



The Kimball Farms



Observer



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New Year Gala — Page 8

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Courtesy photos
Above: Rick Pocock with his first Alfa Romeo GTV at Lime Rock racetrack in the 1990s. At left: In the cockpit of his final racer, a Formula Ford Crossley 45-F, in 2007.

Boyhood Dream Realized **A Racetrack Winner**

By Jean Rousseau
Observer Contributor

WHEN RICK AND ROSE Pocock joined us last August, their introductory interview with The Observer made brief mention of Rick’s unusual hobby, auto racing.

Here is the story: Way back, at age 14, Rick was living in Paris. His father, a U.S. Air Force colonel posted there, was keen on auto racing and eager to take young Rick along. What better to begin than with The 24 Hours of Le Mans, the most prestigious and demanding endurance sports-car race in the world?

“It was electrifying,” Rick said.

Father and son went on to view great races at the most challenging tracks in Europe and a dream was born.

Fast forward: Rick grew up, studied mechanical engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), then went into product management and market development at GE Plastics in Pittsfield. His career blossomed for years, including considerable international travel. But the racing bug persisted. He attended as many as he could.

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In 1986, three events coincided to advance the dream. His duties at GE changed from international to domestic, creating more time at home. He sold his fishing boat for an unexpected \$10,000 and enlisted a very gifted young mechanic, Jeff Greenfield of Quadrifoglio Performance in Pittsfield, to join him in creating the Dovetail Partners racing team.

Rick purchased a pre-owned Alfa Romeo GTV racing car and the two worked through 1986 and 1987 on improving it. A stickler for fine work, Rick's mantra became "Success is where preparation meets opportunity." As he puts it: "Racing attracted me because of the combination of mechanical accomplishment and sporting competition."

In 1987, still with GE Plastics, and after the training and testing on several New England courses that the Sports Car Club of America required, he qualified to race in competition. In 1989, Dovetail Partners won the North Atlantic Road Racing Championship, followed by a succession of races and wins in important meets across New England and the Northeast.

Of approximately 150 races he competed in over 25 years, Rick finished more than 130 and won 25 against professional teams and amateur enthusiasts. While he asserts that racing is not as dangerous as many think, he did suffer two severe crashes. In 1996, a car with failed brakes struck him broadside causing substantial damage to the Alfa and some to him. He bought a more advanced Alfa Romeo Spider. Jeff stripped all the important racing elements from the damaged car and used them to make the Spider an even more competitive machine.

Twelve years later, Rick suffered a more severe crash with injuries that precluded any more competitive racing.

He praises Rose effusively for years of accepting his hobby.

"She was always supportive through my long hours in the shop, extended travel, time away from the kids, and in every way," he said. "She accompanied me often to races in my spectator days, never came to a race where I was competing, but never complained either."



Rick Pocock, center, with partner Jeff Greenfield, left, and son Matt Pocock at Lime Rock in 1990s.

There is a happy ending. Around 2000, while Rick was still racing, Skip Barber, of the eponymous Racing School, invited him to join their professional team of instructors. So, after his extended recovery, Rick was able to resume the work he loved until his retirement in 2017.

February Trips

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Saturday February 17th | Bus 10:45a |
| Bus to Holyoke Mall w/lunch at Cracker Barrel | |
| Wednesday February 21st | Bus TBD |
| Art Show Berkshire Botanical Garden | |
| Friday February - Date TBD | Bus 5:30p |
| Hevreh in Great Barrington for Community Shabbat | |
| Let's Eat Out | Bus TBD |
| Date and Location TBD | |

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

Stephanie Beling, Susan Dana, Mary Misch.
Kathy Ness, Dorothea Nelson, Margot Yondorf

PHOTOGRAPHS

Lily Wayne, Charles Bonenti

CONTRIBUTORS

Stephanie Beling, Susan Dana, Mary Misch.
Dorothea Nelson, Jean Rousseau, Ann Trabulsi.

Oncologist With a Jazz Gig

By Dorothea Nelson

Observer Contributor

IT WAS A COLD and sunny morning when I stepped into John and Michele Horton's apartment (#204), but my spirits were warmed by the sight before me. Against the east wall was a beautiful harpsichord and next to the patio doors stood a trombone, sparkling with glints from the sun.

Melodies from the big bands — the likes of Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey — swept through my head! John Horton, owner of both instruments, urged me to sit down and talk with him about his life. Regrettably, his wife Michele was indisposed, but he filled me in on her interests, too.

Born in Sheffield, England, John came to the U.S. in 1956 for an internship at Albany Medical College. After considerable training in oncology there, he accepted a position at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. While there, he initiated a still-existing professional journal, *Cancer Control*. Although he retired from clinical work in 2005, he remained the editor of that journal for 10 more years.

It was while he was in Albany that John's love affair with the trombone flourished and he started a jazz club and a jazz band. Gigs at the Saratoga Race Course and the former Pittsfield Symphony were both appealing and fun! An interest in early music spawned his attraction to the harpsichord. His instrument, made by a Cambridge, Massachusetts, artisan, is now on display for his own pleasure. John dismisses his interest with the comment, "I know how to tune it, but I'm no keyboard player."



Photo by Lily Wayne

Michele and John Horton are new arrivals.

He did acknowledge, though, that he was, again, exploring Bach. Maybe he'll become a keyboardist after all.

John's artistic interests aren't limited to music. Although the walls in their apartment are empty now, many paintings lean against them awaiting placement, and I was privileged to see a few. John is a fine artist, but had to give up art in order to devote his spare hours to music.

Meanwhile Michele has explored her own interests. For many years she was the photo/art editor of the medical journal John founded. Her cooking and tennis skills were legendary, and she hopes to play tennis here when the weather improves.

You'll be interested in how they met: Thirty years ago, each was booked on a Delta flight from New York to Nice. He was off to a meeting while

she was heading home to care for her ailing father. They chatted and then found themselves waiting for their baggage together. One thing led to another!

John and his daughter, also in Nice for a meeting, were invited to Michele's home, where her father was delighted that John's daughter spoke Italian. There was delight enough for everyone. The couple married and found "delights to spare."

After a few years of spending six months in South Egremont and six months in Nice, they are content now to settle at Kimball, a place John knew about from his long-ago experiences in Albany. Still unpacking and sorting out, they'll soon be ready to explore what to do here, to meet more neighbors . . . and maybe we'll be lucky enough to hear that trombone.

It was while he was in Albany that his love affair with the trombone flourished.

Bearing Skills for Kimball's Benefit

By Dorothea Nelson

Observer Contributor

ONE THING TO SAY about the decision of Diane and Charles Cook to move to Kimball Farms: We are lucky to have them. Her gardening skills and his civil engineering training can be helpful on future Kimball Farms environmental projects.

The Cooks had intended to do a grand tour of western Massachusetts and nearby areas to investigate retirement communities, but first they decided to visit Kimball, a place they knew a lot about. They did, after all, live in Pittsfield for 50 years. That visit sealed the selection process.

Then came the nitty-gritty of sorting out the family's collected history, no easy task since the family included three adult children whose "stuff" was still in the family home along with the accumulated paraphernalia of both Diane and Charles.

Among the "stuff" Diane found was a wreath that had belonged to her mother, Marcella Kropf, who lived at Kimball 20 years ago and kept that wreath on her door. Once again it hangs on the door at #138; the apartment that was Marcella's is now the home of her daughter and son-in-law.

Diane and Charles met as students at UMass and remained in this area as their careers took off. For Diane it was first working as a tailor at Sears and later as an estate gardener in Alford.

Her passion for weaving developed when she worked for Sam Kasten, an internationally acclaimed designer of drapery, upholstery, rugs, and architectural cloth. Her interest in weaving will continue, thanks to the loom strategically placed near their patio door and the bright selection of yarns her daughters placed in the soffits of the apartment.

Probably the single thing that has absorbed Diane's interest and skills most recently is her

Pains-taking genealogical study, in which she has traced details of her ancestors' lives since 1600. The result is a handsome book, the cover of which displays a Stewart tartan for one family branch and the inside of which is replete with pictures and tales of her forebears.



Photo by Lily Wayne
Charles and Diane Cook

The apartment that was Marcella's is now the home of her daughter and son-in-law.

Charles began his professional life with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. His raining training as a civil engineer and transportation planner provided an excellent background for the comprehensive planning services this agency provided. His tenure of 30 years ended in 2003, when he retired as transportation planner. From there he moved on to Habitat for Humanity for 15 years, helping to build houses for low-income families.

His interest in environmental issues was reinforced at Habitat, where he valued the opportunity to work with like-minded people.

Today Charles's sights are already pointed at solar panels and charging stations for electric vehicles at Kimball, areas where his skills and interests can be of huge benefit to our community.

The Cooks' adult children are Heather Leeds, Will Cook, and Abbey Cook. Heather is teaching at nearby Northfield Mount Herman School and is also co-director of Full Circle elementary school in Northfield. Will is a teacher and department head of English at Framingham High School. Abbey is a senior financial analyst for the Dartmouth Hitchcock health center in Woodstock, VT.

Diane and Charles claim it was "old age" that brought them to Kimball, and they appreciate the life on "cruise control" that they can enjoy here. Let's hope they go on.

Programs Planned on Changes at KF

By Susan Dana & Ann Trabulsi

Kimball Farms Co-Presidents

KIMBALL FARMERS ask many questions about aspects of independent living — questions for which the answers are complicated, or need more information. We'll try to help with a series of short programs during the Residents' Association monthly meetings, beginning with the February 8 meeting.

At that meeting, Mike Paglier, Director of Dining and Nutrition, will discuss the latest changes in dining hours and services. As Mike describes it, "...after three and a half years of many transitional and operational pivots....I'm happy to report additional positive changes as we reopen to full service." Questions are welcome!

At the March meeting, Jody Manzolini, Director of Marketing, and her team will talk about the strategies and tactics they have developed to attract new residents. The team has been very successful, as you will have observed from the impressive number of new residents who have joined us. You may be surprised to learn which marketing techniques draw the most inquiries.

In succeeding months, there will be presentations about the nursing department and Independent Living residents, and Integritus, the Massachusetts based not-for-profit provider of senior housing and healthcare, memory care, hospice and palliative care, which includes Kimball Farms.

Are there topics you'd like to know more about? Come talk to us and we'll put them on the schedule.

The February schedule is packed with interesting films, talks and concerts. Sharon Lazerson's lineup includes music from David Anderegg and two sopranos on Feb.7, followed during the rest of the month by the amazing Kids 4 Harmony chamber group; singer Sherri Buxton; Professor Marc Lendler; a program on movie music; and the grand finale for Leap Year: a Kimball Farms favorite, violinist Yevgeny Kutik with pianist playing Max Bruch's violin concerto.

February may be short, but there's lots of interesting and exciting activities to be had!



Photo by Lily Wayne

Instructor Mike Cohen poses at a workstation.

Sculptors Gain a Studio

A sculpture studio, said to be the first in a Berkshire senior community, opened with a reception Jan. 18 in the former jewelry-making room adjoining Kimball's main art studio. The renovated space features six workstations primarily for those modeling in clay, said instructor Mike Cohen.

It can be expanded as needs develop, he said.

Waging War on Waste

The Trash, Trash, Trash Committee collected armfuls of textiles, plastic bags, food containers, electronics, extension cords, and dead batteries at its Recycling Fair on Jan. 20. Textiles, banned by state law from landfills, are outsourced as bedding for animal shelters or shredded for industrial use, said chair Pat Steele.

Single-use plastics, particularly in film form, can be shredded and added to sawdust to make plastic lumber, explained Andrew Ferrara, program



Pat Steele, Dave Vacheron, & Andrew Ferrara with recycling displays.

manager at Zero Waste at Berkshire Environmental Action Team. Examples of what could and could not be recycled were on display.

Next fair is in April.

Love Your Heart

By **Stephanie Beling, M.D.**

Observer Staff

IN 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson established American Heart Month, and since then, heart health has been front and center every February. It is also the month when we celebrate Valentine's Day and once again the heart is front and center. So let's love our hearts and keep them healthy for as long as possible.

Cardiovascular disease is the #1 killer of men and women. For women, cardiovascular disease kills more than do lung and breast cancer. The good news is that deaths from heart attacks due to clogged coronary arteries are decreasing. A heart attack is a medical emergency, and acute-care medicine worldwide has dramatically improved. Earlier diagnosis and advanced surgical and medical techniques are saving lives for both men and women.

The bad news is that deaths from heart *failure* are increasing. Heart failure is the inability of the heart muscle to pump blood around the body to vital organs. Three causes of heart failure are damaged heart muscle caused by a heart attack, viral disease of the heart muscle, and damaged heart valves. The major cause, however, is uncontrolled hypertension (high blood pressure). The heart has to work harder to pump blood around the body, and over many years the heart enlarges, becomes flabby, and weakens. Unlike *acute* medical care, which has improved, *preventive and chronic* care is largely inadequate. For people over age 70, the prevalence of high blood pressure is 65%. It is undiagnosed in 50% of the population, and not well controlled in 30% of those who know they have high blood pressure.

Type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome are also risk factors for heart disease. These conditions have in common insulin resistance (glucose, or blood sugar, that does not move out of the bloodstream into the cells), increase in blood pressure, blood fat (triglycerides), inflammation, and your waistline. Type 2 diabetes is the epidemic of the 21st century and is largely responsible for

atherosclerosis — the fatty deposits that clog up coronary arteries. Additional risk factors are smoking, obesity, family history, and a sedentary lifestyle. One preventive measure that is easily available is to have a blood test that measures the risk of clogging and inflammation. One small tube of blood can measure glucose, total cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL, LDL, lipoprotein (a), and high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (a marker of inflammation).

Coronary artery disease can progress for a long time without symptoms, and that is why prevention is so important. **Know your blood test and blood pressure numbers** and make the changes necessary to get them into the normal range.

Women in particular may have fewer or milder symptoms than men, do not take their discomfort seriously, and wait longer for a diagnosis. By that time, serious damage may have occurred. Sudden cardiac death occurs 50% of the time in people who have had no previous symptoms. Often risk factors are present but ignored. The recipe for a

healthy heart is familiar to all and not followed much of the time. February is a really good month to put your heart health front and center, and here's how:

- Eat a diet high in fiber (fruits and vegetables)
- Choose lean protein and healthy fat (fish oils, nuts, and seeds)
- Moderate aerobic activity on a daily basis — walking is great
- Stress management — remember “so what, who cares”
- Supplements — as recommended by your physician or other health care provider
- Medications if appropriate and recommended by your physician — e.g. statins, blood-pressure-lowering medication, aspirin

Let's make this Valentine's Day and every day special for ourselves and all our loved ones.



‘Tom Lake’ has won its place

By **Mary Misch**
Observer Staff

TOM LAKE, the latest novel by Ann Patchett, occupies a secure spot on a major bestsellers list. The author has a solid reputation, backed up by numerous awards. This story, both contemporary and reminiscent, well deserves the attention it gets. The book has been circulating vigorously among patrons of our library.

This is a novel artfully narrated in the voice of its main female character, Lara. She quotes the main male character, the actor Peter Duke, in his own words as well as in lines from stage dramas that he repeats, especially from the Anton Chekhov play *The Cherry Orchard*. Before their joint story unfolds, Lara introduces herself as a teenager playing the lead role of Emily in Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*. After watching mature women audition, Lara won the role with an unaffected performance. In her blunt way, she says, “Simple was my specialty.”

The mature Lara tells the main story to her three daughters, all in their twenties, but she recounts much more to herself. As she says, “. . . the parts they’re wanting to hear are the parts I’m never going to tell them.”

Like the mythical Scheherazade, Lara spins out her tale one segment at a time, in this case during the summer of 2020. Her younger daughters, Maisie and Nell, are on leave from college because of the worldwide pandemic. The eldest, Emily, works with her father, Joe, in the family business, Three Sisters Orchard. Everyone is involved in harvesting 40 acres of cherries there, without their usual number of migrant workers. Lara treasures all the time with her daughters as adults, and she brings up memories of them as children. In one flashback, the three young girls have trapped themselves by braiding their long hair together.

During work breaks, Lara’s girls beg her to fill in the background of Duke, who has been in the news regularly after becoming a major screen star. Lara

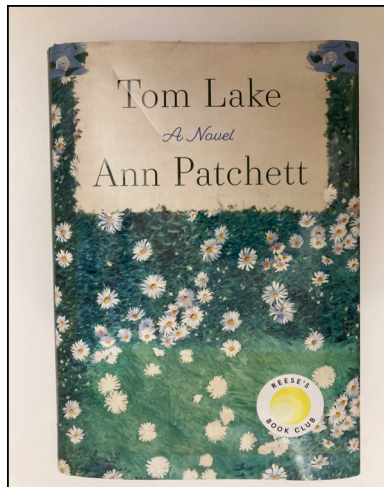
does this at her own leisurely pace, covering a reprise of her role as Emily in a college production, then some time as a Hollywood ingenue, before she finally tells about acting with Duke in summer stock. Joe has already revealed, “You know your mother used to date him.” This was at a grand old Michigan estate known as Tom Lake.

With frequent reminders that she is not telling everything to her girls, Lara describes Duke’s striking features, tall physique, and undeniable charisma. She is cast as Emily once again, while at age 28, Duke handles the role of her father. Offstage, they are a couple.

The summer months at Tom Lake run roughly parallel to the harvest season at Lara’s family farm. Decades apart, both are intense times. By the end of the Tom Lake summer, Lara is finished with acting and estranged from Duke. In her fifties now, she sews quilt squares and face masks

while selectively telling her daughters about the past. Halfway through the year 2020, she says, “I can do nothing about the world and the flames beyond leaving free masks in the fruit stand, but the part in which we’re trapped is joy itself.”

Not all of Lara’s past or present should be called joyful, but there are compensations. Hers is a story of and for our times. It may be too obvious to note the similarities in plot and content with Herman Wouk’s 1955 novel *Marjorie Morningstar*.



February Birthdays

Seventeen residents celebrate birthdays in February. There is a 18-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

Nelli Van Batavia, Edward Mordia, Betty Simmons, Max Silver, Rita Kaplan, Ruth Bemak, Bruce Bernstein, Lita Moses, Joanna Strauss, Peter Strauss, Alan Hoffman, Reed Hand, Dorothy Mandel, Bridget Connolly, Gene Leibowitz, June Ann Mason, and Gloria Pixley.

In Memoriam

Alice Bomer: August 26, 1927 to January 2, 2024

2024

New Year's Eve GALA

The event featuring cocktails, a performance by Wanda Houston and her band, and an elegant buffet, was presented by the Kimball Farms Players.



Photos by Charles Bonenti

Residents Carolyn Vandervort, Adelene Quigley, Bridget Connolly, and Garry Roosma pause for the camera.



Singer Wanda Houston headlined the show.



Clockwise from above left, Cynthia Segal & Nadine Gill; Jeanne Kempthorne & Doug Cannon; Nancy Curme & Dorothea Nelson; Kurt & Pat Steele.



Dining-room server Susan Gordon smiles a greeting



Leslie Curtis & Dave Vacheron tend bar.

