



The Kimball Farms



Observer



Volume 31, No 1

Happy New Year!!!

January, 2022

Hoping and Planning for a Better Year

Welcome to a new year which we all hope will be better than the very stressful past two years. A new residents council has been elected and is ready to serve the residents and advise the Kimball Farms administration on matters pertaining to interests and concerns of the residents in the Independent Living apartments.

First, I would like to give thanks to Dorothea Nelson, our retiring president, for all that she did to help us get through the pandemic at its worst. A big thank you goes to Sandy Shepard and the staff for their tireless work to keep us as safe as possible. While the COVID still lingers with variants popping up, we are seeing more things getting back to what we had before the pandemic. This will all take time.

Michelle Rosier is hard at work scheduling indoor concerts and providing movies. The Kimball Farms Singers, under the direction of John Cheney, are rehearsing with special masks for singers. The Education Committee is scheduling speakers. The dining room reservation requirement is still a chore, but Mike Paglier is doing all he can do to hire more staff and have the dining room opened fully and thereby eliminate the reservation requirement. There are shortages of people for businesses across the United States, but new hires are coming in though at a slow pace. Hopefully, we will have a full complement of dining room staff soon.

As we move into the new year there will be changes regarding the COVID restrictions, all of course

dependent on the weakening of the virus and hopefully its disappearance. As changes occur it will be important for us to stay informed as to what we can and cannot do. Our principal means of receiving information in regard to changes are basically the TV channel 1390 and notes or letters in the mail room cubbies and the bulletin boards located in the commons area. Efforts are also being made to use emails but not all of us have computers or use a computer for emails.



The gavel passes. The ceremony took place at the December Residents Council meeting

You are encouraged to look at Channel 1390 every day and check your cubby when you pick up your mail. Look at one of the bulletin boards, located in the mail room, on the bridge or in the sitting area outside the potting room. By doing this you will be better informed, can take advantage of the activities available to us, and be aware of changes that will make life at Kimball Farms more enjoyable.

Our new council is looking forward to serving you the residents. If you have concerns, contact your councilor. There is a suggestion box in the mail room. Your concerns or questions will be addressed as quickly as time permits. In closing I want to wish you all the best for the new year.

Garry Roosma

And Her “Piano” Woofs Like a Dog

Louise Cianflone, the new occupant of apartment 111, moved from her Pittsfield house with remarkable speed and amazing results. All the furniture and rugs were in place; Christmas decorations were up. Pictures were hung, plants arranged by every window, and nary a packing box in sight, seemingly within moments of her arrival. Louise credits the impressive results to the efforts of her children and grandchildren who helped with every detail of the move.

But before we learn more about Louise, let’s learn about her name. Her late husband Ralph’s family name is Cianflone. The English pronunciation is See-an-FLONE (accent on the last syllable which rhymes with phone). The family is from Calabria in southern Italy, and the Italian pronunciation is Chan-FLO-Neh. Internet sources claim that the name is derived from the Calabrian word “cianfruni,” the word for an ancient gold coin.

Louise grew up in Hull, Massachusetts and graduated from Westfield State University. After college, she taught school in Weymouth, Massachusetts. She and Ralph, who had grown up in Pittsfield, had met in college. “The moment we met, that was it forever,” she remembers, but he was drafted during the Korean conflict. She waited for him during the two years that he was stationed in France, and they were married when he returned. While Ralph was at law school in Boston, Louise taught in Hull, where her father was the superintendent of schools. After Ralph graduated, the couple moved to Pittsfield, where Ralph joined a local lawyer in his practice.

Louise had her own nursery school for a while and then taught first, second and third grades in almost every elementary school in Pittsfield, at the same time that she was producing babies. By the time the sixth one arrived, for a total of four girls and two boys, Louise retired from teaching and focused on

her other loves, gardening, singing and her family. “I sing and I garden and oh! I love my family,” she says.

Several of those children are in Pittsfield: Jenny Benson and her daughter and son; Pam Rich, who has three children, and son David Cianflone, who is a lawyer with the firm of Martin & Oliveira. Further afield are daughters Linnea and two sons in San Miguel, Mexico; Debbie and three children in Scituate, Massachusetts, and son Ralph in Oregon, who has one daughter.



When the children were growing up, Ralph was very active in the Pittsfield Rotary Club, and the family participated in the Rotary Scholars exchange program. They

hosted mostly high school age students from many Western European countries, including France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, England, and Germany, and the Cianflone children traveled to Europe to complete the exchange. “One summer,” Louise remembers, “we rented a car and traveled all over Europe visiting the students who had stayed with us, and their families. We just kept going and going....”

Ralph and Louise also traveled often in Italy, honoring Ralph’s heritage, especially to the charming town of Menaggio on the western shore of Lake Como, although one year Louise managed to convince him to visit Sweden, her family’s country of origin.

Now about the singing: her singing career centered on the choir of Pittsfield’s South Congregational Church, but she has also sung with groups conducted by Tracy Wilson and Jack Brown. When she moved in, Louise didn’t waste a minute before signing up for the Kimball Farms Singers, conducted by Kimball Farms’ own John Cheney. She and fellow resident Janet Tivy have sung together, too, in a number of Berkshire musical organizations. The

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(Cianflone, Continued from page 2)
music gene has been inherited, Louise says: “All of my children and grandchildren are musical.”

For the move to Kimball Farms, her baby grand piano has been replaced by an elegant-looking spinet piano, which holds a secret: it’s really an electronic keyboard, which can sound like any instrument, from guitar to double bass. It can also sing in “dog,” making “woofing” noises “guaranteed to drive any dog crazy,” Louise claims.

And the gardening? Her apartment houses numerous plants of all sizes and shapes, including citrus trees and a fig tree which has lost its leaves for the winter, so has been pressed into service as a Christmas tree. Louise specializes in orchids and is an active member of the Springside Greenhouse group in Pittsfield, for which she started all the seeds for the plants for the Mother’s Day plant sale. Anyone who has attended that sale will tell you that’s a LOT of seeds.

Louise also gardened on 23 acres on Churchill Street in Pittsfield, property that abuts Pittsfield State Forest. In addition to numerous flower gardens, she had a “huge” vegetable garden, again with plants she started from seed. “Really,” she says “it was a farm. There was a beautiful barn on the property which I took advantage of – I had two horses, a flock of chickens, turkeys and pigs as well as dogs and cats, and three more children after we moved there!”

But the star of the gardens must be the Monarch Butterfly fields: Louise devoted all of the fields on the property to the care and feeding of Monarch butterflies. The butterflies’ favorite food, milkweed, grows abundantly in the meadows. Louise has the meadows brush-hogged every spring to keep trees from taking over. As the summer wanes, the caterpillars build their cocoons. In August and September, the butterflies emerge, and prepare to fly thousands of miles to their winter hibernation grounds in the oyamel fir trees in Mexico. (Monarchs raised west of the Rocky Mountains migrate to Southern California to hibernate in eucalyptus trees.)

Although she has sold the house on the property and four acres of land, she is keeping the Monarch meadows. Perhaps that’s a destination for the Trips Committee to consider next summer when the butterflies hatch?

One final note on this interesting and vibrant new resident: Louise practices a daily yoga routine, which finishes with her standing on her head. Don’t miss an opportunity to meet Louise, who can be reached at 7111.

Susan Dana

Birthday Wishes to our residents!

Twenty-five residents celebrate birthdays in January. There is a 22-year spread between the youngest and oldest celebrant.

January birthdays belong to: Augusta “Gus” Leibowitz, George Raymond, Louise Cianflone, Anne Cashen, Diana Feld, Ann Morgan, Conlin Bradley, Marilyn “Lynn” Fiddes, Gwen Sears, Glenn Jorn, Abby Pratt, James Kraft, Lynn Wood, Katherine Stell, Mike Brown, Marilyn Simons, Ned Dana, Patricia Carlson, Nancy Steele, Sue Colker, Judy Levin, Laurel Meyerhofer, Vivian Wise, Audrey Salzman and Julane Reed.



The holiday spirit was brightened by waitress Donna Lucido’s decorations. This tree stood outside the potting room.

In on the Ins and Outs Of Making Money

Kimball's custom of interviewing "newbies" is a great way to develop friendships, a truism made truer when I had the chance to spend time with Bernice Halpern last month. This quick-witted nonagenarian came to us from Virginia Beach, partly to be closer to her two adult children and partly because of her long-time affection for the Berkshires.

As for most of us, there were several stops along the way. In her teens she completed two years at New York University before she married her dentist husband, Seymour. It was Korean War time, and her Seymour, a practicing dentist, was called to serve in the U.S. Army. The young couple was sent to Puerto Rico. That was home for a couple of years, not luxury housing by any means: home was in a condemned facility. Among its many faults there were no doors. I mean no doors, not to bedrooms, not to bathrooms ... nada. And the floors were not level. Bernice described dropping a watermelon in her kitchen and watching it roll on the floor until it went out the door of their house!

With military service completed, the couple settled in Norwalk, Connecticut, where they raised son Peter and daughter Sue. Bernice, an only child, happily assumed the role of many mothers of that era, involved in many children's activities as well as being an active volunteer in civic and cultural affairs. Her keen interest in politics still brings a sparkle to her eyes!

As her children reached young adulthood Bernice wanted to stretch her own horizons. Back to school she went, this time to take business courses that would lead to productive employment. She became a buyer of women's lingerie before she created her own mail order business. That enterprise was nipped in the bud as the nascent computer industry became the omnivorous one that swallowed up small businesses like Bernice's.

Undaunted, she went in yet another direction, this time as an associate for a venture capitalist. About this position she commented, "It was exciting ... but I saw too much. I got a good education, at an old

age," about ins and outs of making money. Eighteen years was enough, though; she retired, as did her husband and they began to travel more.

Their favorite trip was a one-month stay at a kibbutz in Israel. Seymour worked from early in the morning until early afternoon serving patients in a dental clinic; Bernice functioned as his assistant. In the afternoons and on weekends they traveled, putting more than 2,000 miles on their car in one month.



Bernice with "Picasso."

When her husband's health began to fail, Bernice became his primary caretaker until his death in August 2000. After his passing a friend asked her to work one day a week at a store. She chose a Sunday, often a lonely day for widows. The one day morphed into five days and was helpful to her as she made the adjustment to a new lifestyle.

Part of that adjustment was the move to Virginia Beach, an area where she enjoyed more favorable weather and where a cousin with whom she grew up also lived. It was while living there that she suffered an accident that necessitated a reappraisal of her life. It was a wet, nasty day when she fell, the feisty independence that defined her swept away in seconds.

One of the things I learned about our new resident is that she is indefatigable. If one life is gone, she'll deal with the new one that awaits her. One of the pluses for Bernice at Kimball is the range of balance classes available to her. She is quick to praise Lynn's guidance in helpful exercises. She's

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Myanmar: Land of Beauty and Brutality

In 1999, I had just retired from my longtime job as a reporter at The Eagle. I was, frankly, at loose ends. And then I heard that Ba Win, a Burmese-American who was provost at Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, was going to take a few friends with him when he went to Burma/Myanmar to visit family there.

I practically begged to go. Having lived in Malawi and spent quite a bit of time in South America, where my youngest son was in the Peace Corps in Bolivia and took time off from medical school to volunteer in Ecuador, I was very interested in visiting Asia.

So I signed up for two weeks, and so did our friend Peter Berle, a Stockbridge resident who had been with the Special Forces in Burma during World War II.

And thus began a 15-year string of visits, which bridged a ruthlessly wicked military regime, a quasi-civilian regime and now another military regime more brutal than anything that had gone before. That was brought on by an election in 2020 that was handily won by Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of the young firebrand who in 1948 negotiated Burma's independence from the British.

Arriving in Yangon (formerly Rangoon), you know you are in an underdeveloped country. Everything in the airport and beyond was a cobbled-together collection of colonial-era remains along with the very simple wood houses and sidewalk stalls that make up a Burmese village.

In the distance were pagodas covered in gold leaf, glistening in the sun. Potholed roadways made their way around the city and into the countryside. The land was very green, and the structures beyond Yangon were mostly bamboo and straw. Burma under the British had been Asia's rice bowl, as well as a country admired worldwide for its educational system. But the Brits had left Burma after 148 years. And in 1999, when Ba Win and Peter and I stayed one night at a very, very small, unclean "hotel" in the bush, we decided to skip the breakfast that came with the room in favor of bottles of beer.



Young mother, her cheeks covered traditionally in tanaka, at the market in Bagan

Like with travel to any undeveloped Third World country, we had learned some no-no's before we left: no raw or slow-cooked food, no walking in tall grass (cobras are plentiful) and that kind of thing. Mosquito nets and hygiene were most important. Tigers reside in northern Burma, but I never saw one. Elephants were around outside the big cities, but they were trained for work. There are plenty of edible fish in the big rivers and lakes of the country.

My favorite place to spend time was Inle Lake, a large body of water mid-country, around which are a number of hotels—many of them on stilts, as are the local houses. I am still in touch with some people there, as well as in Bagan, where hundreds of Buddhist temples dot the dry red earth, and in Yangon, the former capital and seat of commerce.

If I was interested in life under a military dictatorship, which I was, I got a taste of it. A young man, who I presumed was a soldier, was being escorted on a ferry we took from Bagan to Mandalay. He was sitting close to me, and his guard sat facing him, yelling, and yelling and slapping him. I couldn't bear it and asked Ba Win to tell the guard to cut it out. Later I realized I had asked a big favor, as in a dictatorship if you annoy someone like the guard who's allied with the regime, you may come in for some "discipline."

(Continued on next page)

(Halpern, Continued from page 4)

also quick to praise other aspects of life here, including the food, helpful staff, friendly residents. “I’m not a complainer” is almost her mantra.

Another thing I learned about Bernice is that she had great eye for treasures. One of her greatest ones is “Picasso,” the elegant dog whose commanding presence guards and graces her apartment door. This is a well-traveled animal, shipped from Rome about 50 years ago, accompanying Bernice on her peregrinations until settling at Kimball Farms. Already she’s thinking ahead to when her balance is more stable, and she can join the knitting group here and explore painting classes. May her determination and curiosity never waver!

Dorothea Nelson

(Myanmar, Beauty, Continued from page 5)

Two little girls huddled on library steps in Yangon were clearly starving. Ba Win brought them a bowl of rice.



Ancient stupas (Buddhist monuments) in Inle Lake

Now the military regime, having offered some civilian participation in the government several years before, scheduled a countrywide election for November 2020. When Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), were overwhelmingly victorious, the generals were shocked. Borrowing a term from our former president, they called the election a “hoax.”

And on February 1 of this year, they announced a coup and early in the morning they rounded up Suu Kyi and her party’s officials, as well as anyone else

who struck them as pro-democracy. Among those detained was Bo Bo Nge, a vice chairman of Finance in the NLD government, who lived in Great Barrington while he was getting started on his college education, which ended with a doctorate from the University of London.

The ferocious madness that has ensued, with military personnel setting fire to whole villages and beating, raping, shooting randomly, and killing anyone they suspect of being pro-democracy, has not let up. Thousands are in prison. It is not unlike the treatment of the Rohingya, an ethnic group that the military tortured and forced to flee the country in 2017.

The civilian response to the coup has been: They have protested vigorously. They quit their government jobs, including jobs at schools, hospitals, and offices. In addition, city men have migrated to the hills to join ethnic armies that have always been in force and taken up arms against their oppressors.

Where this tragic story will end is anyone’s guess. Some international pressure has been applied—cold shoulders, condemnations, and sanctions; but it appears that nothing less than an invasion from abroad will quell this horror. Of course, I’ve got my fingers crossed. I want to go back. But I’m not counting on it.

(Note: Best books about Burma/Myanmar: *A Savage Dreamland*, by David Elmer, *Finding George Orwell in Burma*, by Emma Larkin; and, of course, *Burmese Days*, by George Orwell.)

Photos and text by Abby Pratt



Myanmar: Giving the Gift of Sight

From 1997 to 2001, I was Director of Major Gifts of ORBIS International, known as the “world’s only flying hospital.” ORBIS is a nonprofit humanitarian organization dedicated to saving sight in developing countries, where 90% of the world’s blind population lives. ORBIS operates a state-of-the-art ophthalmic teaching facility on a DC-10 jet.

On the ORBIS aircraft and in local hospitals, American doctors taught doctors how to perform modern safe and effective procedures to treat avoidable blindness through hands-on training and lectures. By 1999, ORBIS had conducted over 500 programs in 81 countries. More than 54,000 doctors and nurses received training, while ORBIS volunteer ophthalmologists had directly treated over 24,000 patients.

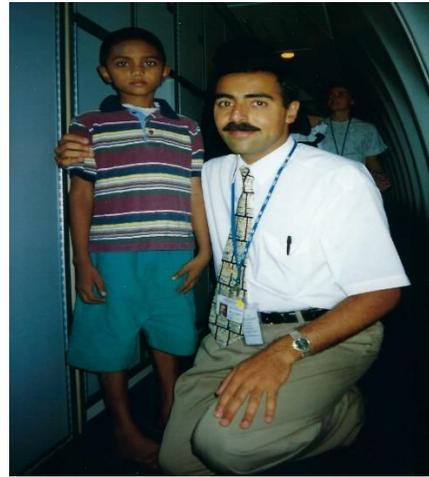
In early 1999, ORBIS went to Myanmar for a two-week mission at the invitation of the Myanmar Department of Health. With only two days’ notice, I was on my way to Hong Kong to meet up with United Airlines’ recently retired Chairman, Gerald Greenwald, and his spouse. I was to be the ORBIS staff host for their visit to see an ORBIS mission. We traveled together from Hong Kong to the ORBIS plane at the Yangon (Rangoon) airport, where ORBIS staff was preparing for training Myanmar’s ophthalmologists, nurses, and biomedical technicians, while treating about 50 patients.

The Myanmar government welcomed us warmly but were in total control of every aspect of our visit. They had a packed itinerary of hotels, meals, travel, and entertainment that gave only positive impressions of their country. We were treated like royalty, but we knew that the government was always watching us. It was the only time I had a “butler” sit outside my bedroom all night.

Why were the Greenwalds visiting an ORBIS mission? ORBIS would not have existed were it not for United Airlines. They had donated the first aircraft to ORBIS, a DC-8. (FEDEX donated the current DC-10 aircraft after the DC-8 was retired). United Airlines’ pilots flew the plane to every destination. Their mechanics serviced the aircraft. The least we could do was to invite its chairman

to see ORBIS at work.

We stayed at Yangon’s most prestigious hotel. Our hosts drove us everywhere on a Greyhound bus, even though there were only nine travelers! We had escorts at all times giving us their version of life in Myanmar. We saw very small towns whose residents may have been seeing a Greyhound bus for the first time, let alone an international corporate CEO. Everyone was friendly, but sometimes too friendly, given the living conditions we couldn’t help but notice.



Aung, boarding the plane to treatment, still blind

I could provide a 10-page travelogue about all I experienced as a guest of the Myanmar government. But I’m compelled to write this piece because of our experience when we met Aung, a patient slated for a laser treatment. He was a 10-year-old-orphan born in Bangladesh (Abby says he was probably Rohingya). The orphanage director had traveled hundreds of miles to get Aung to the ORBIS plane.

Aung had never been to an airport before, let alone on an airplane. He was terrified. The medical director tried to calm Aung with some new clothes and a bag of Disney toys. Aung cried out of fear and pushed the toys away. The medical team performed laser surgery on Aung with local doctors watching. They put patches on both Aung’s eyes and told him to return the next morning to have his eye patches removed. We returned the next day to see Aung again.

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(Myanmar, Sight, Continued from page 7)

I will never forget Aung's expression when the patches were removed. He realized he could see, likely for the first time. He smiled with amazement. He even giggled. He had never been able to see like this! He said quietly to the interpreter, "You have given me the only gift I will ever need, my sight. Thank you." We learned later he probably will never be adopted because he was Bangladeshi. Giving him his sight was indeed the only gift he may have ever received.

The Greenwalds admitted this was the most moving trip of their lives and they had been around the world several times over. While I watched hundreds of patients see for the first time during my time with ORBIS, Aung remains my fondest memory.

Text and photo by Melanie Brandston

Myanmar: Troubled Land

The British East India Company seized control of the administration of Myanmar after three Anglo-Burmese Wars in the 19th century, and the country became a British colony. After a brief Japanese occupation, Myanmar was reconquered by the Allies and granted independence in 1948. Following a coup d'état in 1962, it became a military dictatorship under the Burma Socialist Programme Party.

For most of its independent years, the country has been engrossed in rampant ethnic strife and its myriad ethnic groups have been involved in one of the world's longest-running ongoing civil wars. During this time, the United Nations and several other organizations have reported consistent and systematic human rights violations in the country. In 2011, the military junta was officially dissolved following a 2010 general election, and a nominally civilian government was installed. This, along with the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and political prisoners and successful elections in 2015, had improved the country's human rights record and foreign relations and had led to the easing of trade and other economic sanctions, though the country's treatment of its ethnic minorities, particularly in connection with the Rohingya conflict, continued to be condemned by international organizations and many nations.

Following the 2020 Myanmar general election, in which Aung San Suu Kyi's party won a clear majority in both houses, the Burmese military again seized power in a coup d'état. The coup, which was widely condemned, has led to widespread protests in Myanmar and has been marked by a heavy-handed response by the military. The military also arrested Aung San Suu Kyi and charged her with crimes ranging from corruption to the violation of Covid protocols, all of which have been labeled "politically motivated" by independent observers.

Wikipedia

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Calling Ex-Volunteers

If you were a volunteer at Tanglewood in the 1980s and '90s, the Boston Symphony Association of Volunteers would love to hear about your experiences. The editor wants to write an article about early volunteers for the newsletter *QuarterNotes*. Please contact Judy Levin (x7204) for more details.

The Palatial History of Hillcrest Hospital

(First of two articles)

Hillcrest Hospital, located at 165 Tor Court in Pittsfield, has a long and storied history. Actually, there is more than one history. There is the fascinating history of the site and the mansion and then there is that of the hospital, and in many ways they overlap. The pivotal year was 1908. That year Hillcrest Hospital was founded as a nonprofit community hospital and it was the same year that the 160-acre Taconic Farm, later renamed Tor Court, was purchased by Warren Salisbury. “Tor” is the Scottish word for “hill” and loosely translated means “hill overlooking a lake,” as the property had frontage on Onota Lake.

Before this country’s earliest settlers, the land was home to indigenous people, but once the settlers arrived, they built a fort on the hill to protect themselves from the “Indians.” In 1856 William C. Allen purchased the property and built a residence called Taconic Lodge. His heirs later sold 386 acres, including the south shore of Onota Lake, to a varnish manufacturer tycoon from New York named Henry Valentine, and the property was renamed Taconic Farm.

Fast forward to 1907. That was the year that Colonel and Mrs. Prentice from Chicago rented the property for a summer vacation. Mrs. Prentice was the daughter of John D. Rockefeller. It so happened that the U.S. Circuit Court was attempting to serve a subpoena on John D. for allegedly taking kickbacks from the railroads for transporting oil, but John D. was hiding out at Taconic Farm. This resulted in the “greatest manhunt in history.” The subpoena eventually was served, and a trial resulted. This caused Mrs. Prentice to abandon plans to purchase Taconic Farm.

In 1908, the year that coincided with the incorporation of Hillcrest Hospital, 160 acres together with half a mile of lakefront were sold to Mr. and Mrs. Warren Salisbury from Chicago. He

was the owner of Kimball Piano and Organ Company through his marriage to Evelyn Kimball. In 1909 the Salisburys demolished Taconic Lodge and began building a new mansion. It took over two years and cost \$800,000. Artisans from all over the world decorated the ornate home, which had a total of 67 rooms. Of note was a \$60,000 organ (Kimball of course) with 1,200 pipes and equipped with a harp and chimes.

The home was finished in 1911. Mr. and Mrs.

Salisbury announced the new name of their estate, “Tor Court.” At that time the estate included acres of lawns, five greenhouses connected by tunnels, a farm with cattle and horses, 2,000 chickens, plum, apple and pear orchards, a profusion of white lilacs and formal gardens. A gazebo built on the lawns behind the house overlooking the lake was the scene of many social events. Mrs. Salisbury died in 1945 and the mansion was

never reopened. The family maintained it in perfect condition until 1948, when Hillcrest Hospital purchased the property.

The next part of this story starts in 1908 when Dr. Charles Harper Richardson saw the need for a surgical hospital in the community and rented a house for that purpose on upper North Street in Pittsfield. It was the second hospital in the community and was established to care for surgical patients and those employed by local corporations. In 1911 care was extended to medical patients. During the 1920s a nurses’ residence was purchased and a maternity department was opened.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s the hospital received monetary gifts from private individuals and foundations, as well as a 38-acre tract of land. In 1947 the 48-bed hospital with 10 bassinets and a medical staff of 92 reported treatment of 1,510 patients, 637 operations and birth of 217 babies. A

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The gazebo dating from Tor Court days

(*Hillcrest*, Continued from page 9)

fund drive was organized to raise money for a new hospital building to be located on the 38-acre tract donated in 1944. The goal was set at \$1 million for a 150-bed facility. However, in 1948 the Board of Directors approved the \$145,000 purchase of the Salisbury estate on West Street in Pittsfield. The price included \$95,000 for the 155 acres and a half mile of lakefront property, the mansion, five greenhouses and a gatekeeper's house; \$50,000 was paid for all the furnishings, including the \$60,000 pipe organ.

The story of the continued growth and expansion of Hillcrest, culminating in becoming the campus for the BMC Cancer Center and affiliating with the Dana Farber Cancer Center in Boston, will appear in next month's Observer.

Stephanie Beling, M.D.

The Nerve!

Scoliosis and stenosis
Was the diagnosis,
Meaning I was fine,
Except the spine
Had gone out of line,
And I could vouch
A life of ouch
Would be mine.

Stenosis and scoliosis,
Fate most odious.
The spine grows a curve
Which pinches a nerve,
Which throws me a curve.
And gives me an ache
I cannot shake.
Oh, the nerve!

Poet Nauseate II

Justice Is Finally Served – or Is it?

Captured in time, as if under the red safety light of an old-school darkroom, a young woman's candid portrait seems to ask for justification of her flamboyant life and untimely death. This book's cover art is an actual portrait of Jane Britton, the murder victim profiled in *We Keep the Dead Close* by Becky Cooper (a copy in the Kimball Farms library). Both writer and subject earned Harvard degrees: Britton in 1968 at the stormy end of the Radcliffe era, Cooper in the challenging first decade of this century.

As a junior at Harvard, Becky Cooper heard a legend about the first-year graduate student in archaeology who might have been killed by someone in her department — someone still teaching there. Press coverage that Cooper later found repeated certain details: a battered body sprinkled with red ocher, or iron oxide, and covered with bloodstained sheepskin rugs. These were suggestions of a ritual killing influenced by something from the ancient past.

Cooper presents herself as an amateur sleuth obsessed with seeing justice served. Using all the connections available to her, she questions Jane Britton's friends, neighbors, and classmates. She looks for records from the Cambridge Police and the Massachusetts State Police, finding that essential files are not available, and the case is considered cold. She hears about possible coverups, from both law enforcement and the university.

Through conversations with some of Jane's friends, Cooper collects personal details and colorful quotations that build up her concept of the living person. One graduate student heard Jane say, "I have dreams of waking up dead in that apartment." In fact, she was living in a rundown, unlocked building on the ragged far edge of Harvard Square, during a time of riots and unrest.

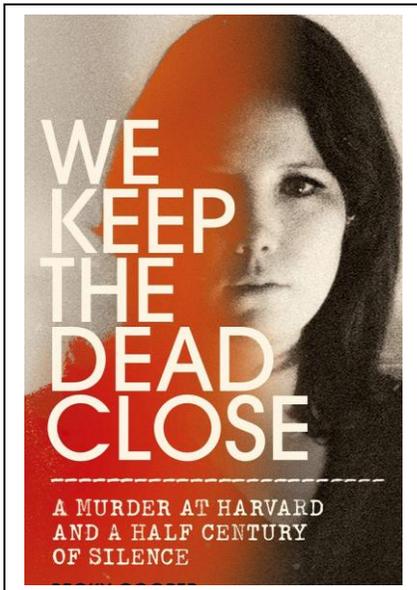
Cooper goes back to Harvard, sometimes undercover and sometimes in the open, to study the chief suspect in the Peabody Museum building where classes in archaeology are held. She finds out that Jane Britton,

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(Justice, Continued from page 10)

despite having solid experience on archeological digs, was not certain of her welcome to the next important expedition. Also, she was killed the night or early morning before her first qualifying test for advancement toward a Ph.D.

At one point Cooper goes through Jane's expedition notebooks in the Peabody archives. She finds "handwriting neat and in all caps like an architect's" and is startled to find a mention of "traces of red ocher." After that Cooper states, "I pulled my hands away from the notebooks and realized my fingertips were coated in the fine sand from the Tepe Yahya desert, and for an instant the years collapsed."



Interviewing some of Jane's neighbors and fellow students, Cooper learns about Jane's spending time with a Peabody curator who drank to excess and later hinted that he might have committed the crime. Police records indicate that he was questioned and

released, but Cooper puts him in second place as a suspect. Another graduate student becomes her third chief suspect.

Over a 10-year period, Cooper continues her research, with backup from her employer at *The New Yorker*, plus financial support from the Fund for Investigative Journalism and another source. She also confers with an Internet group known as Websleuths. She spends more time at Harvard, again partly undercover. Finally, in 2018, a breakthrough press conference is scheduled. The Middlesex County District Attorney is to present evidence that will identify the killer through laboriously restored DNA material.

Becky Cooper is invited to attend. Armed with notebook, phone, and recorder, she gets the news that the identified killer, now deceased, was not anyone on her list. This part of the book is for Cooper and her readers to accept, or not. Almost as a consolation prize, the District Attorney fulfills Cooper's public records request in the form of a CD holding 4,000 pages of files. Cooper spends another year studying police reports and other information. She finds that there have been at least seven prime suspects.

At the very end of the files, Cooper sees photos of a personal journal that Jane Britton kept during an expedition to Iran in 1968. Feeling as though it is addressed to her, she reads from an uneven scrawl, reproduced in the book, "Be my chronicler, so the tale of the Brit is told throughout the land..."

Mary Misch

A Few Life Lessons

My doctor asked if anyone in my family suffered from mental illness. I said, "No, we all seem to enjoy it."

Telling a person to calm down is about the same as baptizing a cat.

I thought growing old would take longer.

Camping: where you spend a small fortune to live like a homeless person.

Just once, I want a username and password prompt to say: "close enough."

I'm a multitasker. I can listen, ignore, and forget all at the same time!

Went to an antique show and people were bidding on me.

People who wonder if the glass is half empty or half full miss the point. The glass is refillable.

When you can't find the sunshine ... be the sunshine.

I don't have grey hair. I have wisdom-highlights.

I'm Not Mad – Just Mad for Exercise

When I came to New York and got married and then pregnant, it was suggested I join a group of ladies in similar condition who were doing a course of prenatal exercises to make the birth process easier. We all lay on the floor with our inflated bellies pointed to the ceiling, breathing and panting and often groaning. It was seldom that the class ended without everyone fast asleep. Husbands were invited to join if we desired. Mine did not. I met a lot of lovely women whom I never saw again once they were mommies. Once I was a mommy too, it became clear to me that my figure had fled and that a girdle alone was not going to solve the problem. So I joined my first gym, run by a most sympathetic and cheerful Puerto Rican gentleman named Carlos. I learned to work on the trapeze, the rings, the ladder things that ran up the wall, and to tumble and stand on my head.

After Carlos I went to a couple more gyms and got my shape back and was reasonably good at everything we did. One day Alex (our instructor, who won my heart by pronouncing me to be very flexible) left and the replacement had not yet arrived but like all the others I practiced. I managed the feat of holding on to the trapeze and flinging my legs over it as well. Now I was able to view the world upside down.

A tall blond man appeared in my sights. He looked very macho, his hands on his hips and his eyes slitted. "I am Radu!" he announced with menace. "I am your new instructor!" He might have added I am here to torture you but there was really no need because he proceeded to spend several months bending us into impossible and painful shapes. He finally quit when he received a better offer – mega trainer to the stars. We all breathed a sigh of relief.

Encouraged by my husband, I was also playing tennis. I was definitely the second worst player at the club. No one ever wanted to play with me but sometimes I got a game because the pro took pity on me. I persevered for years and wound up playing with a foursome of inepts, who did have a lot of

laughs. I gave up when I calculated that it was costing me \$100 every time I stepped onto the court.

I took up walking first thing in the morning. I walked all over the USA, wherever we happened to be: Tucson, Palm Beach, Palm Desert, Long Island, the Berkshires, Riverside Drive, and all over China and Europe too. I didn't go very fast or far, but I walked. In bad weather I used my treadmill. I stopped walking when I was hit by a brutal bout of sciatica. A patient Israeli therapist finally cured me but I dare not do such impassioned walking anymore.



Next was yoga. A group of us found a terrific instructor, a tall, strong lady who somehow managed to imbue the Salute to the Sun and Downward Dog with mystical as well as physical properties. We were briefly surprised when, after 9/11, she described for us a dream she had in which she had sex with Osama bin Laden. We continued the sessions with her until she announced that she was now an artist and needed the

yoga space (and time) to pursue her vocation. My subsequent attempts at yoga failed miserably and I gave up. Then I opened the Shoppers Guide and discovered an ad for Pilates.

For several years now I have deferred to my core and I go twice a week one-on-one to Pilates. I look forward to it and work hard. I have observed that the woman instructor's clientele is largely composed of my contemporaries. Sometimes I do weights, lying prone on a Styrofoam roll. I use my abdominals with abandon. I balance on a rubber circle. I pull myself up and down. I hate the "Reformer" but grit my teeth and use it. I emerge from my sessions glowing with strength and virtue, just like all those people of a certain age I used to see marching along Riverside Drive in the New York mornings. I believe I have finally found exercise Nirvana.

Molly Pomerance