



The Kimball Farms



Observer



Volume 35, No 3 **Observer Spotlight — Page 7** March 2024

Oscar Insights

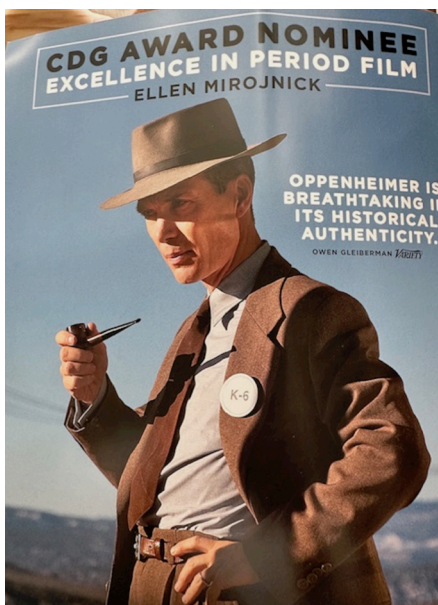
KF Film Designer Views Nominees

By Charles Bonenti
Observer Staff

ONE KIMBALL FARMS RESIDENT will be watching the Academy Awards on March 10 with professional interest. Lily Wayne, who made a career in costume design for film and TV, is now retired but keeps up with what’s going on through news reports and friends still in the business. She is a member of the Costume Designers Guild, LA, and once nominated for an Emmy.

“It’s an incredible year of very good films in period costume,” Lily says. Among the films nominated for costume design this year, she found the hats that actor Joaquin Phoenix wore as the title character in *Napoleon* were of particular interest, as were the number of uniforms.

Flower Moon was “exquisite,” she



‘Oppenheimer’ is a nominee.

said. She loved the indigenous dress and particularly the male actors’ faithfulness to the period.

Poor Things had a particularly unifying look.

The period costumes in *Oppenheimer* were flawless, Lily said. “Accuracy in male and female uniforms is essential. If you make one mistake in the uniform or a medal, someone in Iowa will let you know.”

“It’s said all the time, she went on, “that once an actor puts a

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Andy Pincus **Editor Steps Down**

Andy Pincus has relinquished his role as editor of the Observer to Charles Bonenti, a former Berkshire Eagle colleague, who aided on publication in recent months. Citing health reasons for his decision, Andy will remain on staff as an advisor and occasional contributor.

Andy became editor in 2015 upon the death of his friend Walter Bemak. He remembers coming home with his wife Kate from a vacation in Maine and walking into a roaring Kimball anniversary party in the Commons. Michelle Rosier handed him a sheaf of proofs for the upcoming Observer edition, prepared by

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PINCUS, *Continued from Page 1*

interim editors Claire Cox and Ginny Fletcher (both now deceased).

“Here, you do this!” Michelle commanded. And he did for the next eight years.

Best known as a classical music critic, Andy served as the editor of weeklies in New Jersey and put in 18 years as a news editor at the Eagle before branching off into music and coming to Kimball. He drew on that experience, especially with small-town weeklies, in finding, editing and publishing stories for the Observer.

Andy considers an in-depth two-part series, written by Stephanie Beling, on nearby, life-saving Phelps (then Hillcrest) Cancer Center his most ambitious and, in the end, biggest single achievement. He is also fond of a successful but short-lived monthly feature, “Open Mic,” that he instituted. In it, residents described, in their own words, unusual experiences they had had. Doane Perry, for instance, told about climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa; Leo Goldberger wrote about fleeing Denmark ahead of the Nazis. Unfortunately, residents kept the flow of memories less than a year.

Then there were the staff-written features, such as Dorothea Nelson’s story on Jeanne Fenn acquiring and learning to play the psaltery, an ancient stringed instrument featured in the Bible. Susan Dana was always good for a lively yarn, such as her recent piece on a christening dress that had come down through the ages in Adelene Quigley’s family. Andy also can’t forget the feature about Brooke Tripicco, Jackie’s teenaged daughter, and her poem lamenting gun violence in schools. Her video of a reading moved him to tears. She repeated it for a Kimball audience.

Working with seniors as reporters is hardly the same as with professionals, Andy says: we old-timers require special care and feeding. But Andy enjoyed the support of his staff, and he loves teaching and working with words – so much so that he gladly put up with the frustrations. A recurring headache was deciding whether to go with an 8- or 12-page issue when he had material for 10 pages and the printer could do only 8 or 12. Finding interviewers and space for the recent influx of new residents posed another problem. As a one-time reporter, Andy retained a competitive instinct, trying to beat the administration in announcing a Kimball initiative. Once in a while, he succeeded.

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

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Raymond, Jean Rousseau, Ann Trabulsi

March Events

Monday, March 4 at 7 p.m. — Auditorium
PHS Chamber Players with Alla Zernitskaya

Wednesday, March 6 at 7 p.m. — Auditorium
Klezmer Group

Wednesday, March 13, 4 p.m. — Auditorium
Irish music with the Andy Kelly Trio

Tuesday, March 19, 4 p.m. — Auditorium
Lecture on President Jimmy Carter by Marc Lender

Wednesday, March 20, 4 p.m. — Auditorium
Lecture on Ireland by writer Kevin O’Hara

Through it all, Andy says, he tried to get his contributors to write clearly and correctly while retaining a personal style.

He recalls that Walter Bemak wrote and published light-hearted poems with a serious undercurrent under the *nom de plume* Poet Nauseate. As a remembrance, Andy continues the tradition as Poet Nauseate II.

Reflection on an Ozawa Farewell

By **Andy Pincus**

Observer Staff

THE SHED STAGE was jammed – about 300 massed players and singers. In the seats out front and on the expanse of lawn, an audience in the high thousands matched the crowd onstage. It was impossible not to be caught up in the waves of emotion that swept through the Tanglewood grounds on that sunny afternoon.

The July 14, 2002, program was Seiji Ozawa's farewell, climaxing his 29 years as the Boston Symphony Orchestra's music director and a Berkshire presence. For the many Berkshire residents and visitors for whom Ozawa was the face of Tanglewood, the impact was personal as well as artistic. He was a star, an icon, a hero.

Seiji Ozawa died on Feb. 6 at 88. Through good times and bad, I chronicled all but the first of his 29 BSO years (1973 through 2002), following him in China, Japan and Europe as well as Boston and Tanglewood. He lost some of his acuity in his last decade, but audiences didn't care. His star power never waned.

I remember a small but telling incident at a Tanglewood student concert in the 1970s. As Ozawa listened in the audience with Leonard Bernstein at his side, a boy in a Red Sox cap asked him for an autograph. Ozawa happily signed the boy's program but pointed to Bernstein and asked, "What about him?"

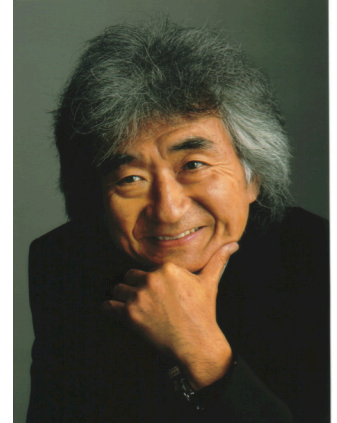
"I don't know him," the boy said, and skedaddled.

The Tanglewood farewell began with Ozawa standing on the podium in silent meditation for a long moment while audience expectancy rose. He was 67.

His once-black mane was streaked with gray. The score sat unopened on the desk in front of him. He would conduct from memory as usual.

The first two works were BSO staples: Berlioz's "Symphonie fantastique" and Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, with Peter Serkin as the solo pianist in Beethoven. The performances carried full measure of drama, but it was not until the finale, Randall Thompson's "Alleluia," that heaven seemed to open. The a cappella choral work, a tranquil hymn, is hallowed in Tanglewood lore as the identifying work of Tanglewood Music Center, the festival's hallowed school, for all of its now 87 years.

Before conducting, Ozawa turned to the audience and invited it to sing along.



Shintaro Shiratori, Courtesy BSO

Before conducting, Ozawa turned to the audience and invited it to sing along with the BSO, Tanglewood Festival Chorus, vocal soloists and student singers.

If you can't sing, he said, "try."

The quiet "Amen," like a benediction, touched off a surge of affection that rose from audience to stage, from stage to audience, and back to stage again.

Amid the ovation, Ozawa made a round of hugs for Serkin, a longtime collaborator, and front-row BSO players. Then, still lithe and athletic, he sprinted offstage. But of course he was called back – called back again and again. He finally turned to face the standing, cheering crowd and a gang of greedy cameras. He said a heartfelt thank-you and goodbye.

"I'll never forget my life [at] Tanglewood," he said.

The cheering resumed. On the stage, more hugs for anyone in reach. He waved to the chorus at the back of the stage, blew kisses to the audience, and left. Slowly, the crowd dispersed. The era ended.

For Ozawa, a Red Sox and Patriots fan, Tanglewood was not only a second home, after Japan, but a chance to indulge his love of golf and tennis, including participation in the BSO's golf tournament. Today, his hillside home in West Stockbridge stands idle. But a monument remains. In 1994, Norio Ohga, then the chairman of Sony, made the gift (reliably reported at the time to be \$2 million) that enabled him to name the new concert hall about to open. Seiji Ozawa Hall reigns today on the Highwood campus.

Pursuing medicine with a side in history

By Dorothea Nelson

Observer Contributor

DONALD ZAENTZ started off in life with a natural enthusiasm that propelled him into a self-designed career path. His story begins in Paterson, then Clifton, New Jersey, where his public-school education took place. Urged by his mother, he set medicine as his goal, though with a nascent interest in history.

Don earned his BA at Williams College, graduating as class valedictorian, then headed to Harvard for his medical degree. First, however, he married Dorothy Nock. They met as teenagers in a community orchestra, she on the oboe and he on the trumpet.

Music remained a vital part of their shared lives.

It was a tumultuous time. The Vietnam war affected many of the choices future doctors made, particularly in selecting internships and residencies. After earning his medical degree, he went on to Vanderbilt University's medical school for a one-year residency. He combined it with a U.S. Coast Guard appointment that provided further credit toward residency. Even more important was the invaluable experience with medical issues.

From there Don went on to the General Medical Group of the Veterans Administration hospital in Nashville, where he specialized in hematology and oncology. This led to board certification in these disciplines, and to Don's three-pronged career as professor of medical students, researcher, and a focus on clinical care of patients.

Don and Dorothy moved from Tennessee to Ames, Iowa, where he helped develop a clinic serving a large regional population. Next came the Call of the North . . . or in this case, Thunder Bay,

Ontario, where for two years he put his clinical skills to good use in that setting. Then it was back to Iowa, this time to Davenport and Bettendorf, where he once again established a regional clinical center.

Meanwhile, Dorothy had dreams of her own. She was a country girl, a lover of animals, and a gardener. So they moved to Chatham, New York, settling into a large home with ample acreage for Dorothy's 14 chickens, 11 rabbits, and 2 cats. Don commuted between Chatham and eastern Iowa for three years before he decided: "Enough; I want to retire when I'm still at the top of my game."

His passion for history reemerged under the tutelage of a professor who assigned no texts but gave students original documents to read, summarize, and defend. There was time, too, for a stamp collection.

For too short a time, the couple enjoyed their idyllic country life. It included many trips to Tanglewood, where they indulged their passion for music, and to area theater venues and dance at "The Pillow." Sadly, Dorothy, diagnosed with ALS, succumbed to that cruel disease in 2018.

Don remains close to his three adult children and his grandchildren, whose pictures are displayed on an Aura screen in his home. One of his daughters was instrumental in his choice of Kimball. Aware of his shrinking local world, Don listened as she spoke of the advantages Kimball could offer and came to agree that life within a beautiful and safe community would work for him.

Don and his gorgeous cat, Tory, arrived early in 2024 in #220, where he has hundreds of miniature elephants on display. He admires elephants because they take care of their young, they never forget, and they are absolutely loyal.

Don also brought with him memories and his wife's mantra: "May you have an interest in life."



Photo by Lily Wayne

Donald Zaentz



Photo by Lily Wayne

Dr. Terry Weaver

A Close Move

By Cris Raymond
Observer Contributor

DR. TERRY WEAVER did not have far to move when he came to Kimball Farms at the end of December. His home was in Lenox.

Terry had been a primary care internist with Suburban Internal Medicine in Lee, along with Dr. Thomas Consolati and Dr. Desmond Tivy. His undergraduate studies were at Yale University, followed by Tufts University Medical School.

In 1998, when he was in Japan to watch his son Patrick compete on the US Olympic Cross Country Ski Team, Terry suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. This unfortunate event ended his medical career.

Terry's wife, Lois, died at the end of 2022 after suffering with Parkinson's disease for twenty-five years. She bore him four sons — Patrick, Christopher, who lives in Lenox, Timothy, and Jonathan — and on one blessed day Lois surprised Terry with a daughter, Rebecca!

Terry's interests are classical music, taking Ollie courses, and reading. Unfortunately, he can no longer indulge in his favorite sport — cross-country skiing.

Community Service Stalwart

By Cris Raymond
Observer Contributor

PAT FLINN'S MOVE to Kimball Farms was only a short six miles from her home in Stockbridge. The nature of her father's work in the paper industry caused her peripatetic family to move about.

Pat was born in Moorestown, New Jersey and from there the Flinns moved to Lynchburg, Virginia, then in 1953 on to Chillicothe, Ohio. The family's next move brought them to Stockbridge in 1959.

*

After graduating from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Pat joined Berkshire Life Insurance Company in Pittsfield, where she worked in its computer department for 36 years.

She became active in contributing to the Berkshire community. For 41 years, she served on the board of the Laurel Hill Association, the oldest village improvement association in our country, and was its secretary for 36 of these years!

*

For 10 years, Pat was on the board of the Literacy Network of South Berkshire where she was a tutor in its English as a Second Language Program.

In addition, she had a stint on the Stockbridge Zoning Board of Appeals for 11 years, and she has been secretary of the Williams High School Alumnae Association for the last 33 years.



Photo by Lily Wayne

Pat Flinn

When she moved here she already knew several residents.

Pat is currently on the Stockbridge Cemetery Commission, the Stockbridge Green Communities Committee, and the board of the Olga Dunn Dance Company in Great Barrington.

Pat still has five boxes needing to be unpacked. When that job is done, she will look about to see how she can contribute to life here at Kimball Farms. When she moved here, she already knew several residents.

Pat was delighted to realize that of the 150 Kimball Farms apartments, there are only FOUR that are closer to the dining room than hers.

Art in the Halls is to be Shared With All

By Jean Rousseau
Observer Contributor

THE ART on Kimball Farms' walls is attractive, colorful, and almost always remarked upon by visitors and visiting prospects. It is also, apparently, unique among retirement communities in the region. Perhaps most important, it provides a means for new residents to bring and retain some of their art treasures.

Here is how it works: Every new resident is contacted by a member of the Art in the Halls Committee shortly after moving in. The purpose is to advertise the opportunity to hang artworks, invite offerings, and explain the several simple rules of the process (more on that later).

The most frequent response is "Great, but I/we are not ready yet." Those asking for time are urged to act at their own speed and to contact either their counselor or the Committee Chair. (All members' names are posted in the mailroom.)

For those prepared to offer works, on arrival or later, the process is guided by a few rules:

Rule #1 is that a resident is entitled to hang at least two works as near to their apartment as space permits. If the works are approved, they can take nearby available space. To effect this, any works owned by Kimball Farms may be removed, subject to reasonable agreement with adjacent neighbors. Works owned by any resident cannot be moved without the agreement of its owner.

Once a work is approved and a space settled upon, a loan form is prepared with a description identifying the work(s) and signed by the resident and the K.F. director. A committee member will tag the work, have it recorded in the Art in the Halls inventory list, and submit a MRF (maintenance request form) to arrange hanging. Residents willing to have more works hung in other available spaces (there are many) should advise the committee. The same rules and process apply. Works are not insured by Kimball Farms nor are they for sale. If the owner leaves, procedures are in place for their removal or donation to Kimball Farms.

Rule #2 stipulates standards. The strict ones: No family portraits/pictures and no works portraying any solicitation of religious, overtly political, or



Photo by Charles Bonenti

Nadine Gill and Stephanie Johnson admire one of the artworks in a Kimball Farms hallway. Displays allow new residents to retain some of their art treasures.

commercial activity. The more subjective rule is that no work should be offensive to a reasonable viewer. For instance, nudity may be acceptable; garish or pornographic sexuality is not. The committee decides.

The process of approving works for display in the halls is not a judgment about their monetary or artistic value. Its principal purpose is to encourage and enable the hanging of works that the owners love and that other residents either love, like, or at least tolerate. It also is a way of keeping track of the many artworks enlivening our environment.

Please contact the Art in the Halls Committee before adding, moving, or removing any work. And enjoy the show!

Observer Seeks Writers

The Kimball Farms Observer is seeking experienced writers to interview new residents and report on news events and features.

Ability to write clearly, correctly and meet deadlines is essential.

Email KFObserver235@gmail.com.

Observer Spotlight



Photos by Lily Wayne

Super Bowl watchers were out in force at 6 p.m. on Feb. 11 for pizza, subs and sweets, left, then settled to watch the game, below, until Kansas City won hours later.



Photos by Charles Bonenti



Kimball Farms Singers Director John Cheney, above, led the chorus and audience in love songs marking Christmas, Hanukkah and Valentine's Day on Feb. 14 in the auditorium. Pianist Nancy King plays at left.

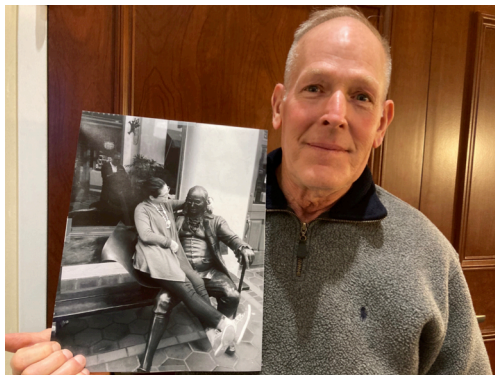


Photo by Charles Bonenti

WINNER *Peter Hursa of Chatham, NY, was first in B&W prints with image of a family member in the lap of a bronze Ben Franklin at the Berkshire Camera Club's February 21 judging at Kimball Farms.*

Art Patron Revisits Gifts

Kimball Farms resident Jane Braus got a private tour of the Berkshire Museum with Director Kimberley Bush Tomio, left, on February 2. Jane and her late husband, Jay, donated 10 artworks to the museum in 2008. She and Tomio stand before two of those works in the current exhibition 'Planning for the Future – 1979-2024,' on view through May 5.



Short Month With Much to Do

Dear Friends,

February has been a short month, but one packed with activities and celebrations here at Kimball Farms. The festive Mardi Gras menu in the Dining Room was followed the next day by all the sweet treats for a Valentine's Day celebration in the Auditorium. The return of the Kimball Farms Singers, directed by John Cheney with Nancy King as accompanist, was a welcome Valentine treat as well. Thanks to all the participants! We've continued to enjoy the Saturday afternoon cocktail parties in the Pub, organized by Garry Roosma and staffed by his excellent crew of volunteer bartenders.

None of these events would be as memorable or as tasty without the skill and creativity of the Dining and Nutrition staff. In addition to their special treats for special occasions, they are now serving a meal in the Dining Room from 12 noon to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. That's another sign that our pre-pandemic routines continue to return to normal. We are grateful for that, and especially grateful for the great work of all of the Dining and Nutrition staff.

The last big event for February was the Meet and Greet for new residents on February 23. This was a chance for all the new residents (35 of them!) to

meet members of the Kimball Farms Administration and other staff. Once again, the refreshments (and the company) were outstanding!

We urge you to come to the Residents' Association meeting on Monday, March 4, at 1:30 pm in the Auditorium. In addition to the regular business, we'll continue our series of brief but helpful programs to answer questions that residents often ask. At our first program, Director of Dietary and Nutrition Services Mike Paglier explained the changes taking place in the dining schedules and menus to a full house of residents. On the 4th, the Nursing Department will outline the responsibilities of the Community Nurses in Independent Living, another topic that involves us all. Put the date (March 4 at 1:30) on your calendar right now. We look forward to seeing you there.

Here's more good news: the first day of spring is March 19th!

*Susan Dana & Ann Trabulsi
Co-Presidents,
Kimball Farms
Residents' Association*

In Loving Memory:

Mr. Robert O'Brien, Mr. Albert Segal, and Mr. Paul Hickey

March Trips

Saturday March 2nd **Bus 11a**
Bus to Ioka Valley Farm – Hancock
Sugar house tour & brunch

Friday March 8th **Bus 1:15p**
BSC 10x10 Festival

Friday March 8th **Bus 6:15p**
Berkshire Symphony Concert
Williams College

Saturday March 9th **Bus 11:15a**
Metropolitan Opera in HD
Verdi's La Forza Del Destino
Mahaiwe Theatre

Friday March 22nd **Bus 5:30p**
Hevreh in Great Barrington
for Community Shabbat

Sunday March 24th **Bus 12:15p**
Metropolitan Opera in HD
Gounod's Romeo et Juliette
Mahaiwe Theatre

Tuesday March 26th **Bus 9:45a**
Williams College Art Museum
w/lunch at Williams Inn

Let's Eat Out **Bus TBD**
Date and Location TBD

March Birthdays

Twenty-two residents celebrate birthdays in March. There is a 43-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

March birthdays belong to: Louise Kirchner, Katherine Kraft, Magda Gabor-Hotchkiss, Doris Bell, Ronald Gilardi, Judith Corbett, Paula Byrdey, Isabel Bigelow, Nancy Brigham, Lorraine Feldman, Bernice Halpern, Adelene Quigley, Marilyn Wightman, Patricia Moynahan, Jeanette Liemer, Elizabeth Myers, Lily Wayne, Henry Jadow, Julie Jadow, Stephanie Beling, Martha Stuart, Ronald Stuart
Happy Birthday to each of you!!

OSCARS, Continued from Page 1

a costume on, they find their character.” The actor and costume have to merge seamlessly to create a believable character, she explained. “Otherwise, the actor is uncomfortable and not believable to the audience. It makes the job very difficult for the actor.”

“Period” is not necessarily pre-20th century—it can be 50 years ago or less. Lily pointed to the balloon-style maternity dress with a Peter Pan collar that Princess Diana wore when pregnant with Prince William and the “very contemporary skin-tight dress” Megan Markle wore when pregnant a generation later. “It was an enormous change, but not so long ago,” she observed.

A lot of research goes into designing period costuming, Lily continued, such as determining the shape and length of a man’s jacket lapel, the knot of a tie, or the style of a hat brim at a certain point in time. Viewers who lived during the period shown in a film will notice stylistic inconsistencies. Back in the 1950s, she said, the way people looked at a cocktail party was a given: women wore stylish dresses; men donned suits and ties. “Now anything goes. Black tie can mean a T-shirt under a jacket. Where did Cary Grant go? It’s impossible,” she went on, “to design a hooker outfit today because so many look like that anyway.”

To understand the film character being costumed, Lily said, you have to read the script over and over, take notes, and become a psychologist asking how that character looks, sounds, and moves. “It’s not like making a dress or a suit and walking away.” Some actors — men as well as women — can be very difficult and only want to wear what they want, she said, adding that it doesn’t help an actor not to listen, because designers can help them create the character. “The bigger the actor, the easier they are to work with.”

Only five slots are available in each Academy Award nominee category, so not every good design can make it. Nominations are based on how well the costume looked, fit the actor, and conveyed the director’s vision and mood. The 2023 film *Boys in the Boat*, directed by George Clooney, was not nominated. She believes it was not gritty-looking enough.



Watch the Awards

The 96th Academy Awards ceremony hosted by Jimmy Kimmel will take place Sunday, March 10 at 7 p.m.

The show will air live on ABC and in more than 200 territories worldwide from the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.

“It was much loved underdog story,” Lily said

Being at the Academy Awards ceremony is fascinating, she went on. “During commercial breaks, everyone runs into the lobby to schmooze with the directors and actors they want work with.

At the parties afterward, you can walk up to someone you have never spoken to and congratulate them. It’s fun — unless they lose.”

Archives Room Cleanup in Need of Volunteers

We have been given permission to reorganize and use the archives room on the second floor in Lenox.

It is filled with historic documents and archives dating back to the beginning of Kimball Farms.

They include copies of the Observer from its beginning, minutes of Resident Association activities, and numerous boxes of old photographs and documents.

So we have begun a project, led by Pat Steele, to sort through and clean up the files and make the room usable for the Observer to eventually share as a workspace.

Volunteers are welcome to join the cleanup project. Contact Pat Steel in No. 273.

Stress — *The Good Kind*

By Stephanie Beling

Observer Staff

YES, THERE IS a good kind of stress and it has a name — *hormetic* stress. This is stress in small doses that makes you more resilient, robust, and able to adjust to omnipresent change. The companion term *hormesis* refers to the beneficial effects of low doses of stressors such as strenuous exercise, food limitation, and extreme heat or cold.

In 1887, a German physiologist named Hugo Schulz discovered that disinfectants in large doses killed yeast, but in small doses actually stimulated yeast growth. The mechanism of this phenomenon appears to be an ability to become stronger or more numerous to maintain balance in a challenging environment.

Since the original publication of these findings, there has been extensive research into the benefit of hormetic stress on health and longevity. This research extends across species from fruit flies, worms, sponges, mice, rats, dogs, and monkeys on up to humans, all with the same results: Subjecting the body to manageable stress with ample time for recovery prevents or delays illness and extends life span. How does this work?

Laboratory tests following a bout of strenuous weight lifting show an increase in inflammation, a rise in cortisol levels, and the appearance of tiny tears in muscle fibers. These are all signals for the muscles to repair themselves, and with adequate rest they come back stronger than before. That is the basis for improving strength with exercise. Food restriction is another major stress, but for many of us it's not one that we experience very often. Yet calorie restriction, skipping meals, and intermittent fasting have many benefits including reducing belly fat and increasing insulin sensitivity. Blood sugar and fat levels improve, your waistline shrinks, and life span is extended. It's not just about promoting leanness, but also about giving your cells a chance to clean themselves up by eliminating or recycling the accumulated waste.

Another “good” stress, quite popular in Scandinavian countries, is exposure to heat and cold. We're familiar with the images of people going from a hot sauna to a freezing lake and



extolling the feeling of energy and well-being that follows. These benefits occur because the immune system cells are activated at higher body temperatures (up to 104° F) and, studies show, an increase in antioxidant after ice bathing. I once sat in a hot tub at 104°F for about 15 minutes followed by a walk through 20 feet of knee-high ice water, based on the same health-promoting idea, and concluded “hot tub yes, ice-water walk no.” Recently, though, I've added a final splash of cold water at the end of a shower.

Stress that becomes chronic, on the other hand, is *not* good for you. It is often caused by “the small stuff,” the cumulative effect of minor daily annoyances: the unexpected bill, the paperwork accumulation, a phone call that didn't come or one that did and caused consternation. These minor upheavals can be turned into hormetic stress (the good kind) by recognizing them as opportunities to practice mindfulness, meditation, breathing exercises, and taking action when needed. With enough practice with the small stuff, we will be better prepared if and when we have to deal with something more serious. It is apparent that Nietzsche's observation that “what doesn't kill you makes you stronger” has its basis in science, and it is comforting to know that some of the less pleasant things we endure will actually make us healthier and more resilient to face life's challenges.

Agatha Christie Reconsidered

By Mary Misch
Observer Staff

LUCY WORSLEY, established author and television presenter, has turned her penetrating gaze on another redoubtable writer in *Agatha Christie: An Elusive Woman*, a book new to our library. Worsley, the Chief Curator of Great Britain's Historic Royal Palaces, is well connected with the resources needed to produce a reliable and readable biography. In addition, she provides fearless commentary on Agatha Christie's written work, with highlights taken from among 80 books plus several plays. All this is handled with notable sensitivity and humor.

The familiar territory of Agatha's early years is well covered, with evidence that Worsley has visited several locations where she lived or visited. Her marriage to Archie Christie in 1914 and wartime work in a military hospital lead toward her first successful book, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, and soon to books and plays featuring married couples.

In 1926 Agatha published her groundbreaking book, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, which brought considerable income and a great deal of publicity. More publicity followed in early December that year, after her wrecked car was found and she remained missing for over a week. Worsley presents a cohesive reconstruction of events, including Archie's admission of infidelity and Agatha's shocked response.

"Loss of memory" was Agatha's public explanation for her disappearance. It was complicated, Worsley reveals, by serious depression. Medication, rest, and hypnosis were involved in a lengthy recovery, followed by divorce from Archie. In Worsley's opinion, "Her mental illness of 1926 was nearly the breaking of Agatha Christie. But ultimately it was the making of her." Worsley also quotes, from "someone who knew her well," that "she had a quality of elusiveness . . . an inbuilt armour." A footnote indicates that this quote comes from a book by Max Mallowan, Agatha's second husband.

Late in 1928, soon after the divorce, Agatha ventured to the Middle East via the Orient Express. She visited archaeological sites in West Asia and participated in some of the digs for antiquities. It was on her second trip, early in 1930, that she met Max, a young archaeologist charged with guiding her to sites in Iraq. By April, both were back in England and considering marriage.

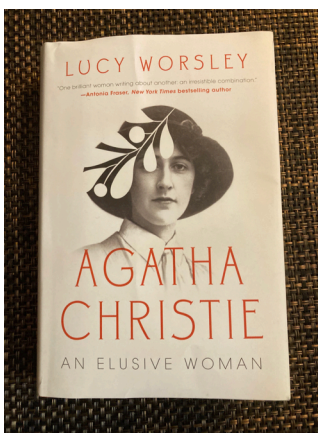
As plans progressed for a quiet wedding in Scotland, Worsley states, "It seemed understood between them that Agatha was going to pay for everything." This was to be the pattern of the next four decades, as Agatha secretly bankrolled several of Max's research projects. More importantly, her busy writing schedule was largely determined by the need to maintain their lavish lifestyle.

In the 1930s, major Agatha Christie mysteries included *Murder on the Orient Express*, *The A.B.C. Murders*, and *Death on the Nile*. In these and other books, there are variations on what Worsley calls "the Christie trick," which is a form of misdirection as to who the killer is.

From the 1940s through the early 1970s, each year would see a new mystery title. In addition, there were two important plays, *And Then There Were None* and *The Mousetrap*.

From the mid-'40s to the mid-'50s, Agatha produced several non-mystery novels under the pseudonym of Mary Westmacott. Featuring women with a psychological bent, they reflected some of the issues of her past.

Worsley devotes a full chapter to "The Mystery of the Christie Fortune." There she notes, "In 1961, UNESCO officially named her as the world's best-selling author." On the other hand, there were serious tax issues with the Inland Revenue that went unresolved for years. In a later chapter, Worsley reports, "Agatha insisted on having a final play, *Fiddler's Five*, staged in Bristol." It turns out that her daughter, Rosalind, was against moving the play to London because it "featured people getting away with not paying their taxes." Could that playscript be worth another look?





Photos by Charles Bonenti



Reed Hand, in cap, poses with Brian Lowery, far left, at the table and above with array of tools used by Kimball Farms residents.

Shop Talk Over a Table

By Charles Bonenti
Observer Staff

CHATTING with Reed Hand in the Pub one day last December, Brian Lowery mentioned that he was looking for a drop-leaf table to expand the dining options in his apartment. It had to be drop-leaf, he said, so it could be folded out of the way when not in use.

“He wanted it to abut a kitchen island,” added Reed, “so it would extend the surface when he sat down to eat his Wheaties.”

With those specifications, a custom job was in order. Brian had turned to Reed because of his experience in woodworking.

“It could not be done by me,” Brian said. “Reed was the designer and primary contractor. I helped when needed, but stayed out of the way.”

The table was assembled and awaiting a painted finish when *The Observer* learned of the project and asked to take a look. Reed led us down the elevator between the kitchen and the Pub and through a maze of workrooms to a cavernous tool-filled industrial space. The maintenance department uses most of it, but a portion is reserved for Kimball Farms residents. We met Lowery there.

“Roland Ginzel, a skilled craftsman [and resident who died in 2021], left me in charge,” said Reed, himself a 12-year resident. “If someone wants to use the tools, I make sure they know what to do.”

He’s helped about 10 users so far.

Dozens of hand tools brought to the shop by past residents hang on a pegboard wall above a long wood-surfaced countertop. “Men would bring their tools and leave them when they died,” Reed said. “They’re still here because we don’t know if the owner is dead or alive.”

The drop leaf, made of white pine, stood on a worktable opposite the countertop. The two men lifted it to the floor to show how the leaves and the legs folded, creating a table that measured 32 inches wide when open and just 13 when folded. Reed then demonstrated the motorized saws and drills that he used to cut, shape, and fasten the pieces in the larger maintenance space.

For the final paint coat, Brian said he enlisted resident Lily Wayne as interior design consultant. She said he was intent on matching the existing blues in his apartment.

Lily urged him to be bold and go red instead. But he said he prefers his blue spectrum.