



# The Kimball Farms



# Observer



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## Meet the Three Marketeers

The Kimball Farms marketing team has been expanded. In addition to the established roles of Director of Marketing and Assistant Director, the position of Move-In Coordinator/Marketing Assistant has been created.

Executive Director Sandy Shepard explained the changes this way: “Our goal is to have a nimble and flexible team. The Marketing Team is responsible for connecting with prospective residents and their families. Once a decision is made to join the Kimball Farms family, we recognize that the transition to a new home can seem complicated and stressful. With the addition of the Move-In Coordinator/Marketing Assistant position, we will have a central resource for helping new residents make a smooth transition. Also, residents transitioning to different levels of care within Kimball Farms will have an expanded central resource. All members of the team will be cross trained and able to help in all facets of the marketing operations, wherever the need is, allowing for flexibility and overall increased customer satisfaction.”

Here’s the team:

Newly appointed Director of Marketing Jody Manzolini has been at Kimball Farms since 2007. She grew up in Pittsfield, and immediately joined the workforce as an executive assistant at KB Toys. At the same time, she was studying to become a paralegal at night classes at Berkshire Community College. After she came to Kimball Farms as an executive assistant, she worked for three Executive



**Jody Manzolini is flanked by the marketing team, Susan Smith (left) and Kaylyn Holliday (right)**

Directors including Al Ingegni and Sandy Shepard, and eventually was promoted to Marketing Assistant, working with Dolly Curletti, Director of Marketing until 2018.

“Dolly trained me on how to give tours and hear what people were looking for, so I learned from the master,” Jody

said.” After Dolly retired, I was actually able to train Heidi Cornwell when she became Director of Marketing in 2018.”

Jody still lives in Pittsfield, with her son, who is a first-year student at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams, and her daughter, who is a senior at Taconic High School in the welding program.

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*(Marketeers, Continued from page 1)*

From her 15 years of experience at Kimball Farms, Jody has observed some changes in what prospective residents are interested in.

“Their requirements are a mixed bag. Some people are just tired of keeping up large properties, some people want large spaces, but since the Covid pandemic, most people are interested in the opportunities for socialization and activities. Our connection to Miraval resort just across the street is particularly appealing.”

Assistant Director of Marketing Susan Smith grew up in Lynn, Mass., on the North Shore, in a large family of six children. Her three sisters are older than she is, and her two brothers are younger. Susan is an avid equestrienne and artist, an interesting combination fostered by her Irish grandfather, who grew up in a stable in Donegal. “I remember drawing horses with him, and he also painted scenes of Ireland on the big clamshells collected from the shore. He was probably lonely for Ireland,” she recalls.

When Susan was a sophomore in high school, she visited her sister, then a student at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and immediately decided that was the school for her, too. “It fulfilled my father’s requirements for an education,” Susan said. While he encouraged her and her siblings to pursue their interests in horses, theater, or art, they should do it at a school that would provide them with a well-rounded education. At Skidmore, Susan majored in fine arts, specifically oil painting. She later became interested in photography, especially landscape photographs.

Just before the pandemic, she met Dana Goedewaagen, an artist who does especially sensitive portraits of animals and has become a mentor to Susan. “Dana is a remarkable artist,” Susan said, “even showing the personalities of horses in her portraits, which is not easy.” Some of Dana’s work will be shown in the next exhibit in the Corridor Gallery between the front desk and Pine Hill. Dana’s mother, Barbara France, is a resident of Kimball Farms.

Some of Susan’s work will be included in an exhibition of art by residents, friends, families, and staff of Kimball Farms being organized for early in 2023 in the Corridor Gallery. Independent Living resident Karen Carmean has persuaded Susan to join the Berkshire Art Guild and exhibit her work with that organization.

Susan doesn’t just draw horses: she owns three of them as well as two dogs. She, her husband and their son live on her in-law’s farm in Stephentown, N.Y., in a tenant farmer’s house. The son, Freling, named for his father and grandfather, cares for the animals when he is not working on his doctorate at the State University of New York’s School of Public Health in Rensselaer, N.Y. The farm was a summer place for the family for many years and the land is now worked by a local farmer who grows winter wheat, hay and corn on the property.

Before coming to Kimball Farms, Susan worked for the Times Union newspaper in Albany, doing advertising and special events. She previously worked in real estate and wireless sales for AT&T.

“I’m glad and grateful to be here,” Susan said of Kimball Farms. “How nice to be in a place where the team approach is impressive, and the culture of music and art is a nice bonus. Imagine being paid to meet nice people!”

The third member of the team is Kaylyn Holliday, who comes to the Berkshires from Catskill, N.Y., just across the Hudson River from Hudson, where her family has lived for many generations.

Kaylyn majored in public relations and communications at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She graduated early, right into the midst of the pandemic. The challenges of finding work in those days is reflected in her resume: she was a preschool teacher in North Adams until the school closed because of Covid-19; was then a client relations associate for an investment firm; and had two internships at the Berkshire Hills Country Club, one managing the clubhouse; then on to the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge to manage the Lion’s Den.

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*(Marketeers, Continued from page 2)*

What she really wanted, Kaylyn knew, was to use her education and feel that she was using it, so when she saw a job opening described as a marketing position at Kimball Farms, she jumped on it. The good news about the pandemic is that many people were ready to move to a life care community to escape the isolation they experienced during those two years.

Kaylyn arrived at an especially busy time as a number of new people and current residents needed help moving in and around the campus.

Kaylyn learned quickly about life care, long term care and insurance. "I have new appreciation for the people making such important decisions for themselves and their families," Kaylyn declared. "Within a few weeks, I had helped six people move in, choosing paint colors and flooring, and one resident move to a smaller apartment. I had great support from Jody Manzolini, Sandy Shepard and Michelle Rosier during my fast-learning experience."

Kaylyn and her boyfriend Nick, the comptroller for a real estate development company in Great Barrington, live in Pittsfield in a house they bought just down the street from Mike Paglier, Director of Dining and Nutrition Services, and his family. Kaylyn and Nick share their house with Louie, a golden doodle, and Oatmeal, a black cat. Kaylyn was actually afraid of cats but wanted to overcome that fear when she took in the stray kitten. Now she, Louie and the cat are good friends.

Kaylyn played soccer and softball at MCLA and loves hiking with Louie and her boyfriend.

She goes to Bousquet Sport on Dan Fox Drive in Pittsfield, where she lifts weights. Kaylyn says, "I like to 'lift heavy' (meaning weights up to 200 pounds) and I especially love dead lifting and goblet squats."

Dead lifting means lifting a weighted barbell (200 pounds for Kaylyn) off the floor to the level of the hips and then placing it back on the ground. Goblet squats strengthen the lower body by squatting while holding a free weight in front of the chest. Kaylyn recently won a seven-week fitness competition at Bousquet Sport, earning herself a four-month free all

access membership! With her serious fitness routine, you do not want to mess with Kaylyn.

*Susan Dana*

***Beep, beep***

*(December 24, 2022, with thanks to the crew and a nod to Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening")*

Lying in bed after sleep  
I hear the glorious sound  
Of beep beep beep.

Frost's little horse that stops  
By snowy woods, giving his harness a shake,  
Thinking the stop a mistake,  
Doesn't know the glorious sound  
Of beep beep beep.

Before dawn the crews are out in trucks,  
Pushing, scraping, backing up for another run.  
In bed I listen to the symphony  
Of beep beep beep.

The woods are full of snow, the parking lots clear  
After the overnight storm.  
I have miles to go before I sleep, the poet says.  
In bed, I think: beep beep beep.

*Poet Nauseate II*

**January Trips**

Wednesday Jan 11<sup>th</sup>                      **Bus at 10 am**  
Clark Art

Saturday Jan 14<sup>th</sup>                      **Bus 12:15 pm**  
Met Opera- Mahaiwe – 1 pm  
Date & Time TBD

Let's Eat Out  
John Andrew's Restaurant  
South Egremont  
Date & Time TBD

## Bridget Connolly: The Story Begins in Ireland

Kimball Farms is fortunate to have Bridget Connolly among our new residents. Bridget hails from Ireland, where she was born, raised and educated. Finishing high school early, she enrolled in a nearby community college, where she had two great teachers. As she neared the conclusion of that term, the teachers told her to “read everything,” which she did and still does, receiving an unusual but outstanding education. As an older teenager, she went to Scotland, where she was offered an apprenticeship. Returning to Ireland, she renewed an old friendship with Jim Connolly, whom she soon married.

At that time, there were no jobs available in Ireland (long before ‘Celtic Tiger,’ the boom years 1995-2007), so they moved to England and lived there for 10 years.

She worked as a secretary in the Rolls-Royce aeronautical division, and found time in those years to have two daughters in the English midwife system (similar to the TV show). Jim was working and developing skills as a machinist. He proved to be so successful that he was wooed by a company in Detroit, so once again they moved to a new country. Ten years later they relocated to Houston and opened their own machine shop.

Jim died in Houston when she was only 58. She believed she was “too old” to do anything and just wanted to “hide away.” Having loved Cocoa Beach on an earlier trip, she decided to move there. She met Jim Choromokos, whom she eventually married. When he died in 2012, one of her daughters, who was living in West Stockbridge, wanted her to be closer. (Her other daughter lives in Key West.) Eventually she agreed and moved to No. 266 in Kimball Farms. That’s a brief bio of this intrepid lady, but there is much more to learn.



For instance, there’s her friendly and lively nine-month-old rescue puppy, Lucy, who loves to go out for frequent long walks. Lucy recently learned to refrain from barking, and also learned the joy of watching snow fall on the patio.

Bridget has another interest. She is entranced by South Korea. While in Houston she met South Korean couples, with whom she quickly bonded. As they talked, her new friends revealed that South Koreans are sometimes known as the “Irish of the Orient,” because they have similar temperaments and experiences. As a result of these friendships, Bridget watches South Korean TV news, in English translations. She definitely has a worldwide perspective.

*Marilyn Wightman*

### **Activities in January**

Poetry with Don Barkin Thursdays 11:15: Start date January 5

Spanish Conversation Thursdays 10:00: Start date January 12

Mah Jongg Mondays 3:00: Start date January 9

Beginners Bridge Thursdays 2:00: Start date January 12

Meditation Fridays 3:00: Start date January 13

Book Group First Tuesday every month: Start Date January 3

## Newbies Pat and Kurt Steele Fit Right in

Pat and Kurt Steele may be “newbies” (is that really a word?), but thanks to friendly “oldies” as well as their own outgoing personalities, they’ve become well acquainted with many Kimball residents. When I stopped by apartment 273 to chat with them, I found them outside their door, surrounded by neighbors, already well known to one another.

Until recently, the Steeles owned two homes, an apartment in Brooklyn Heights, N. Y., and an 1870s farmhouse in Norfolk, Conn., their summer and weekend retreat for many years. The pandemic changed that custom; they found they spent so much more time in Norfolk than in Brooklyn Heights that they decided to sell their apartment and live full time in Norfolk.



Originally from Denver, Colo., they’ve known each other since childhood. Pat completed her Bachelor’s degree at the University of Denver, while Kurt headed east to Colgate. His burgeoning curiosity about issues of faith caused him to major in philosophy and religion. Pat came from a long line of Methodist ministers but eventually the couple were drawn to the Unitarian Universalist faith community, where they remain active today.

Their friendship blossomed; they married and moved to New York City, where Kurt enrolled at Columbia University’s Law School. This was the Vietnam War era and he decided to leave law school to teach for a year with a deferment from military duties and later finish his law degree. He eventually became a corporate lawyer, working for Rand McNally, Standard and Poor’s, and McGraw Hill, with jobs in several different states.

The family grew to include two children, a boy and a girl, born while they lived in New Jersey. Although

Pat had started out as an English major she began to work for the Department of Children and Family Services. As she became increasingly involved in their children’s schools, she realized her real interest was in Public Administration. That interest morphed into earning a Master’s degree in School Business Administration from Rutgers University.

She worked for several school districts and eventually became Assistant Superintendent for Business of the School District in Mundelein, Ill. She retired from there when the family returned to New York.

Pat and Kurt love to travel and have enjoyed trips to many countries around the globe. The pandemic changed a lot of that but they’re anxious to resume some trips now that they have two grandchildren to visit. Son Brian lives in Los

Angeles with his wife Stacie and their five-year-old daughter Frieda; daughter Karen, husband Ken and toddler grandson Liam are in Kingston, N.Y.

This energetic pair has incorporated many other things into their lives. After Kurt retired from law, he earned yet another degree ... this time in social work. Pat is a genealogy enthusiast with 5,000 people in her database. He and Pat are active in the Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire. Pat claims it’s the prettiest of the five Unitarian Universalist churches they’ve been part of. And it’s a bonus that their downstairs neighbors Zoe and Stuart Dalheim attend the same church.

They sing the praises of life at Kimball. Among the things they love best is no longer having the responsibility of home maintenance, having food prepared for them, and above all friendly and interesting people.

*Dorothea Nelson*

## Ex Lawyer Alan Launches Kimball Career

The name is Alan Hoffman; the apartment number is 166; though a “newbie,” this vigorous “newbie” is ready to meet and greet Kimball neighbors.

A graduate of Columbia College with distinction in English and History, also of Yale Law School, where he served on the Board of Editors of their prestigious Law Journal, Alan has devoted his professional career to the practice of law.

As counsel to entrepreneurs, public companies and venture capitalists, his keen eye for new opportunities was instrumental in his 1970 career move. In that year he became a founding member of Shereff, Friedman, Hoffman and Goodman in New York City. During his 20 years with the firm he designed investment products and formed new mutual funds.

His diverse “lawyerly” duties demanded a 75-hour week, not leaving time for many other things he enjoyed. But he did manage to fit in trips to the Berkshires, where he could indulge his love of music, theatre and dance. Cultural attractions in this area figured prominently in his choice of Kimball as a retirement home.

His first wife, Suzanne, mother of his two adult sons, died after a long struggle with brain cancer. Alan is delighted that his younger son, Seth, is pursuing a career in investment management and that Seth and his wife Sarah live in nearby Richmond. No longer hemmed in by professional constraints, Alan expresses gratitude that there’s time now to get to know his two adult grandchildren. Granddaughter Lucy has found her niche in a not-for-profit firm in NYC. Her younger brother Noah is enrolled at Fordham University and has shown interest in and talent for sports journalism.



Alan’s older son Jeffrey, lives in Oaxaca, Mexico, which means much less physical contact. This is when we can be grateful for ZOOM and email!

Alan’s first days at Kimball have been dominated by complications of selling his home in Larchmont Woods, a section of New Rochelle, N.Y.; many residents remember such ordeals. By the time this article is in your hands, we can all be hopeful those complications are only a memory.

Alan is a person always willing to investigate something new and to involve himself in a host of activities. His own words summed up his way to a fulfilling life, “I think I demonstrate resiliency and the ability to face up to problems ... deal with them and then move on.”

Sounds like a life prescription to me and perhaps to you as well. Check out Alan in apartment 166. You’ll meet a vigorous man with a wonderfully curious mind!

*Dorothea Nelson*

### **Watch Your Pupils**

I didn’t like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn’t control her pupils?

When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.

When chemists die, they barium.

This girl today said she recognized me from the Vegetarians Club, but I’d swear I’ve never met herbivore.

## Residents Go to iSchool with Montessori Kids

For many years Kimball Farms residents have enjoyed a delightful partnership with The Montessori School of the Berkshires of neighboring Lenoxdale. Kindergarten children have regularly visited LEP, sharing games, stories and snacks. Upperclassmen brought their enthusiasm to talent shows and dances and held joint art shows.



### Montessori student Asher Lynch helps resident Marilyn Wightman with her iPhone

Pre-Covid, we enjoyed intergenerational singing and Show and Tell sharing under the direction of the effervescent musician Andy Kelly. Now a new group of eight to ten students ranging in age from 12 to 14 visits on Friday mornings for a mutually beneficial Cyber Seniors program. Residents may avail themselves of the talents and skills of a tech-savvy young partner to overcome blocks and frustrations with their devices. In just two sessions last month, a variety of problems was tackled on phones, iPads, even a Fitbit.

The rewards of cyber competency, so mysterious and distant for many of us, are worth aiming for. Residents questions have ranged from the very basic – "What is Google?" "What is the Facebook?" to "How can I initiate a Zoom session with my family?"

The possibilities are truly endless and the students hope to lead their resident partners to genuine technical proficiency so that they may enjoy live broadcasts, podcasts, all sorts of apps and more. Their sights are set on an eventual YouTube contest with

teams competing for the most views. Whether or not this idea is intelligible, come to the Game Room on Fridays at 11:00 to meet some friendly and eager students for help and a good dose of fun.

Their teacher, Caitlin Henke, has overheard her charges say, "I can't wait for Cyber Seniors!" Hopefully, you will be one of the participants to soon feel the same way. Sessions resume on Friday, January 13, at 11:00 in the Game Room with students also going to apartments from there to help with desktop computers.

Another group of students has been practicing Scrabble, Chess and Checkers to join us for an hour of board games after school on Wednesdays beginning later in the month.

*Sharon Lazerson*

### Birthday Wishes to our residents!

**Nineteen residents** celebrate birthdays in January. There is a 20-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

January birthdays belong to: Augusta "Gus" Leibowitz, George Raymond, Helene Eicholz, Ann Cashen, Diana Feld, Ann Morgan, Lynn Fiddes, Lynn Wood, Katherine Stell, Steven Somlo, Ned Dana, Patricia Carlson, Nancy Steele, Sue Colker, Judith Levin, Laurel Meyerhofer, Vivian Wise, Audrey Salzman and Julane Reed.

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

## “Bullet That Missed” Is Thriller That Hits

Do retired people want to read books about people in a retirement community who solve cold-case crimes? Obviously they do, since *The Bullet That Missed* is now the third in the series of Thursday Murder Club mysteries. The first two have been million-copy international bestsellers; the first and third are in our library.

Richard Osman, the author, draws heavily from his experience as a television producer and personality in the United Kingdom. He uses the county of Kent and the heart of London as rich backgrounds for compelling stories. His characters come through with immediacy, since most of the text and dialogue are in the present tense. Opening the book at random, one finds the following lines:

*“I launder money,” says the Viking. “Through cryptocurrency.”*

*Viktor tells his clients to steer clear of me. Says it’s too risky.*

*“It is costing me a great deal of money. If I kill him, my problem is over.”*

*“Oh, you poor love, that must be difficult,” says Joyce.*

*“Alan, I have literally just fed you.”*

It will not spoil the plot to reveal that the Viking is not a killer, and that Alan is Joyce’s dog. But it may help to read some lines from the book’s cryptic opening section:

Bethany Waites understands there is no going back now. Time to be brave, and to see how this all plays out.

*She weighs the bullet in her hand ... Will she live, or will she die?*

That is the last to be seen of the actual Bethany in this book, although memories of her pervade it. The character who recalls her most vividly is Mike Waghorn, a television newsman who worked with her 10 years ago when she was a young reporter, just before her car went over a cliff. No trace of her body was ever found, and that is why the Thursday Murder Club is investigating.

In addition to Joyce, who keeps a useful diary and invests in Bitcoins, the club includes Elizabeth, a

former high-level secret agent, as well as Ron, a longtime political activist, and Ibrahim, the resident psychiatrist who is both enabling and cautionary. The club members have good connections with local law enforcement; hence their access to cold cases. They often seek information from friends, relatives, casual acquaintances and known felons. This makes for a dizzying number of characters. Looking for Bethany’s killer is as great a challenge for the reader as for the story’s participants.

The two of us who read this book in tandem ran through a number of suspects, some of whom did not survive

to be convicted. For a while we focused on a character who seemed both logical and expendable, but we were wrong. After that we tried to decipher the meaning of certain handwritten notes; it was Ron’s clever grandson who did that for us.

The book’s final exposition happens brilliantly on social media. Believe us, it will be satisfying.

Mary Misch  
Laurel Meyerhofer





## For New Year, Fasting Plan Offers New Beginning

Happy New Year to one and all. It's that special time of year once again, when we're all determined to make those changes in our lives that we just didn't quite get around to last year ... the time of the famous New Year's resolution. Year after year, for many of us, the number one resolution is to lose weight or in other words to "go on a diet."

My own experience, and that of the thousands of patients that I have worked with over the years, is that diets don't work, and resolutions most certainly don't work. There is instead another option, and that is just to make a minor tweak to when we eat and when we don't. It's been given the most unsatisfying name of "intermittent fasting." Unsatisfying because it gives an impression of deprivation, going without, and being rather haphazard. In reality, the most common use of the term "intermittent fasting" simply means to stop eating after dinner and not eat again until breakfast.

Simple indeed. The goal is to make the time between dinner and breakfast stretch out from at least 12 hours to ideally 14-16 hours. Another simple tweak is to eat your biggest meal earlier in the day and have a smaller meal later. That's because our metabolic fire, our ability to digest and absorb nutrients, is highest mid-day rather than in the evening. If you stop eating at, let's say, 7:00 p.m. and don't have breakfast until 9:00 a.m., you've got your 14 hours right there.

The body needs a rest period to digest, to repair and rebuild, to get rid of toxins and damaged cells, to create new, healthy cells and tissues, and that period of "fasting" allows all that to happen. Basic research has revealed that intermittent fasting (remember it as a period of 12-16 hours of not eating) can protect organs against chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, age-related neurodegenerative

disorders, even inflammatory bowel disease and many cancers. Some benefits research has revealed so far:

- Thinking and memory – boosts working memory in animals and verbal memory in adult humans.
- Heart health – improves blood pressure and resting heart rates as well as other heart-related measurements.
- Physical performance – men who fasted for 16 hours showed fat loss while maintaining muscle mass. Mice fed on alternate days showed better endurance in running.
- Type 2 diabetes and obesity – In six studies, obese adult humans lost weight through intermittent fasting. People with type 2 diabetes may benefit: Most research shows that intermittent fasting can help people lose body weight and lower their levels of fasting glucose and fasting insulin while reducing

insulin resistance. Some studies found that patients practicing intermittent fasting with supervision by their doctors were able to reverse their need for insulin therapy.



Typical dieting (counting calories, food deprivation, etc.) as a method for achieving and maintaining one's ideal weight is a notorious failure. For most people, there is an initial weight loss, but too often it's short-lived for reasons such as low energy, depression and

hunger. The diet then ends before the goal is reached. The few that stay on a diet may achieve their ideal weight, but what happens after that is the real problem. As the diet ends, the old eating lifestyle is resumed, and the result is weight gain that often leaves the person heavier than ever before. This repetitive pattern of weight loss and weight gain is known as the "yo-yo" syndrome familiar to all dieters. It is a stress on the body and therefore something to be avoided.

*(Continued on page 10)*

*(Fasting Plan, Continued from page 9)*

Another New Year's tweak that could lead to healthier food choices, as well as when to eat and how much to eat, is to enjoy meals in a state of mindfulness. According to Kabat Zinn, the founder of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts, mindfulness means "paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." Paying precise, nonjudgmental attention to the details of your eating experiences as they arise and subside is the intention. January 2023 is indeed a window of opportunity for small changes that may accomplish much.

A poem for the New Year:

### *A Window*

A window is a wound,  
 an opening, a hole,  
 a portal.  
 A cleft, a rift in  
 the structure, the fort  
 that is the body.  
 It is created by loss, by illness,  
 by the death of a loved one.  
 That loss is like a hole in  
 your heart, but is actually a  
 window to let in light,  
 fresh air, and love.  
 Windows are for illumination,  
 ventilation and view. A view  
 requires looking out.  
 A window allows for looking out and  
 allows an escape route for  
 grief and despair.  
 Take advantage of that wound,  
 that opening. It works two ways.

*Stephanie Beling, M.D.*

### ***President's Comments: Keep That Resolution!***

The new year is here and 2023 was welcomed with a gala event including pre-show cocktails. The show was followed by a delicious buffet put on by the kitchen and dining room staff.

Along with welcoming the new year, we have resolutions and, of course, great expectations for a better and happier year. Two of the biggest hoaxes or fantasies are the aforementioned resolutions and expectations. There are two resolutions which we usually make in all honesty to ourselves and those who are at a New Year's Eve party or gathering. The first is "I am going to work out regularly and lose some weight and get in shape."

Gyms across the country are full of enthusiastic would-be athletes with new sneakers and the latest Nike or Under Armour workout attire. The Pine Hill gym during the first week in January is no exception as eager residents flock to Lynn's classes. But by the end of January many of those enthusiastic workout folks fade away and the class returns to its usual attendance numbers.

The second resolution is that very elusive "I am going to lose weight." With the motivation that I will feel better and my clothes will fit, the determined dieter carefully reviews the daily menu and perhaps eschews the glass of wine, asks for smaller portions and definitely forgoes the dessert. How long this new regimen lasts varies depending on the self-control and determination of the individual, but most gradually slide back to their old eating habits, perhaps losing a few pounds, but generally what is lost comes back in due time.

What about Kimball expectations? We are still emerging from Covid and the flu, and hiring people for the dining room and kitchen remains a problem. Eventually we will have the staff to open fully but as of now that day is several months off. In the meantime, enjoy what we have as the dining room staff makes every effort to make our meals enjoyable. All the best for the new year.

*Garry Roosma*

## The Happy, Sad Story of Queechl

The crows are calling to each other in the treetops. *Caw! caw!* says one. *Caw! caw! caw! caw!* comes the reply from deeper in the woods. The conversation continues in speech-like accents and tones. Agreement has been reached – but about what morsel of carrion or lovers' tryst? A variety of rattles and cackles conveys other messages. Or a flock swirls above the trees, sounding a squalling alarm against an invading hawk.

It's a such times that I think of Queechl.

The moral of this tale is that birds don't belong in cages. You'd think that was obvious but it took us several years to reach the conclusion.

Queechl was a toucan – a red-rumped aracari toucan, to give him his pedigree. To look at, Queechl was a stunner. He (I think he was a he) was about 15 inches long, more beak and tail than body, with darkly iridescent green upper parts, a bright yellow belly, a red rump, multicolored pantaloons and a downward-curving yellow bill. But unlike budgies, lovebirds, canaries and parrots – those household stooges – toucans can't be tamed.

We named him Queechl because that was that sound he made when he was happy – one of the sounds anyway, because he had a sizable repertory of *queechits*, *queeps*, *quawps* and *quirrs* to show pleasure, when he finally got around to showing pleasure. When he wasn't happy, he either assumed a martyr's pose in his cage or loosed a variety of protesting squawks and screeches, the worst of which was a horrendous crescendo *crooootch!* – louder and louder, shriller and shriller – that would have peeled the leaves off a jungle.

Queechl. We established him in a sunny spot in the living room with a view across the hills. Crows regularly flew by outside the window and they were fine. For them, Queechl puffed himself up and emitted dulcet *quirrs* of approval. But hawks and vultures also roamed the skies and they set off a panic, which

resulted in bananas, water, droppings and feathers splattered across the cage's newspaper-lined floor and part of the living room besides. Cage cleaning became a ritual repeated several times a day.

We told him the cage was his own fault for letting himself get caught in that Bolivian jungle. But that's small comfort compared to the knowledge that you are a fellow creature's jailer.



We discovered Queechl sitting in the back of a New York aviary shop. All around him the other birds were hopping and twittering cheerfully on their perches. Not this old

grouch. He sat in his cage in his martyr's pose, mad at the world. We looked him over and passed by. But something about that miserable toucan came back to haunt us. When we got home in rural New Jersey, we thought: somebody should rescue him.

Namely us.

Why us? Because the shop owner told us that Gloomy Gus had sat there three months without a taker, and pity filled our unsuspecting hearts. So when we called, yes, they still had the toucan. (Why would they not have the toucan? Nobody else was going to put down good money for a sad sack like him.) Well, hold on, we said. We're coming back. He was about a year old and came with a wire-mesh cage equipped with two perches for hippity-hop. He would live to be about thirty, the shop owner said. He'd outlive us.

Queechl had no song, only his *queechits*, *quawps*, *quirrs* and the horrific *croooatches*. From beneath the large tablecloth that covered the cage at night, Queechl announced daybreak like a rooster. *Let me out of here*, the *croooatches* said. *It's time to be up in the trees, splattering fruit around*. Also – I was sure of it as I tried to sneak a few more winks – *it's time for some love life around this joint. Where are the babes anyhow?*

He lived to be about ten. I say it again: birds do not belong in cages.

Andy Pincus

## West's Artistic Side Emerges in New Show

The Kimball Farms community knows West Saunders as a skilled and good-willed member of the Environmental Services Department who is ever ready to respond to residents' maintenance needs. Together with Chris Arnold, and making good use of his artistic sensibilities, West has also quickly and ably hung all the art exhibits in our Connector Gallery.

At the University of Maine in Orono, West played football and then lacrosse while majoring in Graphic Arts. In those years he did a lot of freelance work designing logos, trademarks and websites. When he graduated, there was a family manufacturing business that put his talents to use in its art department. There he designed metal clipboards for companies such as Calvin Klein, which ordered 100,000 of them.

When the business was sold, West went to work at a paper mill, which led to a midlife return to school for a degree in print-making. Despite the scarcity of free time, West has still managed to pursue his passion and to offer new work to share.

The current show was created with the hope of offering our community the chance to support and appreciate one another's efforts and gifts. Some of the artists will already be familiar to residents and those who roam the halls. Others will reveal new talents. There is a great range of work, highlighting our diversity and at the same time the common thread of the importance of and joy in creative striving.

*Sharon Lazerson*



### In Christmas mode, West Saunders shows two of his drawings, making owls his subject.

This month his own pen and ink drawings are on display in our community-wide show featuring photography, fiber art, paintings and other works by residents, staff and family members. West, a native of the Berkshires who spent most of his adult life in Maine before returning to live in Sheffield just a few years ago, has always loved doing art. He recalls entering a ceramics competition at the age of six together with his mother, a professional ceramics artist, and besting her for first prize! She came in second.

Painting and drawing have always been part of his life and the hobby he turned to as his port in a storm.

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

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