

# HHH Residents Write



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## Geraldine

By Barbara Gogolen

When we lived in Chester, Connecticut, on Chipman Drive our youngest son, David, was five years old. His friend down the street had a cat that had just had kittens, and he wanted to sell David a kitten for five cents. At the time, we were about to leave for our cottage on Silver Lake in Harrisville, New Hampshire. Dad said it would be all right to take the kitten with us. Great!

David had not known what to call our cat. His older sister had been dating a fellow named Jerry something, so she suggested Geraldine. Since three color cats are always female, and Geraldine was a three-color cat, mostly white, but with some black and a little tan, we all loved the name.

When we got to the cottage, the kitten loved climbing on Dad's chest when he sat in his wicker rocking chair. He was very tolerant

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## Are You Watching Birds or Babes?

By Al Ports

It is a question I get regularly as I sit with my binoculars on a sofa on the Lodge's Main Street looking out into a courtyard where there is a bird feeder. Yes, I am a "birder", something we bird watchers are often called. I've been one for many years, ever since an aunt helped me to identify a bright red bird wearing a hat, a Northern Cardinal when I was about eight years old. I thought my birding days were over when my wife and I moved into the HHH Lodge and also gave up our car. So sure of that, I gave up my binoculars, spotting scope and other birding paraphernalia, passing them on to the younger generation.

It took me almost a year to realize I didn't have to be done "birding" when I found an old pair of binoculars hidden away. I could continue to contribute whatever I see, whenever I see it, and wherever I see it to eBird, a world wide data base launched in 2002 by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University and the National Audubon Society. eBird gathers basic data on bird abundance and distribution throughout the world. It transforms the global birding community's passion for birds into a powerful resource for research, conservation, and education. I had been contributing my sightings to eBird since its launching in 2002, why not get 33 Christian Ave on the world birding map? So if you pass me on Main Street. and ask what I've seen exciting, I will say "it's all exciting, and it's birds, not babes!"

of her because she was very quiet and peaceful. One of the first things David had to check about her was whether she could swim. He took her down to the water's edge, stood on our big rock and threw her into the water. She shot right out! It was not for her! With her other behavior, she was friendly to all of us. She did not sleep with any of us. She stayed mostly in the main part of our living space by herself and slept. I don't remember what she ate, just cat food and mice!

Back in Chester David went to kindergarten. During the school year, they held a Pet Parade. I made a bikini for Geraldine, and I found her a tiny pair of sunglasses. She was all fit out. Geraldine did not win in the show, a dog did, but our family loved the way she looked. She was so compliant and just became one of the family.

While we were still living in Chester, my husband's job was changed by AT&T. and we were moved to Chamblee, Georgia, just outside of Atlanta. He was to be an instructor for management development for men from all over the country. He didn't particularly care for the man who was the boss.

I was sent to Georgia alone to buy a house. I was taken around the area and nearby towns, Sandy Springs for one, and showed all kinds of fancy houses. I liked simpler houses and, in a few days, found one to our taste. With four children, we needed four bedrooms, two bathrooms, on the second floor and a lavatory on the first floor. There we also had a family room with a fireplace, a lovely kitchen with a bump out for our breakfast area, a lovely dining room and an adequate living room. The house sat on a lot that included a short backyard and a

long grass covered front lawn but no sidewalk. Our two-car garage fit right into the side of our house, with the laundry room beside it.

My husband was not impressed by some of the men attending the two-week course. Some of them spent their evenings attending strip bars. He was really outraged by this. He and I both met and became friends with other instructors and their wives and children, that was the good part. We loved the house. It was in a neighborhood where other people were from all over the United States. The only drawback on our property were black widow spiders and copperhead snakes. We learned how to avoid them.

One thing we were able to take in the moving van with us was our seventeen-foot lapstrake wooden boat. Our house was an easy distance from Lake Lanier. Our oldest son Bob did water skiing and we swam there. We all had something in the lake to watch for, however: water moccasins! I liked swimming in the lake except when my feet touched the bottom. It was terrible, just mud! I wore my sneakers to tolerate that.

Our children were all in school. Susan was at college level and attended the University of Georgia. Later she earned her master's degree in a gifted children program from the University of Virginia.

Bob was a junior-senior in Chamblee High School, doing two years in one. Bruce was in second grade and David was in kindergarten. All of them had different experiences.

Bob spotted a girl in his class. She would not date him in Georgia. However, later in

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life she married him. Her name was Beth Caldwell.

David's teacher gave him an outline of a cat and told him to color it in. He did just what he was told and colored it just like Geraldine, mostly white but with some black and tan. The teacher handed it back and said to color the entire cat. He told her he had colored it just like his own cat.

Bruce's experience was more painful. In the south, principals were allowed to spank students. We did not believe in spanking and Bruce was spanked. He also had a teacher, who, when she gave a test, made each student stand and announce the grade. His were always in the 60's. As an adult, he graduated from Syracuse University and immediately was hired by Raytheon as an engineer. He helped with the production of the Hawk, the Patriot and the rocket that was designed to intercept incoming bombs. He lives in Auburn, N.H. and has a management job with Raytheon. I often see him and his wife, who is originally from Thailand.

I have digressed from Geraldine to family and shall now resume my account of Geraldine! She adjusted from wherever we were living to life on the lake. In Chamblee she spent a lot of time in the house, but outside she ruled our front lawn! She would not allow a dog to put one paw on our front lawn; it had to go out into the road and stay off our property.

When we moved back, this time it was all of us, including Geraldine. Bruce made her a wooden box so she would be comfortable, and I made her a cushion. Her box was put on top of the luggage so she could see out the window, and we put her little sunglasses on her too. Whenever a car passed us the people in the car did a double take at Geraldine It

was always fun for us in our car to see their reactions.

Back in New England we sometimes lived in Connecticut and spent summers in back in New Hampshire. Geraldine lived twelve years with us and died right at my closed bedroom door at the lake house. Our entire family loved her dearly and we all miss her. She had such a perfect personality!

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## **I'm Sorry, Sue**

By Ro Metcalf

Sue, I noted in News & Previews that you would like to publish a fall issue of Residents Write, but you need fresh new entries. I'm trying to think of a good topic, but I'm having a hard time. There's nothing in the evening news worth writing about; most of what's discussed wouldn't be accepted. The readers all know what I mean. Politics is definitely off limits; it can bring on nightmares. Climate change is almost as bad. It's producing out-of-control wildfires, monsoon rains, dust storms, and triple digit high heat in various parts of the country. We lucked out when Hurricane Erin bypassed our coast, but we're told that other mega storms will soon follow. Every week there seems to be at least one episode of a shootout in schools, churches, businesses, etc., and a large number of airplanes are experiencing danger in the air or on the landing runway. I have my ticket to fly down to North Carolina for Thanksgiving; I don't want to be warned about possible airplane crashes! World news is just as bad, worse actually, because of wartime destruction in Gaza and Ukraine. No, today's news doesn't lead to anything I want to write about.

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Maybe I haven't delved deeply enough. Elon Musk and his SpaceX engineers are working on a rocket capable of going to Mars. He plans to send hundreds of thousands of people there on reusable rockets. Does he really expect to build a colony on Mars? We also have a program in the works that plans to establish a base on the moon. We're in a race with China. They too are planning a lunar base. All of this is beyond my ability to understand. I must choose a subject I know a little more about. AI is a hot topic right now, and believe it or not, I've tried it, with some success. A few weeks ago, I went to my computer and asked ChatGPT to help me with some writing that would be grander and longer and more complex than anything I'd ever done. I had a list of ideas and fed them to it and was amazed at how quickly it put together a structured draft of my plan. It gave me three directions for expanding the project and suggested how the concepts I'd been considering could be brought into it. I began this in June and am still working on it. What I end up with will be a collaboration, a project I couldn't have accomplished alone. It's funny with AI. When it changed a paragraph for me, I found myself saying please and thank you as if I were talking to a human. I understand this is not unusual. Some people feel that they're bonding with a live person because it talks to you in a human voice. I'm told there may be big problems ahead as AI becomes more knowledgeable and takes over jobs only humans have covered in the past. Will we lose our creativity and critical thinking skills? I don't know enough to comment on that, but AI is helping me and many others, and it's bound to change our lives greatly in years to come. That's all I can say on this subject.

I could write about the Megabucks. I wonder what my chances are of winning 750 million dollars. Each day the amount

goes up. If nobody wins it will soon become a billion or more. It might be worth a dollar for me to buy a ticket. On the other hand, what would I do with all that money if I won? I'm afraid it would bring with it a mountain of headaches. I think I'll wait for my ship to come in on some other dock.

Lately I've been ruminating about generational culture changes in my family. I have great memories of my childhood, starting with the late thirties, forties, and fifties through college graduation and marriage in 1957, at age 21. My parents had little money and were dealing with the end of the Great Depression and the war years, but they were young and creative about finding ways to have good times at little or no cost. In college I majored in English, a good Liberal Arts curriculum. Most of us in that era gave little thought to training for a career. I was going to marry and have four children, two girls and two boys (ended up with two boys). My education was designed to expand my horizons and to enrich and encourage my curiosity. I took typing and shorthand on the side so that if I ever needed a job, I could make do. I looked toward a future like that of my mom, who never worked outside the home. On the other hand, my sons, born in the '60s, definitely needed a vocation. Liberal arts would be a part of it, but career training was a must. Their children, my grandchildren, grew up in the '80s and '90s. All five of them, two girls and three boys, chose educations that gave them tools for future careers. The first girl is married, has a 2 and a half year old daughter, and after being an at-home mom for the first year, she has recently gone back to her guidance counseling profession and is working four days a week. Her daughter is thriving happily in day care. My younger granddaughter majored in communications and Spanish in college,

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then joined the State Department. In preparation for her first tour of duty in China she was taught Mandarin, so she is now trilingual at age 28. Their lives are developing somewhat like mine, since I went back to school for my master's degree after marriage, when I decided to become a teacher. Where I see values, goals, and changing lifestyles is with my three grandsons. They each trained for definite careers. One spent time in Paris learning how to bake breads and is now a master baker. Another is a computer wizard writing specialty programs for his company, and the third trained in meteorology. Their lifestyles are distinctly different. The youngest was approved to purchase a home for an unbelievably high price when he was only 21 years old and barely out of college. He and his girlfriend were able to do this based on their two salaries. They weren't married and have recently broken up; the girlfriend is now living in the house with her brother and the family dog. The couple has remained friends, and is perfectly happy with the arrangement, though at some point I assume the house will have to be sold. Meanwhile my grandson is now living back home with his parents, still paying on the very lengthy mortgage. I can imagine what my parents would have said if I had moved in with a boyfriend in a similar scenario! The middle child is on his second relationship, which looks serious, but he's turning 29 in a couple of months and there's been no talk of marriage. The eldest, 31, finally moved out of the family home this past summer. He's renting, doesn't feel he can afford to purchase a house, and may decide never to invest in a home. None of them appear interested in raising children. I try not to be judgmental, but their lifestyles boggle my mind. And yet, they're mild when compared to so many other young people. So far, no nose rings and only one small tattoo! Enough about family.

Sue, I'm sorry I can't come up with a decent topic to write about. Although I'm standing with my feet firmly planted on earth, I'm not sure it's the same planet on which I was born. Politics you can't mention, unbelievable climate change, migrations to Mars, and 21-year-olds purchasing homes I never could afford are sure proof that the world is passing me by!

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## **“The Sky is Crying with Us”**

By Jeanie Holt

May gave us a raw, rainy day on which to say “goodbye” to Rosie. Jeff lit a fire in the wood stove. Rosie rested on her bed in front of the warmth; I sat with her, watching the dancing flames, sipping tea and quietly stroking her.

And I remembered....

I had wanted a puppy for a long time when I saw a picture of Rosie on Facebook: “Puppy hoping for a forever home by Valentine’s Day...will you be the one to tie a big red bow on her and love her forever?” I skipped the bow...but not the love her forever!

And I remembered...

How Rosie loved snow! She would leap and bound across the fields. Once, Dennis measured the distance from leap to landing—10 feet! Rosie liked me to throw snow in the air so she could jump and snap at it, then shake her head wildly when she got a face full of snow.

And I remembered...

Speaking of “leaping”: in a game we both loved, I held up a stick and she dashed across the field to leap into the air and grab the stick. She could leap as high as I could hold the stick.

And I remembered...

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I had a special call when I wanted her to come. I started with R-o-o, on a low note and then jumped to Z-E-E-E-E held out on a long, LOUD, higher note. I could make it carry far across the fields and woods, and when she came running to that call, she always got treats.

And I remembered...

So many hikes with Rosie. She loved to run and run and run. To make that possible I ended up using an electric collar for training. Many dog trainers disapprove of these, but I used it very sparingly and it gave Rosie the freedom to run. I'd call her, "RooooZeeeeee". If she came she got LOTS of treats. If she did not come, she got a warning beep. Only as a last resort did I give her a mild shock. Every spring I had to remind her of my expectations during the first couple of hikes but the rest of the season she would pivot mid-stride to come flying to me for treats and praise whenever I called.

And I remembered...

Rosie was very popular with the folks at Heritage Heights. She was friendly without demanding constant petting or attention. And she was the perfect height to be petted without leaning over. Rosie loved people and if she saw someone down the sidewalk a ways, she demanded to go to say, "hello" - which gave us lots of opportunities to meet folks as well. Rosie quickly learned that people with walkers often had dog treats in the basket of the walker. Every walker became an object of intense interest!

And I remembered...

The vet and her assistant arrived. Dr. Joann Fontaine and Quinn from Healthy Heart Veterinary Clinic are kind, loving, and personable. Dr. Fontaine chatted with us while greeting Rosie. She suggested we give Rosie as many of her favorite treats—freeze-dried liver—as she wanted. I wondered if

Rosie thought she had already arrived in heaven as we offered her treat after treat. Meanwhile Dr. Fontaine explained her process: first she would give Rosie a sedative to let her settle into a nap. Once Rosie was sleeping, she and Quinn would get access to a vein for the final injection. "While she is falling asleep you will have 10 minutes or so for treats and goodbyes," Dr. Fontaine said.

Rosie died very quickly, with only a fraction of the medication Dr. Fontaine expected to use. "She must have had a major disease process going on internally. She has been hanging on for you," Dr. Fontaine told us. That really put my mind at ease. Rosie had been still wagging her tail to greet me when I would come into the cottage and she was still eating well so I'd been wondering if I was just tired of the extra care she was requiring - so easy to feel guilty when making such an irreversible decision.

"The sky is crying with us," Sadie said as we carried Rosie outside to the grave Dennis and Jeff had dug before the rain started. Rosie used to sit on a hill in the middle of the yard for hours, basking in the sun and surveying the beauty of the lawn and woods. Her grave is on that hill, next to a garden. We got soaked as we buried her and said our final goodbyes. Jeff had bought a "Rainbow Knockout Rose" that we planted there - "coral pink flowers with yellow centers" the description reads. His gift brought another round of tears for me. I am eager to see these bloom!

My heart is light and at peace. I understand grief and expect more tears in the days and weeks to come but for now, all is well, though the sky is still crying today!

## Breaking Down the Barriers

By Sheila Whitney Mable

"But, Mrs. Mable, I can't write," groaned Ray after I announced that we would do a lot of writing this year, my first year of teaching (1968) and second week at Springfield High School.

"Why do you say that, Ray?" I questioned.

"Well, I can't spell."

"Me, too," added Ross, and soon others joined the complaint.

"Okay, folks, hold it!" I yelled over their voices. "One at a time, please." I paused and then asked the class to tell me about their writing experiences.

These ten exceptional ninth graders all responded loudly and emotionally as we discussed where and how they wrote, what their best and worst pieces of writing were, and what they were told about their English skills.

I learned that parents and teachers had often told these students that they couldn't write because they couldn't spell and because they had "lousy" penmanship.

"And I don't talk good enough," added John.

"Yea, and I always get Fs in reading," interrupted Kim.

By the end of class, I knew I would have to face many challenges, but the first one would be to help them overcome their resistance to write. These scruffy, boisterous boys needed to be shown they were experts on certain subjects, needed to overcome past fears about spelling, and needed to experience success in their writing. And I vowed I wouldn't give up on them.

The next day after assuring the boys I would do every composition with them, I

read aloud my piece entitled "In the Combat Zone" about having cafeteria duty. They laughed in delight as I read: "By the time I arrived at the corner table yesterday, two boys had flung mashed potato and green beans at each other. With flying fists, the 'mashed potato boy' knocked over the chair and pushed 'String Bean' into me. 'Ouch!' I screamed, holding onto my foot. 'That's it! To the office.'

"I can hear you now," responded Dennis, not realizing he had recognized a voice from this piece of writing.

After Kim bragged to everyone that String Bean was his older brother, we talked about good writing and reading, and I asked each student to bring in a meaningful object to explain to the class on Thursday. I hoped this show-and-tell session would lead to establishing these students as authorities who have something to say.

As part of my show-and-tell presentation on Wednesday, I showed a model of an Elizabethan theater and told the boys why it was important to me and how it worked. They seemed interested and asked me several questions: "How much did it cost to get in? Are there theaters like that today? How come you know so much about that theater?"

We then talked about the importance of specifics and listed some of my details on the board. When I asked the class what the best detail was, Ed answered, "The men playing girls' parts."

"No way," argued John with an impish grin. "The best part was the people throwing oranges at the lousy actors."

After pointing out the boys' good listening skills and excellent questions that brought out more specific information, I reminded them to bring their props to class the next day. During the next two sessions my

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students spoke about such topics as fly-tying, deep sea fishing, cutting wood, making maple syrup, deer hunting, and working on a piston. I was truly amazed at their polite behavior and expertise. They used the board for illustrations. They demonstrated, explained and answered questions well. They were interesting and interested, and I praised them.

"I want you guys to do a good job in the writing assignment which we will start next Monday," I announced after their speeches. "You are all experts--you proved that in your speeches. You do have something to say and can express yourselves well. You have senses of humor, good stories to tell, and knowledge to share." I then explained that they could write about the items they had just shown or they could choose another topic as long as they knew about it and cared about it.

On Monday the boys came to class with their topics and moved easily from brainstorming details to starting their discovery or first drafts. Ray, however, kept asking me, in whispers, how to spell most of the words. As I wrote key words on a 3x5 card to give to him, I realized I wasn't helping him to think about spelling. And so the next day, I began class with the question, "What do you do when you can't spell a word?"

"Ask the teacher," Ray said and then laughed.

"Look it up in the dictionary," offered Ed, my most capable student of sixth grade reading and writing ability.

Since no one else added to the discussion, I introduced inventive spelling to the boys as a way to overcome that last blockade of getting started in their writing. They were surprised that I would allow them to make up their own spelling on early drafts and

that I wouldn't take off for spelling errors until the final drafts. I emphasized that everyone should try to sound out the word, to get at least part of the spelling. "In the first drafts, however," I urged, "concentrate more on what you are trying to say."

"You promise to help us fix up the spelling later?" Ray asked.

"I promise," I said as he picked up his pencil and began to write as fast as he could.

One week later we finished our pieces of writing and shared them by reading them aloud to the class. "I can't believe it," said Ross. "You actually got us writing and reading."

"I can believe it," I replied. "And just think how much easier it will be to get started on the next paper."

"Deer romance—that's going to be my next story," announced John as the bell rang and the group pushed through the doorway.

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## Encounter

By Joan Borton

After a day of rain and hours in the attic going through Mom's folders labeled "Precious – Save", my back is aching! There are cards, quotations, letters to the editor, articles and family photos. My husband, Cam, encourages me to walk before taking a hot bath to ease that ache: to treat myself for "a job well done." It was satisfying to sort, save, cherish and then let go. It has been ten years since she died.

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I start to circle the conservation pond's rim. The bright gold of black eyed susans catches my eye. I climb down the bank to pick and save them before the fields get mowed. A bouquet of cheer in my hand, I clamber back up the side of the dam. As I emerge on the rim I see a small otter, gracefully leaping along the bank with something in his mouth. I stop still – so pleased to see him or her. “Oh, there you are,” I say softly and watch as a crayfish struggles to get free. Otter holds on and goes down to the pond's edge. I hear a plop, crayfish must've escaped. The otter's pursuing plunge makes ripples on the pond. Soon he is back hidden somewhere in the tall grass. This time the otter is successful with his prey.

As I watch, another otter scampers, or does she leap, within five feet of where I stand. She looks up, her triangular brown face and dark eyes take me in. She keeps on going to settle near her feeding sibling. These are young ones, I'd say by their inexperience and seeming fearlessness regarding me. I laugh out loud with delight as I watch them here at the water's edge.

Ripples appear again. Then a third otter, equal in size, swims close to where I am watching from above. Emerging, he is poised to leap on but catches sight of me and stops, turns, and stands on his hind legs. He looks me straight in the eye. My breath catches. We hold each other in a gaze for seconds that feel like minutes. I exhale slowly.

He must have decided that I am quite big and may actually be a threat, because – then he is off, quickly running toward his siblings. One of them joins him. Did he give a call of alarm? They bound off together, following the rim of the bank toward the brook. Then over and down they go, back to safety and home.

Meanwhile the original hunter, enjoying his feed in the tall grass at the edge of the pond, stays on. I also stay for a while, smiling from head to toe with my memory of their little faces looking right at me.

It is time for my bath. Hot water awaits but could not warm me from the inside out as these darling creatures have. I walk with new energy up the path, eager as Mary Magdalene to share my joy in this encounter.

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## **Frank and Doris**

By Carol Ann Blake

Frank and Doris are delighted with their cottage along the bluff overlooking the Merrimack River

This afternoon finds Doris sound asleep in their master bedroom.

Frank is cleaning the garage.

Suddenly Doris screams “Herb, get in the car!”

Frank drops the hubcap he's polishing. He makes a beeline to Doris, Throws open the bedroom door and in a gentle but firm voice, “Doris, It's me, Frank! Wake up dear! You are dreaming.”

“Oh, Frank! it was awful.”

“What was?”

“I was helping Herb's wife, Hannah get him into their car for Herb's annual Alzheimer's checkup. He kept asking her why! Frank, it was as if he couldn't remember. Hannah was getting frustrated because they were already late. That was why I was trying to boost Herb In!”

“That was very kind of you, dearest.”  
Frank hugs Doris

## Patterns of Life

By Heidi Clow

So many colors  
And numerous patterns  
I could weave all day,  
Every day  
And never finish  
All there is to learn.  
But fifty years  
Of devotion  
To a passion  
For colors and patterns  
And threads of cotton,  
Tencel and wool,  
Has ended.

The looms are sold.  
The colors are sold.  
The equipment is gone.  
But the patterns are there  
In my head  
As I dream  
At night.

At my new house  
In Concord  
There is no space.  
Too many cones of yarn  
Too many weaving tools  
To fit!

THEN

I was gifted a loom.  
"You have to weave!"  
My friends said.  
And so I do.  
I happily weave  
Every day  
On my new loom.  
Experiment with colors  
And patterns,  
And I dream of them  
At night.

## Meeting Famous People

By Barbara Gogolon

My family, especially my father who was a Yale graduate and an engineer, wanted his four children to have more education beyond high school. My two sisters, one older and the other younger, were well suited for nursing school so that was their track. He wanted me to follow what my interest was and that was personnel work. My parents thought that could be covered at a junior college level and those were the schools they looked into. They decided Endicott Jr. College would be a good choice since it was nearby in Massachusetts.

I graduated from Roger Ludlow High School in my hometown of Fairfield, Connecticut in 1943. Going to a junior college would be two years only, so I would be in the class of 1945. In school my strongest subject was always writing and expressing myself. At Endicott, my major was Merchandising as that would cover personnel, but in a very indirect way. Simply, it would put me in a job that would have a personnel department. I made a lot of wonderful friends. My best friend was Beth Daggett, whose hometown was Niagara Falls, New York.

Endicott was in Prides Crossing, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston, a city where we girls liked to go. There was so much to do there. At the same time people in Boston could travel easily to visit nearby towns.

Prides Crossing was an ideal town for a small college as there were lovely estates and big houses that made perfect dormitories for the girls. My dormitory in my second year was once called Alhambra and had been the summer home of Isabelle Stewart Gardner of Boston. Beth, another roommate named Mary Burleson, and I had a bedroom with attached bath on the second floor directly

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over the lovely living room and had a piano as part of the furnishing.

During those war years at Harvard in Boston there was a detachment of young men in the V5 program. Jack Lemon," The jack Lemon," was one of them. His mother had an apartment in Boston, probably on Beacon Hill.

With Endicott's proximity to Boston, the boys in the V5 program came out to our dances to be our dancing partners. Jack Lemon was a wonderful piano player who sought out our dorm to play the piano for us and teach us some crazy songs. He had a warm and friendly personality. When Harvard V5 men were having a dance, Jack invited my roommate, Beth to the dance. She stayed the night in his mother's apartment.

We all became well acquainted with Jack, loved his personality and his piano playing. I am thrilled to say I have known a famous person who has been on stage and in the movies.

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## **The Origins of No-Crack...in case you wondered.**

By Mary Davies

My father owned a drug store but his interest really was in cosmetics. During World War II when it became difficult to stock products from Elizabeth Arden and Helena Rubinstein he began to make his own perfumes, colognes, deodorants, shampoo, bubble bath and hand cream. He even tried lip stick and later used the molds for stick cologne and deodorants. He also made leg makeup when women had difficulty buying hosiery during the war. Another short-lived product was Tiptoe (or was it Pretty Feet?), a medicated foot balm.

All of the resulting odors clung to him, to his car, and even today I can open up papers belonging to Art Heberd and inhale those familiar smells. Both my sister and I now find we are allergic to perfumes. Back in the days when people visited department stores I always tried to avoid the door that entered directly into the perfume sections.

Needless to say, I was often recruited to help mix, bottle, put on labels, and deliver the products. Most popular when he started was the cream deodorant. He had named it Finesse but a big cosmetics manufacturer began using the name for their shampoo. He enlisted a childhood friend to represent him in suing, but the \$500 he was awarded went to his friend, the attorney (who ended up in Cook County jail in Chicago for income tax evasion). The deodorant went through various names and was never the success Art had hoped it would be.

Coming up with names was a creative endeavor. Once he made a dishwashing soap that he marketed to church women's groups as a fundraising product. He called it "Ladies Aid." What became his most long-lasting product was No-Crack Hand Cream. Some other product names included Blasé, Radiant Hour, Gay Mood, Love Me Tender, Aureola, Lara and more.

No-Crack Hand Cream was first concocted in 1942 in response to drug store customers who would come in and complain that nothing worked on their cracked hands. Art came up with a formula that was a heavy rich cream. Some people thought the original No-Crack was too greasy. So he came up with a different formula and marketed the original for night use. These two hand creams, day and night use are still marketed today, 83 years later.

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While Art started out making everything in the back room of the drug store he decided in 1957 to sell the store and move his manufacturing to a vacant store front away from downtown. It was a one-person business and he had several hourly workers he would call in. Unlike the drug store he no longer had to worry about payroll, a soda fountain, cleaning, or prescriptions. In 1994 when he had a stroke he sold it to a woman who had worked for him for years and she got her son involved in the business. Well into his 90s Art would unfailingly call each morning and ask, "Any big orders?"

Still a very small company, using little automation and few workers, No-Crack can still be purchased. In 2001 New York Times columnist Jane Brody recommended No-Crack along with products such as Oil of Olay and Cetaphil for cracked fingers. One big contract was with Restoration Hardware, and they displayed it in their stores often near the checkout counter. Duluth Trading Company sells it today as does Vermont Country Store. Wall Drug, the famous South Dakota retailer was an early outlet.

From the back room of a drugstore to national sales, No-Crack hand cream continues to heal cracked winter-worn hands.

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## **If War is Not the Answer, Then What Is?**

By M. I. Till

Where do we look to find the Answer?  
It must lie before the first missile is fired,  
before the first bomb is dropped,  
before lives are shattered,  
before bones are crushed,  
before eyes are blinded,  
before children are orphaned,  
before cities are destroyed,  
before lands lie fallow.

It must lie earlier than when the dispute arose  
over whose land it is, whose oil it is.

Is it mine because I can take it?

Is it yours because it lies below the land  
where you were born?

No, the answer does not lie there. It comes  
before,  
before the first fence was built around a piece  
of earth

and declared to be mine,  
before we tried to divide the waters that  
refused to be divided.

Like the air, water goes its own way.

It does not respect boundaries.

Is that a clue?

The answer does not lie in defining what is  
mine and what is yours.

The answer lies in the moment the child  
emerges from his mother's womb,  
when he is held in his father's arms.

The answer lies in the moment they tell him  
his role is to share.

Share his time, his food, his intellect, himself,  
with all living beings.

But it is not enough that he does this.

Every child must be taught this way of being  
and sharing.

The answer is all around us. By sharing,  
abundance emerges.

We live on one planet, prolific enough for all  
of us if only we share.

Then there is no longer a need for war.

Let's tear down the fences, decommission the  
bombs.

Let's plant the wheat to feed ourselves and  
our neighbors.

Let's watch two loaves turn into enough to  
feed thousands.

But we must begin with every little child  
that flows from her mother's womb into her  
father's arms.

We must begin. to share together, all of us.  
That is the Answer.

## **Grandpa Smith**

by Sheila Mable

There will be no harvest time this year.  
Grandpa lies in his hospital bed while  
the clock on the wall stares,  
judges and counts out  
his last minutes as he fades  
beyond the reaches of time.  
I, the watcher at his pulse,  
hold his hand-rough and gnarled  
from fifty years of farm work.  
Despite his strong hands,  
he is but a shadow  
of the man he once was.  
"I see the light, " he whispers  
as I lean closer to hear him.  
Oh, please don't let Grandpa die, I pray.  
"Mommy, hurry back,"  
my quivering thirteen-year-old voice says  
aloud.  
But I know he's gone,  
no more to build on there.  
(influenced by "Out, Out" by Robert Frost)

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## **Coming to the Health Service Center (HSC) Part 1 – 2nd Floor**

By Tom Stevens

In August 2022, my doctor diagnosed me with an abscess under the skin of my right leg, just below my knee. I told my sister, a retired nurse, about it, saying that my surgery was scheduled for the following month. She told me to get the surgery done right away! I asked, "What's the rush?" She responded "Well, if the abscess gets into your blood stream, you're screwed! Any questions?" I replied "No!"

So, I rescheduled my appointment for an immediate review at Concord Hospital, in Concord, NH. My surgical nurse kept me in the hospital, and I underwent surgery the following day to correct my abscess.

Before starting the surgery, a few nurses were helping me move my right leg to the correct location on the operating table. As I tried to slide across the operating table a female nurse located behind me said "All we need is another six inches!" I quickly responded, "Lady, I have been hearing that all my life! But this is not the time or the place!"

My surgery involved creating an opening about three inches long and three-fourths of an inch deep on the inside of my right leg. After opening my leg, the surgeon inserted what I can best describe as a sterile version of a vacuum cleaner, to suck the infection out of my leg! The whole procedure lasted about one hour.

My post-surgical treatment required that the wound remain open and heal from the inside to the surface over an extended period, about one year, to completely close the wound. In contrast, an appendectomy incision is closed using stitches, so the wound closes and heals much more quickly.

After six days in the hospital, I was getting ready late one afternoon for discharge to my cottage at Heritage Heights. I had seen the written discharge order, which said "Go Home"! And my car was waiting patiently in the hospital parking lot.

At the last minute, just before 5:00 PM, a nurse said to me "Well, we can't send you home to your cottage because the Visiting Nurse Association does not have enough staff to change your dressing every day. So, guess where you're going?"

Well, I knew the answer to that question – I would be discharged to the Havenwood Health Service Center (HSC). My wife Mary was already a resident on the first floor in the HSC, but there was not even one bed available on her floor, so I ended up on the

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second floor. My new second-floor roommate was a good friend whom I had met earlier at the Heritage Heights campus, so we got along very well.

The design of the second floor of the HSC is based on what I call “1950’s motel-style architecture”, with one bathroom located between, and serving the needs of, two separate bedrooms. Two ladies occupied the next bedroom - so, they got access to the bathroom. My roommate and I were delegated to using wooden commodes! This was reminiscent of my military service in Vietnam, but without all the shooting!

Several days later I developed a COVID-19 infection, so all staff members had to “gown up” each time any of them entered my room. These early COVID-19 gowns were exceedingly long, cumbersome, and difficult to adjust. One night my nurse tripped on her gown as she was bringing a few pills to me. So, here I was with a beautiful nurse falling toward me. By a sheer instinctive reaction, I raised my arms to save her from falling, either on me or the floor! Chance close encounters like this do not often recur!

In the past I had often visited Mary on the first floor of the HSC. But now the staff brought Mary up, by elevator, to the second floor to visit me on a few occasions. Because of the continuing COVID-19 outbreak, Mary had to wear a hot, cumbersome surgical gown that was extremely uncomfortable for her. On the plus side, Mary and I were finally able to enjoy some time together.

I want to emphasize that, despite the COVID-19 related difficulties, all HSC staff members were very skilled and incredibly supportive of my recovery from surgery. For example, the HSC Physical Therapy Department worked with me often to help me to rebuild my strength and walking ability.

After COVID-19 had run its course, I was finally able to enjoy my first bath in the HSC! This occurred about 28 days after I entered the Concord hospital for abscess surgery. This easily topped my previous record of about 7 days without a shower which I had set while serving in the U.S. Army in Vietnam.

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## **Kibbutz Pantoum**

By Kendel Currier

Reading The Source by Michener.  
I learned about the kibbutz life.  
In Israel during a time of peace.  
Kibbutz Parod was eight miles.

South of the Lebanese border.  
Reading The Source by Michener.  
We could see the Sea of Galilee.  
In Israel during a time of peace.

From the dining room windows.  
South of the Lebanese border.  
The Golan Heights in the distance.  
We could see the Sea of Galilee.

Became comfortable with uniforms.  
From the dining room windows.  
Men and women striding.  
The Golan Heights in the distance.

Carrying machine guns in public.  
Became comfortable with uniforms.  
Started by cleaning bathrooms.  
Men and women striding.

Picked and sorted ripe apples.  
Carrying machine guns in public.  
With kibbutzniks and volunteers.  
Started by cleaning bathrooms.

In Israel during a time of peace.  
Picked and sorted ripe apples.  
Reading The Source by Michener.  
I learned about past and future life.

## Acrostic LIFE Poems

By Judy King

I wrote the following as part of an exercise for the recent "Living Fully and Dying Prepared" workshop series. We were invited to write heartfelt, serious, or playful acrostic poems featuring the word "life."

Let my final days  
Inspire you to be  
Fearless and at peace as I  
Experience dying

Listen!!  
I'm  
Fine  
Even now (especially now)

Laugh  
In the  
Face of my  
Extinction

Look carefully after I'm gone  
I will leave my love  
For you to find  
Everyday and everywhere

Laugh and enjoy life or  
I will haunt you  
For  
Ever

Let me go now  
I'm off to a new adventure  
Fearlessly  
Exploring The Next Place

Love each other after  
I'm gone  
For love is life's purpose for  
Each of us

Life  
Isn't  
Forever  
Except after you die

Lucky me  
I  
Found  
Extra-large wings that

Let angel  
Interns learn to  
Fly  
Effortlessly

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## She Is Gone

By Sheila Mable

She is gone,  
Severed from the light.  
Lying cold and alone.  
In the earth.  
We are here,  
Languishing over her grave.  
Feeling empty and wronged.  
On this rainy August day.  
We linger,  
Screaming our pain to the heavens.  
Wishing to reclaim our mother.  
Never to let go.

(a reprint from Issue 3 – December 2013)

## **Not A Christmas Letter**

By Rufford Harrison

It is rare that cards are accompanied by as little as one page of supposed interest. Everyone dreads these epistles. December should be devoted to presents, fattening foods, intoxicating beverages – anything but enforced reading. Furthermore, it is inescapable that the well-meaning writers have insufficient acumen to foresee the reader's reaction. We therefore refuse to embark on such an unwelcome document.

So we shall not tell you the year began with a visit by daughter, Wendy, and grandson, Justin, followed by our two weeks in Florida, sponging on friends and relatives. It is of no interest to you whatever. As, of course, is the fact that John and Jan Haynes stayed with us for Town Meeting, when Rufford was elected Selectman. That we then went to Australia (table tennis meetings) and New Zealand (friends) is likewise of no interest, and so we forbear to mention it.

We shall also remain silent on Rufford's visit to China for the World Championships, and you don't need to know that Marty stayed home, having been there the previous year.

Should we mention that Bruce and Noeline Petrie, aforesaid New Zealand friends, were our next visitors? We think not.

Other's grandchildren are boredom personified so we'll not mention that McCrae and Joann spent July here. Parents, John and Sita and sister Jennie, visited in June. And since it is of no concern that Rufford and son-in-law, Mike, then returned with them to Samona, that too shall remain unremarked.

Rufford's trip to Atlanta, on Olympic matters, would not raise your eyebrows, and we'll

therefore not say a word. Meanwhile Marty and the remaining population of Washington were taped for Good Morning America, but we're quite sure you would have no interest in that.

Our visit to cousins in Pennsylvania will thrill no one, and we'll not mention it. Nor our countless trips to families, friends and the Oktoberfest in Delaware. Our new Jeep, our cow-sitting for a neighbor, Marty's visits to the NH Symphony: all too ho-hum to cite.

You have, we know, such interest in history that a visit here by the Briod family, who used to visit Echo Cottage decades ago, would leave you unaffected. We'll say nothing.

The plain truth is we respect you enough not to impose on your time with the litany of this year's doings. That being said, we note that, should you persist in sending us another tedium, it will go unread for a while. You see, in December we shall be.... But no, you wouldn't be interested in our meeting in Cyprus.

But do have a Merry Christmas, even a Happy New Year. You'll feel better with the knowledge that you haven't had to read yet another of those interminable Christmas letters.

### **Work Haiku**

By Kendel Currier

Typing for poet  
Donald Hall I came to see  
A full bigger world