



The Kimball Farms



Observer



Volume 31, No 6

Hail, Summer!

June, 2022

Five Employees Awarded Education Grants

The Staff Education Grants committee of the Residents Association is perhaps the most exciting one to serve on at Kimball Farms (although we're willing to hear about your favorite) because the committee members have the chance to meet employees whom they may not see every day, or at all. Those employees have applied to be considered for the grants the Residents Association gives annually to those who need help as they work on degree or certificate programs after they graduate from high school.

The grants are funded through the Residents Association budget, which is funded by the spring fund drive, and covers programs and services ranging from library books to computer ink and art room supplies. This year, the committee had \$7,000 to distribute among five candidates.

The grants are available to full- or part-time employees on either the Walker Street campus or at the Nursing Care Center. The application consists of several statements by the employees about their goals and needs, plus recommendations from teachers or employers, transcripts of their grades, and copies of their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) paperwork, which determines their eligibility for Federal Pell Grants and other federal grants, loans and work-study funds, and possible funding from the state and the applicant's school. Once the committee reviews the applications,

a member (and sometimes two) of the committee arranges an interview with each applicant.

"Then the hard part begins," said Tad Evans, a long-time member of the committee." Every applicant has a story, and every year we are impressed with the ambition and perseverance with which they manage family needs, working and going to school. Making decisions about the grants is challenging."

This year's group of applicants is no different. Let us introduce the grant winners to you:



Ne'vae Smith, Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center Activities Assistant

Ne'vae Smith will graduate from Taconic High School in June, and after an orientation program in July, will begin the nursing program at Morgan State University in Baltimore in August. She works as an activities

assistant at the Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center in the Sedgwick Alzheimer's unit, where she is popular with the residents and appreciates their comments: "Patients give me a compliment every day. They say, 'You're so pretty!'"

(Continued on next page)

Gone Fishin'

The Observer does not publish in July and August. See you in September.

(Grants, continued from page 1)

Her mother is a single parent to Ne'vaeah and her two sisters, Natalia and Joanna. Ne'vaeah will be the first in her immediate family to attend college. Ne'vaeah says, "I have been wanting to pursue my education to become a nurse ever since I was little." While going away to college can be daunting, Ne'vaeah has already lined up a support group: Her uncle lives in Baltimore near Morgan State, and she has a cousin who recently graduated from college in Georgia and has been helpful in preparing her for college life. She's very excited to start something new.

At Taconic, she's enrolled in the Career Technical Education (CTE) Health Technology program. Ne'vaeah's school counselor describes the program: "...students are following the Massachusetts Certified Nurse Aid Curriculum and upon completion are able to take the state certification exam. Students are also offered the option to participate in cooperative education and work in a health care setting or learn advanced skills in the classroom while attending academic classes every other week. Ne'vaeah has been given the opportunity to go out on cooperative education, where she is excelling."

This student who has excelled academically is also a softball player. Her position is left or right field, and the week of her interview, she had a game scheduled every day to make up for all the rainy days of the previous week. She's decided not to play softball at Morgan State and to focus instead on her studies. Committee interviewer Susan Dana said, "Ne'vaeah's wonderful smile will take her far, even without her focus, her obvious love of people and her academic and personal skills. A winner!"

Tyanna Thomas graduated from Lenox Memorial Middle and High School in 2018. She works as a nurse's aide in the Life Enrichment Program and helps as a housekeeper and in the laundry. When she was in elementary school, she became a friend of Aimee Green, a daughter of Environmental Services Director Mike Green (and also a grant winner). Tyanna was soon adopted by the Green family.

Tyanna is in her second year in the nursing program at Mildred Elley, a private college with divisions in

Pittsfield, Albany and New York City. Her goal is to enroll in the nine-month nursing program at McCann Technical to "gain more knowledge in the nursing field," Tyanna wrote in her application.

Committee member Ann Dorfman interviewed Tyanna and was impressed by her positive attitude. Her references are also enthusiastic: An advisor who has known Tyanna for 10 years wrote, "I have witnessed her devotion in health care and commitment to her education. She demonstrates loyalty, eagerness to learn and progress toward her professional goals.... Families whose loved ones she has cared for have acknowledged her talent and understanding."

Her advisor and tutor at Mildred Elley commented: "Tyanna has been an excellent student not only in the book aspect of her courses but also in her clinical knowledge ... she is a joy to be around. She is without doubt a team player and helps her classmates who may be struggling. She shows great passion for the work ... is willing to learn new things and most of all is not afraid to ask questions."

The next winner, Aimee Green, graduated from Lenox High School in 2018, and is now about to begin her senior year at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) in North Adams. She was interviewed by Tad Evans, who noted that this is the fourth grant made to Aimee, who graduated from Berkshire Community College before transferring to MCLA.

Aimee is majoring in performing arts with a concentration in Theatre. During the Covid pandemic, theatre classes via ZOOM didn't seem to make much sense, so Aimee took a year off to attend cosmetology school to learn techniques she could use in theatre. After graduation she plans to work for three to five years and then do costume and production design. "I'm a theatre person, and I really love the research needed to dress characters for productions," she declared.

Aimee explained that she is very grateful for the grants. "I pay for college all on my own, and I'm

(Continued on page 3)

(Grants, continued from page 2)
already in debt from school loans, so anything at all helps. I commute to North Adams to college, and the high gas prices are a real problem.”

Aimee noted that she works as many hours as she can in Security and Maintenance, but “as a theatre major, I have to do ‘tech weeks,’ which is very hands-on before and during productions, and cannot work then, so the grant is especially appreciated.”

Perhaps you have already met Evan Nutting, who has rescued many of us from computer quandaries as the Kimball Farms technical guru. The 2018 graduate of Pittsfield High School is now a senior at MCLA. He will graduate in the fall with a major in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting. The next step for Evan will be applying to the Master’s in Business Administration program at MCLA.

Evan is responsible for his educational expenses and earns his tuition by working in Security/Maintenance on the Walker Street campus.

Evan’s grades are excellent. One of his references noted that “since Evan transferred from Berkshire Community College, he had done very well in his courses at MCLA. This is especially impressive since he is taking advanced accounting courses, which are very challenging.”

Committee member Charlotte Finn interviewed Evan and was enthusiastic about his skills, academic record and competent demeanor.

The fifth grant went to Mary Quispe, who graduated from high school in Lima, Peru, in 2005. She is now a student at Berkshire Community College (BCC), and her goal is to transfer to MCLA to study radiology technology and eventually work at the Berkshire Medical Center Cancer Center. This year,

Mary will complete the courses at BCC which are prerequisites for her transfer to MCLA. She works at Pine Hill.

Mary’s references were glowing. One of her professors says, “I have had the pleasure of having Mary as a student for an entire academic year ... I could quickly tell that Mary was a very intelligent woman ... completely committed to high achievement and learning as much as she could ... During the past two semesters I have grown to truly admire and appreciate Mary as a person of deep integrity and hard work...”



**Grant Winners: Aimee Green,
Tyanna Thomas and Evan Nutting**

The professor goes on to describe a research project Mary designed for a biology class: “forming the hypothesis, writing an abstract, describing her methods and performing the actual research experiment. Her lab bench skills are very good and her lab etiquette is perfect.”

Faculty at BCC are strong advocates for Mary, recognizing her love for her family and her love of taking care of others, important attributes for a successful career in health care. Committee interviewer Nancy Curme was impressed with Mary’s focus, warmth and enthusiasm.

Many thanks to all of you who supported the budget that made these grants possible. The grant winners are wonderful, deserving people who with your help will go far in their careers and lives.

Susan Dana

In Memoriam

Glen Jorn

January 11, 1925 to May 7, 2022

President's Comments: A Time for Patriotism

Summer days are here as warm temperatures allow us to break out our short sleeve shirts and blouses and various types of shorts. While summer officially begins on June 21st, Memorial Day is recognized as the unofficial start of the summer season. Memorial Day is the first of three patriotic observances that we celebrate one way or another during the summer. The other two are Flag Day which is June 14th, and July 4th, Independence Day.



Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day when family members of Civil War dead would visit the graves and decorate them with flowers, usually geraniums. As time passed and more wars created fallen service members, the day was renamed Memorial Day as a day of remembrance for all deceased armed forces members. Eventually the last Monday of May was designated to be the day for the holiday. Many cities, towns and villages across the nation observe the day with parades, speeches and barbecues or picnics.

At military cemeteries across the nation and American cemeteries around the world, a small American flag is placed by the gravestone of those buried there. Many families visit local cemeteries where a military family member is buried and place flowers and a flag on the grave. Here at Kimball Farms, the dining room menu includes hot dogs and hamburgers and summer salads. The Memorial Day golf tournament takes place at parking lot E. This is a fun outing which all can enjoy; many who never played golf have won prizes.

The flag that is placed at the grave is the current version of the flag of the United States of America. The first American flag was approved by the Continental Congress on June 14th, 1777, and that day has been designated Flag Day. This is the day that many patriotic organizations conduct a ceremony and respectfully burn old flags, which is the only recognized method to destroy flags that are

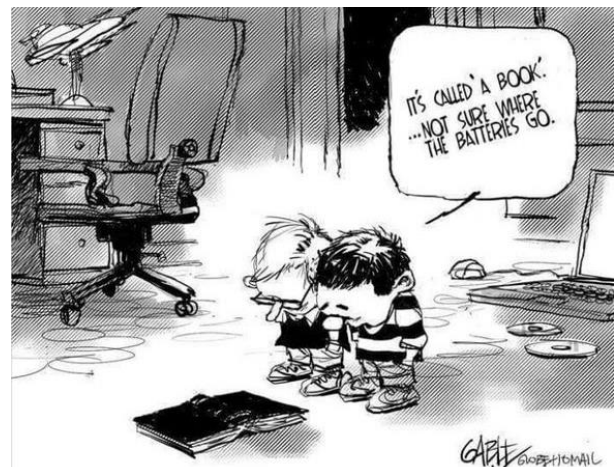
out of date, torn or otherwise rendered unfit for use. June 14th is coincidentally the birthday of the United States Army, which was officially organized in 1775, making it 247 years old and the oldest of all the armed forces of the United States.

At the military bases there are three different sized flags. The most common flag is the Post flag, which is 20 feet by 10 feet. When bad weather is predicted, then the Storm flag, which is 8 feet by 4 feet 2 inches, is flown. On special days such as holidays and of course Flag Day, the Garrison flag, which is 36 feet by 20 feet, is flown.

The third patriotic holiday of the summer is our biggest celebration, as the Fourth of July commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Parades, cookouts and fireworks mark the day. Over the years the firework displays have become bigger and better, with *oohs* and *aahs* coming from the crowds. Once again, our dining room menu includes cookout fare. While we do not have fireworks here, towns in the surrounding area have fireworks or you can watch the national celebration on television.

The summer months give us these three patriotic events as a time to reflect, remember and celebrate. Enjoy the holidays and have a wonderful summer.

Garry Roosma



Curtain Rises on Stellar Kimball Season

Sharon Lazerson is back, and so are the lectures, concerts and educational programs she presented for residents until the pandemic knocked them out. Under her magic wand, Kimball Farms is turning into an all-season hub for education and entertainment.

In four intergenerational programs last month, for example, students from the Lenox Dale Montessori School, led by singer-guitarist Andy Kelly, interacted with residents in games and singing. June features a return of New York Times columnist Linda Greenhouse, a photography show reopening the Connector Gallery, and talk on the Declaration of Independence. Also under Sharon's aegis, the popular 92nd Street Y programs will return with two presentations in June, and a poetry appreciation class has begun.



Sharon Lazerson, Andy Kelly and the children of the Lenox Dale Montessori School

Michelle Rosier, “and we came up with a plan.” Some of the June programs on tap are:

- June 3: Alan Chartock, president and CEO of WAMC, on “The World According to Alan.”
- June 9: Tenor Doug Schmolze, with “Love Songs Through the Ages.”
- June 12: Linda Greenhouse, Supreme Court columnist and author of the newly published book “Justice on the Brink.”
 - June 14: Roselle Chartock, educator and author of the recently published “The Jewish World of Elvis Presley.”
 - June 18: Opening reception for the Connector Gallery (between the main entrance and Pine Hill) with a show of art photography by Dan Mead, Sally Eagle and others. Other art shows are planned for the fall.
 - June 28: Dr. Marc Lendler, professor of government at Smith College, will speak on the Declaration of

Independence.

Sharon first came to Kimball as director of the LEP at its opening in 2010. After Sandy Shepard arrived as executive director, Sharon moved over to take charge of community outreach in 2016. She left in 2019, shortly before the Covid pandemic, to tend to family affairs. With the pandemic, she says, the outreach program “just evaporated.”

Sharon went first to California to visit her son and grandchildren. A four-week visit turned into four months when she broke her hip. Mobile again, she traveled to Florida to be with her mother and brother.

Then, with the easing of the pandemic early this year, “things opened up again,” she recalls. “The pandemic didn’t seem to be such a strong threat. It was okay to bring performers and lecturers and events into the building and not compromise the safety of the residents.”

At that point Sandy asked her to return to help with special projects. She met in March with Sandy and

Jazz concerts are planned for the future, with two dates already set in July. The Wanda Houston Band launched a jazz series in late May. In the near future if not June, Matthew Tannenbaum will host a screening of the new movie “Hello, Bookstore,” about his book emporium in Lenox. Sharon is also trying to arrange an informal musical event in the courtyard outside the Friendly Friday Room.

“For July,” she says, “we will have world renowned Brazilian accordionist Vitor Goncalves playing classical, jazz and bossa nova pieces, with vocalist Maya Solovey. And we’ve started posting the ‘Poem of the Day,’” now a feature on channel 1390.

Programs such as author talks and musical events will continue through the summer and into the fall. Sharon also hopes to bring back lecturers from local colleges. Kimball will be a busy place.

Andy Pincus

Now You See Them, Now You Don't

Our new neighbors Peter and Joanna Strauss are no strangers to the Berkshires. When not spending time in their apartment 159 at Kimball Farms, they can be found in their house, which Peter's father bought in 1952, on Stockbridge Bowl. Born within four days of each other in the same hospital in New York City, they did not meet again until 21 years later in New Haven. They were married in October 1964.

PETER

Peter, at age 2, moved with his parents and younger sister from New York City to Washington, where his father worked for the government during World War II. Soon after it ended his father became a corporate executive and his mother was severely handicapped with polio, which made for a difficult childhood. His was a musical family with music a constant presence in the home. He graduated from Harvard College and, as a member and manager of the Harvard Glee Club, had opportunities for travel abroad. At Yale Law School he was the editor of the Yale Law Journal.

After graduation he held a clerkship with the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington and subsequently with U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan. He and his wife then spent two years in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where Peter taught at the law school. Shortly after the end of the six-day war in Israel, he spent six summer weeks at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Returning to the U.S., Peter worked for the Solicitor General in the Department of Justice in Washington for three years. There he had the opportunity of arguing a number of cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Columbia University School of Law in New York City invited him to join the faculty, and he remained for 46 years, teaching administrative law and – his favorites – courses exploring legal education. For his first four years he also taught family law and he and his wife co-authored a book

review that remains the second most cited element of his scholarship.

Academic leaves offered him the opportunity to work with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. On returning to Columbia, he often visited universities abroad for brief courses or fellowships, as in Argentina, Australia, China, Italy, and the Netherlands. The great bulk of his scholarship has concerned American public law. He became Professor Emeritus in 2017, continuing occasional teaching until last summer.



Music remains a constant in his life and he has sung in small choruses, specializing in madrigals and sacred polyphonic pieces. Favorite pastimes in the great outdoors include hiking, biking and kayaking.

JOANNA

Joanna grew up in Westchester County with a younger sister and has fond memories of spending time skiing and fishing in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. Their father produced comic books and balloons with logos for advertising use by companies. Their mother was President of the school PTA and interested in parent education, which may have been the genesis of Joanna's future interest in the field. She graduated from Radcliffe College (Harvard), then briefly attended Yale Law School, but found that her interests were more in emotional than in legal issues. She graduated with a Master's degree from Smith College of Social Work.

Accompanying Peter to Ethiopia, she worked during her first year in the social development section of the U.N. Economic Mission for Africa and, during the second year of their stay, taught in the social work school of Haile Selassie University. After their return to Washington she worked as a psychotherapist in a psychiatric hospital, experimenting with a new approach of establishing a therapeutic community. When they moved to New York she took advanced training in psychotherapy

(Continued on page 7)

(Strausses, continued from page 6)

and spent many years as a psychotherapist in private practice in Hastings-on-Hudson, where they lived. She developed psycho-educational programs for mothers of young babies.

Joanna enjoys traveling, theater, dance, cooking and photography. Her interest in photography started when, at age 13, she had her photograph of a toddler published in the local small-town newspaper. While at college she joined the *Harvard Crimson* as a photographer and had many exciting opportunities covering the news. Among her notable experiences, she was at a dinner for Fidel Castro when he was a speaker at Harvard. She managed during two summers to get on the staff as a speechwriter for Congressman Carl Eliot of Alabama, a sponsor of the National Defense Education Act who was awarded the first Kennedy Center Profile in Courage medal.

Peter and Joanna have two children. Their son, who lives in Princeton, N.J., is a climate scientist and head of Climate Central, a research organization. He and his wife, a legal consultant for a medical school, have a 12-year-old son, who enjoys the outdoors along with his parents. Peter and his son have enjoyed yearly outings and adventures in some interesting parts of the world. The Strauss' daughter moved to Lenox two years ago with her graphic designer husband and two sons, now 3 and almost 10 years old. She is a stay-at-home mom at present but formerly worked in international education and danced flamenco for fun.

Grandparents Joanna and Peter are grateful to have two of their grandchildren nearby.

They have loved traveling, especially when they were able to spend time living in different countries.

Both were summer exchange students as teenagers – Joanna in France and Peter in Sweden. Since then they have enjoyed many trips related to Peter's teaching, with two years in Ethiopia and shorter stays in many different countries. They have been to all continents except Antarctica.

To get to know this vital couple, catch them as you can.

Margot Yondorf

A Personal Note

It's a feeling probably familiar to anyone who has worked at a job late into life: time to retire.

After 46 years as a classical music critic writing regularly for *The Berkshire Eagle*, and occasionally for such other publications as *The New York Times*, I've said goodbye to the job. I did not cover any concerts in the Berkshires' fall-winter-spring season. I will not be back at Tanglewood this summer. What *The Eagle* does about coverage is up to *The Eagle*.

I still love the music. I also loved the challenge of offering readers information and ideas to, I'd hope, increase understanding of music being performed. There are a couple of Shed concerts summer I may yet attend – notably, Brahms' "German Requiem." And, having been gripped a few years ago by George Benjamin's opera "Written on Skin" in a student production, I am intrigued by his new opera, "Lessons in Love and Violence," which will also be performed by students.

But for the most part, the Tanglewood repertoire is music I have been listening to for most of my life, and I am glad to give both it and myself a rest. For my mistakes, and to any musicians I may have wronged, I'm sorry. To those who have read my work over the years, I say: thanks.

Andy Pincus

Birthday Wishes to our residents!

Fifteen residents celebrate birthdays in June. There is an 18-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

June birthdays belong to: Dorothy Angeli, Eileen Duffy, Donald Richter, Ellie Chandler, Nancy Gillespie, Iris Krieger, Tad Evans, Marilyn Hunter, Dolores Morin, John Cheney, Doane Perry, Lynn Leavitt, Leo Goldberger, Cy Henry and Larry Greenapple.

Happy Birthday to each of you!!

It All Began with a Museum in Fort Wayne

Suddenly, without warning, the unexpected happens. Sometimes there's bad news — a telegram, police or military at the door, an unwanted diagnosis. Sometimes, not so bad — an inheritance, a lottery win, a college acceptance. In all cases the news leads to unplanned changes in an otherwise predictable life. In my case it was a letter postmarked April 5, 2021.

The letter came to our mail room and was part of the usual stack of solicitations on behalf of farm animals, elephants, Lakota school children, homeless dogs and donkeys. It stood out from the pack because of the slightly larger and unusually shaped envelope and an eye-catching logo with the words "Fort Wayne Museum of Art." Of course, my first thought was to toss it, but the curiosity gene kicked in and I opened the letter. My eye was immediately drawn to the lower left corner which showed a picture of one of my husband's glass sculptures, then drawn back to the text that explained that the piece was part of a glass collection recently donated to the museum. The curator was looking for information about this unknown artist. Whew! That gave me pause — almost like winning the lottery.

The significance of this needs a bit of a review for those who may never have seen or even known about my 186-piece collection of contemporary glass sculptures accumulated over a 40-year period. So back to the beginning:

In 1972 I married Carl Beling, a Swedish doctor who had come to the United States to head the Endocrinology laboratory at New York Hospital. During the next 10 years we made annual or semi-annual visits to Sweden to visit relatives and fell in love with Swedish glass. At first it was production pieces — vases, candlesticks, wine glasses, small glass animals, bought as gifts to bring home. But one memorable day in 1982, a gallery owner noted that we had a slightly above average interest in glass and told us about artists making unique pieces. He had some to show us in a back room. We were smitten and brought home our first piece, made by one of the pioneers of the studio glass movement in Sweden. After that there was no stopping. During the rest of



Stephanie's husband's glass sculpture that started the whole process.

that decade we made annual trips to Sweden and continued to buy unique pieces of glass.

We discovered galleries in New York City and many glass artists from other countries. We felt a particular affinity for the *cast* glass pieces (as opposed to *blown* glass) made in the Czech Republic. We joined a group of glass collectors based in New York and made annual visits to collectors' homes, artists' studios and galleries in Boston, Providence, Santa Fe, New Orleans, Washington, Asheville, N.C., Cleveland and other places. We also visited each other's collections and it was quite an education. Our most memorable trip was to the Czech Republic and

(Continued on page 9)

(Glass, continued from page 8)

Hungary, where we got to visit the studios and homes of our favorite artists.

Beginning in the early '90s my husband thought he might like to make his own glass sculptures. At that time, we were full-time Berkshire (Richmond) residents and the glass making facility was in Brooklyn. Through a complicated real-estate swap we obtained a studio apartment in NYC two blocks from Grand Central Station and the subway to Brooklyn.



That was it: From 1991 until his untimely death in 1999 he spent several days a week at the glass studio and ultimately made about 100 sculptures, a few of which remain in my

apartment 205. During this last part of his life, Kenn Holsten, the owner of the Holsten Gallery (now the Schantz Gallery) in Stockbridge, became a friend and offered to sell a few pieces of Carl's art. About a dozen or so pieces were sold to unknown collectors. It was all rather thrilling but we thought no more about it. Some sculptures were given to relatives, some to friends and the rest remained with me.

Now back to the letter and the amazing series of coincidences that allowed me to move forward in my life. First, the tenant. In another house on my Richmond property I had a tenant who had been there for 10 years. The house was old and needed updating, but the tenant kept it going, paid his rent, and we just kept on in that way ... until on March 15, 2021, he gave notice. After a three-year wait he had finally gotten into senior housing in Lenox and felt he needed to take it or else go back on the waiting list.

I completely understood and was happy for him. The departure date was set for May 15. It presented a bit of a quandary as the house needed renovation – major things like a septic system and replacing

electricity that had been there since the dark ages. Being aware of these flaws made it difficult to rent again. It also would be difficult to leave the house empty, especially in the winter with periodic loss of power. What to do???

It was after less than three weeks of pondering this dilemma and not arriving at any sensible conclusion that the LETTER arrived. Of course, I immediately called the curator and offered her all the information about this “unknown” artist (my husband), for which she was grateful. I also offered that I too had a glass collection, which piqued her interest, and a Zoom showing with the museum director was arranged for the following week. Needless to say, their excitement was palpable, as was mine. The glass would have a permanent home in a museum whose goal was to be the go-to place to see contemporary glass in the Midwest.



I was only too happy to oblige. Free at last. I could now happily sell my house and the tenant's house and move on after 43 years. (Of course, for the last eight years I have also been living at Kimball Farms.)

The museum people were amazing. They sent the curator and administrator to photograph and catalog all the individual pieces and then arranged for packing and shipping. By the end of May the entire collection was safely ensconced in the Fort Wayne Museum of Art and the tenant had moved out.

My house had been on the market, overpriced on purpose as I was ambivalent about selling, mostly because of concern about the tenant and the collection. A phone call to my broker telling her of my wish to now sell and asking what to do brought an immediate response – “lower your price,” said in a deliberate, no-nonsense tone of voice. So I did on May 29 and I had a signed contract the next day. The

(Continued on page 10)

(Glass, continued from page 9)

buyer was someone who had seen it at the higher price but had not made an offer.



The thing that amazed me and still does was the confluence of events – senior housing for the

tenant; a donation of a sculpture made by my husband to a museum that I had never heard of; the interest of a woman I never met and a letter that could have easily been discarded; a buyer waiting for a lower price, and suddenly in the space of two months a new life opened up for me. The really good news is that the collection is going to be exhibited to the public beginning July 16, 2022, and there will be a special day and dinner for donors, artists and me on July 22. This will be my first visit to Indiana. You can see how this never could have been planned.

Stephanie Beling

You Asked for It

Don't blame the kitchen for:

Half red wine,
Half clam chowder,
Half tossed salad,
Half roasted game hen,
Half baked potato,
Half grilled Brussels sprouts,
Half Baked Alaska,
Half hot coffee, half decaf,
Extra half-and-half.
Enjoy your meal!

Beau Napati

(Editor's hint: Pronounce the author's name out loud.)

An Ode to the Pub

At Kimball Farms there was a pub,
With coffee, tea and tasty grub,
You could sit right down and have a beer,
And that's the way it was for years.

Chips of crisp potato,
Bacon, lettuce and tomato,
The Reubens there were truly fine,
The salads there were just divine.

The old guys liked to watch the game,
They knew the players all by name,
They yelled and cheered and had a ball,
And jolly times were had by all.

But when old Covid came to town,
T'was then they had to shut it down,
To keep us all as healthy as can be,
And separation was the key.

And now as Covid fades away,
We all look forward to the day
When the Pheasant pub will once again be here,
And we will give a mighty cheer.

A. Publican

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

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Then and Now

THEN

My firstborn was on the verge
of her first steps.
Her efforts to stand were
unending, unyielding,
yearning as all have done
to stand alone, to walk.
To be.

Reaching out,
her tiny fingers wrapped
tightly in mine.
She stands on tippy toes,
One step, two, three,
Letting go, she pauses, wobbles,
steps alone;
one, two, three,
Free to be.

My first born is grown;
a strong woman standing sure
on steady feet.
Strong hands hold little ones,
time to let go
One step, two, three
to stand alone
Free to be.

NOW

My first born,
Watches my steps;
tenuous, unsteady, yearning,
My fingers wrap around her hands
It must be someday soon
time for me to let go,
One step, two, three
into a new being
eternity,
Free to be.

Gwen Sears

A Few Life Lessons

Camping: where you spend a small fortune to live
like a homeless person.

Being an adult is the dumbest thing I have ever done.

I'm a multitasker. I can listen, ignore, and forget all
at the same time!

People who wonder if the glass is half empty or half
full miss the point. The glass is refillable.

When you can't find the sunshine ... be the sunshine.

I don't have grey hair. I have wisdom-highlights.

Sometimes it takes me all day to get nothing done.

I don't trip, I do random gravity checks.
My heart says chocolate and wine, but my jeans say,
please, please, please, eat a salad!

My spouse says I have two faults. I don't listen and
... something else.

Never laugh at your spouse's choices. You are one of
them.

"Dammit I'm mad" is "dammit I'm mad" spelled
backward.

I'd grow my own food if only I could find bacon
seeds.

Losing weight doesn't seem to be working for me, so
from now on I'm going to concentrate on getting
taller.

Some people are like clouds, once they disappear it's
a beautiful day.

Some people you're glad to see coming; some people
you're glad to see going.

Common sense is not a gift. It's a punishment
because you have to deal with everyone who doesn't
have it.

Kevin O'Hara Rides Again

Author Kevin O'Hara is famous in the Berkshires, and well known beyond, for his first book, *Last of the Donkey Pilgrims*. His latest book is something else. Our library has one copy of *Ins and Outs of a Locked Ward: My Thirty Years as a Psychiatric Nurse*. Impatient borrowers should buy their own; it's worth it.

O'Hara has gone above and beyond his typical slice-of-life style in this work. He tells us in a brief Author's Note that this is a "fictionalized memoir," and it often makes the reader pause and reflect on what is fact and what is fantasy. Patients have nicknames or pseudonyms; real names of local friends and medical professionals appear; most of the unsympathetic characters are labeled "Nurse Ratchet."

The author is called by others "Nurse Lite" for his seemingly flippant attitude and frequent bending of rules. He calls himself a "donkey nurse," comparing his role to that of the donkeys often stabled with racehorses to keep them calm. His first chapter sets an expected scene: a Sunday double shift in the more controlled of two psychiatric wards.

By early afternoon, tension is high. A brawny, unstable young man rushes toward a relative. Kevin, in the way, takes a smashing fall. He is wheeled out of the ward with serious injuries. For the next several days, and chapters, he will be in what is called the Neuro ward. What happens there is described in terms from earthy to ethereal. With all the painkillers the situation merits, Kevin shuttles between lucid memories and flights of fancy.

An added complication is a roommate, victim of a motorcycle crash, "a racked-up redheaded guy in his late forties." Oliver, or Ollie, is to become the audience for many of Kevin's reminiscences. Informed by one of the doctors that Ollie may have caused his own accident, Kevin takes on the task of looking out for any suicidal inclinations. When their long talks turn into a fantasy road trip from

Northeast to Southwest, they choose "handles." Kevin says, "I'll be Kevlar, one of my many nicknames before my protective shield wore out. How about you?" Ollie responds, "Fat Boy. After the Harley I purposely smashed up on Sunday."

At this point the book becomes another kind of O'Hara pilgrimage. With the road trip as the frame, the author tells long stories, some more for himself than for Fat Boy. He details his long struggle to be accepted to and stay in nursing school. After experience as a firefighter in Vietnam and service as a hospital orderly, he felt a bias against male nursing students by some female instructors. After his first semester, he noted that ten students out of sixty, including three out of twelve men, had failed or dropped out. He remarks, "I'd heard rumors about 'nurses eating their young,' but now I had witnessed it firsthand."



The short courtship and long marriage of Kevin and Belita bring some relief to the more intense material in this book. But the two are shown with their own issues to resolve and challenges to meet. A major one is Kevin's being a hospital patient with unresolved injuries, after thirty years of hospital work.

A somewhat chilling part of the narrative takes place when O'Hara admits to some rare but serious mistakes. When the prescriptions for two patients get mixed up — luckily, they are safely sorted out. But when a medicated patient is found face down in a bowl of cereal — that is almost heart-stopping. Following that section are poignant stories of deeply depressed or addicted patients who do not reach recovery. To offset those accounts there are several about patients who make repeat visits to the ward, but lead productive lives overall.

The book concludes with Kevin on the mend and Ollie stabilized. As Kevin is discharged, he says, "I'd much rather be a nurse than a patient."

Mary Misch