



# The Kimball Farms



# Observer



Volume 32, No 15 Photography Winners, Page 12 May 2023

## The Subjects: Slavery and Gun Violence

### *Mumbet to Live Again On Kimball Stage*

An extraordinary opportunity awaits Kimball Farms when we will be honored with a one-person replay of the first staging of the Elizabeth Freeman (Mumbet) theatrical performance. Written by Teresa Miller for the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, the play, “Meet Elizabeth Freeman,” was first presented in 2020 and subsequently in Sheffield, Mass., on August 22, 1922. The three-person play became very popular in a variety of venues, and is now coming to us on May 31, at 7 p.m., with jazz and gospel singer Wanda Houston repeating her role as Elizabeth Freeman. Fiddler Maggie McRae provides a musical accompaniment.

Some of you know the story of the young woman, enslaved for 40 years, who had the courage to leave John Ashley's home in Ashley Falls and flee to Sheffield, walking the five miles and risking her life. There are two different stories of what prompted her to run away; one claims that she was inspired by guests' discussions of freedom; the other, it was as a result of serious injury when her enslaver's wife struck her as she protected her younger sister from a hot poker. Both may be true, but we do know that she did run.

Eventually, Theodore Sedgwick, a prominent Stockbridge attorney, took her case, which landed in the Court of Common Pleas in Great Barrington on August 21, 1781. Sedgwick's principal argument was that slavery was inherently illegal under the newly ratified Massachusetts Constitution, which stated: “All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights: among which are the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties.” *(Continued on page 2)*

### *Gun Program Inspired By Student's Poem*

*I would like to be a mother. To cultivate my own family in a happy household. Pets, games, and love. I would like to love my children.*

So begins the poem by Brooke Tripicco, a Pittsfield High School junior, that has inspired a many-sided program coming to Kimball Farms to consider gun violence.



Brooke, the daughter of Kimball social worker Jackie Tripicco, wrote the heartfelt poem in response to the gun violence, especially school shootings, pervasive in America. She will read the so far untitled piece for the Kimball audience in a program on May 28 at 7. Four other speakers will join her in a discussion of the issue: Grace Rossman, a senior and activist at Simon's Rock College; Matt Donovan, a visiting poet at Smith College; State Rep. Smitty Pignatelli, and a mental health professional yet to be named.

Donovan is the author of *The Dug-Up Gun Museum*, a book of poems that explores the country's obsession with guns to get at its “deep-seated political divisions and to violence, race, power” *(Continued on page 2)*

*(Gun Violence, continued from page 1)*  
and privilege.” Insisting on the distinction between gun use by sportsmen and criminals, Pignatelli has co-sponsored a bill to prohibit “ghost guns,” the kind that can be made and assembled on three-dimensional printers. He represents the Third Berkshire District in the State Legislature.

Brooke’s poem recounts things she would like to do and people she would like to spare from violence, such as friends, family, teachers, and students. She concludes:

*But more than anything, I would like to be safe.*

Brooke has been writing poetry off and on since the age of 10. She also writes short stories and is studying advanced Spanish. She wrote the gun poem last December and went public with it then at a reading at the Calliope Café in the Stationery Factory in Dalton. She also posted a video of it on the internet. After a PHS lockdown in March, the poem received wide publicity when The Berkshire Eagle featured it prominently under the headline “Thoughts of a student in lockdown.” (Brooke’s father, Tom, is an editor at the Berkshire Eagle)

Spoken in the young woman’s own voice on a video the poem strikes a deep emotional chord in many who hear it.

On the video, Brooke recalls that on March 27, the same morning that a woman shot and killed three girls and three staff members at a school in Nashville, Tenn., PHS was locked down in response to a call warning police that an armed intruder was in the building. The warning, also phoned to other schools in the state, proved to be a hoax.

“We entered lockdown for just under an hour,” Brooke says, “and we did not know what was happening for much of that time. We did not know if our lives were in danger or not, and although they were not, ultimately a lot of students still experience trauma from that day.”

As the poem ranges over many aspects of fear and longing brought on by a constant threat of guns, it considers:

*I could buy a gun on amazon. In the time it takes me to press “buy now with one click,” 20 people could be killed from just one click. All it takes is one. One person One weapon. One room. One pull of the trigger. To ruin lives.*

Massachusetts has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation, Brooke notes. “However,” she adds, “we are still not entirely safe.”  
*Andy Pincus*

*(Mumbet, continued from page 1)*

(If this sounds familiar, it may be true that the framers of our national Constitution copied some of the words from the Massachusetts Constitution.)

The jury found the arguments convincing and “Mumbet” was set free. Although John Ashley initially appealed to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, he dropped his appeal, and this strong and determined woman changed her name to Elizabeth Freeman. Although she could never read or write, she helped change the lives of countless enslaved people for years to come. Today she is honored with the naming of the Elizabeth Freedom Center, the Pittsfield nonprofit that assists victims of domestic/sexual violence, in her honor.

*Marilyn Wightman*

**Further ...**

The National Women’s History Museum recounts: “Once she gained her freedom, Mum Bett [an alternative spelling] changed her name to Elizabeth Freeman. Colonel Ashley asked her several times to return to his home as a paid servant, but she declined. She became a paid domestic worker in Sedgwick’s household instead.

Freeman also worked as a prominent healer, midwife, and nurse. After 20 years, she was able to buy her own house where she lived with her children. Elizabeth “Mum Bett” Freeman died on December 28, 1829 and was buried in the Sedgwick family plot in Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

## *Environment Committee Tackles the Challenges*

Getting the Environment Committee organized and ready for action has taken a long time. The process would once have been described as proceeding at a “glacial” pace. Global warming has changed the meaning of that phrase since glaciers are now retreating at a rapid pace. Perhaps a more appropriate simile would be “molasses in January,” although January is no longer reliably cold.

Whatever.

It’s taking a long time to get the Committee underway because the environment is a big, big topic and many Kimball Farms residents are interested in many approaches to saving our planet.

The Steering Committee continues to work to understand the best ways to combine the environmental interests of Kimball Farms residents with projects that are worthwhile and doable. The committee members, Marilyn Wightman, Dorothea Nelson, Patricia Moynahan, Bernice Halpern, Carolyn Vandervort and Susan Dana, began with an informal survey to find out who was interested in the environment, and what issues were particularly of interest to them.

About 45 people responded to the survey. Their interests were wide-ranging, from recycling plastic bags to worldwide climate change. When all the similar topics were sorted into groups, three themes emerged: waste management/reduction; renewable energy, and climate change/global warming.

The Steering Committee decided that it was important for each group to study their issues so that they understood the problems, could quantify the problem, and understood the pros and cons of proceeding to identify practical, cost-effective proposals for solutions. Communication with the Steering Committee, residents and Administration would be vital, and projects would be evaluated while they were in progress.

In April, the Steering Committee started to recruit leaders for the study groups, and to confirm the names of residents who had signaled their interest. The

Waste Management Study Group will be chaired by Pat Steele, with Dorothea Nelson and Patricia Moynahan as Steering Committee reps. The Renewable Energy Group will have Susan Dana as the Steering Committee rep until the group meets to discuss leadership. The Climate Change/Global Warming study group will be led by Mary O’Brien with Marilyn Wightman and Bernice Halpern representing the Steering Committee.

In May, brainstorming sessions will be scheduled for all three groups to provide the information they need to study issues and develop workable plans that will make a difference to our community environment as well as the larger community.

The first project carried out by the Steering Committee at the same time as the interest survey was to offer free samples of Earth Breeze detergent sheets, which are dry and packaged in recyclable paper, to residents, to eliminate plastic jugs from the waste stream. Forty-six samples were given out, and Earth Breeze sheets were ordered for the Pinnacle Store for residents’ convenience rather than order online. They also cost less (20 cents a load) from the store than online.

Last week, Director of Resident Services Michelle Rosier had a call from a woman in Dalton who had seen the Pinnacle Store listed on the Earth Breeze website as a place to buy the detergent sheets, which are not otherwise available locally. Could she buy them? she asked. Of course, said Michelle, and the woman and a friend arrived for their first visit to Kimball Farms and their first purchase. Two more plastic jugs eliminated from the waste stream!

*Susan Dana*



## Three from Staff Receive Study Grants

The Residents Association annually awards grants to help employees who are continuing their education, either academic or vocational, beyond high school. Applications are available for all employees on the Walker Street campus and at the Nursing Care Center.

Completed applications are reviewed by a committee of residents who signed up for the job during the recruitment activities carried out in the fall by the famous Committee on Committees. This year's volunteers were Tad Evans who chaired the committee for several years, Ann Dorfman, Nancy Curme, Bernice Halpern and Susan Dana, the current chair.

The committee has announced that grants will be given to three applicants this year. "The Committee," said Nancy Curme, "is delighted to award grants to three outstanding young women, each of whom has the talent, clear goals and the determination needed to succeed in their fields"

The grants were awarded to Milly Hernandez, a member of the waitstaff in both the Independent Living and Assisted Living dining rooms; Mireille Moussoyi, a Certified Nursing Assistant at Pine Hill Assisted Living, and Jordan Rosier, a housekeeper in Environmental Services. Amounts of the grants are yet to be determined.

Milly graduated from Lenox Memorial High School in 2019, and is now a senior at Providence College in Providence, R.I. She plans to study at Tufts University next year, to work toward her Master of Public Health degree. But wait – there's more: after she finishes the clinical requirements for the Physician's Assistant program, she plans to work toward a dual degree as a Physician's Assistant to add to the MPH (Master of Public Health) credential. Milly's mother, Milagro (also called Milly), is a Certified Nursing Assistant in Pine Hill.

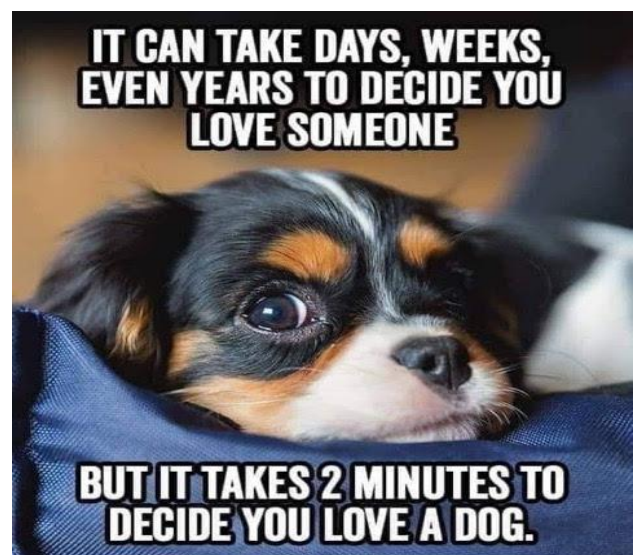
Mireille Moussoyi is also a Certified Nursing Assistant at Pine Hill, where she has worked for seven years. She has been awarded Staff Education grants before, helping her to graduate from Berkshire Community College with an associate's degree in

Business Management and then transfer to the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, to work toward a bachelor's degree in international finance. While she waits for a housing opening at Lowell, Mireille has taken additional courses at Berkshire Community College in Public Health. Since she fled the Congo, Mireille has not only supported herself but continues to support her family still in the Congo, including her mother, who has had many health problems and cares for two orphaned grandchildren.

A year ago, Jordan Rosier thought she had her education all figured out: she wanted to become a large-animal vet. She says: "I always felt my passion was working with animals; however, I quickly learned ... that I love helping people, which led me to choose nursing." She came home and immediately enrolled in and successfully completed the pre-nursing program at BCC. She was accepted into the Nursing Program and completed a Nursing Assistant course which allows her to work at Berkshire Medical Center. She will graduate in December 2024 with an Associate Degree as registered nurse. She plans to immediately enroll in a Bachelor of Nursing Program through the University of Massachusetts, with the long-term goal of becoming a Nurse Practitioner.

Congratulations to this impressive group of women with exciting plans and the determination to make the plans into reality. We're pleased to be able to help you succeed.

*Susan Dana*



## Going Beyond Duty: Four from Staff Honored

Each year Integritus Healthcare, of which Kimball Farms is a part, recognizes persons on its staff who have exceeded the organization's mission, vision and core values. We would like to feature in this article two of those award recipients this year, Lynn Lak and Ohinene (NeNe) Asilljoe. An article in the June Observer will recognize the similar awards to Laura Lipoufski and Beverly Turner, both from Sunset Nursing Care Center.

We did not need awards, or a special dinner or a beautiful plaque, to appreciate Lynn, Wellness Nurse and Physical Therapy Assistant for Independent Living, PineHill Assisted Living and Sunset nursing home, or NeNe, Director of Activities at LEP and PineHill Assisted Living. Their ready smiles and "can do" attitudes couldn't be derailed by a pandemic; it was just a glitch along the way.

Yet it was with a dinner and plaque for outstanding service that Integritus honored the four award winners at the AC Hotel in Worcester on March 31. Several senior staff delivered remarks praising the recipients' service..



Along the way to special recognition, Lynn earned first an LPN from Western Massachusetts Hospital followed by a Physical Therapy Assistant certificate from Berkshire Community College. But degrees can't describe what makes her work stand out.

Nothing fazes her. She works with groups; she works with individuals. One resident summed it up: "She has a gentle and pleasant manner and is always attentive. She always attends to our needs. She is a vital gift to Kimball Farms."

During the pandemic she found ways to conduct classes when the gym closed. Her emphasis on balance and strength was accompanied with a Falls Prevention Program that kept us upright even when

we thought we were ready to collapse! And all of this was done with a smile and utmost grace.

Lynn and her husband are empty nesters, with their two adult children now on their own. But the nest is large enough to accommodate three dogs, one cat, age 17—and yes, I said 17—chickens.

NeNe Asilljoe was born in Ivory Coast and emigrated to the USA in 2015, She's a living testimony to the generosity of Kimball's residents. Some of our donations through fundraising are designated for staff education; one of those grants continues to support NeNe as she pursues accreditation to become an activities professional certified by the National Council for Activities Professionals (NCCAP) at DH Special Services, located in New Jersey.

Along with the usual learning curve associated with promotion from Activity Assistant to Activities Director, NeNe faced other obstacles. Her promotion and the pandemic arrived almost simultaneously, but she didn't miss a step. She familiarized herself with ZOOM and all things digital. She observed stringent pandemic restrictions while still insuring everyone in LEP maintained close connection with family and friends.

Probably one of the qualities staff and residents admire most in NeNe is her willingness to go beyond, to imagine what could be. It was that daring spirit that prompted her to be the very first staff person to volunteer first for the "Kimball Farms Got Talent Show"; that same spirit encouraged her vital participation in Kimball's recent Casino Night.

NeNe lives with her three children –Jaden, 10; Aaliyah, 7; stepson Delmonte, 19 – and husband Paul in Pittsfield. She is thrilled that the necessary papers have been secured and the family has been joined by her parents.

*Dorothea Nelson*

## *Stockbridge Library To Honor Buck Smith*

The Stockbridge Library will honor long-time Stockbridge – now Kimball Farms – resident Buck Smith at its 2023 Golf & Tennis Classic on Tuesday, June 13.

Buck will be recognized for his work in overseeing the renovation of the Stockbridge Library, completed in 2016. In addition to his expertise as an architect and dedicated support of the library and community, Buck is a master swimmer, yoga student and for many years a biking enthusiast. He took to the ice to play the sport of curling for 40 years.

The public is invited to participate in either the golf or tennis events and enjoy a continental breakfast and luncheon buffet with a silent auction. Participation fees are \$150 each for golf, and \$100 for tennis. Golf registration is at 8:00 a.m. and tennis registration is at 9:30 a.m.

Individuals unable to attend may still donate to support the library and honor Buck's important work by visiting [stockbridgelibrary.org](http://stockbridgelibrary.org). Business sponsorships are available at a variety of levels and can be purchased at [stockbridgelibrary.org](http://stockbridgelibrary.org). Questions may be directed to Susie Harding at [sharding@cwmars.org](mailto:sharding@cwmars.org).

The mission of the Stockbridge Library Association and its Procter Museum & Archives of Stockbridge is to make history a vibrant center of community life in Stockbridge.



## *Thanks, Grandparents*

Taking the job at Kimball Farms was the best decision I have made for my career.

I am uplifted, always encouraged to bring ideas to the table, and fully aware of the capability I have now that I work with such a supportive group of people. Can you believe it's been almost seven months since I've manned the fort in the Marketing Department?

So, what's the point of this article, Kaylyn? Come on, we're losing interest.

The point is, I enjoy working with my newly found group of "grandparents." Andy Pincus gave me the idea for this month's article, "working amid dozens of grandparents." While most residents are significantly older than I am, we share a lot of the same interests. We look out for our friends, enjoy seeing Kiwi prance among the halls, and – most importantly – both residents and employees care so much about this place it warms your heart.

I've made sure to know names, faces, and apartment numbers. On Wednesdays I've begun to learn your likes and dislikes when it comes to food and drinks. I think I've gotten a good grasp on who's who! Getting to know everyone is comforting; I can pretty much identify who wants what, and when they want it (it's a win for everybody).

Long story short, I enjoy working here – especially with my supportive grandparents who are rooting for me from the sidelines. I am honored to hold the title of newest grandkid at Kimball Farms!

*Kaylyn Holliday  
Move-in Coordinator  
(And part-time waitstaff)*

## Sounding Off...

### *Three writers respond to teacher's challenge to describe sounds*

*(As an exercise, Ruth Bass asked her writing group to do essays on sounds they hear. She chose these three as outstanding examples.)*

#### ***Trumpeting, Whooshing At the Waterhole***

On his way to the watering hole, the elephant trumpeted as he splashed his way to take a bath. He rustled through tee reeds, causing honks from the whooping cranes whooshing overhead. His heart fluttered when he heard his tiny friend squeal with delight. The mouse giggled and then murmured, *splish, splash I was taking a bath.*

Soon the whip-poor-will chattered his song, joined by the chickadee while the bees buzzed.

The elephant gulped the water, dribbling it down his trunk, and then the elephant hiccupped, scaring a great cat who roared, whacked his tail, and chattered his teeth in fright. The big cat growled and, with a thump and a flutter of footsteps, whispered his way into the tall grasses.

The soil was sizzling but the birds squawked from the treetops, while the monkeys zapped the coconuts, knocking them to the ground — *boing, crunch, snap, crackle, pop.* The cool liquid hissed as the monkeys slurped the drink.

The humans watched all of this from the Jeep. One of them sneezed, the horn beeped, and the elephant blurted a trumpet. A hush fell on the waterhole.

*Patricia Moynahan*

#### ***The Kimball Symphony, From Dawn to Dusk***

Retirement and living in Kimball Farms are blessings. When morning comes, there's no alarm waking me up, no one stirring, no anxious desire for breakfast, just silence.

Yet as soon as I get up, sounds are all around. The gurgle of the toilet flushing, the scraping of my slippers, and, best of all the staccato belching of the

coffee. Dressing brings its own sounds: groans as I lift my left leg into my jeans; more groans as I look into the mirror, and more groans as I force my reluctant feet into safe walking shoes.

As the day blossoms, sounds become normal metronomes: click-clack of my feet on the hallway, squeak on the door of the trash room, unknown voices chattering, light dinging on the elevator door, on and on.

Downstairs, however, is different, with many thirsty and sleepy voices finding free coffee, sharing “good mornings.” Before too long, more sounds prevail: the thud of mail falling into the outbox, the squeak of personal mailbox keys turning in anticipation, followed by exclamations of annoyance or pleasure. Soon we hear Amy's welcoming to the few or many who need van transportation. The day continues, bringing soul-filled silence in meditation, sometimes interrupted by telephone, computer, or doorbell insistence.

Dinner time comes, with its expected roll call of friends, urging the need of a table for four, and final dispatch to the requested table. The cacophony of soothing, stimulating, uninteresting conversations fills the room, until “thanks” and “good nights” release all, some stopping to watch the thud at the billiard table, or the extended conversation at the Bridge. Evening and night come, hopefully bringing blessed silence at bedtime.

*Marilyn Wightman*

#### ***Sounds of the Beach, Sounds of Absent Birds***

Sounds are ubiquitous, affecting us even though we are unaware of their potency. I've narrowed them down to several categories: feel-good, relaxing, annoying, comforting, etc. *(Continued on page 8)*

*(Sounds, continued from page 7)*

The first sounds are my feel-good sounds, the ones I hear at my favorite place, the beach. They uplift me, making me feel that I'm glad to belong. As I bask in the sun, I absorb all the sounds around me: the *pfat, shh, pfat, shh* of the waves hitting the shore and receding, knowing that the process would go on forever. Other sounds: the reprimanding tones of concerned mothers, teenagers volleying their flirtatious remarks back and forth, the delightful laughter of young boys and girls catching Frisbees, or the commands of children in a cooperative effort trying to build sandcastles that would stand up to the playful waters; and mostly, the screaming sea gulls as they warn me they're going to steal my lunch. "Not mine," I say back to them.

These are the sounds that make me feel glad to be able to enjoy just being around.

The second group of sounds is the relaxing ones. I can just sit in a chair anywhere, lean back, close my eyes and let my mind take me to another place, as I listen to the music created by Mozart and the more modern composers, Aaron Copland, and Ferde Grofé, imagining I'm traveling down the Grand Canyon on a mule. And of course, the crooners of my era, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, taking me back to New York, New York, and a little bit of *amore*.

The annoying sounds are the third ones on my list. We were getting ready for our trip to France when I heard the cackle of birds. They seemed to be coming from the fireplace chimney. It had to be cleaned out before we left. I called for a chimney sweep, who came complete with a top hat, just like in *Mary Poppins*, but instead of brooms in his arms, he carried a vacuum cleaner. There were no birds, not even a vacant nest. Nothing! Maybe they flew away. On to France. I heard the birds again. They couldn't have been the same ones that flew across the ocean from Eastchester to Paris. No way.

When I returned home, the mystery was soon solved. I had all the symptoms and problems of Meniere's Syndrome, which included the bird sounds. Tinnitus is still with me, but the birds have morphed into other sounds which I am able to ignore.

The fourth sounds are the comforting sounds that come from the TV, which I have on most of the time. They help abate the fifth, the sound of loneliness.

*Eileen Henle*

### May Trips

<b>Thursday May 4<sup>th</sup></b> Town Meeting	<b>Bus 6:40p</b>
<b>Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup></b> <b>12:15p</b> Met Opera. Mahaiwe – Great Barrington, MA	<b>Bus at</b>
<b>Wednesday May 24<sup>th</sup></b> Berkshire Botanical Garden	<b>Bus at 11a</b>
<b>Wednesday May 31<sup>st</sup></b> Barrington Stage Co. Back Stage Tour	<b>Time TBD</b>

### **Birthday Wishes to our residents!**

**Twenty-one residents celebrate birthdays in May.** There is a 25-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

**May birthdays belong to:** Lu Ann DeGenaro, Eden Gruenberg, Rudy Sacco, Joel Margolis, Rhea Schindler, Paul Schlesinger, Beverly Hallock, Janet Tivy, Mary Misch, David Quinlan, Marjorie Van Dyke, Betty Furey, Josephine Brunjes, Hank Fenn, Dorothea Nelson, Jill Roosma, Erika Mueller, Molly King, Theresa Griffin, Susan Dana and Karen Rizzardini.

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



## How Can We Say What We Mean?

Peter Gibb, a professional mediator, has created his own corner in the field of humanistic psychology. His recent book, *MINDFUL CONVERSATION: Speak Openly, Connect Deeply, Live Joyously*, is available from Amazon as either a paperback or a Kindle download. Your reviewer obtained the book as a bonus for attending a Zoom session with Gibb through OLLI, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. At that session, in two hours, some two-dozen people were presented with Gibb's major principles and invited to practice them. We were given his model of core values, C.A.R.E., standing for Curiosity, Authenticity, Respect, and Empathy. Next, we were instructed to use three levels of listening: Facts; Thoughts and Feelings, and Story and Meaning. After some preparation, we were paired off to converse on Zoom, with a goal for each person to share "an experience that shaped who you are."

Fully intending to present a humorous anecdote, I shifted focus when faced with a serious amateur artist discussing her current painting. I countered with a description of a multiple-image collage I was working on. Our conversation felt awkward, but we seemed to touch on all the C.A.R.E. points. For the moment, we were colleagues, if not close friends.

When Gibb's book arrived, I found 21 chapters, complete with assigned activities, appropriate cartoons, and the directive to keep a "conversational journal." In an early chapter, Gibb offers an internet link to a 15-minute assessment of one's personal style of conversation, which may turn out to be Observer, Performer, Nurturer or Explorer. Once people complete the assessment (which I did not) they may be able to find a better balance in their social interactions. At this point Gibb advises, "The message of Mindful Conversation is that conversation is a dance, not a competition."

Chapters that I found most interesting, featured verbal tools, nonverbal tools, storytelling and the seven deadly "sins" of conversation. In a "personal score card" one would earn three negative points each for having such behaviors as The Interrupter, The Wanderer or another perceived sinner.

Gibb offers a variety of online and in-person workshops and coaching. His web address is <https://petergibb.org>. For anyone looking for a simple beginning, here are three skills he mentioned in his initial lecture:

1. Listen fully and deeply.
2. Speak clearly and authentically.
3. Talk about what matters.

These skills alone should be enough to take us through the dinner hour.

*Mary Misch*

### In Memoriam

**Marilyn "Lynn" Fiddes**  
January 9, 1937 to April 13, 2023

**Iris Kaphan**  
December 15, 1928 to April 17, 2023

**Shirley Rubenstein**  
August 12, 1933 to April 18, 2023

**Cynthia "Jo" Burke**  
November 9, 1932 to April 25, 2023

**Eugene Hunter**  
April 2, 1931 to April 28, 2023

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## Creating Health for Yourself

Health isn't simply absence of disease. It is a state of living with vitality, vigor and pleasure in daily activities. The habits we create during a lifetime, and the choices we make moment to moment, play a huge role in how we experience health or the lack thereof. Our genetic makeup is a given, but how these genes manifest is strongly influenced by habits and choices. Believe it or not, there is now a board-certified medical specialty called "Lifestyle Medicine."

My specialty after graduation from medical school was Endocrinology and Metabolism, and as a result, many of my patients were diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity, and way back then many were smokers and consumed excess alcohol and had a variety of chronic diseases. I didn't label it as such at the time, but my practice became essentially lifestyle medicine. The drugs available were few and far between and came with unwanted side effects. In addition, because I was given the time to take adequate medical and lifestyle histories, it was apparent that poor diet, lack of exercise, inadequate sleep, stress and substance abuse were major factors in these chronic and life-threatening conditions.

A major difference between so-called traditional medicine and lifestyle medicine is that the latter involves the patient as an active participant. The patient becomes a partner in creating and maintaining health and even reversing chronic disease. It is often not enough to just take prescribed medicines and ignore the six pillars of lifestyle medicine: a whole-food, mostly plant-based eating pattern, physical activity, restorative sleep, stress management, avoidance of risky substances and positive social connections.

These health practices involve commitment and creativity on the part of the patient, and education and motivation from a variety of health professionals, including but not limited to nutritionists, movement therapists and psychologists. These days, the doctor often has limited time to engage and educate the patient; however, many of the other health-related specialties are covered by Medicare and other insurance with a referral from a physician.

I believe there is an additional pillar embedded in all the others and that is CREATIVITY. Creativity helps us problem-solve and perceive the world in new and different ways. It also refreshes our bodies and minds by creating a state of "flow." Typically, when one creates something, anything, whether it's a garden, a painting or even a grocery list, you tend to get lost in the activity.

The act of creating requires focus and concentration, and multitasking doesn't work. Psychologists have defined "flow" as those moments of rapt attention and total absorption when you get so focused on the task at hand that everything else disappears. This state is caused by changes in brain structure and function. Brainwaves slow down, and original thoughts are better able to form. Additionally, the prefrontal cortex temporarily deactivates, or "goes quiet," making us less critical of our ideas and more courageous. Lastly, during a flow state, our brain releases an enormous cascade of neurochemistry.

These are pleasure- and satisfaction-inducing chemicals that affect creativity and well-being. The way the brain acts during creative activities is similar to the experience during meditation, mindfulness and yoga exercises. These activities are designed to help you find peace, calm and happiness by blocking out external stimuli. Creativity also produces a natural high or feeling of joy and contentment. Best of all, most of us no longer have to earn a living by our creative output, so we are free to just have fun — and fun is fundamental to increased vim and vigor, as is getting out into nature as often as possible. Please consider the following

*Is it too much to ask of yourself to pick up a pencil a piece of paper, your sketch pad, your notebook — Sit down and begin to write, draw, or compose? Any poem, novel, essay, or memoir begins with a single word.*

*A landscape, portrait, or surreal abstraction starts with a single stroke or even a dot.*

*A song or sonata needs that first note.*

*Is it too much to ask of yourself to just begin?*

*Stephanie Beling*

## ***Health Fair Invites Public***

“Thrive after 65!” the advertisements say.

In collaboration with Canyon Ranch, Kimball Farms will present a health fair for older adults as a community event on Friday, May 19, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The day’s activities are open to the public at no charge. Guests are invited to bring a friend. Kimball residents are also invited.

Activities include a chipping (golf) contest; massage, meditation and mindfulness; self-care and relaxation exercises; connecting with nature; the science of happiness; eating well and aging well, and tours and demos. A full schedule and registration are available at [RSVPKimballFarms.org](http://RSVPKimballFarms.org).

Residents are invited to tour The Club at Wyndhurst, featuring indoor and outdoor pools, tennis courts, and a newly renovated fitness center. Buses will be going there throughout the day, with stop at the chipping contest.

## ***Betty Jones Paintings In Spring Show***

Once again, the Conference Room gallery devotes its entire spring show to the work of one artist. This time it’s our own Betty Jones, a longtime resident of Kimball Farms Independent Living, now living in Pine Hill Assisted Living with her husband, Bill. Betty says she has loved art, and painted for most of her life. Although she was accepted at a traditional art school she thought perhaps she “should earn a living” and chose to go to nursing school instead. She never stopped painting and took art classes whenever she could. It was during a watercolor class at Lenox Community Center about 12 years ago that she met Mike Cohen and approached him about the possibility of teaching art at Kimball Farms. Fortunately for those of us who have become students of Mike, he agreed and, as they say, “the rest is history.”

The current show is a retrospective of Betty’s work spanning a 40-year period. It includes landscapes, seascapes, portraits and paintings of barns, boats, flowers and animals. Many are places visited by Bill

and Betty and some are from Betty’s imagination. Please visit the exhibit as often as you can as there is always more to see each time you look.

*Stephanie Beling*

## ***Springtime***

Spring is the season of activity. Things move, jump, leap, spring, into action both indoors and out. All my turtleneck shirts are jumping down to the bottom dresser drawer while the short-sleeved ones are springing up to replace them. Even my black pants are sliding their way to the back of my closet, exchanging their place for the lighter tan and gray tones.

When I step outside, I can feel the gentle breezes blowing the clear warm air around me. The rhododendrons catch my eye. They unfolded their dark green leaves and create a perfect base for their fluffy pink blossoms, like little tutus, ready to jeté with the yellow lady slippers growing underneath them. Overhead a songbird is chirping away, adding its music to create nature’s own ballet.

The sun, like a bright spotlight, is radiating wide beams of light onto the tulips below, all lined up in a row, just like the New York City “Rockettes,” ready to dance in synchronization. Even the bunnies are on cue, following their script of munching a salad of fresh flowers.

The trees and bushes awakening from their winter dormancy are doing their part in setting the stage for the season, exhibiting beautiful arrays of color that attract a chorus of chirping birds, buzzing bees and the humming of waltzing insects.

As for my springtime activity, I’ll don my tan pants, short-sleeved shirts and just sit on my patio and enjoy the show.

*Eileen Henle*

### 3 Residents Win Camera Club Competition

Arlene Potler's picture of her husband, "Boots," in a Chinese vineyard won first prize in the Berkshire Museum Camera Club's first photography competition in which Kimball residents competed. Lorraine Roman and Doane Perry were runners-up in the judging, which took place at Kimball on March 22..



**Arlene Potler's first prize photo**

Arlene's photo show Boots in an arbor covered with grapevines. She took the picture in Turpan, in northwest China near the Mongolian border, during a 1980 tour sponsored by the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. Both Potlers were board members at the time. Arlene recalls that, coincidentally, the coming Memorial Day weekend marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her first meeting with husband-to-be, which took place in the cocktail lounge of the Chelsea Hotel in Atlantic City, N.J. "When the rabbi asked why I wanted to marry Boots," she remembers, "I replied, because he is perfect. The rabbi said, 'No man is perfect.' But he didn't know Boots!"



**Lorraine Roman's runner-up**

Lorraine's close-up photo shows the paws of a sleeping black bear in a nature preserve in Alaska. It was her first digital shot, she recalls. She took it while on a photographers' safari in 2009. She was able to get up close because the bear was behind barbed wire.

"I was glad he didn't wake up," she says.

Doane photographed his winning still life of bowl of peaches in the kitchen of his and Karen's home in West Stockbridge.



**Doane Perry's runner-up**

Founded in 1937, the Berkshire Museum Camera Club met at Kimball Farms for the first time. Open to all photographers, it is dedicated to picture-taking and the improvement of knowledge and techniques of photography.

Residents were among those invited to participate in the print contest, which was judged by local artist Bruce Panock. Over 20 people attended and there were many submissions in both the print and digital divisions. Kimball Farms residents swept the print contest.

*Andy Pincus*