



# The Kimball Farms Observer



Volume 28, Number 7

Halloween = Fall Foliage

October 2019

## ***Sharon Says Farewell – Or Does She?***

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's Super Sharon! When you've finished reading about all the amazing things Sharon Lazerson has done, both as Activities Director in the Life Enrichment Program and more recently as the Community Outreach Coordinator, you will be astonished, and perhaps exhausted. She is a dynamo, and it's no wonder that she is looking forward to a retirement which could offer what she calls "a more spacious life, with room to revitalize friendships and take long walks." Being Sharon, her definition of "retire" is nuanced.

The more Sharon talks about some ideas she'd like to pursue, even she admits that her "retirement" may sound more like a sabbatical.

Sharon grew up in Buffalo, New York, attended Smith College but transferred in her junior year to Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. She graduated with a dual degree in English and Education, and then lived in Europe, mostly Germany and Switzerland, where she and her husband were studying Waldorf education, the approach to educating children developed by Rudolf Steiner. She also lived in Maine, Amherst, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, eventually moving to Great Barrington. She has three children and six grandchildren.

She trained to become a Movement Therapist, and took some nursing courses, but her career path changed when a friend asked her to help care for her mother, who had dementia. Although other caregivers thought the mother was "impossible," Sharon liked her. Sharon was hired for the dementia

unit at Melbourne Place, but when Kimball Farms opened the Life Enrichment Program (LEP) in August of 2010, Sharon was named Activities Director of the unit.

Of the early days of LEP, Sharon says, "the daily life with co-workers and residents in creating a community for people with dementia that was at once lively and profoundly caring was so rewarding. We were pioneers with very high standards, a

cohesive team truly united to meet the needs of the residents in the best way possible. We were dedicated, worked hard, and had fun together."

"In general," Sharon says, "I've been motivated to bring the arts to all residents, to support continued intellectual life, and to advance community."

One example is *Meet Me at the Clark*, a program Sharon and the Clark Art Institute designed for people with dementia and their caregivers. On days when the museum is closed and quiet, and staffed by specially trained docents, dementia patients and caregivers experience the art together. "It's really uplifting for everyone involved," Sharon recalls. One

woman was dreading her visit with her father because he was difficult, "but it was a great experience for both of them, and improved their relationship. The father died shortly after the visit to the Clark, but the daughter kept coming to the sessions, and is now a docent in the Clark program. Every session is fully subscribed, which makes me very happy."



**Sharon's farewell party**

*(Continued on next page)*

*(Lazerson, continued)*

*Meet Me at Kimball Farms* is a variation on that program, when people with dementia come to paint and “make art” while their caregivers meet in a support group with Social Worker Jackie Tripicco.

A few years ago, Sharon suffered a broken shoulder which sidelined her for months and made her think she should retire, but instead, when she returned, she was named the Community Outreach Coordinator for Kimball Farms, providing a platform for programs covering a broad range of topics and issues.

Here’s what Sharon says about the programs and events: “... it meant a lot to me to give the staff immigrants who are part of the fabric of Kimball Farms a platform for their stories to be heard. I’m also glad that I could bring in lecturers from Smith on a variety of compelling topics, and speakers like Linda Greenhouse, Joan Didion and Michael Bergman. We had interfaith panels with local clergy — Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish and Protestant — on topics like Forgiveness, Gratitude and Finding Light in the Darkness.” And just recently, Sharon says, there was “a very inspiring one” on Dying with Faith, and two Social Justice panels, one on being a Woman of Color in the Berkshires; the second on Being Out in the Berkshires.

Another reason for her to come back is to keep those programs going, she says – “There are so many possible themes.”

Through her wide connections in the community, Sharon brought stunning art displays to the new “Connector Gallery” between Independent Living and Pine Hill, to connect art and artists with Pine Hill and LEP residents. Artists have been invited to give “Gallery Talks” about their work in the exhibition, and they have been pleased with the meaningful and touching responses to their work, particularly portraits of people, from residents.

Sharon has also focused on intergenerational programs which she regards as among her “best things.” Kimball Farms residents have been “Kinder Buddies” for kindergarteners at the Morris School, mentors at Pittsfield’s Conte School, poets with dancers from the Pulse dance school, and friends of children at the Montessori School of the Berkshires

through an intergenerational chorus, visits, a talent show and making scrapbooks together.

Sharon still has unfulfilled goals and many wonderful things she wants to do. The success of the recent resident/staff talent show convinced her that there was a need for an Improv group at Kimball Farms, and for expanding the Kimball Players, which brings us back to the sabbatical idea.

At her recent “retirement” party, Sharon acknowledged her good fortune in her roles as LEP Activities Director and Community Outreach Coordinator in which she “was extremely and unusually fortunate to have almost unlimited creative freedom. ... The only limitation was my own imagination.”

Sharon did admit that she has a consulting gig, and is talking to the Pittsfield public schools about intergenerational programs. She praised her co-workers, and told the attendees that she was “a better person for knowing every one of you. Each one of you means a lot to me.” She also denied the rumor that she was going to move to either coast of the United States to live with her grandchildren.

Sharon has promised to stay in touch and we will look forward to that.

*Susan Dana*

*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,  
Bernie Handler, Loring Mandel, Dorothea Nelson,  
Margot Yondorf

PHOTOGRAPHS:  
Ned Dana

CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH:  
Hank Fenn, Jackie Tripicco

## Together When Apart: Meet the DeGiacomos

Jim DeGiacomo's affection for his family and pride in his working-class roots speak volumes about who he is and what he values. Born in Boston to his police officer Dad and stay-at-home Mom, he and his three brothers all enlisted in the U.S. Marines and were on active duty in several overseas conflicts.

In 1952 with a B.A. degree from Boston College in hand, Jim became a Marine. He served in Japan and Korea and in Japan he met the love of his life, Jeanne Marie. Jeanne Marie was always a woman "ahead of her time." A graduate of Kent State University, she competed nationally in college debate and was in Japan serving on the staff of the State Department when the two met.

Jim described the occasion. He and a buddy had leave and went to Mass on a Sunday morning where they saw "two gorgeous women," Jeanne Marie and Camille, her roommate. They *had* to say "hello"; that greeting lasted quite a while ... long enough for Jim to marry Jeanne Marie, long enough for them to bring four children into the world, long enough to cherish and support each other here at Kimball Farms, with Jeanne Marie in the LEP program.

Because she remains so vital a part of Jim's life, my comments will describe them as a couple. That is who they are: a loving and devoted husband and wife.

Let's go back, though, to the early days. Assignments in the Far East completed, both Jeanne Marie, who continued to work for the State Department, and Jim headed for Washington, D.C. It was there that Jim studied law at Georgetown while Jeanne Marie continued her work.

Upon his law school graduation the couple moved to Boston and eventually settled in Cohasset, a lovely community on Massachusetts' South Shore. Jim practiced civil litigation law with Murpha Cullina LLP, where he remains "of counsel." Jeanne Marie carried the major responsibility of raising their four children while obtaining a master's degree from

Northeastern University and working in Boston in the area of public health.

Daughter Diane, an attorney, lives in Lenox; interestingly, she is connected with the firm Cain, Hibbard and Myers, which was founded by Kimball resident Elizabeth Myers' husband, Fred, and it was he who interviewed and hired her. Son Mark, the third attorney in the family, joined his father's Boston law firm. Paul lives in Ottawa, Canada, where he works with a non-profit agency dedicated to providing support services for Third World countries; and Andrew is a nurse at the Albany Medical Center. Jim and Jeanne Marie are also proud to claim four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

When their children were grown, it was time to consider a new journey, this one a return to urban living. Their new home, on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, was steps away from the Public Garden, which, along with its neighbor Boston Common, are the oldest parks in the country, established in 1837. They loved the proximity to the city's cultural life – museums, Symphony Hall, theaters — and were ardent supporters of their programs.

At one point in our conversation, Jim leaned in and expressed his belief that he and Jeanne Marie "shared three passions: the visual and performing arts and travel; these brought us together and kept us together."

He glowed when he described their travels ... literally all over the world ... to Central and South America, Iran, Burma, the Far East, Indonesia, all over Europe – the list goes on and on and on. He finds joy now during his daily visits with Jeanne Marie in jogging her memory of their many shared pleasures.

When continuing their busy lives in Boston became impractical, the next journey made perfect sense: move to Lenox, where together they had enjoyed summers at Tanglewood for decades.

*(Continued on next page)*



Photo by daughter Diane



## ***Daters' Love Wins Out Many Years Later***

David Vacheron, who moved into Apartment 123 in early July, was born and grew up on Long Island, New York, and attended school there and then St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, majoring in English. As a freshman he met and dated Nan Parmele and, upon graduation, they went their separate ways.

Dave, who wanted an acting career, attended The American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City and then acted Off-Broadway, in summer stock, soap operas, prime time TV shows and movies. When he met and married Trish O'Brien in 1964 he decided to become a TV executive and worked at WPIX-TV, CBS and WNBC, where he managed the Broadcast Standards Department, ensuring truth and accuracy in commercials and handling legal and taste matters in programs.



Dave was married to Trish O'Brien for 22 years and they adopted two children before Trish died of cancer in 1986.

In 1988 Dave and his erstwhile college classmate Nan Parmele re-met at a party given by a fraternity brother of Dave's who was married to a sorority sister of Nan's. Dave knew that night he would marry Nan and his dream came true in June of 1989. They built a home in Canaan, New York, and retired in 1991. After a series of medical problems Nan passed away in August of 2018, ending a beautiful 29-year love affair.

Between them the Vacherons had four loving and devoted children and seven grandchildren. Dave's son lives in Sacramento, California, and Dave plans to celebrate his son's 50th birthday there in October.

Nan's three children live in Utica and Rochester, New York, and Spokane, Washington.

To say that Dave is busy is an understatement. Besides swimming, tennis and pickleball, he enjoys cooking, going to the theater and gardening. He has been involved with flower arranging at Shakespeare & Company for many years, was a docent at The Mount, worked the visitor center at Tanglewood and is currently involved with serving seniors lunch at the Lenox Community Center. Dave loves a good book, especially biographies of influential people from all walks of life.

We hope that this busy new resident will have time to participate in some of Kimball Farms' activities. A newcomer with diverse interests is always a welcome addition to life here.

*Margot Yondorf*

### ***(DeGiacomos, continued)***

Jeanne Marie moved to the LEP, and Jim joined her at Kimball Farms when an apartment opened up for him shortly thereafter.

He and Jeanne Marie see each other daily and enjoy being out and about. There is special joy when they are able to "share precious memories together." Perhaps you will be fortunate, as was I, to meet them in one of Kimball's lounge areas, hands clasped together, faces wreathed in smiles.

*Dorothea Nelson*

## ***Birthdays***

Twenty-two residents celebrate birthdays in October. There is a 34-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant. October birthdays belong to:

**Ann Trabulsi, Marvin Seline, Robert Shanks,  
Rosaleen Miller, Gale Crane, Jean Rousseau,  
Evelyn Hand, John Moynahan, Jane Gilligan,  
Helen McCarthy, Rita Weinberg, Audley Green,  
Betty Jones, Nancy Curme, Laura Krzyzosiak,  
Lorraine Roman, Patricia Curd,  
Suzette Lemieux, Arlene Potler, Nelda McGraw,  
Nora O'Brien & Judith Pierson.**

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



## The Woman Behind the Suitcases

Do you recall the newcomer whose welcome-to-Kimball picture, on display for several weeks, revealed not a face but several attractive suitcases? I wondered who belonged to the luggage and now I know: Ann Dorfman, who makes her home in Apartment 119. Not because she's shy, not because she avoids the camera, but simply because no one photographed her, a composite of luggage was chosen to represent her.

It was a wise choice. Ann likes to explore. She revealed expectations and hopes and destinations as



our conversation drifted from school to work to family, to political causes that absorbed each of us.

Not surprisingly one of those causes had to do with the “isms” that prevailed in her early life and continue today, one of them being anti-Semitism. As a teenager in a summer job, Ann was employed by the New York telephone company and was the only Jewish person there. A supervisor questioned the derivation of Ann's last name and asked if the spelling was German. Ann did not respond and kept her job but the animosity behind the question was apparent.

Ann's formative years were spent in her birthplace, Jersey City, where she graduated from high school and then went on to Douglass College, the women's college of Rutgers University. She experimented with several majors before settling on English Literature.

Luggage and B.A. degree in tow, Ann moved to Manhattan, where she landed a job with the

Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), eventually becoming an assistant radio producer for their New York news office. In that capacity she crossed paths with many interesting personalities, including artist Salvador Dali, many politicians and entertainers.

During the eight years she worked at CBC, Ann met and married photographer Ernie Dorfman. After son Ben's birth she was a stay-at-home mom for a year before returning to school and work. She earned a Master's Degree in Education from NYU and taught at an independent school, St. Ann's (no religious affiliation), for several years.

Always on the lookout for new challenges and now for more space than their cramped apartment provided, the family bought a house in the Cobble Hill area of Brooklyn and Ann became both teacher and director of the Parkside Children's Workshop, an innovative pre-school “dedicated to educating the whole child.”

One challenge the entire family had to face was the relentless course of diabetic complications that were seriously impacting Ernie's life. In the late 90s his compromised body finally said, “No more”; Ann was left a widow at age 58.

Fast forward three years and Ann is on the move again, this time to San Francisco, where she connected with family members and launched a new career. Her work as the Human Resources Director of an architecture firm was a source of great satisfaction but was interrupted when she was severely injured in a 2002 accident. Ann and her cousin were crossing Santa Monica Blvd., green traffic light glowing and in the pedestrian crosswalk when they were hit by a city bus. Ann lived; sadly, her cousin did not. But Ann suffered severe neurological complications which affect her mobility and cognition. While she was hospitalized and in rehab for an extended period, her employer held her job for a year! It was the recession of 2010 that ultimately ended her career.

Though not ready to retire, Ann thrust herself into activities that work hadn't allowed room for. She took courses in music and art, film classes focusing on work of famous directors, and volunteered for the San Francisco OLLI.

*(Continued on next page)*

## President's Report: Take My Word for It

The leaves are beginning to turn as fall is upon us here at KF. We have a number of new residents, and have had the opportunity to meet and get to know each other at various successful events.

Progress is being made on the Potting Shed, or "Pot Shop," at last, and the new windows in the dining room are in, with more improvements coming.

Now I want to share with you something very clever that will be of particular interest to many who are Scrabble fans ... I am not, but this one sure caught my eye anyway. Someone is deadly at the game. (Wait till you see the last one!) When you rearrange the letters:

|                  |   |                    |
|------------------|---|--------------------|
| Dormitory        | = | DIRTY ROOM         |
| Astronomer       | = | MOON STARER        |
| Desperation      | = | A ROPE ENDS IT     |
| The Eyes         | = | THEY SEE           |
| George Bush      | = | HE BUGS GORE       |
| The Morse Code   | = | HERE COME DOTS     |
| Eleven Plus Two  | = | TWELVE PLUS ONE    |
| Slot Machines    | = | CASH LOST IN ME    |
| The Earthquakes  | = | THAT QUEER SHAKE   |
| Election Results | = | LIES-LET'S RECOUNT |
| A Decimal point  | = | IM A DOT IN PLACE  |
| Snooze Alarms    | = | ALAS! NO MORE Z'S  |
| Animosity        | = | IS NO AMITY        |

AND FOR THE GRAND FINALE :

Mother-in-law = WOMAN HITLER !!!!!!!

Someone out there must have WAY too much time on their hands ! BUT, brilliant ! Enjoy. folks!

*Hank Fenn*

## At High Lawn Farm, a Kimball Farms Calf

Not yet, but there could be a calf named Kimball. On a recent visit to High Lawn Farm, we learned the almost 100-year history of the dairy farm, the efforts made to retain and restore the barns and fields, and the care taken of the pedigreed Jersey cows. We learned that Jersey cows produce milk with more protein and calcium per unit of feed and the taste is richer and more satisfying than other milk. And then... the offer.

In order to increase community involvement and as an additional source of revenue, we were given the opportunity to adopt a calf, even a newborn calf. We



**Stephanie interviewing calf**

could name the calf, visit and feed the calf and watch her grow into one of the herd of milking cows. All of this for \$400. Several of us were enthralled and the name "Kimball" was suggested. But how to come up with \$400? Perhaps if we, the Kimball Farms residents, contributed some amount towards adopting "Kimball" we could do it. If this appeals to you, and you would like more information or to make a donation, please contact Dorothea Nelson at 7104 or Stephanie Beling at 7101.

*Stephanie Beling*

**(Dorfman, continued)**

And she traveled, in the U.S. and abroad. She especially enjoyed trips given by Elder Hostel (now Road Scholar).

The stars aligned when it was time for another move. Son Ben, now married and father of two girls, had settled down in Great Barrington. Ann found an attractive condo near her family and spent four years there before moving to Kimball Farms.

Ann loves her close contact with her two granddaughters: Lucy entered Drexel this fall and Elena is a sophomore in high school. Ben is principal of Monument Valley Middle School in Great Barrington; daughter-in-law Mariah is the curriculum director for the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, to which she commutes several days a week.

If you're searching for lively, interesting dinner company, call 7119 and make a date with Ann; you'll walk away with a smile on your face and (maybe!) a spring in your step.

*Dorothea Nelson*



## When TV Meets Theory of Games

(First of two parts)

Art and Business have never been comfortable with one another. Where they connect is much like where Main Street and South Street intersect at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge. Watch out!

In late 1956, just having finished writing a *Studio One* program for CBS, I was approached by the show's producer, Felix Jackson, a German-born writer and refugee from Hitler. Felix had persuaded CBS that since *Studio One* had long been sponsored by the Westinghouse Corporation, it would seem appropriate to do a special drama celebrating George Westinghouse, whose career was built upon the invention of the air brake. CBS said yes.

Felix asked me to come up with a drama that would, in some way, relate to the connection between science and industry, "or something."

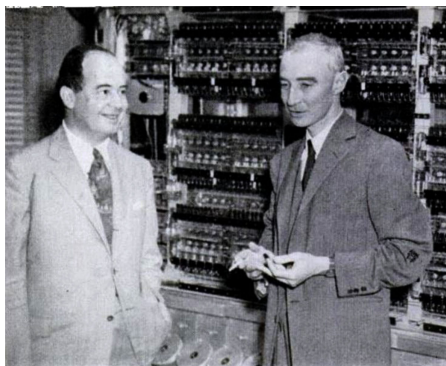
After several abortive attempts, I was brought to attention by a Life Magazine article, written by Clay Blaire, Jr., concerning the life and death of John von Neumann. Von Neumann was a scientific genius who was remarkable in many ways, whose work was instrumental in the development of the computer, and who, as he was dying of cancer, provided much scientific guidance to the American military. Here, I thought, is the basis for a character and a situation capable of developing into a strong drama.

Felix approved the idea, and I went to work. I read everything I could find on von Neumann. I interviewed John Kemeny, his former student and soon to be President of Dartmouth. (Kemeny was a Hungarian, as was von Neumann.) At Princeton I interviewed Oskar Morgenstern, von Neumann's economist-collaborator in the seminal *Theory of Games*, upon which much U.S. military strategy was based. I learned that he secretly recorded the interview. These were the days of Senator McCarthy,

and Morgenstern was suspicious of anyone coming to his office to ask questions.

Ultimately, I had to start writing. A friend, *Kraft Theater* director Fielder Cook, encouraged me to write the script on spec(ulation).

It seemed natural to outline a six-act structure for the show, abandoning the conventional three-acts to better accommodate the *Playhouse 90* format. But the major non-technical problem I had to solve was *How to write a character smarter than I was*. The answer to that lay somewhere within the nebulous alchemy of becoming the character you're writing. And then it's more like stenography, if you've got it right.



**John von Neumann, left, with  
Robert Oppenheimer**

I presented the script to my agent (who, in order to write a contract, gave it the name "Project Immortality") and sent it to John Houseman, then a *Playhouse 90* producer.

Houseman, along with the director Frank Schaffner, presented it to Executive Producer Martin Manulis, who turned it down. Manulis objected to a pivotal scene in which an abstruse scientific problem is explicated at length, a scene I thought could be exhilarating. Subsequent efforts to convince Manulis failed.

And at this point, re-enter Fielder Cook, an eminent television director with a bumpy history.

He was a dapper — almost elegant — man, tall and graceful, with the charm of many southern-born men, though sometimes just a bit overboard. Our friendship, which began in 1956, lasted for many years. His speech and his clothing were flamboyantly distinctive: He spoke in images rather than abstractions, and often wore a cape over his shoulders. He had heard of what happened to my planned Houseman-Schaffner script, and pulled me across 55<sup>th</sup> street to a small bar (I think it was Giovanni's), listened to the story I described and, on the spot, told me he'd do it as one of his shows on

(continued on next page)



*(Mandel, continued)*

*Kraft Television Theater*, where he headed one of the production units. Then, because it was Fielder, he told me what kind of wine to buy.

But as these matters go, while the script was scheduled for production, *Kraft Theater* went off the air. Cancelled. There are good luck scripts and bad luck scripts, and this one already had been two-striking.

But then, the next year, *Playhouse 90*'s wizard Martin Manulis retired and Peter Kortner, who had served as his story editor, became the producer. He remembered and revived my script. By then, Houseman and Schaffner were committed to other projects. Kortner called me and asked if I would make my script available for him at *Playhouse 90*. In those more enlightened days, the writer owned both his script and the copyright. I agreed, and said I wanted Fielder Cook to direct it.

Kortner was reluctant. Fielder had directed another *Playhouse 90* that was semi-disastrous and CBS was no longer viewing him as employable. I held out, time passed, and ultimately, Kortner flew to New York to meet with me. He suggested other directors. I refused, knowing that Fielder understood the script and had the talent to direct it. Kortner swallowed hard, and accepted.

Then the trouble began. *(Second part next month)*

## Let VoiceFriend Be Your Friend

When the rolled-up document in every Kimball Farms mailbox looks identical, you know a message is being delivered from on high. You were right. We are all invited to indicate one or more means of personal communication, in order to be available to the services of *VoiceFriend*.

While the name may be a non-sequitur, *VoiceFriend* is a system by which messages can be directed to any number of components in a system. Kimball Farms has been using *VoiceFriend* for six years as a means of sending messages and directives to various administrative departments and employees. Now, the capacities of—let's just call it *VF*—are being extended to communicate from Administration

directly through residents' landline and cell phones and internet addresses.

Adjunctive and in no way a replacement for the electronic Link to Life units in each apartment, *VF* will be able to make us aware of emergency or time-sensitive information not dependent on the electronic

message screens or channel 1390. Executive Assistant Lisa Cabrera-Rizzo will be in charge of this new system, and in a brief interview she explained how it will



proceed.

When all the forms are returned with what information residents provide, the numbers and addresses will be entered into a *VF* database. Once accomplished, the system will be inaugurated, first only for those in Independent Living. Over time, those in Pine Hill will be added.

At present, the system will not be interactive. There may be certain messages which invite a response, but *VF* is generally a one-way messaging system. It's conceivable that it may be made to function bi-directionally in the future. But not yet.

The value of immediate communication through multiple means is apparent. Should one system fail for any reason, the remaining means can still bring important information to us all. And Lisa expressed the hope that all of us will fill in the documents and return them promptly. She has a lot of typing-in to do.

*Loring Mandel*

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <h3>In Memoriam</h3>   |
|  | <p><b>Sylvia Holcomb</b><br/>March 1, 1920 to Sept. 5, 2019</p>        |
|  | <p><b>Harold "Boots" Potler</b><br/>June 3, 1924 To Sept. 16, 2019</p> |



By

Stephanie Beling, M.D.

## ***Better Body, Better Brain***

We all have family, friends, and neighbors who can no longer live independently. For many it is because of the dreaded condition “Alzheimer’s.” This is the dementia that robs people of their memory to the point of no longer recognizing loved ones and no longer able to feed or dress themselves. As of now, there is no cure and may never be, because although the brain can repair and regenerate to a great extent, by the time a diagnosis is made it is often too late. The good news is that while searching for a cure, a lot has been learned about the risk factors for Alzheimer’s and of course that brings us to prevention. Prevention means taking charge of your choices and decisions to minimize the risk factors.

It is important to know that one of the hallmarks of Alzheimer’s is the accumulation of beta amyloid plaque in the synapse, the space where neurons connect, thereby preventing the neurons from “talking” to each other. We notice this disconnect when we forget something.

### **RISK FACTORS**

1. Age: The biggest and only unchangeable risk factor for developing Alzheimer’s is age. The chances of being diagnosed increase steadily as we age. Right now, the risk doubles every year after the age of 65. About half of people who are 85 and older have Alzheimer’s.
2. Genetics: There is a gene called ApoE4 which can be inherited from one or both of our parents and does increase the risk for developing Alzheimer’s. However, our genes do not determine our future. We have a say in how our genes are expressed. This is the science of epigenetics and every lifestyle decision we make affects our gene expression. Epigenetics determines what your genes have to say.
3. Diabetes and insulin resistance: A recent study that looked at men and women over the age of 60

found that people with diabetes (especially type 2) were twice as likely to develop Alzheimer’s. A proposed mechanism is that nerve cells require a lot of energy to do the work of communicating. They get this energy from glucose and oxygen in the blood. With diabetes, cells develop insulin resistance. Insulin is the hormone that transports glucose from the blood into the neurons; therefore neurons have to manage with less glucose. Diabetes also leads to damaged blood vessels, which compromises the delivery of oxygen. Neurons already struggling to communicate despite too much beta-amyloid may lose the battle if deprived of glucose and oxygen.

4. Cardiovascular disease: Eighty percent of people with Alzheimer’s also have cardiovascular disease. Scientists are trying to better understand the link between heart health and Alzheimer’s, but we do know a few things about this relationship. Cholesterol drives the production of beta-amyloid. For a brain that is already struggling to keep beta-amyloid levels in check, high cholesterol may be the tipping point. As already mentioned, the neurons in your brain need a lot of oxygen. If you have high blood pressure and plaques in your blood vessels, they are less efficient at delivering oxygen to your brain. All the risk factors for heart disease (things like poor diet and lack of exercise) are also risk factors for Alzheimer’s.

In addition to the risk factors just mentioned, chronic stress, inflammation, inadequate sleep and unhealthy gut bacteria also play a role. Here’s where decisions about healthy lifestyle choices become important. Neurogenesis is the ability to grow new neurons. This can occur at any age (even our age) but requires regular exercise. Other benefits of exercise are improvement in clearing beta amyloid and improved sleep. Neuroplasticity is the ability to make new connections between neurons and this also occurs throughout life if blockages and gaps are not too far gone. This means that things like a healthy, Mediterranean diet (whole grains, red and purple fruits and vegetables, fish, healthy fats like nuts and avocados) and exercise may not only protect the heart and blood vessels, they may protect the brain.

*(continued on next page)*

*(Beling, continued)*

There is currently no cure for Alzheimer's, but understanding these risk factors offers us some good news. While we can't do anything about getting older or the genes we've inherited from our parents, eating smart, keeping cholesterol levels, blood sugar and blood pressure low, getting good quality sleep to flush out brain toxins, feeding our good gut bacteria plenty of fiber, and managing stress with exercise, meditation and slow breathing may keep us fit with memory intact as we age.

## **Entertainment**

Tuesday Oct. 8, 7:30pm

**Tommy T & Black Velvet  
Elvis Tribute Show**

Monday Oct 14, 7:30pm

**Education Committee Program**

Tuesday Oct 15, 7:30pm

**Royal Garden Jazz Band**

Monday Oct 21, 7:30pm

**Professor Vincent Ferraro  
Foreign Policy Lecture**

Tuesday Oct 22, 7:30pm

**Wisteria String Quartet**

Monday, Oct 28, 7:30pm

**Education Committee Program**

Tuesday Oct 29 7:30pm

**Musicians of Ma'alwyck  
"Macabre Music"**

**Movies: Wednesdays and Saturdays**

**October 2, 5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23, 26 & 30**

a resident about a bereavement support group, I decided it was time to start one up again. Several years ago, we had a group that ran for approximately a year.

When the participants decided they no longer needed the group, we ended, and I moved on to other projects, fully intending to start another group in the future. That time is now. In planning this group, I decided to partner with one of my former interns who is now a social worker at HospiceCare in the Berkshires. Kim Mathews, LCSW, and I will co-lead the new group with help from my current intern, Emily Borsody. The group will be held on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 1 p.m. in the conference room. All residents are welcome to join to give and receive support about coping with the loss of someone important in your life.

*Jackie Tripicco, LCSW*

## **Trips**

Thursday October 3, 10:30am van **Mt. Greylock,  
with lunch at Bascom Lodge**

Sunday October 6, 2:15pm van

**South Mountain Concert, St. Martin Ensemble**

Tuesday October 8, 7:15pm van

**Hevreh – Gr. Barrington**

Sunday October 13, 2:15pm van

**South Mountain Concert, Emerson Quartet**

Thursday October 17, 5:15pm van

**"Let's Eat Out"**

**Old Inn on the Green, New Marlborough**

Wednesday October 16, Time TBD

**Lenox tour with lunch at The Mount**

Friday October 18, van at 6:15pm

**Berkshire Symphony, Williams College**

Saturday October 19, 12:15pm van

**Met Opera - Turandot, Mahaiwe Theater**

Saturday October 19, 1:15pm van

**American Underground, Barrington Stage Co.**

Sunday October 20, 1pm van

**Ghent Playhouse**

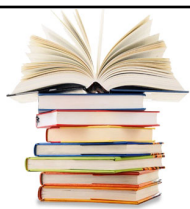
Saturday October 26, 12:15pm van

**Met Opera - Manon, Mahaiwe Theater**

## **Support Group Starting For the Bereaved**

Just over six years ago, when I transitioned into my current role as community social worker here at Kimball Farms, one thing I felt very committed to was providing for the expressed needs/interests of the residents. I'm a firm believer in the power of group work and when I was recently approached by



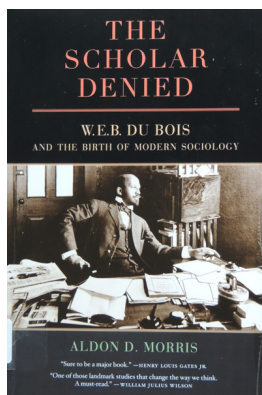


## Library Lines By John Gillespie

### Notable New Nonfiction Added to Our Library

In our September column, we highlighted some of the new, noteworthy fiction titles recently added to our library. This month, we will introduce some new nonfiction titles.

With adjectives like “ground-breaking,” “brilliant” and “monumental,” critics have praised Aldon P. Morris’ *The Scholar Denied*, the new, highly praised biography of W. E. B. DuBois. The wide scope of the book is hinted at in the subtitle, *The Birth of Modern Sociology*, because the book not only covers the traditional accomplishments of DuBois in the fields of writing and civil rights, but also in the founding of this influential new discipline. Of additional interest to Berkshire residents is that DuBois was a “native son”—he was born in Great Barrington in 1868 (died in 1963).



Years after she helped her friend Truman Capote write his true-crime bestseller *In Cold Blood*, Harper Lee, of *To Kill a Mockingbird* fame, decided to try her hand at writing in this genre. She attended a trial in her native Alabama in which a man was accused of killing the Reverend Maxwell, a local preacher who was, in turn, under suspicion in the deaths of five family members, each of whom had insurance policies made out to him. This is the basis of Casey Cep’s *Furious Hours: Murder, Fraud, and the Last Trial of Harper Lee*. One reviewer said “it is at once a compelling true-crime thriller, courtroom drama and miniature biography of Harper Lee.”

Many readers are familiar with the literary masterpiece *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the ground-breaking novel in magic realism style that is the story of a Colombian (South America) small town and the

family, the Buendias, who founded it. In *Solitude and Company* by Silvana Paternostro, the reader becomes acquainted with this literary genius. In the subtitle, the author gives credit to her many helpers, “his friends, family, fans, arguers, fellow pranksters, drunkards and a few respectable souls.” The first part of this biography describes his life before *Solitude* was published and the second part after its publication when his life became equally divided between writing and partying

When Ernest Hemingway was 56 in 1948, he visited, with his fourth wife, the city of Venice. He fell in love not only with the city but also with a young girl, Adriana Ivancich. The affair lasted for years. She became the inspiration for his novel *Across the River and Into the Trees* and later was present with him in Cuba when he wrote his last masterwork, *The Old Man and the Sea*. This relationship is the subject of Andrea di Robilant’s *Autumn in Venice: Ernest Hemingway and His Last Muse*.

In her memoir *Small Fry*, Lisa Brennan-Jobs tries to convince readers that she enjoyed the company of her famous father, Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, Inc., who died in 2011, but the painful facts of her life prove otherwise — e.g., Jobs denied his paternity of Lisa until he was sued to pay child support. Although later he introduced her to a life of luxury and indulgence, he was often cold and unfeeling. This is the story of the erratic, often poignant childhood of a “poor little rich girl” and her relationship with her famous father. It is an enthralling read.

*Boy Erased* is a memoir written by Garrard Conley, first published in 2016 and later filmed with Lucas Hedges playing the Conley character and Nicole Kidman and Russell Crowe his parents. At age 19, while he was in college, Conley was “outed” as being gay and sent by his parents (his father was a prospective Baptist minister) for gay conversion therapy that promised to cure him of his homosexuality. He underwent months of counseling and a two-week intensive intervention program. This book details how, in spite of good intentions, these programs “lack compassion and can often do more harm than good.” A sobering book that is well worth reading.

Next month, a look at reading preferences of some new residents at Kimball Farms.

## Learning to Live Without Her

"How are you doing?" people asked.

"Getting along," he replied.

"One day at a time," they said.

Do I have any choice? he mumbled to himself.

They meant well. Many of them had lost spouses and knew what it was like. But her death was an intensely personal matter for him. How did you talk about something when there was nothing you could say?

Preparation for the inevitable is one reason people live at Kimball Farms. It was certainly a benefit when his wife went first to Sunset and then to LEP. In each case the transition was as smooth as could be hoped, thanks to a caring staff. And during the seven months she was in LEP, it was only a short walk through the halls to visit her or bring her back to visit him.

Nearly eight years on, he still missed the house on the hillside overlooking valley and hills near Tanglewood. They had lived there 33 years. It meant stability, independence, dogs, walks, runs, swims, careers, concerts, travel – all the good things. He would not have been able to care for her at home. Which, of course, is another reason people come to Kimball: care.

He resisted Kimball for several years while she campaigned for it. Finally the day came when she got tired of climbing the steps from the garage to the house and he got tired of pumping out the basement after every heavy rain. The house needed work, lots of it.

"Let's go," he said.

They did.

To his surprise, her death was not the hardest one for him. It was a shock and left a big hole in his life, of course, but he was prepared for it by her absence and slow decline. His father's death was tougher. It was the first time he saw someone close to him through their last months and days. Later, his beloved

Samoyed went: his son and brother. He still gets a pang of loss every time he drives by the house where he rescued the big white dog from a trip to the pound and possible oblivion.

His sister tells him the worst is the death of a child. One of her sons died early in the AIDS epidemic. Others have said the same thing about losing a child. An adult has usually led a more or less full life. A child does not deserve to die so soon. It upsets the order of things.

Any death upsets the order of things.

Without children, he and his wife had lived as one for 65 years.

She is everywhere and she is nowhere: in the sweaters she knitted for him; in the dishes he eats from; in the toothpaste tube she started and he is finishing; in the empty bed when he wakes up in the night.

He misses their private language: "consquirt" for concert, "scrambulance" for ambulance, "squeegees" for kisses.

He wishes he could believe in an after-life but he can't.

How was he doing?

He wished he knew.

*Andy Pincus*



**At her loom**

### ***Support Groups***

Tuesday October 1, 3pm, Pine Hill Art Room

**Low Vision Support Group**

Tuesday October 15, 1:30 pm, Conf. Room

**Alzheimer's Support Group**

Call to RSVP:

Jackie Tripicco, Community Social Worker, X-7037