



# The Kimball Farms



# Observer



Volume 34, No 1

Dining Changes p.8

October 2023

## New Faces on Kimball Campus

### A Lifetime Enriched by Change

Peggy Braun wears many hats: photographer, psychotherapist, printmaker, potter are a few. Born in Houston, she moved to New Orleans, then to La Jolla and Los Angeles before she settled in the Berkshires.

She went to UCLA for two years and secretarial school for another two. Her father did not share her wish to apply to Stanford University, complaining the only reason for a girl to go to college was to snare a husband — standard thinking at the time.

After secretarial school she got a secretarial job, but when injured in an auto accident, took her insurance settlement and traveled with a friend to Mexico for several months. Then it was goodbye to California and hello to New York City, but this time there was the added responsibility of reading scripts, which she loved.

*(Continued on page 2)*



**Newcomers Rick and Rose Pocock**

### A Change of Pace

Kimball’s halls are alive with newcomers! Rose and Rick Pocock have already put their personal stamp on the apartment they happily call “home.”

Married for 57 years, they lived in Pittsfield for 43 of them. Rick is a graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and Case Western Reserve University. He worked for many years as a mechanical engineer at GE Plastics.

He and Rose met in Troy, N.Y., when she was a student at Russell Sage College. Their two children are Christen and Matthew. Christen lives in Alameda, Calif., where she is the Executive Director of the San Francisco chapter of the Grammys; Matthew is the Director of Information Technology at Miss Hall’s School in Pittsfield.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Surgeon Inspired by Farming

Brian Lowery came to Kimball Farms as a result of a fall that shattered his hip. After seven months of surgery, healing, and intensive physical and occupational therapy, he has settled in his Stockbridge apartment.

Born in Houston, he was raised on a farm/ranch with four older brothers. At age 16 he sprained his ankle playing basketball. The doctor treating him saw something beyond a hurt ankle, and took him along on his hospital rounds, where he met a surgeon who invited him into the operating room. There an interest in medicine began to grow.

After high school, Brian attended the University of Texas for three years then entered Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, graduating with honors. He went on to Johns Hopkins for his first two years of

*(Continued on page 2)*



*(Enriched by Change, continued from page 1)*

There was also marriage to a writer, the birth of three sons. The young family found city life too stressful and moved to Stockbridge, where Peggy became a potter and worked at the Lavender Door for a few years. She took courses at UMass Amherst, then enrolled in Smith College's Master in Social Work program, which launched her career as a psychotherapist.

Her interest in photography grew as she took workshops and traveled, camera in hand, to Morocco, Alaska, France and Bali. Her work can be seen at the Sohn Gallery in Lenox and on her website: [peggybraun.com](http://peggybraun.com).

Her spiritual values have been supported by a longtime relationship with The Diamond Approach, an international group that incorporates Buddhism and Sufism. Covid disrupted her local group, but it recently resumed meeting in person.

For some years she had a blog, "Experience of Aging," on Tumblr, which she may be inspired to revive when she meets with Kimball's writing class. She has also taken the poetry, improv and the art classes, all meeting here weekly. These comments reveal only a little about her wide-ranging interests, her eagerness to explore new ideas, and her engaging curiosity.

*Dorothea Nelson*



*(Inspired by Farming, continued from page 1)*

general surgery training.

He then joined the Navy for two years in 1967, first in Vietnam at a 400-bed trauma hospital. There he had three responsibilities: co-director of the Intensive Care unit; member of the Resuscitation Team; and junior general surgeon.

He married Mary Austin, a student nurse he met at Johns Hopkins, two weeks after returning from Vietnam but remained in the Navy another year. They had two children and five grandchildren and later divorced.

When his parents reached their eighties, he moved his practice to Austin to be near them. After their deaths, he returned to the old farm and ranch, which had prospered under the care of his brothers. The land was sold, but Brian moved the whole house, in two parts, 250 miles to the top of a hill on a lake in the Texas Hill Country. He did some of the work himself, with a lot of professional help. Brian lived there until June 2021, when he moved to be near his daughter in Chatham, N.Y. The fall, which shattered his hip ultimately, brought him to Kimball Farms.

When asked what was the greatest event in his life, he immediately said, "Working on the farm and ranch." He said it required responsibility, integrity, hard work, and learning many different practical skills.

*Marilyn Wightman*

*(Change of Pace, continued from page 1)*

For Rick, a huge highlight of his Pittsfield years was his lengthy association with the Skip Barber Racing School. It is the world's largest automobile racing school, headquartered in Lakeville, Conn. For 17 years he worked there as a master instructor, driving a variety of "amazing automobiles." As a racer himself for nearly 25 years, Rick won six season championships. His love of racing dates back to his childhood; his dad, a career officer in the U.S. Air Force, introduced him to the sport when the family was stationed in Paris, France.

Rick's enthusiasm for motor sports was encouraged and never waned. It's evident when he talks about visits to many European Grand Prix racetracks. Regrettably, it was a racing crash that put an end to his racing in 2008, when he fractured several vertebrae. His orthopedist made it abundantly clear that racing was off the table. But there were two other passions he could enjoy: golf and fishing. The move to Kimball has put these activities on hold for now.

After graduating from Russell Sage, Rose embarked on a career in social work until their children were born. Her profound interest in family and children's welfare was maintained when she served on the board of Berkshire Center for Families and Children. Other volunteer activities included her years on the board of the Country Club of Pittsfield, where she became the first woman to serve as President. There was still time for tennis, cooking and bridge; the jury's out as to her continuing with those activities. An unfortunate accident delayed their arrival here. After she spent three months recovering from a badly broken leg, they were happy to move to Kimball in early August.

Although they say their travel time is over, it wasn't before they visited over 100 countries and enjoyed ports of call all over the world. But now they plan to concentrate on local areas; a favorite spot is the Clark Art Institute, which they describe as a "sterling facility."

Rick's enthusiasm for motor sports was encouraged & never waned.

*Dorothea Nelson*

**In Memoriam**

**Andrew Campoli**  
**April 7, 1924 to September 6, 2023**

**Audrey Salzmann**  
**January 30, 1927 to September 9, 2023**

**Mary Ellen Tremblay**  
**November 16, 1933 to September 30, 2023**

**Birthday Wishes to our residents!**

**Twenty-four residents celebrate birthdays in October.** There is a 30-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

October birthdays belong to: Annelise Brand, Gale Crane, Patricia Curd, Nancy Curme, Stuart Dalheim, Jane Gilligan, Audley Green, John James, Mary Jones, Janet Johnson, Daniel Kaplan, Eleanor Lord, Nelda McGraw, John Moynahan, Katherine Ness, Arlene Potler, Lorraine Roman, Jean Rousseau, Albert Segal, Anna Smith, Starbuck Smith, Ann Trabulsi, James Tremblay, and Rita Weinberg.

Happy Birthday to each of you!!

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

**EDITOR** Andy Pincus, Charles Bonenti  
**PRODUCTION** Kaylyn Holliday  
Michelle Rosier

**EDITORIAL STAFF**  
Stephanie Beling, Susan Dana, Dorothea Nelson,  
Margot Yondorf

**PHOTOGRAPHS**  
Lily Wayne, Charles Bonenti

**CONTRIBUTORS**  
Mary Misch, Garry Roosma, Marilyn Wightman

## Vagus Nerve Helps Calm Body and Mind

Imagine that within your body is a powerful tool that can bring calm, peace and joy. It is not a miracle drug or an implanted device. It is something we all have, but it may not always be performing optimally. If not working properly, it may in fact be creating inflammation and increasing the risk of chronic diseases. This “something” is the vagus nerve, one of the longest and most important nerves in the body that helps control a number of critical functions.

The vagus nerve is a superhighway, a two-way, rapid-transit system where nerve impulses carrying sensations and instructions to and from all major organs, that affect everything from your mood and stress levels to your digestion, heart rate, breathing and immune response. Its name is derived from the Latin meaning “wanderer” as it arises in the midbrain (as the 10<sup>th</sup> cranial nerve) and wanders down both sides of the body influencing and being influenced by information from the heart, lungs and digestive tract.

It is the primary channel through which the gut and brain communicate. It is one of the major ways that the trillions of gut bacteria (the microbiome) talk to the brain. The vagus nerve is essentially the mind-body connection, and of course responsible for that “gut feeling” we’ve all had from time to time.

An understanding of the way that a healthy vagus nerve contributes to calm, peace and joy requires further explanation. We have two nervous systems called respectively the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system is often thought of as the

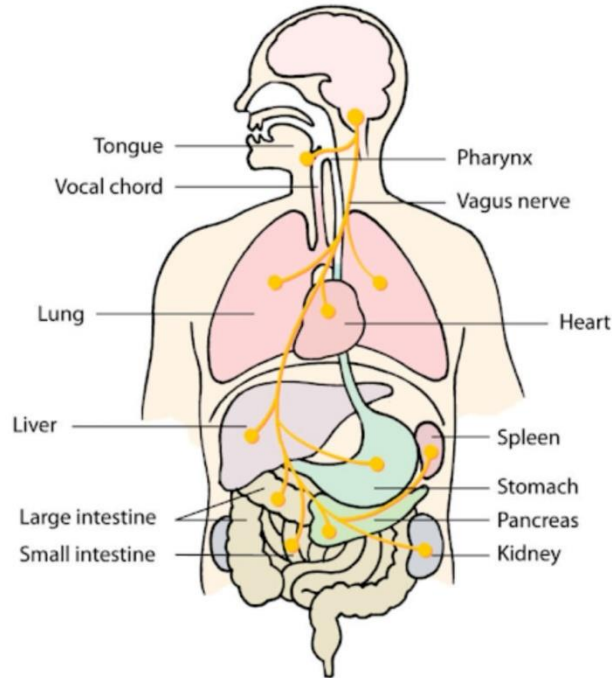
conductor of the “fight or flight” response. When chronically stressed, overwhelmed or frightened the sympathetic nervous system goes into overdrive releasing cortisol and adrenaline as fuel, to go into combat mode.

If you stay in this mode for too long, inflammation increases, leaving you exhausted and unmotivated with higher risk for disease. Heart and breathing rates increase, blood is diverted to muscles and away from the digestive system, and platelets become sticky in anticipation of a wound.

This is not a healthy state to be in for any length of time. Fortunately, when the actual or perceived danger passes, the parasympathetic nervous system via the vagus nerve steps in to calm things down. It slows your heart rate, lowers blood pressure, turns on digestion and promotes relaxation, recovery and rejuvenation. It promotes restful sleep and enhances immune function. It has also been shown to be effective in treating depression and anxiety. The parasympathetic nervous system is meant to be your default state. It is known as the “rest and digest” state and the longer you remain in it the healthier you will be. It is in this stage that you experience calm, peace and joy.

Having a healthy vagus nerve is critical and there are several ways to stimulate it for healing purposes. One of the most effective is deep breathing through your nose, allowing the abdomen to rise and exhaling through the mouth. Singing, chanting and humming also help. The vagus nerve runs right through your face and neck so massaging those areas is effective.

*Stephanie Beling*



## Bocce Court to Expand Playing Fields

Even if you don't know a pallino from a pizza, you will soon when the bocce court (pronounced bot-chee) being built by Grounds Supervisor Derek Powell and his crew on the edge of parking lot E is finished.

The long wooden sides of the court have been installed, filled with gravel and sand, which has been carefully smoothed and leveled. The leveling was a challenge, Derek reported, because the ground slopes gradually, but steadily, downward toward the eastern end of the court. The finishing touch, a layer of artificial turf, will be installed soon. Rain will drain through the turf and keep the court surface playable in spite of rain and snow. An official inauguration is planned, but the date depends on when the artificial turf can be installed and, of course, the weather. Derek was not willing to speculate when.

Derek said the Environmental Services staff, particularly Director Mike Green, came up with the idea while brainstorming for new outdoor activities requiring minimal equipment. Bocce seemed a natural.

The game, which originated during the Roman Empire and was refined to its present form in 18th century Italy, is similar to English lawn bowling and French boules.

Visit the website [BackyardBocce.com](http://BackyardBocce.com), for easy-to-understand descriptions and rules for beginners. Here's a quick summary:

Bocce can be played by two or more. Two would compete with each other, but for more, two teams would be formed with up to four players on a side. Equipment includes one small ball (the pallino) and eight larger balls. Each set of four larger balls is colored or decorated to differentiate it from the other set of four.

The game begins with a coin toss to decide who will place the pallino by throwing it, underhand, from one end of the court to the other. Then the teams take turns throwing, again underhand, the large balls, trying to get as close as possible to the pallino. The team that comes closest is awarded points. The measurements are taken from the center of the pallino to the edge of



**Grounds Supervisor Derek Powell stands on leveled surface of the new bocce court that awaits installation of artificial turf.**

the bocce ball, which might lead to some discussion about accuracy amongst the players! The goal is for a team to reach 16 points to be declared a winner.

Resident Dave Vacheron is enthusiastic about introducing bocce to other Kimball Farmers. He said: "I think it will be lots of fun, and something everyone can play. Maybe we can even start to play this fall, before it snows. I hope we don't have to wait until spring."

The equipment will be stored in the shed at the west end of the bocce court.

The grassy verges of parking lot E on the northwest side of the campus are becoming a lively sports area, with the new bocce court opposite the site of the popular Bill Jones Memorial Golf Tournament on Memorial Day and Labor Day. Contestants enter three competitions: chip, putt and chip and putt. Golf clubs and advice are provided and ribbons are awarded. There is usually a large, enthusiastic cheering section, and of course, refreshments. Rumor has it that cheerleaders' pompoms may be available for the contests next year. See you on the playing fields!

*Susan Dana*

## President's Report: Plentiful Activities for Residents

Whether you recently arrived at Kimball Farms or have been here for some time, there are many things to discover that will enhance your life here. The new raised garden beds and a totally new grill area are an example. If you have not visited the garden come down and see the abundant flowers and vegetables. If you want to grill on the electric grill, let me know and you can get an orientation on the use of the grill.

If you have not looked into Lynn Lak's exercise classes, check out the schedule on the bulletin board and see Lynn for an orientation. Keeping yourself in good shape helps to prevent falls. There is a seated exercise for those who like a lower-level workout session. Again, see Lynn and find what is best for you. Yoga and Tai Chi are also offered. You can find out the time and place on the monthly calendar, Channel 1390 or the bulletin boards.

If you like to walk or hike, there is the Dan Dorman trail that takes you through the wooded area surrounding Kimball Farms. Wear sturdy shoes or boots and walk with another person. There are many wildflowers to be seen on the trail. A list is posted on the bulletin board.

Committee sign-up forms were recently made available to residents. Look the form over and see what interests you. If you have a question contact the committee chair for an answer. Remember, choosing a committee on the form does not mean that you will be selected. That is up to the committee chair.

Activities and events abound. These are announced on the bulletin boards. There are guest musicians, speakers, movies and other special events. The Trips Committee offers excursions to a variety of places from museums, exhibits, concerts, scenic tours and so on. Our library is another source of enjoyment with new books coming in and CDs and DVDs available as well.

There are many other groups who meet to sing, put on plays and skits, develop language skills, read books or develop writing skills. Our monthly publication, The Observer, is one place where

writers are always welcome. Recently an Environmental committee was formed and has three committees to examine and implement ways to help our environment.

Kimball Farms is our home and community. Join in the activities and events for satisfying and memorable enjoyment.  
*Garry Roosma*



At left above, Ann Trabulsi inspects raspberries in the new garden



Above right, signs mark Dan Dorman Trail.

### October Trips

<b>Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup></b> Barrington Stage Co. "English"	<b>Bus 1:15p</b>
<b>Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup></b> South Mountain Concert Dover String Quartet	<b>Bus 2:15p</b>
<b>Wednesday October 18<sup>th</sup></b> Nature Walk at Parson's Marsh w/ Lunch at On A Roll Cafe	<b>Bus 11:00a</b>
<b>Wednesday October 25<sup>th</sup></b> DeVries Sculpture w/ Lunch at Ozzie's Restaurant	<b>Bus 11:30a</b>
<b>Friday October 27<sup>th</sup></b> Berkshire Symphony Concert Williams College	<b>Bus 6p</b>

## New Mystery for Music Lovers

Gerald Elias, violin in hand, recently entertained a Kimball Farms audience with fragments of music, including the title musical element from his first mystery novel, *The Devil's Trill*. He described the decade-plus process in which a how-to guide for musicians became the first fictional book in a series of eight, with more to come. Our library has the latest one, *Murder at the Royal Albert*, and this is our main topic.

Author Elias described for us, in person and in this book, the singular design and use of London's gigantic Royal Albert Hall. Of great importance to the plot is the Arena, a standing-room area holding "Up to fourteen hundred music lovers . . . squished together like sardines." On the program as the story begins is Symphony No. 6 by Gustav Mahler. The 80-minute performance is to close in a "hallucinogenic nightmare" with either two or three "thunderous hammer strokes" representing death. On this occasion, death is real.

Present at the concert are several of Elias's multigenerational cast of characters. Seated in the Grand Tier are Kate Padgett, a former violin prodigy; Daniel Jacobus, a blind and irascible musical genius and sleuth; and his assistant, Nathaniel Williams. Seated on the stage are concertmaster Yumi Shinagawa, who is Kate's granddaughter, and young violinist Natasha Conrad, who is Yumi's former star student.

Prior to this, her first major concert, Natasha had explored Hyde Park. "She had stopped for a moment at the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain and reflected on her good fortune and how easily life could turn."

At the third hammer stroke, Natasha's life is dramatically ended by a single bullet from an

unknown source. Yumi takes up the quest for justice, spurred by another musician's lament, "Mahler's ghost has taken his prize."

Investigations proceed slowly through the late summer and early fall in London and environs. The characters mentioned above discuss matters while staying in the Belgravia mansion of Kate's sister, Leonia Padgett-Trelawney, to whom food means much more than music.

Yumi gets scant cooperation from London detectives. As diversions from the general grief, all but Leonia find small-scale musical events to attend. At one point they play chamber music among themselves. In her own way, Leonia reveals clues to what becomes a complex puzzle.

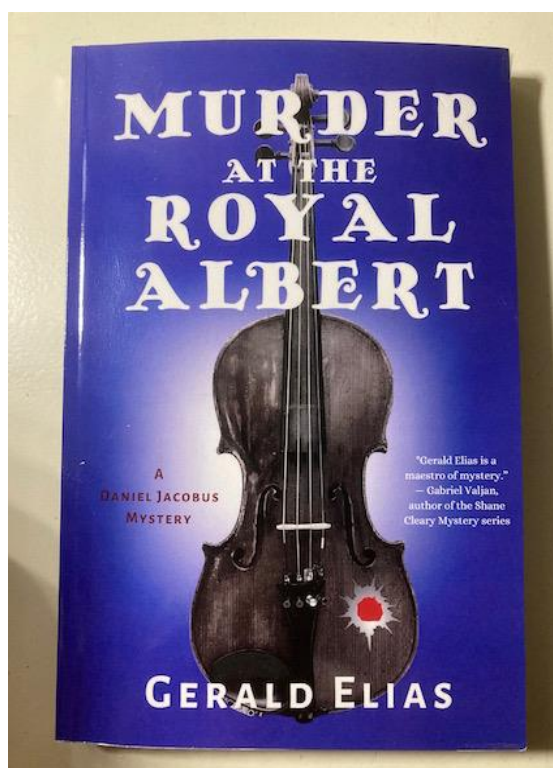
In person, Elias told our audience that he had framed this book around Antonio Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in F Major, *Autumn*, from the *Four Seasons*. In print, the book opens with a sonnet written by Vivaldi to describe the concerto's three movements. As the story progresses, the main characters attend a regional performance of

this work. Through it they add another investigator to their ranks, and a solution begins to emerge.

It may seem odd that the top-flight musicians featured here spend a good bit of time listening to less renowned performers. The crusty Jacobus notes that, in the *Autumn* presentation, a harpsichordist "reacted spontaneously to the solo violin line, creating an ongoing, real-time dialogue."

This and other comments about less-than-textbook presentations lead into the story's final lines, which give links to community and youth orchestras.

Mary Misch



## Progress, Changes in Dining Services

Kimball Farms Chef Mike Paglier reported on progress in staff hiring and anticipated changes in food service at an information session Sept. 29 sponsored by the Nutrition and Dietary Services Committee. There was a large turnout as most if not all of us have a great interest in our food and dining experience.

We learned that our kitchen and staff provide 350 meals a day to residents in independent living, assisted living and the memory unit. This requires a lot of staff. Pre-Covid, the department had 56 staff of whom 47 percent were cross-trained to work at several tasks. The pandemic dropped the staff to 41 and much effort has been put into getting back to previous levels. Now the good news: Three new staff have been hired and interviews were scheduled for four more.

A switch in food vendors happened recently from US Foods to

Hartford Provisions and the feedback was less than satisfactory. The good news is that working together with the new vendor has yielded good results and alternate vendors such as Black River from Vermont and Wohrles from Pittsfield are part of the team. In addition our kitchen staff are making some things in house such as Sweet and Sour Sauce and a 14-spice blend for the table as an optional seasoning. Mike said



**Kimball Farms Chef Mike Paglier poses in his culinary domain.**

about 85 percent of the dish from the kitchen are prepared from scratch.

There are four menu cycles. The fall/winter cycle has begun, and we will be getting a choice of three entrees beginning in January. Good news: Lamb chops have returned, and we will see them soon on our menus. There will also be more plant-based entrees. The first pub special has arrived: It is chicken potpie and there will be more specials to follow.

As for hours of operation, there is a plan to resume dining room service on Saturdays, but a date was not mentioned. On Oct. 16, dining hours are expected to

expand to 7 p.m. There was also talk of eliminating the buffet, which drew quite a reaction from residents. Some like full-service dining and many quite like the buffet. So we'll see. Mike said seven staff are needed for full service and currently we have five to six.

Mike mentioned opening a Farmers Market in the Pinnacle store. There would be local products such as dairy from High Lawn Farm and fresh fruit and vegetables.

A final note: Mike stressed that he and the committee welcome comments and suggestions. The cards for these comments are on the table outside the dining room. They are all read at the monthly meeting and acted on when possible. So, keep comments and suggestions coming.

*Stephanie Beling*