



The Fitness Issue



Photo by Charles Bonenti

Residents Strive to Stay in Shape

By Charles Bonenti
Observer Editor

THE OLDER we get, the more thoughtful we have to be about exercise. It's too easy to get hurt, often with lasting consequences. Yet without exercise, we grow frail. What to do?

Kimball Farms offers lots of choices that we explore in this issue. Walking the corridors seems simple enough. But doing it regularly, miles at a time, takes discipline. We asked some residents how they do it.

There are free classes in Strength and Balance, Yogilates, and Tai Chi, with coaches demonstrating how to get the best results in the safest ways. The gym equipment is available to use on our own.

Some brave the outdoors in all weather, walking the campus drives, the Dan Dorman Trail, or to town and back. Others bike and even ski. We got their views on what it takes.

Off campus, we have access to indoor swimming pools and gym facilities for free at nearby Wyndhurst or through memberships elsewhere. We interviewed some who use them.

Read on to learn what they had to say.

STRENGTH AND BALANCE classes led by Kimball Farms physical therapist assistant Lynn Lak, at right, are held on Mondays and Fridays at 9 and 10 a.m. and Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. in the PineHill exercise room. Lynn also leads 15-minute balance exercises on Mondays and Fridays at 1:30 p.m. in the first-floor sitting area by elevator E in Lenox and at 2 p.m. in the first-floor sitting area between elevator C and the door to parking lot B in Stockbridge. Call her at 7386.

Walking Creates Friendship Bond

By Andy Pincus
Observer Contributor

AROUND AND AROUND they go, and where they stop, they already know. It's PineHill, where they began.

If you live in Independent, you've probably seen them: PineHill residents Frank Pringle and Bob Hawboldt walking Lynn Lak's half-mile circuit on the first floor of Independent. They're out there day after day, morning (only Frank), noon, and night. Frank tries to clock five to seven miles a day, Bob four.

Frank, who suffered a stroke a year ago, started the mini-marathons about two months ago at his doctor's suggestion. He said his record distance, posted on De-

ember 30, is 10.3 miles, achieved after nearly four hours of nearly continuous walking.

"Bob is my walking partner," Frank said between morning and afternoon sessions. "I love walking with him. We chat and walk, and when I'm done walking, I'm relaxed."

More simply, Bob calls his partner "Coach."

The half-mile route, created by Lynn to encourage walking by all residents, mostly loops through the Lenox wing of the building. The pals do as many laps as they feel like doing at the time. They pretty much stick to Lynn's route, but "once in a while we'll take a detour to add some extra steps to the walk," Frank said.

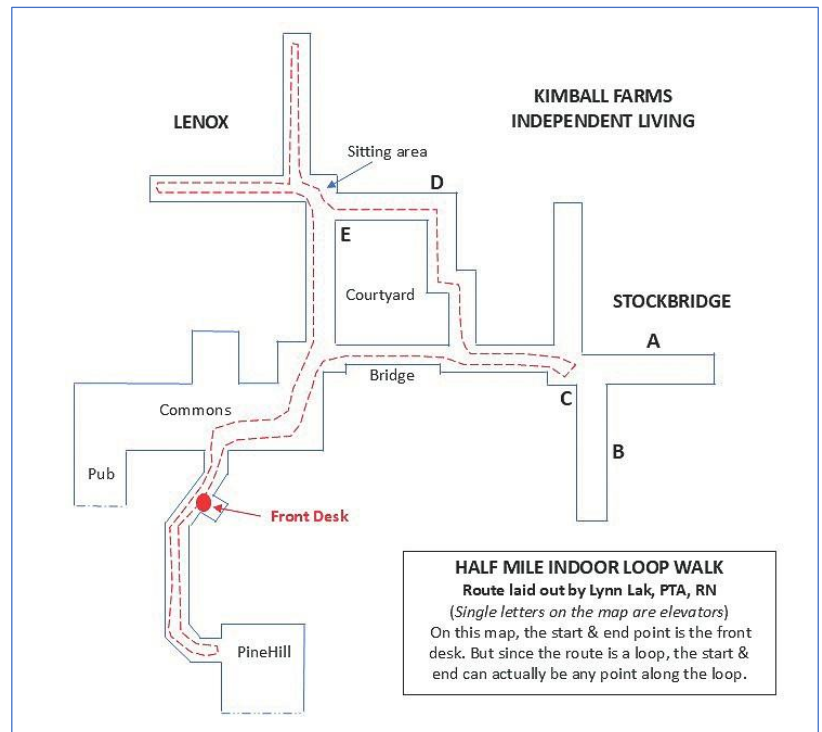
The friends come from contrasting backgrounds. Bob, who lived in Pittsfield and moved to Assisted Living last May, worked for the power company, now Eversource. He started as a meter reader and worked his way up to being in charge of

Walking continued on page 4

WALKING PALS Bob Hawboldt, left, and Frank Pringle, residents at PineHill, pause in the Lenox section of Independent Living on a half-mile circuit of Kimball Farms corridors. Frank began daily walks a number of weeks ago along the route laid out by physical therapist assistant Lynn Lak. Bob joined him later, and the two converse as they build their exercise routine to multiple miles. A map of the route is shown below; copies are available at the front desk.



Photo by Charles Bonenti



Swimming Attracts Senior Athletes

By Charles Bonenti
Observer Editor

SWIMMING is an ideal exercise for older folks, often recommended by doctors. It provides an aerobic workout, tones the body, and minimizes chances of joint injury.

Kimball Farms has no pool, but residents can use the indoor and outdoor ones at nearby Wyndhurst Golf and Club for free by borrowing a pass at the front desk.

Other options are to buy memberships the Berkshire South Community Center or in the Kilpatrick Athletic Center at Simon's Rock of Bard College, both in Great Barrington. (The Kilpatrick Center's future is under discussion with the closing of Simon's Rock later this year.)

Here's what some residents say about their experiences.

AT WYNDHURST

Mary O'Brien learned to swim at Girl Scout camp in Pittsfield and kept it up—along with softball, hockey, and basketball, sports that she “was not good at but enjoyed.” She also took tennis lessons and made use of the public beaches at Pontoosuc and Onota lakes for recreational swimming.

“When I got old, I switched to pickleball,” Mary said. “Now walking and water aerobics are my main exercises.” The latter was recommended by her doctor for back pain.

Mary attends Wyndhurst water aerobics classes three days a week, often with other KF residents Susan Dana, Nancy King, and Marcia Brolli.

“You keep moving through 45 minutes of jog-

ging, lifting foam barbells, and exercising with noodles against water resistance. It's strength training as well as aerobics and helps you stay limber,” she said, adding, “I haven't had a cold since I moved to Kimball Farms.”

Dave Vacheron is a water rat. “The oceans, the beaches, pools, swimming, diving, Olympic events, teaching my kids how to swim—water has always been a big positive in my life,” he says. “When swimming, all else is forgotten.”

His father was a team swimmer and Dave learned early on how important it was to be safe in the water. Since Wyndhurst memberships became available to KF residents in June of 2023, he has swum there almost every day. There is no making a decision. His mantra is “Just do it. It's great exercise that also happens to keep you in shape.”

Dave swims for half an hour by the clock (rather than counting laps) and varies his stroke to avoid boredom. He

has to keep his head out of the water (prone to ear infections) and uses a Styrofoam weight under his neck to avoid getting a stiff neck and a noodle at his waist to increase buoyancy.

When he can't swim, the gym at Wyndhurst has all the exercise machines for a great workout, and walking the KF ring road is another heart-healthy option.

AT BERKSHIRE SOUTH

Terry Shea has been swimming a mile a day for the past 40 years. He averages 70 lengths in about 45 minutes at the Berkshire South Community Center in Great Barrington. Sidelined in recent months by a rotator cuff injury, he is now back in the pool. He credits swimming for maintaining his weight and good health.

A New Yorker and part-time Stockbridge resident for 45 years, Terry has stuck with Berkshire South since it opened in 2002. After a 20-minute

Swimming continued on page 4



Courtesy Wyndhurst Golf and Club

Indoor pools at Wyndhurst are open free to residents with Kimball Farms passes.

Swimming *continued from page 3*

commute, he says he easily finds a lane upon his 7 a.m. arrival and enjoys the camaraderie there.

Admitting to poor hand-eye coordination for other sports, Terry began swimming as a youth, went on to compete in and then manage the swim team at Colgate University, and just kept on swimming.

AT SIMON'S ROCK

Buck Smith played baseball, basketball, and soccer in high school and college, fenced while in high school, and joined a curling team as an adult. He “knew how to swim” but never did so seriously until 2007, when he took out a pool membership at the Kilpatrick Athletic Center at Simon’s Rock, which has a robust aquatics program.

Buck biked seriously and golfed in the summer and swam during the off-season, but he dropped the biking about four years ago out of age-related concerns for balance and falls. “For older people,” he said, “swimming is a better sport as there are no joint problems and it’s therapeutic.”

A member of the coed masters swim program, the Pacemakers, for all ages and abilities, he goes to Simon’s Rock two to four times a week, swims a mile under an hour in varied styles, and enjoys the camaraderie among the 30 to 35 swimmers there at any given time. There is instruction, there are meets

with teams elsewhere, and the group socializes afterwards over lunch.

Bruce Bernstein grew up near the ocean in Brooklyn and has been a competitive swimmer since he was eight, when his mother took him and his brother to classes at a Manhattan pool. Today he swims four times a week, also with the Pacemakers, at the Kilpatrick Athletic Center.

He admits to being the oldest, at 89, and among the slowest of the 30 to 40 in the pool at a time, completing 66 lengths in just under an hour. The sessions are both social and competitive, he says, with a coach directing the workouts. Others swim in the Simon’s Rock pool without a “coach” or if ages 7–18, swim with the Snappers Swim team with a different coach, both at different times from the Pacemakers.

On Monday and Friday midday practices, the masters swimmers do share the pool with an aerobics class which takes up three of the total eight lanes and has its own separate coach.

Bruce lifts weights in the PineHill gym on non-swim days and has signed up to swim two events in the New England Masters Championship Swim Meet at Harvard on March 21.

“I love the feeling of being in the water,” he says. “It’s easy on your body, allows aerobic conditioning, and I’ve made a lot of friends.”

Walking *continued from page 2*

budgeting and scheduling. His wife is in the Nursing Care Center.

Frank arrived last October from a home in New Marlborough. He ran an IBM operating division in Europe, living and working in London for seven years. Before joining IBM, he played football for Penn State University. He was a starting outside linebacker and right-side defensive end.

With so much mileage behind them, the pair are familiar figures to residents, especially those who live along their route.

“Our reception is very favorable,” Frank said. “I don’t know everyone’s name. They often say,

‘Frank, good morning,’ so far. I’ve met a lot of interesting new people. I’ve learned what they’ve done before they moved here. I’m constantly being stopped by people who say, ‘Hi, Frank, how many miles have you walked today?’ ”

Bob said there is a “quasi-competition” with Stockbridge resident Nadine Gill, whose five-mile daily walks are a familiar sight. They stop to compare mileages with her. “She’s an inspiration to both of us,” Bob said.

What happens when the weather turns warm? Out onto the perimeter road, the walkers hope to go. They might even be able to walk on Walker Street.

Some Take Their Exercise Outdoors

By Pat Flinn

Observer Contributor

AT KIMBALL FARMS

Margot Yondorf has spent her whole life enjoying exercise outside, and in recent years, inside too.

When Margot was young, her downhill skiing was curtailed by a knee injury. She and her late husband, Rudy, were big hikers and cross-country skiers. They hiked all over the United States and Europe. They were members of the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Adirondack Mountain Club, the Sierra Club, and local hiking clubs too.

Margot explains: “I loved cross-country skiing. I did it until a few years ago.” She also used to swim a few times a week at Wyndhurst and walk into town and to Tanglewood.

She presently takes the Exercise & Balance class three times a week, Yogilates twice a week (“lots of fun,”) and, in season, Tai Chi once a week. In addition, she says: “I try and walk every day.”

She used to do the whole campus loop, but now does just a portion, out and back. Cold weather does not deter her. She bundles up and forges out.

Margot sums up her lifetime of activity with satisfaction: “I have been faithful all along. Exercise is good for me.” Her stature may be petite, but her determination is not.

Kitchen chef **Liang (Andy) Chow** says he has been exercising here at Kimball ever since Covid started. Twice a day, he goes out the employee entrance, walks the loop road around to the end, goes along Walker Street, then turns in the other end of the loop road and walks back to the start.

Andy’s approach to this exercise is stoic. He says: “I just walk. I am nonstop. I don’t care about the weather.” Each circuit he does is about a mile. Two circuits a day five days a week mounts up to a creditable 10 miles of walking.

Andy has been working at Kimball for almost 15 years. How does he feel about the walking he has done these last five years? His answer is straightforward: “I enjoy the walk. I try to keep healthy.”

ALL OVER SOUTH COUNTY

Nancy King says: “I try to do something every day.”

- Monday-Wednesday-Friday is Strength & Balance class, which Nancy tries to take at least twice a week. She credits the classes for eliminating leg aches she had before moving here.
- Tuesday is “Tuesday Play Group,” founded by KF resident Reed Hand. In cold weather they hike. In warm weather they bike, riding 20- to 25-mile loop routes, through Sheffield, Egremont and into Conn.
- Wednesday is water aerobics at Wyndhurst for 45 minutes.
- Thursday during the winter is skiing at Butternut Basin in Gt. Barrington for 2½ hours.
- Sunday is day off.
- Her filler options: walk 1¼ miles in the KF corridors, do the elliptical for a half hour, or hike the Dan Dorman Trail.

- Nancy has another outdoor activity: “I am a trail steward for two trails sponsored by Berkshire Natural Resources Council. Every three weeks I walk the Housatonic Flats and Thomas & Palmer Brook trails, clearing debris and parking lot trash.”

Has Nancy eliminated any activities in recent years? “Not really; I just don’t go as far and as long.” It is highly doubtful she will slow down anytime soon.



Photo by Charles Bonenti

Nancy King poses dressed for skiing.

President's Letter

Busy March Lies Ahead

Dear Kimball Farms friends,

As I sit here on a Saturday in February, we are expecting more snow tonight! Will winter ever wind down?

February has been jam-packed with activities. A highlight was the performance of John Cheney and the Kimball Farms Singers on Valentine's Day. The Recycling Fair, held several times a year, was a success as always. Sharon Lazerson filled our calendar with speakers and concerts for cold winter nights. We celebrated the Super Bowl with a spread from Mike and the kitchen crew and a return of the auditorium projector. We await a very busy March schedule, including Mardi Gras on March 4.

The solo dinner table continues on Sunday nights at 5:30; check with Dave Vacheron. We will be holding a coffee hour on March 8 for folks who arrived within the last six months, to compare notes and ask questions.

We will also be celebrating the many contributions of Garry and Jill Roosma as they relocate to Virginia. Mark your calendars for Friday, March 21, at 3 p.m. to wish a fond farewell to the Roosmas.

Meanwhile, we are busy filling Garry's many roles. It seems we need about 20 people to take his place! We have a new counselor, a new chair of the Food Committee, and new teams forming to continue the Saturday Social Hour and the Summer Cookouts in the communal garden.

We will also be restarting movies soon and have set up a new Movies Team to provide a range of selections. We have also revived the Conference Room Art Committee. Lectures on fire and disaster safety as well as safe driving are occurring. The Speakers Committee is active in March, as is the Trips Committee.

And Spring will come. Daylight Savings Time starts on March 9.

— Pat Steele, President

Editor's Desk

A Focus on Fitness

NEVER ONE for team sports as a kid, I learned to swim in college and took up jogging, as it was called back in the '70s, alternating the two through my adult life.

I gave up logging miles of daily running about a decade ago to preserve aging joints, but persevered with lap swimming and walking and new, alas, physical therapy routines.

I was impressed upon moving to Kimball Farms to see my neighbors, many of them older than I, keeping active to stay fit. Their example and Kimball Farms' many exercise offerings inspired this month's fitness theme. Besides describing facilities and classes, we talked to residents about what they do and why. Their examples may inspire others among us to get moving.

We also take a look at Great Barrington painter Ken Otsuka's absorbing exhibition in the Connector Gallery on the ways nature can visually meet up with romance, and we offer a selection of poems by residents in place of a book review this month.

— Charles Bonenti, Editor

Free AARP Tax Help Offered

The Lenox Community Center offers free tax return preparation assistance to some seniors through April 15. It's available to middle- and low-income taxpayers, with preference to those age 60 and older. Taxpayers do not need to be AARP members or retirees.

Volunteers trained in cooperation with the IRS will assist in filing the returns on paper or electronically.

Those interested should contact the Community Center to pick up a multi-page Tax-Aide question form and a checklist of required documentation to bring to their appointment. Returns will be completed on the day of the appointment. For more information and to schedule an appointment, call (413) 637-5535.

Lives in Academic Pursuits

By Dorothea Nelson
Observer Contributor

CYNTHIA AND MARK Coleman met at a party when each was in college, she at Wellesley and he at Harvard. He says he wooed her on his motorcycle, advancing later to a VW bug.

BAs in hand, they went on to pursue graduate degrees. Cynthia earned a master's in biochemistry at Harvard Medical School and then supported Mark as he earned his doctorate in English literature at Cornell. Degrees achieved, they left the East and headed to Northwestern University in Illinois for seven years, where Mark joined the English Department. Daughter Elizabeth was born, and Cynthia devoted herself to child-rearing and domestic crafts such as upholstery and tailoring.

Following their stint at Northwestern, Cynthia and Mark headed to a branch of the Georgia State University system, where Mark taught English. After two years, they were eager to head back to the Northeast for positions at SUNY Potsdam. Mark taught Shakespeare, with a weekly film to focus on interpretation and performance, as well as classical and biblical literature. He focused on the teaching of rhetoric/writing, including publishing on the pedagogical use of computers. Mark spent time at the American University in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, where he observed how central writing/critical thinking skills are to the functioning of democratic societies.

Cynthia, meanwhile, taught chemistry at SUNY Potsdam, developing the laboratory program, writing the manuals the program, and teaching general education courses in chemistry.

She served also as department chair.

Academic pursuits were not all that kept the Colemans busy. They had a large property near the college with a very large deer-fenced garden devoted to fruits and vegetables, which they harvested and froze for winter use as ragouts, curries, and tagines. Besides tending to the garden, Cynthia baked bread, lots of it. All that was then, and in today's now it's a happy and aromatic memory.

Cynthia has a profound interest in vocal music. She took advantage of choral opportunities at Potsdam's Crane School of Music and also sang with the choruses of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Chicago Symphony. Mark's community involvement included chairing the local zoning board, the Orchestra of Northern New York, and Stimulating Opportunities After Retirement, the lifelong learning institute in the North Country.

He and Cynthia loved the adventure of travel, beginning in 1970 with 10 weeks behind the Iron Curtain. In retirement they have enjoyed travel-

ling throughout the world, including Uzbekistan, Japan, Turkey, Ireland, Spain, Egypt, Latvia, India, Sicily, China, and Poland.

Their daughter, Elizabeth, found Kimball Farms for Mark and Cynthia. She and her husband work in financial services in New York City and own a weekend retreat in Lenox. Their grandson, Connor, is now a freshman at Avenues the World School in Manhattan. He has already developed fluency in spoken and written Mandarin.

Cynthia and Mark look forward to participating in some of Kimball's offerings and in taking advantage of the music and theater opportunities in the Berkshires once the "chaos" of sorting and unpacking in their apartment is accomplished.



Photo by Lily Wayne

*Cynthia and Mark
Coleman*

In Connector Gallery
Nature Meets Romance

KEN OTSUKA'S PAINTINGS in the Connector Gallery seem at odds with one another: serene, contemplative nature studies on the one hand and steamy bodice-ripper illustrations on the other. The conjunction is deliberate, he explains. The timeless nature studies he considers "fine art" are where his heart lies. The illustrations for romance novel covers made money. He exhibited them together, he said, to expose how illustration was part of his life.

Otsuka, who is 81 this month, was born and grew up in Japan. He immigrated to the United States in 1973, studied at the Art Students League in New York, married, and became a father.

When his second son was born, he needed to boost his income and approached an Art Students League colleague, Franco Accorero, a successful illustrator of romance novels, for advice.

"You can do what I do," Accorero told him, and

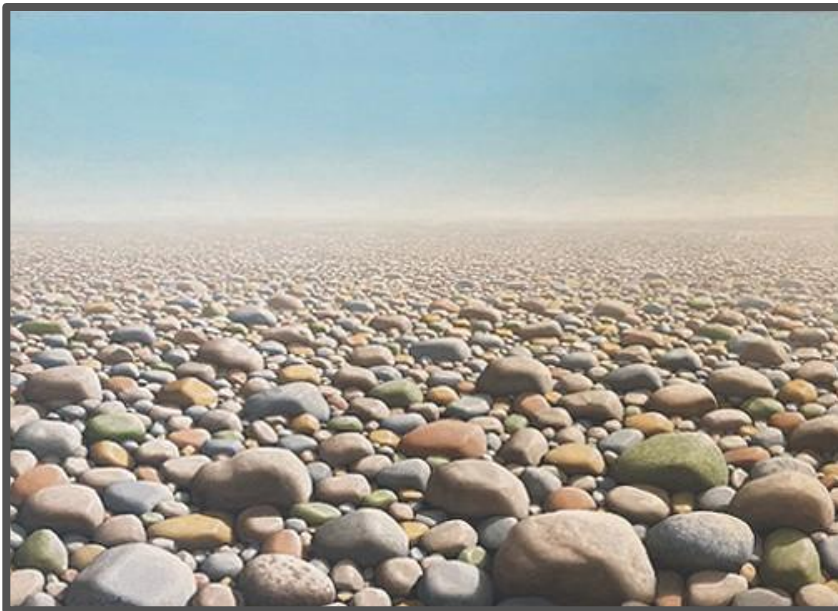
introduced him to a publisher. Otsuka painted a sample and got the job in 1988. Most of his work on view was for Silhouette and Historical Romance paperbacks, published by Harlequin.

Otsuka worked with an agent and a photographer. Typically, he explained, the publisher provided a book summary, models were hired, costumes ordered for a historical novel, and lots of photos were taken in a studio. Otsuka made masterful paintings on illustration boards from the photographs. That practice faded as publishers turned to computers to alter photos.

He did it for 10 years, all the while making fine art, which he still practices and exhibits. He and his wife, Holly Otsuka, an interpreter, moved to Great Barrington in 2006.

For more about his practice, visit his website: www.kenotsukaart.com.

— Charles Bonenti



Rocks and water in this oil titled "Peaceful Moment" symbolize timelessness to Otsuka.

Ken Otsuka chats with Kimball residents Lorraine Roman, center, and June Muffati at the Feb. 7 opening.



Photos by Charles Bonenti

March Events

March 6 • 7 pm

Marina Lomazov, pianist

March 12 • 7 pm

Klezmer Concert

March 14 • 2 pm

Families Helping Families:
Memory Care Supportive Event
Must call front desk to sign up.

March 17 • 10:30 am

St. Patrick’s Day Party w/KF Singers

March 18 • 2 pm

Book Group

March 19 • 10 am

Theatre Games with Maggie Barkin

March 19 • 6:30 pm

Camera Club

March 22 • 1:30 to 3:30 pm

OLLI Workshop
Must contact OLLI to register.

March 23 • 2 pm

Irish Dancers

March 24 • 7 pm

Speaker Series – John Cheek

March 25 • 4 pm

Kevin O’Hara, Irish Stories

March Trips

Tuesday, March 4 Bus at 10:30 am

Lunch at Williams College Faculty Club followed by a visit to the Sawyer Library’s Special Collections to see facsimiles of the U.S. Declaration of Independence & Constitution and photos on the history of dance at Williams.

Saturday, March 22 Bus at 11:15 am

Bus to Ioka Valley Farm in Hancock for brunch and a sugar house tour.

NOTICE: *Yogilates classes are being suspended on March 13 as instructor Pam Levin begins work elsewhere. She hopes to return to Kimball if her schedule allows.*

Birthday Wishes

Twenty-one residents celebrate birthdays in March.

There is a 30-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrants.

March birthdays belong to: Julie Jadow, Mona Kelada, Adelene Quigley, Gary Goldsmith, Henry Jadow, Mark Coleman, Lily Wayne, Elizabeth Myers, Katherine Kraft, Jeanette Liemer, Sharon Salit, Bernice Halpern, Patti Cusson, Magda Gabor-Hotchkiss, Marilyn Wightman, Stephanie Beling, Nancy Duvall, Lorraine Feldman, Louise Kirchner, Martha Stewart, and Janet Hodos.

Happy Birthday to each of you!!

In Memoriam

Judith Corbett

March 16, 1944 to January 18, 2025

Nina Pancaldo

October 23, 1925 to January 24, 2025

Jane Braus

April 2, 1925 to February 6, 2025

Virginia Rocheleau

November 30, 1929 to February 10, 2025

Gloria Pixley

February 16, 1926 to February 17, 2025

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

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Cardiac Arrhythmia

Diagnosis and Treatment – Part 2 of 2

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

Observer Columnist

ARRYTHMIAS that begin in the ventricles (the two lower heart chambers) are the most common cause of sudden cardiac death. They can be life threatening and require emergency medical care. Normally, these arrhythmias occur in people with structural heart problems, but they may sometimes occur in people who do not have evidence of cardiac disease.

A very rapid (greater than 100 beats per minute) but regular beating of the ventricles is called ventricular tachycardia. It can last from a few seconds to much longer. While mild episodes may not be life threatening, continued ventricular tachycardia that lasts for more than a few seconds is dangerous and may evolve into ventricular fibrillation, which can be fatal. It is important to keep in mind that individuals with ventricular tachycardia may have minimal symptoms. Sometimes symptoms are more severe and include chest pain called angina, palpitations, light-headedness, or shortness of breath.

As its name suggests, ventricular fibrillation (V-fib) makes the ventricles quiver due to disorganized electrical signals. When this happens, the heart is unable to pump blood to the body and death may occur. V-fib is treated by using a defibrillator to deliver an electrical shock to the heart and restore its normal rhythm. Kimball Farms has five defibrillators, all located near wall telephones in case a call to 911 is needed. Many staff personnel are trained in their use. Defibrillators can also be used by untrained individuals, if necessary, because the devices provide explicit instructions.

Another rhythm abnormality is bradycardia, a slow heartbeat (less than 60 beats per minute) that may be

caused by a failing sinoatrial node or a blockage in the electrical circuit. If it is prolonged or severe, symptoms such as light-headedness, fainting, and weakness may occur. A pacemaker may be needed.

It should be noted that light-headedness can be a symptom of either a too fast or a too slow heartbeat. With the advent of smartphones, smartwatches, and special apps, it's easy enough to obtain a heart rate. If one doesn't have such a device, the old-fashioned method is still valid: Feel for the pulse at the wrist,

and with a clock that has a second hand, count the beats for 15 seconds; multiply by 4 and you have the heart rate.

Tests such as electrocardiography (EKG or ECG), an exercise stress test, echocardiography, or an electrophysiology study can provide information leading to a specific diagnosis. In addition, other tests can be done at home, such as wearing a Holter monitor for up to 7 days, which may pinpoint more intermittent arrhythmias. Finally, in some cases, lifestyle change may provide a powerful therapeutic benefit. Controlling hypertension, achieving and maintaining a healthy weight, limiting

alcohol intake, and treating sleep apnea may stop flutter and fibrillation in its tracks and keep the heartbeat steady and strong. In addition, medications are often prescribed to control blood pressure and heart rate.

For any arrhythmia, it is best to consult and remain under the care of a cardiologist. Moderate exercise is also beneficial. Cardiac rehabilitation programs under the supervision of a health professional can ensure that the exercise is safe as well as beneficial. Remember that prolonged sitting is another risk factor for illness and—it is all too prevalent, especially in an aging population.



Photo by Charles Bonenti

Kimball Farms has five defibrillators: at the front desk, in PineHill, and in LEP; at elevator C on the main floor, opposite the art room; and at elevator E on the main floor, opposite the door to parking lot F.

Aspects of Indoor Living

This page reveals the creative products of several Kimball Farms residents. Two recent newcomers have found different ways to describe how our part of Walker Street abounds in walkers. A health advocate faces a low point. Another poet gives a cheerful salute to the season.

—Mary Misch

A Little Light Verse

By Ruth Heuberger

I'd be lying to say, dying
to get out and shovel snow
but it's nice to watch from inside
where the northern winds don't blow
and to contemplate the secrets
of the seeds locked in the freeze
how it gives them rest when needed
buried—maybe two feet deep.
They're ignoring all the storming
and they'll know just when's the time
to dazzle all that see them
with their many gifts sublime!

Finally Frail

By Stephanie Beling

The onset remains elusive,
the exact moment a mystery.
Deny, deny, deny to no avail.
Walking is lurching, can't walk a
straight line, couldn't pass a sobriety test.
Was it the backward fall last week
striking my head against the corner
of the wall with a thud heard round the world?
Was it earlier than that—always
needing a banister to even step off a
two step stair?
Was it holding on to the wall to go to the
bathroom at night?
The truth stares me straight in the face.
Deny, deny, deny to no avail—
less walking now since the dog died,
not going to strength class,
previously felt immune to aging—
now not so much.
What do you expect—can it be otherwise?



Photo by Steve Blanchard

An Ode to the Walker

By Nancy DuVall

Back in the day when Lenox was new,
The Founding Fathers were in a stew.
Here was a street as yet with no name,
So, "Let's call it Walker ahead of the game."

So many walkers it boggles the mind,
At Kimball the hallways with walkers are lined.
The parade of walkers on Walker Street
Is an impressive scene.
Some have ribbons tied up in a bow,
And some are simply serene.

Never confusion as to whose are whose,
Their owners have nary a doubt.
Like puppies and children,
Their parents won't lose them
To kidnappers who are without.

So, we who don't need them as yet
(We are lucky), we might well be
Doing some shopping
For a model we like,
And suits our own needs,
Before our joints start in popping.

So, long live the walkers on Walker Street,
Long may they wheel down the halls.
They choose the right place,
For sure, that's the case.
With walkers—far fewer falls.



Yogilates class, left, led by Pam Levin, right, has drawn a dozen residents to the auditorium on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but is being suspended on March 13 as Levin begins work elsewhere. She hopes to return to Kimball if her schedule allows.



Observer Spotlight

Photos by Charles Bonenti



Clockwise from above, Potting Shed Committee members, from left, Judy Matthews, Barbara France, and Jeanne Fenn transfer root-bound plants; Arlene Potler ponders her next brushstroke in art class; and Berkshire Eagle publisher Fred Rutberg, center, talks with Kimball residents Jane and Terry Shea before speaking on Feb. 3 about the Eagle and the future of journalism.