise much needed funds for the theater, especially the Apprentice Program, for which Betsy hosted an elegant luncheon each year. They became hugely popular, making it possible for Betsy and David to approach others who became generous donors that kept the program going for many years. Also, this busy couple helped fund many wonderful afternoon galas at the Blantyre Estate in Lenox which became very popular and were attended by hundreds each year.

Another favorite and long-supported project of Betsy's has been Gould Farm in Monterey, Mass. The Farm is a residential community that has helped countless troubled young people and adults and has been lauded by such renowned therapists as Oliver Sacks.

This is one busy lady! Betsy is settling into her sunny art- and sculpture-filled apartment 203, and a great asset to our Kimball Farms community. Welcome, Betsy!

Betsy has three children: Sarah, an environmentalist living in Seattle, Wash., who has two children; Colin, who operates businesses for "tired owners," has four children, two of whom were adopted from Ethiopia; and Heather, in Santa Fe, N.M. who helps with business development, and whom she describes as "hostess with the mostest."

Marilyn Hunter

Collage Show Opens

Don't miss the new and exciting exhibition in the Conference Room: collages by resident Pauline Meyer. It is full of fresh and amusing ideas.

Molly Pomerance

Library Lines: More Prize Winners

In the previous issue of the Observer, the two most prestigious annual book awards, the National Book Awards and the Booker Prize, were introduced with details on the latter. This column will concentrate on the National Book Awards, which are currently given annually to a single book in five different categories: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, translated works and young adult literature. (This column will deal primarily with the fiction category). The books must be written by Americans and published by American publishers.

Rumaan Alam, *Leave the World Behind*. Amanda and Clay, with their two teenage children, head out to a remote part of Long Island for a restful weekend but find that this peaceful environment is soon shattered by a night call from an older couple who are strangers but claim to be owners of the house. They bear disquieting news that a sudden blackout has engulfed New York City and environs. Who or what could be the cause, can this couple be trusted, is the world on the verge of total destruction? One critic called this “a suspenseful and provocative work — keenly attuned to the complexities of parenthood, race, and class.”

Lydia Millet, *A Children's Bible*. This is the story of 12 amazingly mature children on a formal vacation with their families in a sprawling lakeside mansion where the parents engage in hedonistic behavior and generally ignore their offspring. The narrator, a teenager named Evie, and her young brother Jack, who always carries a Bible with him, are the leading characters and, when a terrible storm almost destroys the mansion, the youngsters set off to seek shelter in the nearby house of one of the parents. This apocalyptic situation is recreated in “a prophetic heartbreaking story of generational division and a haunting vision of what awaits us on the far side of Revelation.”

Deesha Philyaw, *The Secret Lives of Church Ladies*. This is a debut collection of nine short stories about several black ladies, their church-going and their sexuality. The stories cover four generations of characters, who deal with their sexuality, emotional needs, and the conflicting standards that the church presents. For example, in *Peach Cobbler* young Olivia's mother makes peach cobbler once a week for the married pastor of her church who, on visits,

stays for more than the dessert. The author's characters “create intimacy and have hope not despite their ugly problems but because of them.”

Douglas Stuart, *Shuggie Bain*. This unusually distressing novel has received fantastic praise and has won several awards including this year's prestigious Booker prize. The novel deals with the depressing life of people living in Glasgow's slums and, in particular, the heartbreaking story of the awkward misfit Shuggie and his alcoholic mother. Though it is tough reading, one reviewer said, “Scene by scene, this book is a masterpiece.”

Charles Yu, *Interior Chinatown*. This is the year's winner of the National Book Award for fiction. Using the narrative structure of a screenplay, including the shorthand found in scripts and with dialogue beginning in the middle of the page, this inventive novel tells the story of Willis Wu, an Asian man, who jumps from being a bit player in a Chinatown melodrama, to fame he never knew existed. He also discovers the secret history of Chinatown and the buried legacy of his own family. Some critical quotes: “The author has seemingly limitless skill and ambition.” “A devastating (and darkly hilarious) novel.” “Infinitely inventive.” “This is mind-bending story telling.” Sounds great.

Next month, we will get a glimpse of some new additions to our library.

John Gillespie

In Memoriam

Norvan Drugmand

May 27, 1928 to December 22, 2020

Jeanne Adams

August 30, 1927 to Dec. 23, 2020

Leo Mahoney

January 4, 1930 to Dec. 27, 2020

Marcel Tenenbaum

August 10, 1932 to Dec. 29, 2020

James McCarthy

July 14, 1931 to January 10, 2021

Nancy Brown

May 20, 1946 to January 11, 2021



Pandemic and Heart: Partners in Disease

February marks the 56th consecutive American Heart Month. It is a tradition that's over half a century strong. The first proclamation was issued by President Lyndon B. Johnson in February 1964, nine years after he had a heart attack. February is also the first anniversary of the novel corona virus COVID-19. The two are connected in more ways than one. Heart disease and COVID-19 are now both front and center in medicine and in our communities. Heart disease kills more people than all forms of cancer combined and it is one of the major risk factors for getting and succumbing to Covid-19.

The risk factors for both are similar: type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, insulin resistance, smoking, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, a diet high in sugar, unhealthy fats and processed foods – lacking in fruits and vegetables, healthy grains, beans and nuts. The statistics for having a healthy heart are alarming:

- 83% of public believe that heart attacks can be prevented but aren't motivated to do anything.
- 72% of Americans don't consider themselves at risk for heart disease.
- 58% put no effort into improving their heart health.

It is also true that many people put no effort into avoiding the virus, such as wearing masks, hand washing and social distancing. Those fairly straightforward and easy to follow guidelines are ignored in the same way as admonitions to stop smoking, maintain an ideal weight, choose healthy, nutrient-rich foods, stay active and manage stress. Managing the risk factors for heart disease will also decrease the risk of COVID-19.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there has been an increase in heart-related problems, which doctors say is due to economic, physical and social stressors. Physicians in the U.S. and indeed worldwide report an increase in a particular heart ailment known as stress-induced cardiomyopathy, or "broken heart syndrome" — according to a recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Stress-induced cardiomyopathy can occur in response to emotional or physical stress, which prohibits the heart muscle from pumping effectively.

When this happens, patients can experience similar symptoms to that of a heart attack, such as shortness of breath, chest pain or palpitations. However, this type of stress generally doesn't go so far as producing acute blockage of the arteries and patients generally recover in two to three weeks.

When we think of the accepted risk factors for heart disease, high blood pressure, high blood sugar and cholesterol come to mind. These, however, are the symptoms of metabolic imbalance, can be fixed, and are not the root cause. The trouble begins with inflammation from excess abdominal fat, toxins, and oxidative stress (damaging molecules from an unhealthy diet) that damages the lining of the arteries known as the endothelium. Over the course of many years as the arteries become stiff and hard, blood pressure increases. When the endothelium is inflamed, lipoprotein particles carrying cholesterol throughout the body will begin to accumulate on the inner wall of the artery.

The immune system will then send molecules to gobble up the cholesterol and they begin to form plaque under the lining. This can narrow the artery, further increasing the blood pressure. If the plaque eventually cracks, a blood clot will form, completely blocking the artery and causing a heart attack or stroke. Taking medications to treat symptoms is important and necessary for some, but treating the underlying imbalances with lifestyle change produces lasting improvement and reduction in risk. If we consider that 2/3 of heart disease is accompanied by and related to insulin resistance and that the average American consumes 152 pounds of sugar and 133 pounds of flour per year, a prescription for change is pretty obvious.

While science is improving medical care in exciting new ways, unhealthy lifestyle choices combined with rising obesity rates in both children and adults have hindered progress fighting heart disease and contribute significantly to the mortality seen with Covid-19. Just watch some old movies from the 1940s about World War II and marvel at the slim and trim physiques of our young soldiers. Gone are the days.

Stephanie Beling, M.D.

A Visit from the Virus: No Ice Cream for Freddy

Mother: “Go to your room and don’t come out till I say you can.”

Freddy: “Wah! I didn’t do anything wrong!”

“You said you saw the Virus.”

“He wanted me to come out and play with him.”

“Don’t fib. You didn’t see the Virus. The Virus is invisible. What’s the matter, don’t you like staying your room?”

“I want my ice cream.”

“Eat your broccoli.”

“Why can’t I have ice cream?”

“I told you, ice cream makes people lazy. They sit around in comfortable chairs and talk too much.”

“I don’t talk too much. There’s nobody to talk to. They’re all in their rooms.”

Freddy opens sliding door to look for people.

“Put on your mask.”

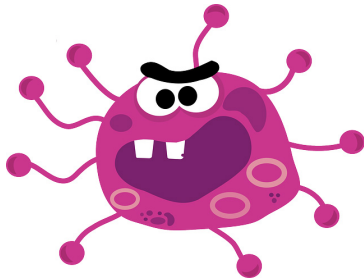
“Aw, Ma, this ain’t Halloween.”

“Isn’t Halloween.”

Face appears at slider. Knock knock. “May I come in?”

“Ma! The Virus!”

At door, the Virus, a red rubber ball with wiggly rubber tentacles for hands and feet.



Wiggly hands reach out for Freddy. Mother clutches Freddy to her breast. “Get out of here! You’re a dirty old man. Can’t you see we’re in lockdown?” *Makes sign of hex.*

Virus vibrates all over. “Mmm, that felt good. What’s for dinner? Chicken or fish? Ha-ha. Ha-ha.”

“The broccoli is very good.”

Ma’s beeper squawks. Urgent conversation:

“Urghwyrst?”

“Zykstuh Virus!”

“OOomygoomy yacklo! Zoom boom yacklo VIRUS BEEP!”

SWAT team rushes in. “Where is he? Somebody said he’s here.”

Freddy wakes. He’s 92 years old, nearly as old as his beard. Ma is in full PPE, wielding swab.

Ma says, “Both nostrils, please.”

“You’re not my Ma,” *Freddy says.* “Who are you?”

“Go to your room and don’t come out till I say you can.”

“You said that somewhere before.”

“What’s the matter? Don’t you like your room?”

SWAT team readies sanitizer cannons.

“I want my coffee. Why can’t we have morning coffee?”

“Coffee makes people sit around and ...”

“... yeah, I know, they get comfortable and talk too much. Okay, then I’ll go out and find company.”

Freddy opens sliding door.

Ma panics. “QUARANTINE! QUARANTINE! RED ALERT. EVERYBODY QUARANTINED!”

Alarm bells go off. Virus wiggles and waves goodbye. Up and down halls, doors slam shut. Freddy reaches for pills. SWAT team goes out for beer. Ma sprouts wings and flies up to heaven. Freddy alone in room. Dinner arrives. Broccoli.

Dr. Fauci

Birthdays!

Eleven residents celebrate birthdays in February

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

Edward Mordia, Nelli VanBatavia, Ruth Bemak, Anne Lagarce, Dorothy Mandel, Gloria Pixley, Betty Simmons, Rita Kaplan, Max Silver, Julia Smith and Reed Hand

Happy Birthday to each of you!!