



The

Kimball Farms



Observer



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We're Back!

September 2020

Four Women Chosen for Education Grants

The Staff Education Grants account is close to the bottom of the alphabetical list of accounts in the Residents' Association Treasurer's report. It may not be the first thing you look for when the report is presented, but it can make a big difference to the education plans of staff members who are recipients of the annual grants.

The Staff Education Grants Committee of the Residents' Association is pleased to announce the winners of grants for the academic year of 2020-2021. The four women who were chosen are employed in several areas of Kimball Farms, from Independent Living to the Nursing Care Center, and their studies are equally diverse.

Committee chairman Tad Evans hailed the "records of outstanding grades, excellent recommendations and clear need for financial assistance of all these students."

Tad introduces us to the grantees:

Mireille Moussoyi works as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Pine Hill while studying for a degree in Business Administration at Berkshire Community College and UMass. She looks forward to a career in international business, using her fluency in French and African dialects, as well as her obvious ability to successfully cross international boundaries



Mireille

Aimee Green works in Environmental Services while pursuing a degree in Fine Visual Arts with a concentration in Theater at Massachusetts College of

Liberal Arts, where she will be a third-year student in September. This summer, she was enrolled in a certificate course in Special Effects Makeup in

Portland, Oregon, which unfortunately was cancelled because of Covid-19.



Aimee

At the Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center on Sunset Avenue, Emily Kolis is employed as a physical therapist. She expects to continue her studies and training at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York, to earn a Doctorate in

Physical Therapy.

Jaimie Henderson is known to many of us as a member of our excellent "waitstaff." A dedicated giver of sports advice (Go, Red Sox! Go, Patriots!), Jaimie attends Siena College, where she expects to graduate in 2021 with a double major in chemistry and environmental science. She plans to continue her education as a PhD candidate. In the committee's interview with Jaimie, they learned that she also works for the City of Pittsfield, spraying habitats for West Nile virus-carrying mosquitoes. Part of her work involves capturing and testing mosquitoes for evidence of disease. The members of the committee serving with Tad this year are Helen McCarthy, Ann Dorfman, Ralph Peterson, Judy Kittredge, Lois Neumann, Marvin Seline, Arlene Potler, Reed Hand and Moe England.

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(Grants, continued from page 1)

The group begins their work early in the year when the availability of grants is announced to employees. Applications from Kimball Farms staff are usually due in March. The committee reviews the applications and then makes appointments to interview the applicants. The distribution of the grants is decided in May, and the recipients are notified shortly after that. Because of the pandemic this year, chairman Tad Evans did the interviews with applicants, making a report with recommendations, on which the committee voted.

Tad then notified the grantees in a note he describes this way: “in the letter...I said that we knew the cost of college and personal expenses made our grants little more than a drop in the bucket.”

That’s not the way the grant was viewed by one recipient in her thank-you note: “Grants that you have called “a drop in the bucket” are very powerful drops that have been filling my education bucket up. They have been an incredibly outstanding strength and boost. My graduation this year is a tangible proof....I’m eternally grateful to all of you. THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH for the beauty and sweetness of your hearts.”

Congratulations to all this year’s education grant recipients. We wish you a wonderful year, whether your classes are virtual or in person.

Susan Dana

Words for Our Times

“I pray heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof.”

Words by President John Adams carved into a wooden mantelpiece in the White House. President Kennedy had the quote carved into marble.

Submitted by Carol Walker

Mary Learning to Live With Only 200 Books

Mary Misch moved into Apartment 150 with 200 books, downsized from a few thousand. A lover of the printed word, Mary was born and educated in central Pennsylvania. She graduated from Lock Haven (Pa.) University with a degree in English.



After a move to Boston Mary worked in publishing, doing editing and copywriting. There she met her husband, Edward Misch, one of the first professors to join Simon’s Rock College, where he taught history for over 30 years. Mary became a tour guide at several local museums.

Experimental theater was another one of her pursuits. Both were involved in buying and selling antiques and collectible books, an endeavor they continued in their retirement years. And, of course, she belongs to a writers club in Lee and another in Lenox. She is a writer of short essays.

Skiing had been one of Mary’s favorite pastimes, but a “bad day” on an uphill trail, she says, put an end to the sport. Mary and Edward enjoyed their travels to England and Canada.

They lived in Lenox until 2017 when they moved to an apartment in Lee.

Her husband died earlier this year, and a Vermont niece was instrumental in finding her a new home at Kimball Farms and assisting with the move and getting settled. She is grateful that her friends in Lenox, Lee and Great Barrington are helping her cope with the change in her life.

Fellow residents and new interests at Kimball Farms will make the transition easier as she settles in, surrounded by her faithful friends, the books.

Margot Yondorf

Scenes from Summer photos by Ned Dana



Straw Sculpture



Indianapolis Quartet recital



Lunch from the Food Truck



Morning Coffee Cart



Thursday Afternoon Mai Tais

Open Mic: Kimball's Double Quarantine

A KF resident asked if I'd be interested in joining a group to discuss racism. I said no.

What's there to discuss? Especially after the George Floyd summer with its street protests, the problem hits you in the face. You can't open a newspaper or turn on the TV without encountering it. The scenes of rage only deepen your already held belief, whether in sympathy with the police or protestors. The question is: what do we do about it?

We here at Kimball Farms have been doubly quarantined. Besides being locked down against the coronavirus, we live in a tight little community where we rarely even see a person of color. We talk, talk, talk about politics and the evils of segregation. A few of us join protests. But mostly the talk just makes us feel either a) bad about not doing anything or b) good about how righteous we are.

We're too old to march with placards, we say. And letters to our congressman or the editor change nothing. Those of us who marched for civil rights or against the Vietnam war are proud to see young and old – but especially the young – pick up the torch and march against police brutality and government venality. Others disagree. So we write checks and say if only we were a few years younger ...

I grew up in the South during the Jim Crow era. In Atlanta I not only saw segregation up close but enjoyed its benefits. Like most families of any means, my parents employed a Black woman as housekeeper. She doubled as a second mother to me, listening to my adolescent complaints and teaching me to play blackjack with her. I can never repay the debt. All around, Blacks did sweat labor, lived in separate (but mostly neat) neighborhoods and addressed white folks as "suh" and "ma'am."

I wasn't too young to see and disapprove of what was happening. But what could a boy of 10 or 15 do? In those days what, really, could anyone do? Segregation was the system, created and enforced by white man's law. Oh yes, the races got along. Atlanta declared itself a "friendly city." But the tolerance, until people like Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis came along, was based on a mutual understanding that one race was master and the other, servant.

Segregation is no longer law but the discrepancies remain. Many whites, both south and north, would like to establish full equality, as we've seen in the protests. But even after you pass legislation, ingrained attitudes and beliefs remain. How do you get one class of people to give up benefits and privileges they enjoy because of the subjugation of another class of people? In many cases the winners don't even recognize their debt to the losers.

Times change and liberalization takes place. In Atlanta today, a Black woman rules as mayor and protesters swarm the streets in response to police actions. Yet we whites can never forget that our good fortune was made possible not only by our own efforts but also by 400 years of servitude by others different from us only in the color of their skin. My conscience aches.

So here we are at Kimball, gradually getting out of one kind of quarantine but continuing to enjoy the quarantine of a safe, caring, but closed community. At our age, we've earned it, we say. And no doubt we have. But that changes nothing outside in the world of pandemics of virus and hate. Perhaps the best we can do is talk, write checks and hope that we influence others by our actions in word or deed.

Andy Pincus

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Do you have an idea, memory or experience you'd like to share?

Hopefully, this essay will launch a monthly "Open Mic" column in which residents speak up on such topics. If you'd like to join in, there is no strict limit on length of articles but between 500 and 750 words generally works best. (A typical Observer page without illustration runs to about 750 words). Deadline is the 20th of each month but late submissions tend to lose out. Email is preferable to printout. Questions and submissions to Andy Pincus, alpins139@gmail.com, or 7167. No partisan politics or personal attacks, please, and save the in-house complaints for the suggestion box.

History of Vaccinations Filled with Successes

The word “vaccine,” first used by Dr. Edward Jenner late 18th century, is from Latin vaccinus, from vacca “cow” (because of the early use of the cowpox virus against smallpox).

Vaccination is a familiar part of our life and has been for many decades. As a young child, a smallpox vaccine was scratched into my upper leg (for cosmetic reasons, I was told); boys were usually vaccinated on the upper arm. My childhood illnesses were mumps, measles and chicken pox, so I’m assuming I was never vaccinated against those. I was sent away to summer camp in the country to avoid polio, although years later I wondered why going from the city to the country was considered safe, as President Roosevelt had contracted polio during a vacation at Campobello, a rural and remote retreat in Maine.

Years later in the late 1950s and 60s things had changed. Smallpox had been largely eradicated in the United States and an oral polio vaccine had become available. Infants were routinely inoculated against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis, known as whooping cough (DPT inoculation). As toddlers, children received vaccination against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR). These specific vaccines greatly reduced mortality as infectious diseases such as measles, diphtheria, smallpox and pertussis topped the list of childhood killers. A little more than a century ago the U.S. infant mortality rate was a shocking 20 percent and the childhood mortality rate before age 5 was another disconcerting 20 percent. The development of safe, effective and affordable vaccines stopped many of these devastating diseases in their tracks.

As the 20th century neared the millennium, more and more vaccines were developed and recommended for children and adolescents. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics endorsed vaccines for Hepatitis B, Rotavirus, Pneumococcus, Hemophilus influenza, Varicella (chicken pox) and Influenza in addition to the aforementioned DPT and MMR.

Older children and adolescents were offered vaccines against Human Papilloma virus and meningitis.

With this proliferating vaccination schedule and the fact that children received as many as 24 different “shots” before the age of 18, a change in public reaction seemed to shift from awe at the life-saving potential of earlier vaccines to one of skepticism and even downright hostility. Some attributed the noticeable increase in autism to either the mercury preservative in the MMR vaccine or the combination of so many vaccines. The mercury preservative was

removed from vaccines and multiple studies have shown that autism is not related to vaccine combinations.

As newly emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases appear, we can no longer take routine vaccination for granted. There are many obstacles in the way of developing and producing safe and effective vaccines,

including support for impeccable scientific methodology, political will and an unlimited funding source for the testing of safety and efficacy.

The history of vaccines and immunizations begins with the story of Edward Jenner, a country doctor living in England. He observed that milkmaids infected with cowpox, visible as pustules on their hands and arms, were immune to the periodic outbreaks of smallpox that rampaged through the area. Anecdotally, it is claimed that he heard a milkmaid boast that “I will never have smallpox with that ugly pock-marked face, as I have had cowpox.” He performed the world’s first vaccination in 1796 by taking pus from a milkmaid’s arm and inoculating an eight-year-old boy. Six weeks later he scratched smallpox into two sites on the boy’s arm; he remained free of disease. Multiple experiments followed and it was established that cowpox provided immunity to smallpox. It must be said that similar transfer of infected material from one person to another had been practiced in Asia, Europe and even colonial America in the 1600s and 1700s.

(Continued on next page)



(Vaccinations, continued from page 5)

Today we are faced with a worldwide pandemic with a novel corona virus for which there is no vaccine or known treatment. There is a rush to develop a safe and effective vaccine in the quantities needed to inoculate the hundreds of millions of people in the United States.

In spite of the recognized need for a vaccine to stop the ongoing pandemic and get the country “opened up,” there is resistance to taking a new vaccine in 35 to 40 percent of the population. There is less resistance to the already approved and recommended vaccines for our age group and they are as follows:

- Influenza, annually
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, booster every ten years or sooner if necessary
- Pneumococcal polysaccharide, one dose
- Shingrix, two doses three to six months apart

When a Covid-19 vaccine is finally approved and available, it is reassuring to know that Dr. Stephen Hahn, the commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, has stated that “I can further provide assurances that any vaccine authorized for widespread use will meet the appropriate standards for quality, safety and efficacy.”

Stephanie Beling, M.D.

Library Lines: What We've Been Reading

This has been an amazing summer but without Tanglewood, etc., we have all had extra time on our hands. Some spent it reading. I thought it would be interesting to find out what books the Observer's staff read over the summer.

We will begin with our editor, Andy Pincus. He has been immersed in Jan Swafford's 1,077-page biography *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph*. The author spends a great deal of his time analyzing Beethoven's music but he also portrays the composer as a figure in Napoleonic times—“an irascible man, always in need of money, always suffering from intestinal disease and his deafness, and always falling in love with a woman—usually from the aristocracy—who was not available.” It sounds like a challenging but rewarding read. Andy calls it “slow-going but fascinating.”

Now to the staff. Margot Yondorf recommends two recently published novels. The first is a co-winner of the 2019 Booker Prize. It is *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo, which explores the lives of Black women in modern Britain. The second is *The Grammarians* by Cathleen Schine, about language-obsessed identical twins whose Bible is Webster's New Unabridged Dictionary, second edition, given to them as five-year-olds by their father. The twins' language obsession follows them as they grow older and apart but are reunited by the dictionary.

Marilyn Hunter has been re-reading three of her favorites. The first is *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco, an historical murder mystery (and much more) set in an Italian monastery. It recently became one of the best-selling books ever published. The second, another novel, is *LaRose* by Louise Erdrich, which tells the tragic story of a hunting accident that results in the death of a young boy, the demand for justice, and the search for atonement. The third is nonfiction, *The Splendid and the Vile* by Eric Larson. Its subtitle tells a lot about its contents: “The saga of Churchill, family, and defiance during the Blitz.”

(Continued on next page)

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EDITOR	PRODUCTION
Andy Pincus	Ned Dana
	Michelle Rosier

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

PHOTOGRAPHS:
Ned Dana, Garry Roosma

(Library Lines, continued from page 6)

Stephanie Beling recommends two books. The story of professional poker players, by one who became one herself, is told in Maria Konnikova's *The Biggest Bluff: How I Learned to Pay Attention, Master Myself and Win*. One reviewer called it "a great reading experience." The second, *The Uncommon Reader* by Alan Bennett, is a delightful, humorous novel about how the English Queen discovers the joy of reading through the help of Norman, a boy who works in the royal kitchen. The title is a playful reference to two volumes of literary essays by Virginia Woolf published in 1925 and 1932 called *The Common Reader*.

Two new titles and two old favorites are recommended by Dorothea Nelson. In the first category is Nicholas A. Basbanes' *Cross of Snow: A Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*. Dorothea writes that the author "has done a 'comprehensive analysis [of the poet's work and current reputation] and produced a book that clearly establishes this man as a great writer and a marvelous human being.'" Her second new title is Donna Rifkind's *The Sun and Her Stars: Salka Viertel and Hitler's Exiles in the Golden Age of Hollywood*. This is the story of Viertel, a Hollywood screenwriter and her salon in the 1930s and '40s that became a refuge for many famous people, most of whom had escaped from Hitler's Europe. Among her flock were Thomas Mann, Arnold Schoenberg, Charlie Chaplin and, at times, Shelley Winters! Dorothea calls the author, "the Pearl Mesta of Hollywood." Her two rereads are Anna Quindlen's *A Short Guide to a Happy Life*, the best-selling author's reflections on what it takes "to get a life," and James Thurber's wonderful fairy tale, *The Thirteen Clocks*.

Former Observer staffer Gwen Sears has reports on three great titles. The first is *The Sacred Universe* by Thomas Berry, who in a series of essays challenges us to recognize that we live in a "sacred universe" that our technologies have betrayed. In the second, *To Speak to the Trees*, Diana Beresford-Kroeger, the author, tells of her current work on a global bio-plan to help restore the global forest. She also tells of her childhood in a family that taught that a respect for nature, including trees, was fundamental to human survival. The third is the delightful novel *Olive Again*, which is a sequel to Elizabeth Strout's

Pulitzer Prize-winning *Olive Kitteridge*. In the second volume, *Olive*, a resident of Crosby, Maine, continues her encounters with the townspeople, many of whom she had taught in school.

Lastly, here are a couple of titles I have recently read and enjoyed. The first is the highly acclaimed novel that many of you have already read and enjoyed. It is *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, the heart-warming tale of two lives that intersect in the French coastal city of St. Malo during the Second World War. One life is that of a young French teenage girl who has been blind since the age of six and the other is that of another teenager, a bright German boy who, as a raw recruit in the German army, has become part of the occupying force in that ancient French city. My second choice is a non-fiction picture of high society during the Belle Epoque in France and England and features such luminaries as Wilde, Proust, Henry James, and Whistler. The title is *The Man in the Red Coat* by Julian Barnes. This refers to the famous painting by Sargent of Dr. Samuel Possi, an incredibly handsome, well-liked society doctor of the period who was admired by all and who moved in the highest of social circles. Lots of gossip and plenty of local color.

Here's to the coming months and plenty of good reading.

John Gillespie



"Each capsule contains your medication, plus a treatment for each of its side effects."

President's Comments: Surviving Amid Covid

The surreal world we've called home for nearly six months shows no sign of loosening its grip; we all struggle to maintain some kind of mental and emotional balance and even good humor as we deal with the necessary restrictions that control our actions and behaviors.

Kudos to residents and staff at Kimball for abiding by the rules. We know they work: no one in our complex has been compromised by this miserable disease; no one can predict how long we'll be wearing masks, maintaining social distance, and limiting visits. The isolation and loneliness impact each of us in different ways as we try to imagine what kind of a world awaits us when scientists discover a way to control this hideous disease.

Vital parts of our lives must go on, though, despite this pandemic. One of those vital parts is our election on November 3. We are bombarded by news about fraud in mail-in ballots. PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT KIMBALL WILL PROVIDE VAN TRANSPORTATION FOR THOSE RESIDENTS WHO PREFER TO VOTE IN PERSON. Complete information about numbers of residents who can travel in the van at one time and the schedule will be made available in ample time for you to make your individual plans. Additionally, Michelle will have available mail-in ballots for those who are comfortable using them. Your voice matters; your vote matters; everything possible will be done to make this process available to every single person in our complex.

One consequence of travel restrictions: it has promoted interest in our raised bed gardens. Fortunately, the gardeners among us are quick to share fresh lettuces, zucchini, Swiss chard; we're assured that the reluctant tomatoes will be available soon. When friends with produce aren't available, there's always Don's fresh farm stand on Housatonic Street. You'll be in for a treat if you visit it and sample some of his locally grown produce. You won't even need to exit your car; just open your window and he'll bring your selection right to you.

Besides the raised bed gardens, a crew of residents has been working diligently on the meadow. Despite a tough beginning, it's clear that the goal of

establishing a sustainable meadow will be achieved. The meadow represents a critical statement for Kimball: it is one way to demonstrate our commitment to restoring a natural landscape, one that will not require chemical pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers. Gwen Sears' heroic efforts to promote development of our meadow will be carried forward by equally dedicated environmentalists like Garry Roosma, Dave Vacheron, Reed Hand and Elske Smith. More strong arms and backs would be appreciated if you'd like to help!



**Monarch caterpillar
in the meadow**

Kimball's dedication to preservation of our planet was lustily demonstrated on April 24, Earth Day, when many hardy residents donned parkas and emerged on their patios to sing *This Land Is Your Land*. Thanks to Charlotte Finn's grandson our tribute was acknowledged in the Eagle.

Thanks to the addition of tables, chairs and tents, there's opportunity for outdoor dining. We even have a grill available, now well-tested, for any resident to use. Resident grill masters Ron Stewart and Garry Roosma are happy to offer instruction in its use. Check out the community garden area to see it, use it and picnic right there where tables and chairs have been placed.

We've enjoyed some outdoor musical events, too, though they will have to end when the weather turns cooler. As we shift to planning indoor programs, please let us know whatever ideas you have that can bring us together in small groups and drop them in the Suggestion Box in the Mail Room. There's not a person here who hasn't been faced with painful situations and struggles that were surmounted as we moved forward. Covid-19 can restrict us; it can sadden and separate us; we will not let it defeat us.

Dorothea Nelson
photo by Garry Roosma