



The
Kimball Farms
Observer



Volume 27, Number 5

It's SPRING!!

May, 2020

Finding Cures for the Boredom Virus

(see also commentary on page 3)

Since the last “newbie” at Kimball joined us on January 10, 2020, and we are thus now a community of “oldies,” why is it that everything seems new and different? Everywhere we turn, we see and hear COVID-19 news. It’s on 1390 and every TV channel; we hear it on our radios; it dominates newspapers; our computers spout out pleas for help, but our internal computers (sometimes called ‘brains’) are beset and baffled and bewildered.

Because we are prohibited from gathering in groups, there’s little opportunity for residents to exchange ideas about restrictions imposed on us to avert spread of the virus. We decided to conduct our own unprofessional and non-academic survey among a few Kimball residents to get a sense of reactions to a new way of living.

These are the questions we asked residents to consider:

1. What have you done to keep busy?
What do you miss the most?
How has isolation affected your outlook on life?
2. Have you read any good books?
3. Which of the TV programs suggested on 1390 have you watched?
4. What could Kimball have done to make this time easier?

Those were the questions; these were the participants: Ellie Chandler, Nancy Curme, Tad Evans, John Gillespie, Judy Glockner, Charlie

Haynes, Marilyn and Gene Hunter, Ralph Peterson, Dave Vacheron and Margot Yondorf. My own spirits were buoyed by responses submitted. This is a group of men and women who practice the age-old adage, “If life gives you a lemon, make lemonade.”



**Here come the flowers!
Scilla in the Memorial Garden,
Parking Lot E**

Read for yourself what your friends and neighbors have been doing. Please note: I have chosen to use their words without specific attribution to avoid abundant use of quotation marks.

Keeping busy has never been a problem for me; without the usual structure I jump from one thing to another; I’ve made a few changes in my apartment; talk more with friends and family on the phone; walk and exercise on the stairs; reading, reading, reading; making and receiving phone calls.

Responses to what is most missed were remarkable for their sameness. How many different ways can people say I miss going to the dining room? Our mini-survey provided the answer: at least nine. Interestingly, though, there was uniform praise for the food, except that several thought there was not enough ice cream.

The plethora of offerings on the internet and TV captured attention of residents, so much so that they didn’t feel the need to consult options mentioned on 1390. (Personal disclosure: *explore.org* was a find for me and I recommend it to anyone who has interest in watching such things as hatching of eaglets, antics of pandas, and many more delights of the natural world). Kimball residents are readers! Readers of novels and mysteries, of history and

(continued on next page)

(*Cures*, continued from previous page)

politics, of nonfiction and classics. And some are using this sudden gift of time to reread old favorites, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and *Jane Eyre* among them.

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, by Yuval Noel Harrari, was described as a “must read,” available in our library; I am tempted to add it to my own list. There are way too many books to list them all here but let me just submit three other titles to whet your appetites: Oscar Wilde’s play *A Woman of No Importance*; Nathaniel Philbrick’s *In the Heart of the Sea*, an absorbing nonfiction tale about the fate of a 19th-century whaling ship; and Umberto Eco’s novel *The Name of the Rose*.

There was abundant praise for Kimball’s stewardship as we live with health and political mandates stipulating our behavior, so kudos to Sandy and her staff ... and I say kudos to our residents, too, experts on making the lemonade that keeps us going. Some regard this as a time for quiet contemplation; others acknowledge the “social distancing” reinforces the often-neglected value of friendship and the privilege of living in these beautiful Berkshires.

Dorothea Nelson

Birthdays

Twenty-six residents celebrate birthdays in May. There is a 25-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant. May birthdays belong to:

Roland Ginzel, Joel Margolis, Beverly Hallock, Linda Stern, Richard Edelstein, Dorothy Kresge, Janet Tivy, David Quinlan, Norman Moskowitz, Rudy Sacco, Marjorie VanDyke, Betty Furey, Josephine Brunjes, Nancy Brown, Norvan Drugmand, Hank Fenn, Dorothea Nelson, Jill Roosma, LuAnn DeGenaro, Erika Mueller, Molly King, Stephen Johnson, Eden Gruenberg, Susan Dana & Betty Davis

Happy Birthday to each of you!!

Evan Nutting on Call for PCs or Macs

In electricity, there’s alternating current and direct current. In computers, there are Macs and personal computers. Usually, the twain don’t meet.

Kimball Farms’ new security staff member, Evan Nutting, works on both kinds of computers – a boon to residents in need, especially PC users, who until now didn’t have a staff member on call. He joins Tyler Shepard on staff to help with computers when on school breaks. “As long as someone puts a MERF in, I’ll stop by the apartment, and as long as they’re there I’ll help them out,” says Evan.



A Pittsfield boy all his life, Evan went to Herberg Middle School and Pittsfield

High School and is now studying accounting at Berkshire Community College. He hopes to transfer to UMass’ Amherst, in the fall but would be commuting, so he’d still be able to meet his Kimball commitments. In his first assignment, he’s working security 3 to 11 on Saturdays and varying part- and full-time shifts on weekdays.

Evan is not entirely new to Kimball. He served on the waitstaff for about a year two years ago. Now he comes to Kimball from the Target store and Regal movie theater at the Berkshire Mall. With the mall shut because of Covid-19, he decided to come back here rather than go on unemployment.

Evan is self-taught on computers and has no preference between PC and Mac. He used PCs while going through school but picked up Macs as he went along. He lives on Elm Street in Pittsfield with his mother. He used to play tennis but now he’s busy with school. For relaxation, he plays computer games and reads comics.

Andy Pincus

President's Comments: the Brighter Side

March 14 marked the start of a new era at Kimball Farms. It was on that date that the first restrictions connected with the coronavirus appeared on our external doors. All fobs that were not in possession of residents or staff were deactivated; no longer could family or friends visit. This was the beginning of a lockdown that impacted every person and every group, every institution and every organization ... you name it ... throughout the U.S. and, indeed, the world.

More was to follow. After a few days of shortened dining hours, on March 24 the dining room was closed and meals were delivered to our apartments; and more was to follow. Every restriction was dictated by one driving force: deny entry of the dreaded virus within Kimball's walls.

Movies were cancelled; gyms could not be used; no meetings were held; only two people at a time could use an elevator; the Pinnacle was closed. We were advised and admonished to wash our hands frequently and to do so for 20 seconds.

As of this writing, April 6th, we have been successful in keeping the dreaded virus at bay. With cleaned and crossed fingers let us hope that remains the case until the pandemic releases its grip.

If we do succeed, huge credit must go to Kimball staff. Under Sandy Shepard's leadership they have worked diligently to insure our health, our safety and our comfort.

Because I was curious about residents' reactions to the new regulations, I decided to call everyone in Independent Living simply to learn how each of you was managing. What began as a self-imposed chore became an enjoyable task. It didn't take many calls before I realized that there were many people here with whom I'd never had a real conversation. Am I alone in needing so ominous a push to encourage basic civility?

I appreciated learning the creative ways the stay-in-place suggestions were managed. There were almost no complaints; there was abundant praise, too abundant to record it all here, but a few comments are worth repeating: "Meal tonight was so good-looking and it tasted good, too"; "Amazed, nothing but compliments to everyone"; "I just appreciate all the help."

There were a few requests that are up there in the cloud like: "Bring me a woman"; "Lend me a husband"; and "more ice cream would be great" ... and, from many women, "I need a hairdresser" (so do I!).

Good ideas were passed along. Jeannie Fenn has a great project going through her church; they make and sell face masks and donate proceeds to the homeless.

Every person I called was wrestling with issues of social isolation. The ordinary things are missed: seeing a familiar face in the hallway; joining a friend for dinner; morning coffee in the Pinnacle. And nearly every person was asking the same basic question: What will our lives be like when this is over?

Beyond the devastating reports of death and virus spread, there remain the wonders of this season: Derek and his crew are out fertilizing, preparing soil and garden beds for trees and shrubs and flowers that soon will burst with color; early risers hear birds chirping, singing their hearts out; social distancing doesn't impede walkers from hearty waves and broad smiles when they encounter someone on the perimeter road.

We are united now in concern for those we love; we sense familiar control, built up over many years, slipping away into a new world we cannot imagine. I hope you, like me, draw comfort from the good will in this place, the beauty of our surroundings, and the belief that there is support and love to sustain us as we live through this plague.

Dorothea Nelson



**Star Magnolia
in the Central Courtyard**

Sandy to Families: You Can Help

Editor's note: This is the ending of a three-page letter from Sandy Shepard to families and other responsible parties explaining Covid-19 policies in effect and how families and others can help.

We are asking the residents to limit leaving the building to go out into the greater Berkshire or surrounding communities. This is the best way to keep themselves, our community and our staff safe. Please help us by asking your family member not to leave Kimball Farms. We have made many accommodations to limit the need for them to have to leave the premises.

The Pinnacle Store has increased in stock and variety to help minimize the need to go to the store. Please ask residents to check if the Pinnacle has what they need before they head out in their cars to a store or the post office. We are doing everything we can to meet their needs within the building.

All packages are being delivered to the vestibule at the front entrance in order to eliminate the need for the delivery person to come into the building. We are limiting IL [Independent Living] mail room access to only two people at a time.

Van transportation has been reduced to essential medical appointments only. As a very last resort, the van driver can make limited pharmacy pickups on a case by case basis to eliminate the need for the residents to leave the building.

What you can do to help:

Again, please provide encouragement for your resident to not leave the Kimball Farms campus except to go to essential medical appointments. A lot of the medical practices are currently doing Telehealth or appointments by phone instead of having patients seen in the office.

If your loved one needs a medication box filled, you can do this at the front desk between the hours of 8:30am-3:30pm. Have your resident drop off their meds and boxes at the desk and they can then pick them up once the person who fills them has finished.

It would be tremendously helpful if you could pick up medications at the pharmacy and deliver to the front desk for your loved one.

If your loved one does not get a 90-day supply of medications at a time, I would highly encourage you to help set this up. You can start by calling their pharmacy to see if they can fill for 90 days. If the pharmacy cannot do so, please check with the physician's office to see if they can change to a 90-day written prescription. Lastly, check with the insurer to see if they have a mail away pharmacy benefit. If they do, then contact the MD office to ask that 90 days scripts be sent to the mail away pharmacy. Having three months of meds on hand will eliminate another need for residents to leave the building or for you to make a drop off.

Please increase calls to your loved one here at Kimball Farms. Have extended family members call, as well. Staying connected is hugely important during this difficult time. Emails, letters, calls, face timing are all great ways to keep connected. Activities staff have set up these facetime interactions with many already in LEP and in Pine Hill.

Lastly, I ask again that you please respect the no visiting policy. I know how challenging this time is. Hopefully by more frequent phone check ins, you will feel reassured that all is well. We are being as vigilant as we are to reduce the risks to our whole community. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. This is all new for everyone and I commend our staff, our residents and all of you for your support, adaptability and flexibility during these very challenging and uncertain times. Stay safe, healthy and strong. Best,

*Sandra Shepard, MBA, LNHA
Executive Director*

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

EDITOR	PRODUCTION
Andy Pincus	Ned Dana
	Michelle Rosier

EDITORIAL STAFF:
Stephanie Beling, Susan Dana,
Ned Dana, Virginia Fletcher, John Gillespie,
Dorothea Nelson, Margot Yondorf

PHOTOGRAPHS:
Ned Dana

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Covid-19 has created new roles for our amazing staff as they work hard to keep us safe and comfortable.



The cooks match residents' requests with menu choices.



Then the waitstaff assemble our meals (176 of them) and deliver them to our apartments



Masked Montel delivers a dinner



Van driver Keith Sykes drives the morning coffee and Danish cart.



Salad box decorated with an EasterBunny



Receptionist Amy Booth takes temperatures and assigns identification bracelets to employees and outside workers.

Library Lines: Newcomers Tell Book Choices

Every few months, I question new arrivals at Kimball Farms on their reading experiences, interests and recommendations. From the latest responses, I would like to share three and to thank these residents for their contributions. Each response has been edited (usually for space purposes). I hope that this editing has preserved the writer's essential content and point of view.

Ann Cashen (Apt. 151) writes that she is rereading *Rogue Heroes* by British author Ben MacIntyre. It's the story of the remarkable British Special Air Service during World War II. Ann writes, "Kimball Farms has a copy of this author's earlier Double Cross, the story of the allies' World War II spies who created an extraordinary scheme to convince the Germans that the D-Day invasion would occur at Calais—and it worked!"

Joyce Hovey (Apt. 265) recalls that reading has always been a joy for her. The first books she remembers reading to herself were the stories of Uncle Wiggily and, much later, Nancy Drew. While teaching in elementary schools, she introduced her students to classics by writers like E.B. White, Roald Dahl and Marguerite d'Angeli. In retirement she has continued her love of reading. Some of her favorite authors and titles follow:

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini. A heart-breaking story that begins in Afghanistan and tells of the friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant.

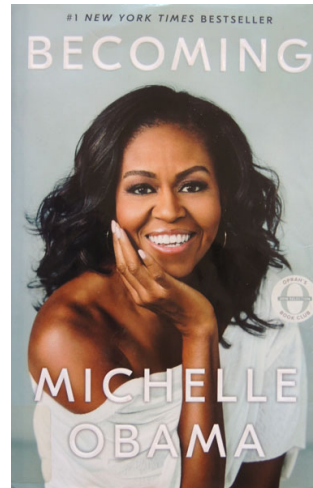
The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society by Mary Ann Shafer and Annie Brown. "A remarkable tale of many things on the island of Guernsey including the German occupation of the island during World War II and of a society as extraordinary as its name."

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet by Jamie Fox. The impressive bitter-sweet story of love, conflicts and friendship set in the Japanese-American community in Seattle during World War II.

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr. Set in World War II France, this is the story of a blind French girl and a sensitive German boy who is a member of Hitler's Youth Group.

The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak. This novel narrated by Death is the long-time favorite about a

girl coming of age in Nazi Germany during World War II.



A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles. The story of Count Rostov, who is sentenced by a Bolshevik court to live out his life in a Moscow hotel.

There were also many fine nonfiction books on Joyce's list. Here are two: *Becoming* by Michelle Obama and Madeleine Albright's *The Mighty and the Almighty*.

Sue Colker of Apt. 126 has made three excellent suggestions. The first is for Eugenia Zuckerman's recently published memoir in prose and poetry, *Like Falling Through a Cloud*. Sue writes, "Eugenia Zuckerman is a gifted flutist familiar to many in our area. Her memory of coping with forgetfulness, confusion, and eventually receiving the diagnosis of cognitive decline led to her writing one of the most beautiful books I have read in a long time. Particularly moving is the moment she realizes that something is wrong and why she chose poetry and music as a way to express her thoughts."

"For another good read during this stressful time. I would suggest Elizabeth Stroud's latest, *Olive Again*. I enjoyed her earlier *Olive Kitteridge* a few years ago and was not disappointed in this sequel. In it, Olive has reached the seventh then eighth decade of her life and is aware of the anxieties and weaknesses that these bring.

"Lastly I would recommend *The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett. It tells the story of a brother and sister whose mother abandons them when they are very young to go to India. The novel follows the siblings' lives during the next five decades, much of which is spent growing up in The Dutch House. The novel is part mystery story and part fairy tale complete with a wicked stepmother."

Thanks again to our three new contributors -- and much happiness at Kimball Farms.

John Gillespie

In the Still of the (Day and) Night

This past winter I participated in an OLLI course called *Loving Kindness/Meditation*. During the first class we learned the basic practice of repeating the following: “May I be safe, May I be happy, May I be healthy, May I be at ease.” We learned to be still and just keep going back to those words when interrupted by a wandering mind or extraneous noise. By the last class, six weeks later, we had learned to include loved ones, unloved ones and even total strangers in our wishes. The last thing learned was “May we all be safe ... May we all be at ease.” This practice has stayed with me during the pandemic and it has never seemed more relevant.

As I write this we are practicing social distancing, at least until the end of April. No one knows at this time what May will bring, except flowers. What we do know is that at some time in the future normal life will reappear, but for sure it will be a new normal. Once we return to “normal” we bring back meetings, appointments, classes, lectures, concerts, theater, lunch and dinner dates ... and the cluttered calendar. For me, the cluttered calendar is accompanied by anxiety and a condition known as FOMO. That is the acronym for Fear Of Missing Out. When you choose to do one thing, there are always other things you might have done, so by definition you are always missing out on something.

During the time of Covid-19, at least through March, and so far in April, there is no FOMO as there is nothing to miss. There is everything one could want on the internet and it has not been hard to make choices without feeling you are missing out on something as you can always get back to the other. It doesn't disappear. Spending the mornings with informative webinars and podcasts may not be everyone's cup of tea. For others the social restrictions have afforded opportunities to clean out a closet or desk, restart a long-abandoned project, even walk down memory lane with the notes for the memoir you mean to leave for your grandchildren.



An antidote to confinement is movement, movement of any sort. For me, because of the dog (Duke), long walks through the woods here in Lenox provide the needed exercise, fresh air and restorative power of nature to maintain a moderate degree of fitness. For those without the dog, the internet once again comes to the rescue. There are yoga classes, stretching exercises and Pilates for all levels. My new favorite is a 15-minute QiGong exercise for balance and energy found at the following link: <https://youtube/nmmNWj9YtAw..>

Keeping mind and body in some sort of good shape has not proved difficult, thanks in part to the excellent food delivered daily to our doors, the opportunity for exercise and the seemingly infinite amount of information and entertainment online.

More challenging is the emotional upheaval caused by the unknown, by the sudden and unwanted veering off course of our “normal” life. Here is where periods of silence and stillness can be helpful. Simply sitting in a comfortable chair and pausing long enough to become aware of your breathing, perhaps repeating to yourself the words that started this article, “May I be safe ...” will help to develop the practice of mindfulness. This brings awareness of the small space between a stimulus and a response and if we can remember to pause before reacting to a feeling, thought or even another person, there will be the space and time needed to take a deep breath, witness what you're thinking, feeling or doing, and make the choice that will serve you and others best. We don't always get to choose what happens to us. But we can be masters of our responses to the inner and outside worlds.

There are always two sides to any story and this is true for Covid-19 as well. This disrupter of daily life and the economy has exposed extensive flaws in our health care system, brought suffering and death to millions but has also shown the generosity, strength and resilience of individuals and even brought a respite to Mother Earth. Air pollution is significantly decreased as shown on satellite pictures and air samples worldwide. And the bear population in Yellowstone National Park has quadrupled. Who knew?

Stephanie Beling

The Ballad of the Virus and the Covid

Said the Covid to the Virus,
They won't hire us but they can't fire us.
Said the Virus to the Covid,
That's okay, I'll make 'em livid.
I'll create a disease
That will cross the seas
And bring 'em to their knees.

CHORUS. (Sing it, all)
Sing it, sing it loud and keen,
It became Covid number nineteen.

The Covid shut the country down,
Making the president frown.
He proclaimed it was all a plot
To make us fear what was not.
Medical science was being scorned,
So stay at home, the doctors warned.

CHORUS. (Sing it, all)
Oh, you Virus, oh, you Covid,
Please leave us, you are not belov-ed.

Masks, ventilators, gowns,
Wipes and precious toilet paper too.
The T.P. hoarders made it elementary
Their pandemic was alimentary
While over scarce ventilators
Desperate governors vented
And shortages of hospital masks
Left masked citizens unmasked.

CHORUS. (Sing it, all)
All hail, all hail citizens who wip-ed,
Until they left the shelves naked.

Ho ho, said the Virus to the Covid,
We gave 'em fair warning
In China, and fair Italy too
But into the sand their heads they hid-hid.
Said the Covid to the Virus,
We'll get in the air they breathe
On the surfaces they touch,
We'll squeeze 'em till they scream,
"Too much!" Too much!"

Too much!" Too much!"
The people screamed.
Locked in a room,
They contemplated doom.
Oh, the curse of human vanity!

The impossibility of sanitizing
Everything
Led to
Insanity.

CHORUS. (Sing it, all)
Oh, Virus. Oh, Covid,
Plague most vicious, most vivid,
Take your gifts and go away!

*Andy Pincus
In memoriam L.M.*

Missing Loring

The Observer staff misses Loring Mandel, who began writing for us in October 2018, shortly after he and Dorothy moved into Kimball Farms. He was a playwright and screenwriter for radio, television, film and the stage. His monthly Observer column, "Looking Backwards" (note the sly humor in the title), gave readers backstage insights into the production of his many plays and told backstage tales about the many famous producers and actors he worked with. The columns were also intended to form a memoir for his grandchildren. He died on March 24.



In Memoriam

Loring Mandel
May 5, 1928 to March 24, 2020
Dorothy Hill
Oct. 29, 1925 to March 25, 2020
Olga Von Loewenstein
Nov. 26, 1924 to March 25, 2020



April Snow - Forsythia near Door F