



The Kimball Farms



Observer



Volume 35, No 1

Looking Back, Pages 6-7

January 2024

Christening Dress Reborn



Courtesy Photo
Adelene Quigley, right, holds christening dress she restyled. Above: Mary Anne Gaughan Bligh O'Neil in 1937 holds grandson Ownen Bligh O'Neil wearing the garment.



Photo by Lily Wayne

Refitted for Future Generations

By Susan Dana

Observer Contributor

THIS IS A STORY about an elegant christening dress, a large, prolific family, and a Kimball Farms resident with a highly developed sense of history — history's importance for her family in particular — and the symbolism of an heirloom to tie it all together.

In 1886, Mary Anne Gaughan Bligh and her husband, Thomas, were expecting their first child.

The couple lived in Holyoke, Massachusetts, where Thomas Bligh worked as a detective. (In those days, detectives were in a separate work unit from police

CHRISTENING, continued on PAGE 2

KF Director Reflects on 2023 Gains, Challenges

By Sandy Shepard

Executive Director

AS I REFLECT on 2023, there are many noteworthy and impressive accomplishments from all levels of our continuum. The staff and leadership at our Nursing Care Center achieved very high marks on their annual survey, which is a highly regulated and very detailed assessment of all facets of care, services, environment, safety, satisfaction, medical records, documentation and resident rights.

Their high marks supported their long-standing and continued status as a five-star nursing facility. Shortly after receiving the news of their DPH (Department of Public Health) survey results, the team received results from their internal customer satisfaction and employee surveys, receiving overall

DIRECTOR, see Page 11

CHRISTENING, from Page 1

departments.) In 1908, Mr. Bligh was appointed Captain of the Massachusetts State Detectives, with an office in the State House in Boston.

But in 1886 in Holyoke, as they awaited the new baby's arrival, Mary Anne decided that the new member of the family would be baptized in a proper christening gown: white, long, flowing, with lots of lace. She commissioned the dress from a "mantua-maker," who would now be called a dressmaker; the title then referred to a skilled woman who cut and fit garments which would be stitched later by a seamstress.

(For some historical background: A mantua was a woman's overdress or gown worn over an underskirt in the 18th and early 19th centuries. It was banned from the French court of King Louis XIV as being too informal, but became acceptable as formal dress at the French and English courts until the mid-18th century.

Until the 17th century, tailors dominated the production of clothing, but the introduction of mantua-makers, who served apprenticeships and were highly skilled, opened the trade to women.)

Mary Ann Bligh and Thomas eventually had eight children, four boys and four girls, all of whom wore the spectacular dress at their christenings, which were usually held when a baby was six weeks old. One of those babies was the mother of Kimball Farms resident Adelene Quigley.

However, only three of the Bligh descendants produced offspring, so the dress was used less often in the next generation. In the 20th century, the number of babies wearing the dress, including Adelene, siblings, and cousins, picked up.

By now, the dress was 137 years old and showing its age. The lace in the bodice was falling apart, and the skirt between the lace panels was developing holes and tears. "But even the tears and rips were carefully mended, with tiny, tiny stitches," Adelene recalled. She estimates that 50 babies have worn the dress.

Has anyone in recent times objected to putting a boy baby in a dress? Adelene said one father expressed horror, but he got over it.

Adelene has the role of genealogist in her family, and she decided to use the dress to maintain the ties among the various branches. As the family groups dispersed around the country, it seemed the role of

the dress in connecting the generations might be lost. She was also inspired by the birth of her first great-grandchild, Patrick Morrison.

She discarded the idea of repairing the dress and decided, instead, to create three dresses, one for each of the three "clans" of the family: her three daughters, her sister Annemarie's nine children, and her Aunt Lillian's daughters. Her plan was to use the lace panels from the back of the dress in three new dresses. By leaving the front lace panel intact, the original dress could be put in a shadow-box frame for display. She invited all the family to come to see the dress before she made the first cut.

Finding the appropriate materials for the dresses required a lot of hunting, with a trip to New York City's fabric district, but Adelene has now finished all three, complete with petticoats, ready to be worn by the rapidly growing clan.

Young Patrick Clark Morrison will be christened on St. Patrick's Day, the first in the family to wear one of the new dresses. He will be followed by five other babies expected in the spring.

In the hem of each dress is a panel with an inscription that was embroidered by Elegant Stitches, a Pittsfield business that Adelene praises for the quality of their work: "*Original Christening Dress Created by a Mantua maker for Mary Anne Gaughan Bligh 1886. Recreated with love by Adelene Cowhig Quigley for future generations 2023.*"

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

EDITOR

Andy Pincus,

PRODUCTION

Charles Bonenti

Michelle Rosier

EDITORIAL STAFF

Kathie Ness, Margot Yondorf

PHOTOGRAPHS

Lily Wayne, Charles Bonenti

CONTRIBUTORS

Stephanie Beling, Charles Bonenti, Susan Dana, Mary Misch, Kathie Ness, Dorothea Nelson, Cris Raymond, Sandy Shepard, Anonymous

The Country Girl Who Discovered Lenox

By **Dorothea Nelson**

Observer Contributor

KIMBALL FARMS can claim another goodwill ambassador in the person of Leslie Curtis, new resident in apartment 247. She came to us after 25 years in Colchester, Connecticut, where she made some important impacts on the town's life. Though she describes herself as a "country girl" who grew up in then-rural Howard County, Maryland, that description doesn't do justice to her wide-ranging interests. Her studies at Connecticut College, when it was still an all-women's institution, was a "cultural experience" in the classical liberal arts tradition with her major in European History and minors in English and Art History. Ultimately, that curriculum has helped her develop thinking skills that she has been able to apply to navigate many of her life's more challenging situations.

Leslie married right after college graduation and supported her husband as a secretary at UConn in Storrs while he was studying for his MBA there. After he graduated, they moved to Glastonbury, Connecticut, where they settled and had two children (now in their mid-50s). That marriage ended after 10 years in an amicable divorce.

In 1970 Leslie took a job at the Travelers Insurance Company in Hartford as a secretary in the new Data Processing Center. Shortly thereafter, this entry-level job began to morph — with a whole year of in-house training — into what became a 35-year career, culminating when she retired in 2005 as a senior programmer/analyst in charge of the Reserving System for the whole corporation.

Much later, a new relationship (and eventually her second marriage) brought her to Colchester with Timothy "Tim" Curtis, who shared her enthusiasm for the town with its pleasant combination of

suburban-rural life. Leslie was a founding member of the Colchester Land Trust, a group dedicated to maintaining the town's "rururban" character by encouraging the preservation of strategic parcels of open space and farmland. In 2011 she became an original member of the town's newly formed Agriculture Commission. This self-described "country girl" had become an advocate for preventing suburban sprawl by supporting local farmers. After retiring from Travelers, Leslie enjoyed part-time jobs in Colchester, where she worked as the Tasting Room manager at the local

winery and as the on-farm Cheese Monger for Cato Corner Farm.

A time-share that Leslie and Tim bought in Stowe, Vermont, back in 1990 precipitated countless vacations throughout the U.S. For the past 12 years, many of those trips were to the Berkshires, initially for skiing. But then they started to explore the area in other seasons, too, and ultimately concluded that this was where they wanted to be. Leslie loved the easy proximity to the region's entire gamut of cultural experiences, and living in Lenox provided easy access to it all.

At Kimball, Leslie has already revived her interest in bridge and

found an instructor to help refine and enhance residents' skills. She has volunteered for the Trips Committee . . . and she has also become the very first woman bartender in the Pub, a job she took on to help Garry and Dave at the Saturday cocktail parties!

We found many topics worth pursuing, especially Leslie's references to her parents. I was especially taken with the "Senility Prayer" kept on her refrigerator, typed by her mother long ago, now faded and yellowed, but still a guide in Leslie's life: "God grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference."



Photo by Lily Wayne

Leslie Curtis

The Peripatetic Heubergers

By Dorothea Nelson

Observer Contributor

IT'S MY HAPPY TASK to introduce you to Ruth and Hans Heuberger, new occupants of apartment 236, and their singular achievements: travel, public service, art.

Hans was trained as a civil engineer. He worked for many years for IBM in Europe, the U.S., and Japan, where his responsibilities included acquisition and disposal of real estate for the European operation. Ruth trained as a nurse at New York's Mt. Sinai Hospital and used her skills in both professional and volunteer capacities.

*

This peripatetic couple has lived in several countries: England, France, Switzerland, Japan, and the U.S. are a few of them. In each place they immersed themselves in local customs; Hans credits Ruth for her outstanding efforts. His time was taken up with work assignments; she was the one who learned the language, provided books for school activities, and engaged in health-care practices and community affairs, such as teaching literacy to children and helping with the American Head Start program.

Let's travel backwards to how the couple met. It was on a ship sailing the Atlantic from New York to Europe — a small ship with no designated classes and few passengers: a fairy-tale way for a young couple to meet. This encounter led to marriage in Switzerland, where their two sons were born.

*

Eventually the family returned to the U.S. From there it was on to Paris for several years. With the boys busy in school and Hans with his work, Ruth used her nurse's training to work at the American School in Paris.

During their years in Japan, Ruth traveled alone a lot, undaunted by her minimal mastery of the language. She saw amazing sights and was the grateful recipient of the kindness of the Japanese people.

The couple retired to Great Barrington some years ago. Like many of us at Kimball Farms, as the years progressed, they began to consider what comes next. They hadn't thought in concrete terms about a



Photo by Lily Wayne

Ruth and Hans Heuberger

retirement community, but as the demands of maintaining an older home in the Northeast became ever more difficult, the reality of an easier way became attractive.

Their long association with Great Barrington acquainted them with friends at Kimball who urged them to consider this for their new home; after several visits, they made that decision. Each of them is quick to praise the Kimball staff, which they regard as “extremely competent and pleasant.” Although Hans believes “it takes a while to get used to it,” he, with Ruth's concurrence, acknowledges that “it was definitely the right decision to come here.”

Hans has already become a twice-weekly swimmer. An accomplished painter, he is eager to find a quiet place where he can paint. He currently has a 22-piece show at the Norfolk, Connecticut, library. Hans and Ruth collaborated on a short film, *Love of a Lady*.

It is a true story with a fairy-tale ending, which we hope can be shown more than once to Kimball residents.

June Mufatti: 'Off on a Mission'

By Mary Misch
Observer Contributor

WHEN YOU SEE June Mufatti around and about here, you can't miss her amazing energy. She may whisk by you in the hall, saying, "I'm off on a mission." A resident since August, June has joined the Landscape Committee and plans to swim at Wyndhurst over the winter. She will be seen at our bridge tables as well.

A visit to June's apartment, No. 270, reveals a serene and restful setting where its occupant may easily recharge. June has made use of her impressive decorating skills throughout the place. Soft color tones and a full wall of white shelving express her special touch. In fact, interior design and stage-set construction have been her avocation over a good many years. She once re-created a *Casablanca* set for a fundraising project, one of many she has participated in.

Growing up in Worcester, with easy access to Boston, June enjoyed meeting with people from many parts of the world. Following her marriage to Bill Mufatti, a former Navy captain, the couple traveled the world together. They were based in the Springfield area until Bill became a patent attorney for GE Plastics in Pittsfield, where they then made their home and raised a son and a daughter. Sports were important to both June and Bill. They played golf and tennis at the Country Club of Pittsfield and did cross-skiing as well. Bill died 15 years ago.

Today June has a granddaughter in this area, and a great-grandson, Mario Zerbato. Once a week, she drives Mario to after-school sports, at which he excels.

To find an area where June has traveled, almost any page of a world atlas will do. She has been to Italy 25 times, to Japan 4 times, to many other parts of the Far East and Middle East, and there's much more. June has a special fondness for the people and



Courtesy Photo
June Mufatti rides camelback with a fellow traveler in Egypt.

the atmosphere of Australia, and she vividly remembers staying in a particularly beautiful spot there, near the Great Barrier Reef.

Volunteer activities have always been of great importance to June. Working with nonprofit groups in the Springfield area as well as in Pittsfield, she has been responsible for raising substantial dollar amounts. She is concerned with good causes, such as health facilities for people in need. We may expect June to play a valuable part in any activity to which she chooses to give her time.

Growing up in Worcester and with easy access to Boston, June enjoyed meeting with people from many parts of the world.



Photo by Lily Wayne
Dining services employee Alma Moro plays a tune as Phyllis Webb of the Magic Fluke shop looks on.



Photo by Charles Bonenti
The Cantilena Chamber Choir circulated through the Commons area singing holiday songs.



Photo by Charles Bonenti

Holiday Fair Was a First

The Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair on Dec. 1, a first for Kimball Farms, drew an estimated 80 visitors to shop, admire and sample wares by 18 vendors displayed throughout the Commons area and Connector Gallery.

“We were very happy with it,” said Assistant Marketing Director Susan Smith, who expects it will be repeated next year. Her marketing team organized the fair with Sharon Lazerson, events coordinator, who inspired the idea and brought in the vendors.



Photo by Charles Bonenti

Left above, resident Suzanne Bach, seated, chats with a shopper. Near left, Executive Director Sandy Shepard stands at display with Resident Services Manager Michelle Rosier. At right, cut-paper German Scherenschnitte designs by Pam Dalton.



2023 in Review

From pages of The Observer

January

— Tech savvy Montessori School students offer a Cyber Seniors program.

February

— KF orthopedic surgeon describes how a club-foot patient changed her life.

March

— Residents form an Environmental Committee to study changing wasteful habits.

April

— Political Analyst tells of work with International Legion of Territorial Defense of Ukraine.

May

— Post-high school study grants awarded to three employees. Four staff cited for exemplary work.

June

— Fine Arts Program plans a new sculpture studio near the art room.

No Observer in July & August

September

— Resident Julia Smith leaves \$100,000 to fund nursing scholarships for employees.

October

— Dining hours are expanded to 7.p.m. Saturday service eyed.

November

— Mock evacuation brings 500 Lenox High School students & staff to campus on 12 buses.

December

— Marketing efforts yield substantial rental successes.

Wonders Wrought in Wood



Photo by Lily Wayne

Tabletop boxes by Jeffrey All are one of a kind.

ARTISTRY IN WOOD by members of the Berkshire Woodworkers Guild was exhibited at the December Holiday Fair with some items continuing on view this month in the Connector Gallery.

Some 50 woodworkers in the region are members of the not-for-profit guild, which holds a Fine Woodwork Show annually at the Berkshire Botanical Garden in Stockbridge.

Eye-catching standouts at the holiday show included Norfolk Pine bowls by Warren Vienneau of Pittsfield, who specializes in decorative objects at his Turned Works in Pittsfield. Vienneau said he buys the Norfolk Pine in logs and cuts the crown of wrapped limbs into blocks that he shapes with lathe tools into bowls with thin walls that reveal the wood's natural patterns.

Jeffrey All of Spencertown, New York, is an independent furniture maker, but is exhibiting in the Connector Gallery extraordinary tabletop boxes he fashions from wood scraps of larger projects.

They are one of a kind, he said, often referencing “sacred geometry” like Egyptian hieroglyphics and “spiritual icons” or “orb boxes” like canoes. Shapes vary with drawers intricately incorporated into the highly finished containers and fastenings and decorations artfully attached. He mentioned harvesting deer bones from road kill to embellish some pieces.

Charles Bonenti



Warren Vienneau shapes pine log blocks into thin-walled bowls that reveal the wood's natural patterns.

Courtesy Photo

Reigning Cats and Dogs: Part 2

By Cris Raymond
Observer Contributor

This is the second article on pets at Kimball Farms. You already met most of the cats. The Observer acknowledges the kindness and understanding of cats Angus Wojtasik and Masie Ehret-Dichter for accepting our apologies for omitting them in our previous article.

IT IS NOW TIME to introduce the dogs.

There are six residing at Kimball Farms. Most pet owners agree that the animals rule the household— they REIGN!

Kimball Farms allows residents to bring their pets with them. Pets are welcome as long as the quality of life of all residents is not compromised. Upon the loss of a pet, residents are not allowed to replace the pet except in extreme cases and with prior approval of the Executive Director.

Bridget Connolly moved here with her dog, Lucy on November 1, 2022. Nineteen-month-old Lucy was adopted from the Berkshire Humane Society and is part yorkie with, perhaps, a dash of dachshund.

Bridget has had dogs all her life, sometimes with three at a time. Lucy is very sociable and often sits on her terrace overlooking the parking lot where she attempts to direct the parking. Every Tuesday, Lucy attends the cocktail party in her corridor.

If Bridget is otherwise occupied, Lucy attends solo! There she eagerly mixes with her best friend Kiwi, owned by Carolyn Vandervort, and the 20 or so guests. Lucy has yet to meet a cat. To Bridget's dismay, Lucy drags out her toy box every morning and litters the floor with her toys.

Hulda Jowett recently moved here with her 8½-year-old purebred Italian greyhound Spencer.

One summer Hulda generously offered to puppy-sit her son David's dog. Spencer was a city dog living in Boston. After spending a summer with Hulda in North Adams, where he had a large yard and could roam the countryside, the then two-year-

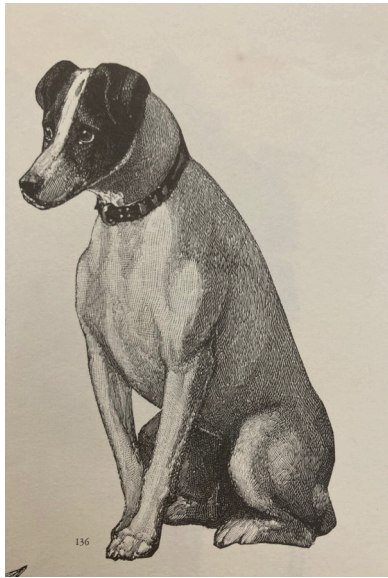
old no longer wished to live in Boston.

The move to Kimball Farms wasn't Spencer's first choice as he is no longer able to roam free. However, he is making the best of it. He is always happy to see David and enjoys walks on the trails.

Peter and Joanna Strauss arrived with their ½-year old female dog Feisty, a cavapoo, half king spaniel and half poodle. She carries the family name "Feist" from Peter's grandfather and great-grandfather on his mother's side!

The pup's personality and energy most certainly live up to her name. She likes everybody, including other dogs and cats, and is off leash only in enclosed areas.

Carolyn Vandervort came to Kimball Farms in September 2022 with Kiwi, her female, two-year-old pure-bred yorkie. Kiwi loves the attention that she gets strolling the halls. Her favorite stop is at her next-door neighbor's door to visit her four-legged friend Lucy. Her other "must visit" is at the front desk, where she is certain to get a treat.



Claudia Wells and her dog, Finnegan, arrived here in November. Finnegan is a nine-year old labradoodle who is trying to get used to house voices and the fact that he no longer has a large "play pen" yard.

He is very friendly and loves meeting people and other dogs. Claudia's daughter has a cat and Finnegan is very friendly with his cat cousin. He is now learning to "whisper bark" so as not to annoy his neighbors.

Amy White lives at Pine Hill with her three-year-old pure-bred pug Sonny. Sonny was accustomed to roaming the countryside in Old Chatham, New York. She had a sister cat and got on very well with her.

Sonny now enjoys the company of other canines when her dog walker arrives and takes the merry band of five to seven pups out for a romp about. When on the trails here, Sonny loves being able to walk off leash.

Stress: Let It Go!

By **Stephanie Beling, M.D**

Observer Columnist

THE “FIGHT OR FLIGHT” response that occurs when we sense danger causes increased heart rate and blood pressure, rapid breathing and muscles tensed for a quick getaway. I realize that this response really serves no purpose at this stage of my life. There is no predator, man or beast, that I can outrun and for sure I have no fighting chance in a fight. This adrenaline response to an acute stress has surely outlived its usefulness. However, we still react this way to anxiety and imagined dangers.

There is another kind of stress that is even more harmful and that is chronic stress. This stress often occurs with the death of a loved one, the responsibilities of caregiving, money worries, onset of a serious illness, change in living arrangements, and even such minor annoyances as waiting in a slow-moving line, a perceived slight, an unexpected bill, misplaced glasses and keys, and living with clutter. The culprit here is cortisol, another stress hormone with even more long-term consequences, mostly based on inflammation run amok.

*

It has been said that stress makes you fat and stupid and here’s why! Long-term inflammation damages blood vessels and brain cells and leads to insulin resistance, the precursor of diabetes. One of the hallmarks of insulin resistance is the deposition of abdominal fat with the obvious result of an expanded waistline. In the brain, the hippocampus, the part of the brain that manages and stores memories shrinks under the relentless onslaught of cortisol. Ideally we would like a shrinking waistline and expanded hippocampus and what we get with chronic stress is just the opposite.

Chronic stress is also associated with decreased resistance to infection, slower wound healing, painful joint disease, sleep disruption, depression, and back, neck and shoulder pain. Heart disease and

stroke are intimately connected to both acute and chronic stress. The rise in blood pressure and increased heart rate associated with adrenaline is just part of the story. Under the influence of cortisol the texture of white blood cells changes and they begin to attach to blood vessel walls resulting in plaque, a key marker of heart disease. Platelets become stickier and clot formation increases. Increased plaque, clot formation, and inflammation are the prescription for heart attack and/or stroke.

Now for the good news. There is a way to manage stress and even reverse the damage that may already have occurred. It is never too late. The following recommendations are all based on scientific research and together with all the science is a good bit of common sense:

Exercise – reduces blood pressure, weight and waistline and most importantly decreases insulin resistance. Exercise pushes sugar out of the blood stream into the working muscles. Diabetes management and/or prevention is greatly enhanced.

Social support system – studies have shown significantly less stress in caregivers and those coping with loss when they are not dealing with major life issues on their own.

Mindfulness and meditation – practicing and using breathing techniques is an antidote to adrenaline. Slow breathing calms the nervous system and enhances relaxation. Consciously lowering raised, tense shoulders and releasing clenched jaws also has a calming effect. Taking time out from just being too busy – making a commitment to 15-20 minutes a day for a meditation practice has been shown to decrease blood pressure and also cortisol levels.

Finally, my favorites. Say these words often – “SO WHAT – WHO CARES” and “LET IT GO” especially when confronted by the “small stuff,” the source of all those minor annoyances. Your body and mind will thank you.



A Killer Series is Back

By Mary Misch

Observer Columnist

LOYAL FOLLOWERS of the Thursday Murder Club should be pleased to find in our library the fourth book in this series by Richard Osman. *The Last Devil to Die* has its usual dark side, along with the poignant and amusing adventures of the residents of Coopers Chase, an English retirement community.

The action takes place in the present day, appropriately just before New Year's. For Elizabeth's cherished husband, Stephen, a brilliant man in decline, Christmas has been this: "A blank page at the end of an old book."

Here, the four key characters start investigating the shooting death of Kuldesch Sharma, an antiques dealer who assisted them in a previous case. This time, Elizabeth, their usual leader, steps back somewhat in favor of Joyce, who shows surprising

spunk in taking over the role. Ron, the activist, is his usual cantankerous self, while Ibrahim, ever the counselor, reveals hidden depths.

Drug dealers and art dealers alike are responsible for the numerous crimes committed in this installment. Through the immediacy of Osman's distinctive style, readers are let into the minds of criminals, both in action and at leisure.

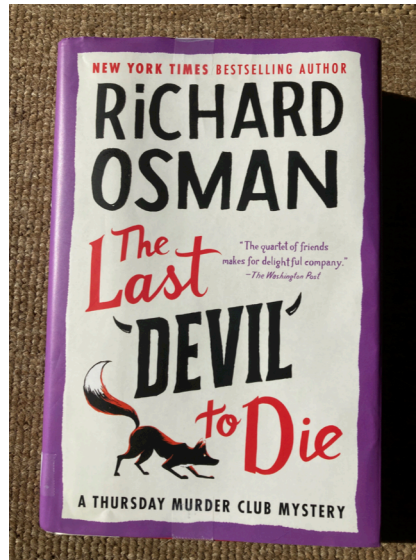
*

The local police, as usual, work hand in glove with the retirees to sort things out.

In a diverting interlude, both groups attempt to convince a new resident that he is the victim of an online, "romance" fraud.'

A frequent occurrence in this book, death is usually violent and quick. When it is imminent for a chief perpetrator, it looks like this: "A broken, bleeding, soaking man at the top of the world."

This is the style of writing that keeps Osman on bestseller lists worldwide.



Pinnacle Store named after a hill and farm

Before there was a Pinnacle Store, there was a Pinnacle vegetable and pig farm on nearby Hubbard Street. It was where produce and meat were processed to feed well-heeled visitors to Lenox's old Curtis Hotel.

The Pinnacle itself was a high, cliff-faced hill facing east with expansive views. It was a favorite Lenox picnic spot.

Kimball Farms residents' advocacy led to the opening of a store named after the Pinnacle on Feb. 12, 1990. It was run by volunteers until 2008, when the Kimball Farms management took over its operation.

Excerpted from *Kimball Farms: Twenty Years of Memories* by Claire Cox.

Morning Ritual

The tramp tramp tramp of feet feet feet,
Up from Lenox they come,
Over from far-off Stockbridge.
At eight-thirty, nine, ten a.m.,
Bright-eyed some, bleary others,
Some, like mendicants, bearing empty cups,
Others, pitiful, empty-handed.
The tide turns, the return begins,
Tramp, tramp, tramp,
cups full, pastries in hand,
Back to nearby Lenox,
Back to far-away Stockbridge.
Hail to morning coffee,
The Pinnacle of morning hours.
Necessity beckons,
Hail to coffee's powers.

Poet Nauseate II

DIRECTOR RELECTS, from Page 1

satisfaction scores of 98% and 95% respectively.

As a team, they also participated in the Annual Harvest Run event at Berkshire Community College this fall. Under the leadership of Bill Kittler and, in coordination with Integritus Healthcare, they were able to raise over \$38,000 for the college's Nursing Program. They also prided themselves on the fact that they took third place overall in the food contest, which, given the great assortment and variety, was a great win! Initiatives and outcomes like these continue to align with our core values of Excellence, Compassion, Teamwork, Integrity and Stewardship, and I am grateful for all their efforts and contributions to our continuum and to those they serve and care for each day.

*

On the Walker Street campus, we successfully attained another high level, five-year, CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) accreditation. This is a voluntary accreditation that reviews over 1,832 standards in all areas of operations, including finance, human resources, governance, leadership, information technology, accessibility, health, safety and education. All departments presented over the course of the three-day remote survey to highlight process improvements and present on all aspects of their operations.

It was a terrific opportunity to network with national experts from all over the United States and obtain feedback and education from others who share the same passion for senior living, retirement communities and skilled nursing care. We are grateful to all the residents, staff and leaders who participated and were graciously interviewed for this prestigious accreditation.

*

Like the Sunset Avenue campus, we had our annual Independent Living customer and employee satisfaction surveys and were very proud to receive national scores of 99% and 95% in overall satisfaction. We were happy to see residents back in our dining areas with guests and new menu options. The Saturday evening cocktail party was very well attended, as was the new grilling area with the addition of the beautifully built pavilion area near the raised beds. We have reopened our doors to the community and hosted many new

Despite the differences in time zones and schedules, the survey was executed flawlessly through highly coordinated efforts.

events, not limited to "Thrive after 65" and the Holiday Bazaar, both of which have now been cemented as part of our annual calendar due to popular demand.

While there was much to celebrate, this year also presented new and difficult challenges that carried over from 2022. In 2022, we noted a net loss in census as a result of natural aging, the need for alternate levels of care and post-pandemic circumstances. As such, we regrouped and strategized new outreach and marketing initiatives. We also restructured the Marketing / Sales Department to include two new members and focused heavily on new digital marketing platforms, with support from the Integritus Marketing leadership.

*

As a result, we were able to double our leads, and the team was able to coordinate a record-breaking number of new closings for this year, bringing us very close to pre-pandemic census levels. We are so excited to be welcoming so many new residents to our community and learning more about their unique stories.

I am beyond grateful to lead such a tremendous group of individuals who work so hard to make the community the exceptional place it is, and I look forward to our continued success in so many aspects in the upcoming year.

Birthday Wishes to Our Residents

There is a 17-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

January birthdays belong to: George Raymond, Helene Eichholz, Ann Cashen, Marlene Bergendahl, Charles Bonenti, Diana Feld, Ann Morgan, Lynn Wood, Katherine Stell, Steven Somlo, Ned Dana, Patricia Carlson, Nancy Steele, Margaret Rubinow, Sue Colker, Vivian Wise and Julane Reed.

January Recycling Fair Gears Up

Mark that new 2024 calendar: Kimball Farms' third Recycling Fair will take place on Saturday, January 20th, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. in the auditorium.

The October 2023 recycling fair accumulated three carloads of items to go to the Berkshire Environmental Action Team in Pittsfield, our primary link to many sources for recycling. Let's see if we can beat that!

What should we bring?

Those who attended the October event will remember the crowd, the treats, and the many resources for discarding those items that should **not** go into our regular trash containers, such as:

- Batteries of all sizes and types
- Small electronics (up to the size of an iPad)
- Extension cords and computer cables
- Towels and blankets (these go to the Berkshire Humane Society)
- Other fabric items of all types
- Clean plastic bags



Photo by Kathie Neff

Pat Steele prepares for the fair.

Who's behind this fair?

It's the Trash, Trash, Trash Committee, a part of the Waste Management Study Group here at Kimball Farms. Hardworking members include Pat and Kurt Steele, Anna Smith, Dave Vacheron, Barbara France, Ann Cashen, Jeanne Fenn, Nancy King, Nelda McGraw

January Speaker Events

Tuesday January 2 @ 3:30

Astronomer Rick Costello

Monday, January 8 @ 7:00

Melissa Canavan/Berkshire Immigrant Center.

Tuesday January 9 @ 7:00

Christina Lowery presenting

Girl Rising, a film about her work

Wednesday, January 10 @ 4:00

Linda Greenhouse to speak.

Wednesday January 24 @ 3:30

Karin Tchougourian, Movie trivia & music

January Trips

Saturday January 6th --- Bus 12:15p

Met Opera Live in HD (1p-3:55p)

Verdi's *Nabucco*

Wednesday January 10th --- Bus 10:30p

Clark Art - Free Day

Lunch on your own at museum

Saturday January 13th --- Bus 11a

Bus to Trader Joe's Hadley w/lunch TBD

Friday January 19th -- Bus 5:30p

Hevreh in Great Barrington for Community Shabbat & Dinner

Saturday January 27th --- Bus 12:15pMet

Opera Live in HD (1p-4:25p) Bizet's *Carmen*

Presidents' Letter:

A Record Response

Dear Kimball Farms Friends,

Thank you for thanking our staff so generously through the Staff Appreciation Fund this year. Your response set records, not only in the amount donated but also, and perhaps even more importantly, in the percentage of residents who donated to the fund: 88%! We have all been beneficiaries of the skill and kindness of the staff throughout the year, and this is the only time we can acknowledge that in a concrete way.

In January, all the committees overseen by the Committee on Committees will begin their new year. Many committees will have new leadership and members, since residents are encouraged to serve for only two years, except in special circumstances.

If you just moved in, you may have missed the sign-up for committees, which took place last fall. This would be a good time to explore the different committees' activities and responsibilities so you'll be ready for the next sign-up period. The leaders of the committees will be happy to share information about activities and responsibilities.

The next meeting of the Kimball Farms Residents Association will be on Monday, January 8, at 1:30 p.m. in the auditorium. In the meantime, our best wishes for a holiday season of joy for all of you.

Ann Trabulsi and Susan Dana, Co-presidents