Dear Friends of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute,

I am so pleased and impressed with the talents presented in this first edition of SPOTLIGHT, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Tufts University literary and art review magazine. I am confident that we can anticipate additional fruitful issues as we move forward.

The vision and the talent you present in and out of the classroom are responsible for the tremendous growth of our program. The joy of learning is ever apparent, as is the joy of serving another as teachers and learners.

Thank you for your part in making the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Tufts University the quality program it is. Congratulations to all of us.

With love,

Marilyn Blumsack, Director
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Tufts University

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves"
- James M. Barrie

The watercolor on the cover was done by Cordelia M. Overhiser. It is of the Croton – a decorative shrub used extensively for landscaping. This photo from which this painting was done was taken at the “Lion Country Safari” in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Many thanks to Kristin Dukes and Lisa Trapasso, Osher LLI Staff members for their help. A very special thanks to the students of the Medford Vocational High School Print Shop, Bill Mahoney, Director of the Medford Vocational High School and Superintendent Roy E. Belson for granting permission to print this historic first edition of SPOTLIGHT.
Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of our new magazine SPOTLIGHT. We feature original work – the voices and artistic creations of members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Tufts University. We have rejected the word retirees because in our society so many negatives have become attached to this period in our lives in which the richness of experience, knowledge and wisdom engender new growth, new learning and new creativity. This magazine is dedicated to the never-ending joy of learning, enrichment and discovery.

The submitted works were reviewed and agreed upon by the editors. A limited number of copies will be printed due to the high cost of mailing. Copies will be available in the Osher LLI office and will be mailed to all contributors. All members may view the contents online at www.ase.tufts.edu/lli.

We want to express our special gratitude to all who contributed; without your work we would not be publishing. Thank you for being a part of this exploration and new adventure.

We would appreciate member feedback and, of course, your submissions.

Sincerely,

Tania Friedman
Mary Hafer
Arlene Heimeret
SPOTLIGHT Editors
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The History of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Tufts University

Sondra Szymczak

The Tufts Institute for Learning in Retirement (TILR) was established in 1999 to allow alumni, students, faculty and administration to interact on campus. Active Tufts alumnus, Ken Fettig, presented the idea to then Tufts president John DiBiaggio and to the Tufts University Alumni Association (TUAA) and “the game was afoot.” Tufts hired the first part-time director and TUAA provided start-up funds.

An executive committee was formed to organize the effort which included Marilyn Blumsack, a TUAA Executive Board Member at that time. The committee scheduled nine courses for fall 2000. In spring 2001, Marilyn Blumsack was hired as director. An online distance learning component became available. This online component caught on quickly and now attracts participants worldwide. On campus, classes were scheduled for Mondays and Fridays when classroom space was more available.

A marketing committee was formed to attract potential new members. The number of class offerings continued to grow. TILR continued to reach out to the local community and the Director formed a partnership with Brookhaven at Lexington, a retirement community, in 2002. Brookhaven offered its campus as a satellite with classes scheduled on Wednesdays starting in fall 2006 which was mutually beneficial.

A full calendar of lunchtime lectures to enliven the break between morning and afternoon sessions. This series drew heavily on Tufts professors and graduate students speaking about areas of study.

Many additional committees were formed as the need arose for members to become more involved. In 2003, the Volunteer Recognition Award was established to honor one or more of those dedicated members annually.

In 2004, the executive committee voted to change the name of the organization to the Tufts Institute of Lifelong Learning (TILL) to acknowledge the growing population of “baby boomers” not quite “retired” but with the time and interest to participate.

Also in 2004, TILL was contacted by the Bernard Osher Foundation with an invitation to apply for an Osher grant established to aid LLI’s. The acceptance of
the grant request another name change to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Tufts University (Osher LLI). Joining Osher connected Tufts to 100 LLI’s throughout the country.

Osher LLI at Tufts University affords us the opportunity to expand in a way which would not otherwise by possible. Our members want more connections and to meet this need, EDventures was established in the fall of 2006 as a collection of out of class activities. Bob Wohlgemuth assented to be its first chair.
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Tufts University Time Line

1999:

- Ken Fettig sent letter to then President John DiBiaggio ~ concerned that students and alumni seldom had an opportunity to interact ~ suggested that an LLI would bring alumni to the campus while school was in session.
- President DiBiaggio asked Dean Rob Hollister of University College of Citizenship and Public Service to do a feasibility study ~ his response positive.
- President DiBiaggio asked the VP of Academic Planning to oversee the development of the proposal.
- Associate Dean Michaela Whalen, Director of Alumni Relations Tim Brooks, Associate Dean of Liberal Arts and Director of the Experimental College Robyn Gittleman and an executive committee was formed with Usha Sellers, Director TUAA Travel/Learn program and Robyn Gittleman as co-chairs.

2000:

- The Executive Committee members were composed primarily of alumni and friends including: Dr. Robert Sears, Norma Sears, retired Dean of Students, Bobbie Knable, the late Dean of Faculty Frank Colchord, Marilyn Blumsack, the late Dudley Samoiloff and David Burns.
- Their plan was presented to the Tufts University Alumni Association and was quickly adopted. TUAA agreed to provide seed money with the request there be outreach to alumni.
- The first part-time Director hired.
- A marketing committee was formed.
- Fall 2000 offered 9 courses on Mondays and Fridays.

2001:

- The current Director, Marilyn Blumsack was hired.
- The first Distance Learning course (online) was offered and now attracts study group members worldwide.
2002:
- The Lunch and Learn series was scheduled drawing from Tufts professors and graduate students.
- Affiliation with Brookhaven established.

2003:
- Winter session was formed.
- Volunteer Recognition Award was initiated to honor service.
- Marilyn McCaffery edited the first formal newsletter.

2004:
- Executive committee voted to change name to Tufts Institute for Lifelong Learning (TILL).
- TILL contacted by Bernard Osher Foundation regarding a grant program.
  TILL’s proposal accepted ~ required name change to Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Tufts University (Osher LLI).
- The inception of the summer program.

2006:
- Satellite campus and an additional class day at Brookhaven on Wednesdays.
- EDvetnures activities ~ a collection of special interest groups formed, chaired by Bob Wohlgumuth.
- SGL Learning Center was established in the fall.

2007:
- Developed an association with North Hill and the Massachusetts Historical Society.
- SPOTLIGHT was initiated, edited by Tania Friedman, Arline Heimert and Mary Hafer.
Intrigued by the pensive pose of a Japanese girl in an advertisement for upscale plumbing supplies, I decided to translate the photograph into a watercolor. Not for a moment did I consider painting the ultra-modern, Western bathroom depicted in the ad. Instead I pored through photos in books a friend loaned me to create a composite of a wooden bath, bamboo blinds, and a glimpse of an Asian garden. Somehow that's where I thought that lovely girl belonged.

- Elaine Rothman
Salt and Pepper to Taste

Sunshine de Leon

For most of my life, the kitchen remained an unknown and feared corner of my soul. It was the only place in the world where I did not know how to trust my instincts, where I was incapable of solving problems. One day a trusted friend of mine told me that he was sure there was an ancient Chinese saying that "if you learn how to cook, everything will fall into place". I decided he was right. Cooking was the one thing I was terrified of and I knew that conquering this fear was an essential part of fully understanding who I was and the possibilities of who I could become.

Sometimes, when you put your mind to something, life hands you the perfect situation. I moved to London for a job and shared an apartment which had a large kitchen, a dishwasher and was conveniently located two minutes away from a large supermarket. I brought along a file of recipes I had collected from friends over the years and "meant to learn to cook", thinking that maybe London, as one of the most expensive places to live in the world, would be the perfect scene for the new role I was about to play. I had always been a devoted "sous chef" when my friends cooked, and would help chop, peel and stir while madly scribbling down every detail of what they did in the kitchen, but this file of notes was truly as far as I had progressed on my own culinary path.

But first, I had to learn to get over a basic childhood fear I realize still haunted me - I was afraid of cracking an egg. I did not spend much time in the kitchen while growing up but I do have certain flashbacks. I remember that no matter how much my mother taught me her expert one handed technique, I always ended up with egg yolk everywhere except the bowl I was trying to put it in. I was a neat child and did not like the mess that I seemed to always create. As an adult, I had learned that imperfection was a part of life and so armed with this knowledge I knew I was ready to risk again. I had spent most of my childhood and adolescence exploring the far corners of the world and not enough of it exploring the basic ingredients of what makes each life flourish in its own space.

As luck would have it, right around the time I mastered the art of scrambled eggs, I also lost my job. I took this as a sign and became determined to find my way in this room that everyone else I knew seemed to understand and yet remained completely foreign to me. I made lists of which recipes which I committed myself to make each week and did my shopping accordingly. I had a strict "nothing will go to waste policy" and adhered to it so religiously that it was not unlikely to find an email...
in my inbox from friends entitled "the what to do with my asparagus, tomatoes and zucchini" recipe dish.

I am told that I live my life like an artist but you would never guess this if you watched me in the kitchen. I was terrified of doing something wrong and guarded against potential errors by treating a recipe like a scientific experiment. I measured everything precisely and did everything in the order in which it was listed. If I did not understand something in the recipe in terms of getting from step A to B, I freely used my kitchen 911 hotline - friends who knew how to cook well and had enough sympathy with my efforts to learn that I could call them at any time of day or night with the most ridiculous of questions. And believe me, no question was too embarrassing or too detailed for me to ask!

It has been my absolute surprise to discover that nothing has given me more pleasure than being able to take raw ingredients and end up with something tasty for my friends and I to enjoy. Each dish I managed to make became a stepping stone to my discovering my own sense of flavor and my acceptance that it was ok to make mistakes. I learned that I could trust myself in an entirely new way and that when I was able to peel back the layers of uncertainty, I did in fact know what it meant when the recipe said "add salt and pepper to taste".
Hi, how are you feeling today?

Terrible. So angry I want to scream. I curse God. There's no hope for me, for us. All we do is hurt each other. I just wanted a normal day, but no, we can't do that. . . We just fight. . . He should find someone else. I should get my own place...

Still holding my breath, I sit down, gripping the phone with my ever tense fingers. What can I say? How can I help? Just a Saturday morning hello call and this all too familiar torrent of fury, vitriol, sadness floods my kitchen quiet. I try to assess what is causing today's rage, but I know it's never really the phenomena at hand. There are so many factors - cancer, pain, depression, longing, careless comments, tiredness - but the deeper why is always beyond my reach.

Isn't cancer reason enough? Isn't pain? But these rages began long before the cancer, before this pain. For a while even, her illness spurred her on to face her stuff. She was amazing, defying her doctor's three-to-six month death warrant. She refused chemotherapy and began her own healing search. Diet, alternative remedies, art therapy - finally she could marshall her will against a real adversary. She lost eighty pounds, she danced and sang, she had days of almost liking herself. Such will power - never before at her command. She wanted to live.

And she has. But now, over five years later, the flush of self-control has faded. She sees herself again as worthless - thinner, but the eating disorder with all its cravings still rumbles just below the surface. She can't eat much since last year's colostomy, but the cravings, the sneaking, the shame gnaw into her confidence.

And yet, she is such a big being - in a soul and spirit sense. Her imagination reaches to the stars and makes connections across time and space. Since her illness, she has started a patient support center that offers help and hope throughout her community, linking doctors and alternative therapists, providing classes and healing conversations. Her hands can fashion beauty from wax, or wool, or straw; her eyes design spaces of warmth and comfort. When she is comfortable, there is no one more fun, or funny, more wise or giving. She will throw a 90' birthday party for a neighbor, organize a block party with a live band and a roving clown, create a table sculpture of vegetables and dried beans at a community center harvest fair to make even committed meat-eaters stand in awe. She is eccentric to be sure. And much loved. She dreams of being normal but does not know compromise. She has a mighty shadow too. Her self-hate will not abate.
From at least the age of six, I remember wanting to make things better for her, wondering why her life was so hard. Mine felt easy. I was happy. But she hung back on the sidelines and always had a plan for escape. Under her bed she kept a bag packed with clean underpants for both of us, in case we needed to run away. I nodded agreement in younger sister fashion, but never knew why we would want to.

As a child she felt unloved, somehow flawed and unacceptable. Our parents hurt her in ways they never understood. We have such different memories. Now I am left with the habit of tense fingers I know I have inwardly grown beyond. And she is left with rage she will not forfeit.

What does she gain from her unhappiness? What do the patterns of self-destruction serve? Is it her anger that keeps her alive? She knows the spirit world, she feels the truth of reincarnation, yet - or is it because of this? - her fear of death is palpable. Would taking hold of her patterns suggest a readiness to move on?

And what of me? My life is so much deeper, so much richer through loving her. It has pained me to realize how much I have learned vicariously from her suffering, how I have grown through her struggles. Can my gratitude approach her sacrifice?

And do I hide behind my questions? Wanting to understand as an effort to stay in control... the stable one who wants to make it all ok. But I can't. Not for her. Not for me. Must she rage her way to death? My love wants to take this from her. To ease her suffering. But perhaps this is her way to go -- no sidelines anymore, just blazing straight across the threshold?

And then? I'll weep. And go on loving ...
It was a strange relationship. I believe there was love involved and intimacy at one time, but it was not apparent. Wendell and Alva, my mother, met when I was very young, perhaps two or three years old. The both rented rooms in a house on Whitwell Street on a hill leading to Quincy Hospital. Alva had recently been divorced from my father, her second husband. My father was an alcoholic and I suspect abusive to my mothers, which is why she chose to live apart from him. My mother’s first husband Malcolm died young because of a heart problem. She loved him dearly and had a modest home and a middle class life style. When he died she was left alone with no money. Wendell had also been divorced, although I never learned the circumstances. I think this may have been the problem with their relationship. Wendell could never live up to Malcolm’s image in Alva’s eyes.

I can remember Wendell visiting us ever since I was a little kid. He still lived in the house on Whitwell Street. We had moved to a housing project on a peninsula in Quincy called Germantown. I can remember watching him walk down the street from the bus stop to our apartment wearing a baggy suit and a straw hat. He always wore a suit and tie that he put on after work. I don’t think he wanted people to know he was a factory worker. Wendell would visit us several times a week, depending on his work schedule. He would stay until the last bus left for Quincy Square in the evening.

During his visits he and Alva would talk about the events of the day. Alva always complained about her stature in life and things that had gone wrong during the day. Alva might complain about the neighbor coming home drunk late at night wakening up the neighborhood. Wendell always saw the good side of people and would sympathize with the neighbor and his problems. Wendell, a Christian Scientist, was always optimistic and would say that God would set things right, if you would only believe. Their opposite points of view on life would inevitably result in an argument. Sometimes he would not come to visit for several weeks because of some disagreement, but he would always come back. I am sure that he gave my mother money from time to time, but I never saw money change hands. Wendell was a generous and compassionate man, although he had little money to give. I always thought that he deserved to be treated better.

Wendell was more of a friend to my sister and me than a father. He was younger than my mother by a few years, but he was not a young man when I knew him. My mother was forty years old when she gave birth to me, her first child. My sister was born two years later. Wendell never played catch with us or
took us to a ball game. I don’t think he had the time, the energy or the money. Because of Wendell there were always plenty of gifts for my sister and me at Christmas.

I often wondered why he continued to visit us. Alva was never pleasant around him. He would tell us that he had taken courses at Boston University. Alva would say that it was not true. He aspired to be a write, but I never saw his work. When she saw him walking from the bus stop, she would laugh and say “Here comes Kingfish.” I am no sure what “Kingfish” symbolized. “Kingfish” was a character on the Amos ’n’ Andy television show that was on the air in the fifties. Kingfish was black and the head of the Mystic Knight’s Lodge in Harlem. Maybe she laughed because Wendell aspired to be more of a leader than she thought possible.

The relationship continued over the years. When I was attending college, Wendell helped me obtain a summer job at the factory he worked at as a security guard. Wendell owned a used car by then and visited mother frequently at her new apartment in Germantown. He would take her shopping and drive her to visit her friends. When Wendell was not around Alva would acknowledge to me what a kind and gentle man he was. After college, I moved to Michigan, married and had a family. Alva would visit us once a year and we would visit her in the summer. One year Wendell came with her to visit. He enjoyed walking our dog every day. When he left for home, he forgot to take his walking shoes. He said that he would pick them up when he visited again, but that was his last visit.

When he was in his early seventies he moved to Pembroke to live with his daughter. He continued to visit Alva in Quincy until his health did not allow it. He died in his late seventies. I returned to attend his funeral. Alva said she could not bring herself to attend the funeral, but she said that she would miss him. She would say nothing but good things about Wendell until her death. Why didn’t she say these things to him when he was alive? Maybe she did.
Fire!

Elaine Rothman

Jerry plucked at the frayed hole in his jeans, just above his right knee. He bent over to sniff the scorched material. The flesh under the burned hole was hot and tender to the touch. If he was lucky the spot would turn into an interesting blister. It had been easy to slip down the hall and return the scented candle to its holder on his big sister’s bureau. He was confined to his own room, but no one could forbid his going to the bathroom, just past Jenn's bedroom, could they? The book of matches was a little trickier. When they had ransacked his room, emptying drawers and shining a flashlight into every corner of his closet, no one had thought to look behind the poster of Mount Rainier taped to the wall over his bed. There was only one match left in the book, and he would have to think very carefully about how to use that one.

He thought he heard a step on the stairs. Jerry was pretty sure he was alone in the house, but Mom might have come home on her lunch break, to check on him. He swiveled on his chair, tucked his legs under the desk and pretended to be deep in schoolwork. The teacher really piled the work on. The school board had been lenient this time. But Mrs. Howard must hate him to assign what looked like four weeks of work for a two-week suspension period. She had been the one to invade the boys’ bathroom, not trusting him to be gone for more than a minute, and looking almost happy to catch him igniting the paper towel roll.

There was no one on the stairs. Mom had said she would be home at 5 to take him to the shrink, who might or might not recommend appropriate placement. A funny expression, "appropriate placement". Something the school board had said when they ordered the two-week suspension from school was, "pending appropriate placement". "Pending" was easy. It meant something hanging over you. But "appropriate" and "placement" made no sense. Since Dad had died it was Mom who decided what was appropriate for Jerry. And he had placement, a seat in Mrs. Howard's fourth grade class where everyone thought he was peculiar because he spent his time reading history books, while the teacher lectured on stuff he already knew. And a place in a perfectly good home with Mom and Jenn, both of whom could be pains, but what women weren't? Even more of a pain was the shrink, who looked at Jerry with his pitiful, spaniel eyes, as if he was so, so sorry that Jerry had no father. As if there weren't plenty of other kids living with just one parent, for one reason or another. As if the accident, Dad's commuter plane going down in a burst of flames, accounted for Jerry's habit of starting fires. If he chose to, Jerry could set that shrink straight. Explain what should be obvious to anyone, about the beauty of fire, the thrill of watching long yellow tongues lick and consume everything in their path. But the man wasn't worth the effort. It was better
to stare at the shrink as the guy questioned, paused, and then filled the silence with his own far-out guesses, most of which began with another question, "Do you suppose?"

It was boring sitting here looking at the pile of schoolwork which he had no intention of tackling. He wished he hadn't read every book on his shelves, several times. The burn on his leg began to smart. Jerry had been trying to see if he could make a perfectly round hole with the lit candle. But when he had tilted the candle, the flame sputtered and went out. It must have been the puddle of hot wax that burned his flesh. Jerry sniffed at the hole in his jeans once more. It smelled more of cinnamon than burned cloth, a highly unsatisfactory odor. He regretted wasting his next-to-last match on such a foolish experiment.

Fire should be nose-tingly, and mixed with the piney smell of deep woods and mountain air. It should send crackly sparks into the night like the wilderness campfires his father used to make. "You can't possibly remember our camping trips, honey," his mother once said. "You were only two." But Jerry did remember. He remembered the shadows under his father's eyebrows and chin, the red glow on his cheeks, how Jenn held her cold little hands over the fire to warm them, how his mother blew on the glowing embers to bring new life to the flaky ashes. And before they all went to bed, he remembered being held in the crook of his father's arm, as his father doused the fire with a bucketful of lake water. Jerry put his head on his knees and remembered the smoky smell on everyone and everything in that snug little tent.

The curtains at the open windows moved in the breeze, and Jerry heard the usual neighborhood sounds. The murmuring of a nearby N, which grew louder at commercial breaks. The wheeze of the air brakes on the bus that stopped at the corner.

He made a cone of Mrs. Howard's assignment sheet, lit his last match and touched it to the paper. He brushed the filmy curtains with his paper torch and saw them flare yellow and orange, and go up in a wonderful whoosh. Holding aloft what was left of his torch he ran to the other set of window curtains.

Someone was sure to see the flames or smell the smoke, and call the firehouse, which was only a block away. He listened for the shrieking wail of sirens. He recalled reading in a history book that long ago fire engines were pulled by horses. Just think how exciting it would be if a horse-drawn engine arrived with clanging bells, while a black and white Dalmatian sprinted along close behind.
Old Dogs

Elaine Rothman

Dogs don't imagine things. Not old, experienced dogs like Blackie, who's been around people long enough to know who is worthy of trust and who merits a suspicious snarl. The first time the stranger came to the lake, the man I think of as "the swimmer" because I never did learn his name, Blackie growled. The dog even staggered to his feet, fooling himself with the notion of springing. I petted him until he collapsed into a watchful crouch, eyes on the swimmer, a menacing rumble burbling in his throat.

The stranger made an unusual sight, with hat and dark glasses bobbing over the water. The hat was yellow with a narrow headband, and flattish, the kind we used to call "porkpie". He was swimming along the whole length of the roped off section, back at the deep end. He might have been using a kind of breaststroke, arms under water. He made it look easy, his hat nodding with each stroke, his dark glasses beaming a steady course.

I was watching from my usual spot at the edge of the beach where the cattails meet the trucked-in sand. Plenty of people come to the lake to swim laps, but I never saw anyone like this fellow, who seemed to run on batteries. When the yellow hat reached one end of the swimming area it would reverse itself and plow back to the other end. Up and back, up and back, for maybe half an hour. I hadn't brought a watch, just my cane, my dog and my towel. The towel because I thought I might get in my first swim of the season, before the State Park was officially open. Blackie was for company. In another couple of weeks dogs wouldn't be permitted. And the cane was for my arthritic right hip. Even the few yards from my house to the park entrance are a daily challenge.

Swimming is another matter. In water my body does what I tell it to. I can float, swim, even surface dive, as if there were no such thing as stiff muscles or brittle bones. Water is our natural element, like the fluid in the womb where we began. We were never meant to stand upright in the air that doesn't support us properly.

I figured on taking my swim after the stranger finished his laps. If he were an older person, he'd understand about arthritis. I'd ask him about the temperature of the water. It's generally pretty cold in late spring. But thanks to Blackie, who shivered and whined, begging to be taken home, I never got to talk to the
swimmer. By the time I returned to the beach, he had gone. The lake was mine for the first goose pimply dip of the season.

The quiet times at the park ended when school was out, around the middle of June. Jammed parking lot, lines at the refreshment stand; smoky barbecues, frantic volleyball games. Some hot afternoons it seemed as if there wasn't an inch of beach on which to lay a handkerchief, much less a blanket. The place roiled with noise from screaming kids, lifeguards' whistles, and competing boom boxes.

Every afternoon I pick my way over sandcastles and oiled bodies to my spot at the very edge of the beach. I recognize most of the faces, locals who've been coming for years. People greet me by saying things like, "How're things going, Mrs. S.?" Because of Stepan that's what they call me, not trying to get their tongues around the five-syllable name that was my late husband's. Stepan died last year. He was an exacting man, a long time caretaker for the State Park. I fill the emptiness that his passing left by doing things I've always done, like going to the beach. For a while there I added something to my routine, watching for the swimmer, the one in the hat and dark glasses. He never failed to appear.

It was funny how he swam without leaving a mark, not even the kind of scratches swarms of skater bugs make on the water's skin. Pond lilies had begun to invade the swimming area, something my husband never permitted when he was in charge of the park. And at the approach of the swimmer's yellow hat long skeins of those lily stems would break apart. Other lap swimmers changed lanes as the dark glasses advanced. Even the kids concentrating on their rowdy game of Marco Polo would scatter.

He didn't seem to know anyone, and I believed it was up to me to acknowledge his presence. I was brought up to say "Good morning" to my parents, and to greet everyone I passed. My mother said you do three things: meet someone's eyes, call the person by name, if you know it, and say something polite. Out of respect for another human being. So I dived into the lake, trying to ignore the band-aids and Popsicle sticks that floated on the surface. Stepan would have had a fit over the way the place is neglected. I swam under water, and came up not far from the yellow hat. For about three dozen yards I side stroked alongside the dark glasses, expecting them to turn in my direction. They didn't.

"Beautiful day!" I shouted, so his right ear would hear me over the racket the kids were making.
The dark glasses stared straight ahead. The swimmer never swerved. I quit my sidestroke and stayed more or less in one spot, treading water. I was ready for his return trip.

"I wish I had your stamina!" I told his left ear. Still no response.

One of the lap swimmers paused and eyed me curiously.

"Were you talking to me, Mrs. S.?" she called.

"He must be deaf," I sputtered.

"Who do you mean?" she asked.

"The swimmer in the hat," I told her.

She shook her head, maybe to clear water out of her ears. I dried myself and limped home, earlier than usual, to make a cup of tea. I told Blackie about my chagrin at being snubbed by the swimmer. My grizzled dog, in "people years" even older than I am, growled. With Stepan gone, there's no one but Blackie to talk to. But anyone can tell you old dogs can keep up a conversation. When I said I was determined to get some kind of response from that fellow, Blackie closed one eye in disapproval.

Chilly or rainy weather did not deter the swimmer. He'd even appear at the lake on grim days, when the ticket booth was unmanned and no one else bothered to come, except me, of course. On a day of stubborn drizzled posted myself where I could wait him out, get a good look at him when he emerged from his swim. My vigilance was rewarded. I saw him remove his hat and dark glasses, and realized he looked even odder without them. His hairless scalp was polished, his nose so large and fleshy it hid his mouth. The top of his skull would barely reach my shoulders, and I am thought to be a small woman. He pulled on a striped, terry cloth bathrobe, probably made for a child. As the swimmer trudged uphill to the parking lot, he let the hem of the robe drag over sand and spiky grass. I followed, a considerate distance behind him.

He unlocked the door to an old Cadillac, the kind you rarely see around anymore, a shiny black model, with tailfins. He climbed on to some cushions, gunned the motor and backed the car out of its space. For several minutes after he'd gone, the stench of exhaust fumes hung in the air.
The weather had cleared by the next day and the park was crowded. I decided to ask one of the lifeguards about the swimmer. Trudy was a sweet girl. I had gone to school with her grandmother.

"It must be hard living on your own after so many years, Mrs. S," she said, ignoring my inquiry. Her brown eyes held no truth in them. If Trudy couldn't answer a simple question, she should have said so.

I hoped the ticket taker might be more straightforward.

"Who's got the old black Cadillac, Ben? The one with the fins?" "Never saw such a vehicle, Mrs. S. Is it parked here today?"

It was parked there every day. Even Ben had taken to telling me lies. I chose an afternoon, made sultry by passing squalls, to sit on a bench three feet away from the swimmer's Cadillac. Thunderheads inked the sky, advancing as I waited. Then the skies opened up, but I didn't care, because a little water never hurt anyone.

The swimmer was a pitiful sight, his bald skull streaming with rainwater, his bathrobe sodden against his small boy's body. As he put the key into the ignition, I walked right up to the driver's window and gave him my widest smile. Even if he was a foreigner who knew no English, he'd understand a smile.

He aimed his empty eyes over my head, then pointed his big nose over his shoulder and backed the car out. He left me standing in a puddle, smiling at a cloud of smoke in a vacant parking lot. Luckily there was no one around to witness my humiliation.

Fingers of lightning pricked at the hills. One nailed the water just about where the swimmer had been a very short time ago. I had good reason to wish the deadly bolt had erased his rudeness forever, but I banished the thought as quickly as it came. I am getting on in years, but I refuse to become a mean old woman.

I continued to go to the lake every afternoon, but no longer thought very much about the swimmer. And when I left for home, I walked as straight as I could, hardly leaning on my cane. On Labor Day the beach and picnic area were peppered with people. I couldn't help noticing the old black Cadillac hemmed in by scores of cars and pickup trucks, parked every which way.
Three or four kids were scooping minnows from the mucky shallows where the weeds grew thickest. None of them seemed to be paying attention to something that definitely didn't belong there. Moored in a tangle of pickerelweed was a yellow porkpie hat with a narrow headband. I started to wade out to get a closer look. A scrawny boy looked up and saw me. He snatched the hat from the weeds, twirling it on one finger, taunting me with his prize.

"Did you lose something, Mrs. S.?" he called.

A few seconds later another boy announced his find. He'd been surface diving and had just come up with a pair of dark glasses. I was the one who discovered the swimmer's striped terry cloth robe, a mud-streaked rag, crumpled at the edge of the lake.

Once it wouldn't have been hard to find him. The water used to be so clear you could see pebbles glinting in the sun, twelve feet down.
Her Father's Death

John F. Murray

It was the summer of 2005. We had just taken Charlie and Elaine to lunch at the Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth for one of their famous chicken dinners. Charlie had slowed down considerably the last few years, but he insisted that he drive his fifteen year old Lincoln Town car forty miles to the restaurant. Charlie, Elaine and Helen had the chicken dinner. I had the chicken livers. I know they are bad for my health, but I like them and once a year I am willing to take the risk. We drank a beer and ate and talked a little. We paid for lunch. On the way to the car we stopped at an outside bar and listened to a one man polka band and drank another beer. This was the last time I bought Charlie a beer.

Charlie had lived an active life and enjoyed being with people. He had been a soldier, farmer, a fireman and a public servant until he retired in his late seventies. He still served on the Board of Supervisors for the county. Charlie and Elaine had eight children; six girls and two boys. Helen, my wife was the second oldest. They had more grand children and great grand children than I can remember.

It was Christmas time 2005. We had just moved to Florida in May of that year. I had just retired from the government at age 59. Most of Charlie’s family attended the annual Christmas Eve gathering at his house. There was usually quite a crowd. Charlie was not feeling well. Elaine had encouraged us to attend, but this was our first Christmas in Florida and Michigan was cold and dreary in the winter. We did not attend. We had attended this gathering only one time since we left Michigan to live in Texas in 1988. It was a cheerful event most years. There was plenty of country food: turkey, beans, meatballs, dressing, mash potatoes, green beans and more. Names were drawn to see who was giving whom a Christmas present that year. Each family was in a group picture in front of the fire place. This year, many took the opportunity to be in a picture with Charlie. Some of the pictures were sent to us. He did not look good.

Charlie felt even worse as New Years approached. For the last few years Charlie and Elaine took a traditional trip to a casino in Upper Peninsula over the New Year. Elaine wanted Charlie to stay home this year because of his health, but Charlie insisted that they go. Dale, one of my brothers in law drove the Lincoln to the casino. Charlie did not feel like driving this time. Upon arrival, they all made a beeline for the gambling floor. Charlie stayed in the room. Charlie was not mush of a gambler. Most years he would mingle with the crowd at the slot machines and watch the world go by, but not this year. Many of the guests that he knew from past years came up the room to say hello. Charlie liked that. Elaine played
the slot machines and always told us that she won. I wonder how the casino makes money.

About a week after New Years, we received a call. Charlie had been admitted to the hospital. The night before he had tapped his cane on the floor to wake Elaine. Charlie had taken to sleeping in the living room on the couch. The short stairway to the second level bedroom would take more energy than he had. Dale and Mary who lived next door came over to help. Charlie said to call the ambulance but not to turn on the siren. He had been admitted to the hospital before, but never wanted to take an ambulance.

We were kept posted on Charlie’s condition. It didn’t seem to be improving. Charlie had always bounced back. On the day after the first call, we were told now was the time to go to Michigan. Helen’s nephew Mike met us at the airport and drove us directly to the hospital. Michigan was cold and dreary as expected. I am glad we arrived when we did. Charlie was still breathing, but did not recognize anyone. Helen wished she had arrived the day before while he was cognizant. Charlie died at 8:00 PM that night with all his children and Elaine at his side. He has just turned 80 a few months before.

The funeral was more of a celebration of Charlie’s life than a wake. The casket was surrounded with flowers and toy tractors and farming equipment. Three painting done by Elaine were on display. Elaine placed one of her paintings of a church scene in the casket to be buried with him. Charlie loved her paintings. The volunteer fire department arrived in full uniform to show their respect. More than 600 people said farewell at the funeral parlor. The funeral procession to the grave site was lead by a fire truck. At the grave, there as a veteran’s ceremony. The flag was given to Elaine.
Softening the Past So There Can be a Future

Kerry Bennett

Unfinished business. I love it; it sticks in my craw and wakes me up sweating and unable to breathe. Unfinished business snaps my head around in the midst of conversations or a very good egg. It lies in wait, ready to attack because-in it's best form-it wants me to leave the planet in good shape. I could list dozens of ub's including writing and painting more, traveling to Iran, building stronger ties to my kids and helping the world in some concrete way. But my immediate task showed itself 3 weeks ago.

I was writing about my father when I hit a sinkhole of feelings and as I dropped down into it, I saw my father and his 3rd wife, Rita. The stories contained in this hole are vivid and well known to me but what became conclusively clear was my need to see Rita before she plunged out of sight and into the hole from which we generally don't return (some beliefs notwithstanding). I catch myself being flippant and I have reasons, you see, I haven't seen her in 17 years, not since my father died, not since she refused to let anyone speak at his funeral, not since she has wanted to control everyone in sight.

Now that her sight has narrowed and my feelings have mellowed, there is urgency to convey to her an important message of thanks. It goes like this. When my father was in his mid-70's, she said to him, "Chet Dudley, are you going to die and not have seen your son again?" (translation: except for two brief times in his life, he had not seen me in the 30 years; not since I was five. Was he going to shuck off his mortal coil without talking to me again?)

She applied emotional shiatsu to him and he called. For this I have always been grateful. And now, with my eticket in cyberspace, it's time to wade through the cultural, religious and personality differences between us and make my way to South Carolina. I know there are deeper questions that swirl around forgiveness and abandonment and reminders of loss but I will put one foot in front of the other, my arms out to greet her, and we will go from there.
Kaddish

Marsha Starr Paiste

Yitgadal veyitkadash sh'mei raba b'alma divera chireutei ...
Let the Glory of God be extolled, let His great name be hallowed, in the world
whose creation he willed. ..

Mrs. Rosa Reische snapped her suitcase shut and turned to her daughter, Anna, a
robust ten year old. It was time to leave for a visit to Rosa's sister, Edna in the city.
They hugged Mr. Reische and fourteen year old Jacob, took a deep breath of the
late August air and were off. She never imagined that might be a final farewell.

The visit with Edna was filled with long conversations over sweet tea and
mandelbrot. Mrs. Reische spoke of life in her tidy home in Eastern Poland. Talk
ended abruptly if politics was suggested. No one mentioned the bullying Anna had
experienced at the hands of her classmates. All attempted to make this visit a happy
diversion. But on the first of September they awoke to shouts, shots and screams.

Edna, Rosa and Anna heard the droning of planes and the rhythm of marching men
in dark German uniforms. The dawn was filled with bellowed commands and gunfire.
Fearsome wails informed them that neighbors were being executed before the eyes
of their families.

They shrunk in terror as a fierce young soldier crashed through the door. With his
gun the young man indicated that the family should go outside. All the Jewish
neighbors were being grabbed and pushed into two lines. In the chaos Rosa lost
sight of Edna forever. She grabbed Anna's hand tightly as they were propelled into a
line. They stood trembling as an officer touched Anna's blonde braids and looked
quizzically at the woman, "Her father... ?"

Rosa instinctively lied, "Her father is Aryan." The officer waved them into the other
line with a look of disgust. Another soldier asked Anna's age. "She is twelve," Rosa
answered.

The people in the first line were taken away and gone.

Veyamlich malchutei bechayeichon ...
May
His kingdom soon prevail, give us strength; His love comforts us..
The two Reisches and many others were pushed into a boxcar. After several days of unbearable heat and darkness those who remained alive were unloaded at the Steyr-Daimler-Puck munitions factory in Majdanek to become slave laborers. Together, the Reisches were sent to the women's area.

They lived for years at the edge of starvation. Daily rations never exceeded a cup of "coffee" made of turnips, soup made from grass and a small amount of bread. Fortunately, some guards liked the young blond and slipped her a bit of bread. This was dangerous for both giver and recipient. Mrs. Reische saw a barracks-mate clubbed about the head when the guards discovered a piece of bread hidden in her sleeve. Blood flowed from her ears and she became deaf.

All suffered from malnutrition. Many had bloated stomachs and were covered with sores. The inmates looked like skeletons. Their individual human appearance eroded.

Each day began with an interminable roll call. No matter what the weather the inmates stood at attention for hours to be counted. The Reisches quickly learned to avoid standing near new arrivals from Greece. They did not understand the German command and were slow to respond. These women, and those standing nearby would be machine gunned. Women who were too weak to stand were killed immediately. If one cried out as a friend or relative was shot, she too was killed.

The work day began at sun up. The labor was exhausting and beatings frequent. Tuberculosis, typhus and other ailments filled the camp. Those taken to the infirmary were never seen again.

Some of the women stayed alive because of basic human instinct. For some, living was their single act of resistance. Some refused to die in order to tell the world their story. For others the will to live was fueled by the dream of Zion. A few yearned to see the coming of the Messiah, which surely must be at hand. Rosa and Anna stayed alive for each other. Each lived to help the other through torment and deprivation. Each stood as a pillar for deprivation the other. They knew that as long as they remained well enough to work they would survive. They gave strength to each other.

A cold, ineffectual sun crept into the factory during Rosa's and Anna's fourth winter at the camp. Daylight silenced the barely audible whispers around them. Women who
worked near the guards had heard nervous conversations about the advance of the Russian army. Many days began with eager anticipation only to conclude with despair. This morning was different. The women could hear the faint popping of gunfire. They could see tension in the guards faces and fear in their eyes. They smelled the flames as evidence of atrocities was burned.

A German officer suddenly appeared and ordered all the women into a line. They marched into the snow. Anna had rags about her feet. Rosa had none. Away from the city and towards the wood they marched. Those who fell were left behind. Anna and Rosa marched on, emotions whirling, yet thinking of nothing, focusing on nothing. Anna dreamed of lying in the snow, sleeping in the pure white fluff, dreaming, dreaming in the chilly air. The snow looked like clouds. Anna dreamed of heaven. Startled by the distant look on her daughter's face, Rosa glared and gave her a silent stern pinch.

Fill us with trust in You, turn us again to the tasks of life.

Both Reisches were near collapse when they saw the Russian troops and realized that the guards were no longer with them. Some women shouted, others prayed. Anna and Rosa stood stunned and immobile.

A Russian officer approached Rosa. Her head was bursting with fear and fever. Her emotions swirled as the man placed a heavy cold metal gun in her hand. He gave her a hard look and spat in the direction of a young guard who had not managed to escape. Rosa looked down, the gun awkwardly resting in her right hand. She wiped tears from her eyes then brushed her left hand against her filthy cotton dress. She squinted at the guard. The Russian pointed the weapon towards her tormentor. Rosa shook with anger and desire for revenge. The weight of the gun was unbearable. Rosa wept silently and thought , "I am now free. I am no longer a member of a herd to be directed. I am free to decide my own fate. I can choose to end a young life. Now I am free. I can choose how I live my life." Rosa shook her head, swallowed hard, and returned to gun to the Russian.

‘Yehei shlaama raba min-shemaya vechayim aleinu veal-kol-Yisraeil, veimeru: amein.
Oseh shalom bimromav, hu yaaseh shalom aleinu veal kol-Yisraeil, veimru: amein.’

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.
He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.
Prayer From Pakistan

Marcia A. Grant

I pour myself a gin and tonic—from my secret stash, go out onto the balcony and sit facing the West, with my glass held low so that it cannot be seen from the street or from the roof of the house next door. My neighbor, an older man who I'm told is an engineer from Pakistan Airlines, is again sitting on his roof looking out onto the street. He waves at me, I keep my glass down and shout "Salaam Alaikum."

"There's a wonderful breeze tonight, isn't there?" he asks before he goes in for evening prayer and Iftar, the breaking of the fast. After he leaves I sit sipping at my drink, watching the sky and listening to the birds, mostly large black crows, swirling around, cawing, looking for their night's perch in the neighborhood's trees. And then, slowly, the wave of sound comes to me. First from the left, then the right, until I am surrounded by the swirling tones of the muzzeins of at least four mosques. Strong male voices in minor discordant tones that overlap, separate, return.

The call to prayer and its reminder that there is but one God, "Allahuh Akbar," enters my body and fills me with the strangeness of the harmonies and the power of the call.

The experience of Ramzan in Pakistan is so very different from the Ramadans I've spent in Jeddah, in Saudi Arabia. As Princess Lolowah would have said, "But we were never under colonial rule, and they were," and that is part of it. There are many kinds of Moslems in Pakistan with different practices, some who fast and some who don't, some who pray five times a day, and many who don't. There are also Hindus and Christians and people who do not practice any faith. Whereas in Saudi Arabia it is assumed that all Saudis are Moslem, and that Moslems in Saudi Arabia are Sunnis and Wahabis, although this is of course not true. Nonetheless, prayer is far more central to all of life there. And religious policemen enforce the prayer laws. All businesses close five times a day for prayer, and it is the skillful person who can get into a restaurant and get served between Maghrib or sunset prayer and 'Isha, the evening prayer. During the working day, even during the University's board meeting, at prayer time men and women excuse themselves, do their ablutions, and then look for their prayer rugs and go into a corner of the room and pray. Also, during Ramadan, everyone fasts, and it is considered to be more than discourteous to be seen with a bottle of water during the daylight hours, for the faithful are not allowed to eat or to take a sip of water until sunset.

The other side to the stringent fasting in Jeddah is that the nights come alive with feasting and prayers and - shopping. Jeddah, where I lived for two years, has more than one hundred and thirty five shopping malls, and anything legal
can be purchased there. During Ramadan the shops are closed during the day, but at night - even until two a.m. - the shops are alight and full of customers. When I was setting up the women's university in Jeddah and needed to find furniture for the administration, I spent several nights starting at midnight, looking for sofas, desks and credenzas, all manufactured in North Carolina, at prices below what one would have paid in the States. On these shopping sprees, I saw an extraordinary gaiety around me. And I understood that at some level the staying up much of the night came from the earlier behavior of the Bedouin, avoiding the heat of the desert.

Yet in Jeddah, there were many, including some of my friends and my African driver, who spent Ramadan in prayer and the study of the Koran. I remember Ahmad, my driver: a smart, funny man from Chad who looked like an Etruscan stick figure, asking me one day when I recognized that the traffic circle contained a sculpture of Noah's ark: "Madam, you have Noah?" (This was asked incredulously.) "Yes," I answered. "And you have pray?" "Yes."

"Madam, you almost be Moslem. Only difference: no pray five times a day. No have Ramadan, no have Zagat (The Moslem practice of giving alms), no go to Mecca on Hajj, and no believe in Mohammed." "That's true, Ahmad." "Yes, but we Africans see you be like us." (Quietly, I think to myself, "If only, Ahmad.")

I am warmed by Ahmad's sense of universality. He made my life in Jeddah a more pleasant one, sharing a sharp sense of humor and a clever commentary on life as he saw it in Saudi Arabia. Against all prescribed practice we would drive around the city, chattering about politics and philosophy, observing the world around us, laughing and laughing.

After my time in Jeddah, I returned home to my French village. It's a farming village, and its little church holds a service only every five or six weeks when a priest is available. The first Sunday after I got back I went in and bowed my head, with the sounds of holy housework to prepare mass going on around me. Trying to get to that still small place inside where there is no monkey chatter in my head I think about where I had recently come from. I saw in my mind's eye the faithful at prayer. Just for an instant I had a flash and suddenly God and Allah were in that little French country church, and whatever it was that I meant by God was expanded in me forever.
Creature of Habit

Cynthia Rockwell

My dear friend Anne tells me that the way to make sure a cat will always come back is to rub butter on his paws. Her paternal grandmother, a horse-whisperer in England during World War I, shared that secret with her. My husband and I administer this treat to our big old Maine Coon cat nightly, like a blessing for his safety, which he accepts with grace, his twenty-pound bulk rendered almost dainty as he licks between his toes. He stops now and then to look up at us, holding eye contact, even with his back paw raised and his toes outstretched. Then, he goes back to enjoy his buttery paws.

Once a stray who roamed the neighborhood (trudging, his great head held low and swaying from side to side) our Coon cat now enjoys a nightly strut around the perimeter of his home. We three exit our kitchen, two pairs of shoes crunching the gravel of the driveway, one set of pads picking their way with precision.

Once on the grass, he signals the walk's official start with a sharpening of his claws on the old woodbin by the side of the barn. He looks over his shoulder at us, makes eye contact, and leads us onward.

I'd never noticed until he moved in that this is what is missing in most cats: they don't hold eye contact. If, say, they are sleeping and you put your face close to theirs so you can smell their sweet little-cat breath, they will open their eyes, meet yours, blink, and then most likely look over your shoulder or around the room before squeezing their eyes shut and resuming the nap.

Not our Maine Coon cat. Scoop him up so his full belly is facing you, all pink beneath the fur, and his legs are sticking out, awkwardly pantalooned in layers of fur, and he will look you full in the face, duck his head, chirp his questioning "Mmmrrrrt?" and hold your gaze. He seems surprised, I think, to find that he is a cat in this lifetime.

When we first brought him in, he'd follow me through the house as I talked with my sister on the phone and bustled through Saturday chores. He'd call to me, "Mrrow?" each time I moved to the next room. After a few times, my sister interrupted me. "Who's that?" she asked. "I keep hearing one of the kids calling, 'Mom?'"

He is more trusting of our separations now, but brooms remain a problem. He scuttles off to hide under the table whenever we sweep the floor—which wasn't ever
often and is now quite rare. Mostly I’ll kneel and use the small brush and dustpan, even if I don’t see him nearby.

This evening, as is customary, my husband and I follow his swishing tail. We climb the fieldstone stairs; our cat glides up the tumbled-down wall. Then we three wend our way up to our garden nook by the stream, where we stop and brush our cat’s fur until it is soft and he is purring. It’s a large, full-throated throb. His neck is thick and shoulders muscular under my hand. I am glad for the strength of it when he lived in the wild.

Sometimes friends and family join our evening procession. On his most recent visit, my father, an old New-Englander-whose only clothes consist of a closetful of blue pants and blue button-down shirts-paced the route, following the cat through his ritual. "He’s set in his ways," he observed, without any obvious self-irony. "A real creature of habit."

I look across our cat’s head, lifted up now, so I can scratch under his chin, over at my husband, who is smoking a cigar. He smiles at me. I notice that he is wearing his favorite pants—I’ve patched them more than once—and, I realize that my father’s repetitive wardrobe is not, perhaps, so different from ours: I wear the jeans that date back to when I chased toddlers. Now I’m tossing car keys to teens who are always headed out, going someplace different, not staying home. When I was their age, I never held to habits, either; I threw off routines as quickly as I changed outfits, barely out of one before reaching for the next and the new.

Sensing a shift in my attention, our Maine Coon cat turns his head, observing me through slitted eyes. Still slightly lost is he in the pleasure of being groomed, but he meets my eyes and holds my gaze with what I take to be gratitude.

It is, I realize, shared gratitude I’m finding there: for the security within the structure of routines, for expectations met again and then again, for the freedom of spirit that soars in the certainty of being loved.

I am glad to have the comfort of these old Maine Coon cat habits, and I reach for the butter for his paws, sliding my fingers across its planes, then rubbing the full pillowed pads, like toes, on his four feet.
Wedding

Kerry Bennett

I am standing outside in the garden of our town library on a beautiful spring day. A soft breeze is blowing. People are gathering for a wedding. I will officiate. I have the same sense of nervousness and excitement that I always have, but this day is different. The two people being married are dear friends. I have known Jane since she was fourteen and used to hang out at our house a lot.

I feel as if I am part of the family. I know everyone there. It will be a small wedding, the families of both partners and a few friends, and their two small dogs. As it happens, these two have raised Jane's three nieces and done an incredible job of parenting. The twins will be going off to college in the fall. They are all in the bridal party.

The photographer is late so I sit down on a stone wall and wait. Another wedding is going on on the lawn around the corner. I think back on the years. Jane and my son, Frank, went together. That is when we came to love her so much. I have so many pictures of them together in my photograph album. Then they broke up. It was all amicable and they remained friends. They didn't talk about it much.

A couple of years later, Linda and her new partner needed an apartment. Ours was vacant. We checked with our son. "By all means, have them come, it is fine." So they lived in our upstairs apartment for several years before they bought their own home and became adoptive parents of pre-adolescent daughters, for all intents and purposes.

When they asked me to marry them, I was pleased and honored. My immediate response was a resounding "yes." Then everything happened very fast. We worked on the service together. They got the license, and now, here we were, ready for the ceremony. My husband had been miffed that they had not asked him to co-officiate. We got past that, they asked him to sing and drew him into the service.

I look up from my brief reverie and everyone is assembled. We are ready. I walk down a grass aisle and stand in front of a table which serves as an altar on which sit two candles and the traditional wedding candle, which they will light. Their parents come in next, smiling. Then the wedding party, one by one. They are each beautiful in their own way. Now the couple, glowing, joyful.
Everything goes as planned. They are married and after some pictures, we go back to their house for a pay.

It was Thursday, May 20, the first day on which gay couples could be married following the historic Court decision in Massachusetts. In the preceding days there had been celebrations and flowers, elation and merriment as couple after couple went to city halls across the commonwealth to obtain licenses. Mary and Jane had gone to Cambridge where some 300 other couples had assembled. They had been up half of the night. Glad congratulations were offered as each couple came down the stairs, license in hand. Baskets of fruits and roses were everywhere. Jubilation was in the air.

Jane and Mary had waited a long time for their wedding day. They had been committed partners for thirteen years. They moved quickly to marry after they obtained their license to marry because we were all afraid that someone would change their mind, or the ruling would be revoked. Their marriage ceremony was really an affirmation of the covenant they had made to one another many years ago.

When I agreed to marry them, Jane asked how the Presbyterian Church would view my officiating at a gay marriage. According to most interpretations of our Book of Order, I am out of line. However, I think I am acting within the spirit of the law and the will of God. Actually, the letter of the law says that I am an agent of the state. The state has changed its laws. But, I did not feel like parsing the law just then. I will not flaunt my actions or make a case of them. It was enough to be asked to share in this ... words fail ... this overdue, sacred moment with them.

She worried about me. "I don't want to put you in jeopardy. Don't say yes, if that will happen." And then, "Will what I do be legal?" "Yes, it will be legal, I am licensed to marry, and no, I am not worried about doing it. I want very much to do it and am so glad that you asked me." Being retired, I was not involving any local church community, though I knew that the one I had served would support me. I felt more free to make my own decision.

So, it is official now. Thank God! I know in my heart that this was so right and I love them so much.

It is months later and we are on the other side of our presidential election in the United States. My heart aches for them and the whole gay community who have been so used and abused in the last election. How did gay marriage become a lightning rod and a test for the moral fiber of Americans? Jane and Mary's morals and ethical sensibility are impeccable and have been tested over time. I certainly
don't worry about them. I worry about the rest of us who let old phobias control us to the point where we cannot see the new path that God is opening up for us.

Is all of this new for me? Yes. Do I understand everything about sexuality? No. Am I sure this is right for them? Most certainly!

We know that sexual immorality is not only the province of the heterosexual community. There is sexual immorality in the gay community too which has been kept from the open expression of love. It should be no surprise that morality is not based on sexual preference, but on sexual behavior and love. This marriage that I have performed is a covenant of love, love which has survived the refiner's fire.

It was a beautiful, wonderful, right, spring day, May 20.
The Longest Night

Frederick L. Hafer

The longest night of my life occurred at El Paso, Texas, in March of 1953.

I was an Air Force pilot stationed at Albuquerque, New Mexico. In order to maintain our flying proficiency, we were required to fly at least 100 hours per year, of which at least 35 hours had to be flown under instrument (weather) conditions, and at least 25 at night. Our favorite night time training mission was to depart Albuquerque after dark, fly south to El Paso, and land there. We would then take a taxi to the Santa Fe Bridge and cross the Rio Grande into Juarez, Mexico. There we would buy a demijohn of good Bacardi rum for a few dollars, and then return to our aircraft and thence fly home to Albuquerque. The round trip took about 4-1/2 hours of actual flying time.

On the longest night, I was assigned a small twin-engine, five-passenger transport aircraft built by Beechcraft and designated the C-45 by the Air Force. The flight south was uneventful, all events were normal, and the landing and tie-down were routine.

Upon our return to our plane at El Paso International Airport I performed all the standard check-list inspections and tests. Everything was great. The copilot and I went through the pre-engine-start checks - everything normal. Then the engine-start checks - everything normal.

"El Paso tower, Air Force 1234 is ready to taxi."

"Air force 1234, taxi to runway 26 (almost due west) and hold"

We then taxied to the east end of runway 26 and performed the engine power checks and the propeller control checks -- everything normal. I then briefed the copilot that on takeoff he would have to hold the throttles and prop controls after I had set them (they would vibrate and change setting if not held). He would also watch the engine power gauges and would tell me immediately if anything was not normal.

And so we were ready for takeoff.

"El Paso tower, Air Force 1234 is ready for takeoff."
"Air Force 1234 is cleared for takeoff on runway 26. ATC has cleared Air Force 1234 VFR via planned route to Albuquerque."

"1234 rolling."

We accelerated down the runway, reached liftoff speed, lifted off, retracted the landing gear (wheels), and set climb power on the engines. A moment later to copilot shouted in my ear: "the left engine just failed!!!!!"

"Max power on right engine - firewall it!!!!!! Engine shutdown checklist!!! Throttle full aft! Mixture cutoff! Propeller feather! Tower 1234 declaring emergency - left engine failed!"

Ahead of us to the west was a busy six-lane highway, and beyond that was a large housing development made up of concrete block buildings. To our right was Fort Bliss and more concrete block buildings and housing areas. To our left the ground was rugged and fell away sharply, but there were few hard, man-made structures.

You do not want to turn into a dead engine if you can avoid it. The dead engine creates considerable drag, so that wing is heavy and tends to drop. This creates more drag, so the wing tends to drop more, and the controls have reduced effect. Without constant fast and careful action by the pilot, this sequence quickly becomes a fatal graveyard spiral. I chose to turn left into the dead engine. At least, if I could not hold 1234 in the air, we would not go bulldozing through heavy concrete walls.

We made a slow, sweeping left turn. It took forever to make a full 180 degree turn to fly eastward parallel to runway 26. At one point we were bathed in a flash of brilliant white light. FLASH! We finally did see the east end of the runway off the left wing tip. Then we made another slow, sweeping left turn and carefully lined up with runway 26. A moment later we were over the end of the runway.

"Landing gear down".
"Gear down and locked".

I eased off a little power on the right engine, and we immediately felt the jolt and heard the "squinch" as the wheels touched the runway. We couldn't have been more than 20 feet in the air. I let the plane roll clear of the runway and then shut down the right engine.
I tried to get out of the pilot’s seat but couldn’t. My breath came in short gasps, my knees beat together, my hands shook uncontrollably, and my throat was so dry I could not talk. Even though it was a very cold night, my uniform was totally soaked with sweat. I just sat there like a brick for a good five minutes. At last my control returned and I was able to stumble out of the seat and talk like a human being. But the only thing that mattered was that WE MADE IT! Only then did we learn that the momentary flash of light we saw was the picture from a drive-in theatre just south of the airport that we flew through.

The entire flight lasted less than 10 minutes but each second seemed like an eternity as we kept asking: Will we make it? Will the right engine fail under the load? That is why those few minutes made it THE LONGEST NIGHT OF MY LIFE...
Maine by Train

Mary Stewart Hafer

Grandma “Stew” (Stewart) and I began by taking the ferry from Newburgh NY across the Hudson River to Beacon where the New York Central train for New York City stopped at a terminal across the street from the ferry dock. All trains stopped at Harmon where the engines were changed from steam to electric. During the switching, young boys came aboard hawking sandwiches. This was during the Great Depression of the 1930s. At Grand Central Station, we changed to a New Haven Shore Line train for Boston. Grandma had splurged on a parlor car, and I was delighted with the comfortable, upholstered swivel chair. I must have been hungry when we had dinner in the dining car. Even the creamed corn, which I usually despised, tasted delicious.

After taking a taxi from South Station to North Station in Boston, we waited for the sleeper to Calais ME. We waited and waited. Finally, Grandma got up and talked to a ticket agent. She learned that the train had already departed. Oops! Apparently, the railroad agent in Newburgh had made a mistake involving Daylight Savings Time. The next sleeper train for Calais on the Boston & Maine Railroad would depart in a couple of days.

The agent told her not to worry. A Canadian train was departing for St. Stephen New Brunswick in just an hour or so, and he could get us sleeping berths on that. (St. Stephen NB is just across the St. Croix River from Calais ME.

Credit cards had not yet been invented. I’m not sure about traveler’s checks, but in any event, Grandma didn’t have them. However, she was a Victorian-era woman who liked to travel, and was prepared for emergencies. We went into the Ladies Room and she delved down into her corset where she had a little safe purse safety-pinned inside the bosom. I suppose she also sent a telegram to Rob Golding who was expecting to meet us.

When I awoke next morning, we were rolling around through wilderness and remote farmland, punctuated by tiny train stations with manicured lawns and beds of blooming red canna lilies. The train stopped at one of these and all the passengers got off for breakfast. We sat on stools at a large U-shaped counter in a room with spotless white tile walls. I wasn’t thrilled to have cornflakes with canned milk, but there was no such thing as electric refrigeration in this part of the world. After passing by more small stations with manicured walls and canna lilies, (a trademark of the Canadian railway I learned much later), we eventually got to St. Stephen and were met by Rob. Rob was a dear friend, family friend who lived in Perry, ME and was a farmer with many other talents, skills and occupations. If he had more than a sixth grade education, he probably could have been a world class botanist. One of his numerous side-jobs was as head gardener and caretaker for a family of notable New Yorkers who has a summer home in nearby
Robbinston. They had gone home for the season, so he took us there to sleep. It was a sea captain’s elegant Federal Style mansion, situated on a bluff above the river where he probably docked his ship. I remember wandering around, seeing furniture covered with dust sheets, and admiring the hall with a fan-light above the door and a graceful flying staircase.

Next day, Rob took us back to Calais where we caught a local train to Princeton. I had never seen such a train except in pictures of the Civil War era. It had a wood-burning engine with a smokestack that flared outward and then back inward to cut down on the flying sparks that started many trackside fires. The one passenger car had kerosene lamps and a wood stove. We traveled slowly and stopped at tiny stations with large, outdoor kerosene lanterns. Every now and then, the train stopped in the middle of nowhere. I was informed that it was because the conductor had to get off and shoo cows off the track. Eventually, we got to Woodland where Grandpa “Stew” met us in an auto. The travel was not yet over. We drove to the hamlet of Grand Lake Stream where we left the car and boarded a couple of large “Grand Laker” canoes which had a flat back end and a small, outboard motor. We then traveled about twelve miles up West Grand Lake to “The Thoroughfare” where we passed into Pocumcus Lake. We went through the Pocumcus Narrows to the Dennison’s Portage. The guides and Grandfather carried the canoes around the spillway into Sysladobsis Lake which the locals called “Dobsey”. We crossed that lake and finally arrived at our destination, a hunting and fishing camp named “The Pines”.

I have traveled on many trains ranging from luxury trains such as the “Denver Zephyr” and “The Orange Blossom Special” to a boondocks train in Canada that stopped at every farmhouse that put up a special signal flag.

All sorts of strange old trains were pulled out of storage during World War II and I rode quite a few of them, but I think the trip from Calais to Princeton was the only time that I rode on a genuine, antique, wood-burner, where cows on the track were a problem.
Poetry

D.D. Abeles

THE MOON
The moon’s a fickle girl.
A tease, hiding behind a veil of cloud,
Or a beauty queen, remote perfection, cold, serene,
Or a siren, golden warm, bending low
Cajoling you to join her glow.

FOG
Where have we been?
Where are we going!
The bleat of a foghorn far away
 Warns of what we cannot see,
Have patience,
The fog will lift,
Then we will know
Which is land and
Which is sea.

NOW
The moon in the sky
Is round like a pie,
Or a scoop of vanilla ice cream,
The stuff of a gourmand’s dream.
Stop gazing above,
Come away my love,
The moon is forever,
We are today,
Let’s spend it together.
Robert G. Ingersoll

Albert Muggia

During the nineteenth century and into the early past of the twentieth century, in the absence of radio and television, people depended a great deal on lectures and talks given by itinerant speakers. Some of these were only for entertainment such as Mark Twain, some were preachers who made a living by talking about sin, fire and brimstone, and many of them were orators who had a facility with words, had a cause and traveled to make people think or to change some of their ideas.

Among the best of these orators was Robert G. Ingersoll. (1833-1899) He grew up in Illinois, and then moved to New York where he was a very successful trial attorney, but above all, he was a freethinker in the style of Voltaire and Tom Paine. He enjoyed talking and spreading his ideas. He believed firmly in the separation of Church and School. He felt it was unfair for the church to take advantage of young minds when children were too young to think for themselves.

He loved to talk about woman being the equal of man and how she should have the same rights. He argued against a man being called: “the head of the family”. He was against physical punishment of children, and against capital punishment. He believed firmly in justice, liberty and goodness and felt one did not need religion or a God to achieve this. He was an ardent Republican and supporter of Lincoln. He was a patriot who supported strongly “the first secular government ever created in the world.” He spoke out on rights for blacks, on birth control but above all on the role that religion should play in the modern state.

He would be appalled to see meeting in the White House starting with a prayer and to see federal money going to church schools or to churches for any motive. His religion was to do good, to be happy and to respect all his fellow men and women. He was for spending Sundays in cheer and good fun with the family rather than going to church and thinking of eternal punishment and listening to the same people saying the same old things. He was a cheerful and witty speaker and without question, he must have planted seed of doubt in the minds of many in his audiences. He knew the Bible as well as any preacher and could always find contradictions and ways of attacking them.

An excellent father, a faithful husband, an honest person, a good lawyer who did much pro bono work and a thoughtful friend to those in need; his heart always seemed to be in the right place. Above all, he was the spokesman for free-thinking and much admired in his time. It is sad that he has been almost forgotten, probably because he did not believe in God???
He insisted “no religion should be taught in any school supported by public money”, “All the sectarian institutions ought to support themselves” and “all institution for the care of unfortunate people should be secular.” He did not like the idea that churches did not have to pay taxes. Just like any other institution, they should be able to finance themselves and pay their fair share. Charity should be secular. He felt that society had tried the government of priests, and found them to be cruel and without mercy. They were the ones to invent and use torture. He argued that there may or may not be a supreme ruler, but we do know that man exists and man should be free to act in the way he thinks best in total freedom. Morality is not a product of the church. “If there be an infinite Being, he does not need our help”.

He was upset when “in god we trust” was imprinted on our money and when legislative proceedings were started with prayer. He felt this was contrary to the spirit of our Constitution. The people must determine what is right. There is no room for superstition in governmental processes. The government derives its just power from the consent of the governed. Reason must rule us, not faith.

“One hundred years ago our fathers retired the Gods from Politics”. He greatly admired the courage of our Fathers, in trying something new and grand. Aristocracy, monarchy and the Gods were eliminated in one fell swoop. Every church and every religion should have the same rights and no more. No church should be allowed to have a sword: it should only be allowed to exert its moral influence.

Many of these ideas were new, but they were well expressed by Ingersoll. His influence was felt throughout the country in his time. Others will have to take up these ideas in this age of mass media, but there is a great need for free thinking and an open mind without superstition. Robert Ingersoll’s memory and work deserves to be honored now more than ever!
Frederick Douglass

Tania B. Friedman

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery on February, 1818, in Talbot County on Maryland's Eastern Shore. His mother, Harriet Bailey, worked in the cornfields; and because she was forced to work long hours, she sent Frederick to live with her parents. His mother visited when she could which was not very often. When he was about 7 years old his grandmother took him to the Lloyd Plantation. While Frederick played with the other children she left. Frederick was devastated. As far as he knew his father was a white man, possibly Captain Aaron Anthony, his master. When Captain Anthony died, Douglass was given to Captain Anthony's relative, Mrs. Lucretia Auld, wife of Captain Thomas Auld. When he was about 12 years old he was sent to Baltimore, Maryland, to the Captain's brother, Hugh Auld. His wife Sophie violated the laws by teaching Frederick the letters of the alphabet. When Hugh found out he put an immediate end to this. A slave who could read and write would no longer obey his master and would dream of being free and might escape to the northern states where slavery was outlawed.

From this, Frederick learned that knowing these skills was a pathway to freedom and was determined to learn them. He made friends with the white children he met while on errands who taught him to read. When he returned home he would read books and newspapers, trying not to be caught by Sophie. With the little money he earned he bought a copy of the Columbian Orator, a collection of speeches and essays dealing with liberty and democracy. When not quite 13 years old but enlightened with new ideas, he began to detest slavery. He observed other blacks in Baltimore, most of whom were free. Things changed when Aaron Anthony died. Frederick became part of the estate and was returned to the Lloyd Plantation as part of the division of property but was eventually returned to Hugh and Sophie in Baltimore.

In 1831, he met Anna Murray, a free African-American, but he was still a slave. In 1838 Douglass escaped by dressing in a sailor's uniform and acquiring identification papers from a free black man. He made his way to New York. He learned that slave bounty hunters were roaming the streets of New York looking for escaped slaves. Frederick wandered the city streets for days. Finally he told an sympathetic looking man about his predicament. He was taken to a link in the underground railroad. Secure in David Ruggles' home, Frederick sent for Ann Murray and the two were married.

Ruggles told Frederick that the port of New Bedford, Massachusetts would be safe for him. This is when he became Frederick Douglass, changing his name from Frederick Bailey to make it more difficult to be tracked. In New Bedford he did whatever menial jobs he could find and joined several organizations, including a
black church. He subscribed to *The Liberator* and in 1841 heard William Lloyd Garrison speak. A few days later, Douglass gave a speech about life as a slave at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's annual convention. Garrison heard the talk and recognizing Douglass' gifts as a speaker hired him to be an agent for the society. As a traveling lecturer, he was given the job of selling subscriptions to the *Liberator* and the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, which he did for 10 years. Garrison was a pacifist, and he believed that moral persuasion could end slavery. Garrison also supported political equality for women and fought to make it part of the abolitionist movement.

In 1843, Douglass participated in the Seneca Falls Convention and was a signatory of its Declaration of Sentiments. This was the birth of the American feminist movement. Douglass became friends with Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Stanton Cady and others. He lectured, became a publisher of a series of newspapers, and was an ordained minister of the African Methodist Church.

In 1845 his autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, was published. The book was attacked by some as people because they could not believe that a black man could write so eloquently. It is a story of courage, self-reliance and triumph over the evils of the brutal, degrading slave system. His friends were fearful that his former owner, Hugh Auld, would recognize his escaped slave and would try to reclaim his property. To eliminate this threat, he was encouraged to undertake a book tour overseas; and Douglass spent two years in Britain, Ireland, and Scotland.

Douglass wrote to William Garrison "The entire absence of anything that looked like prejudice against me, on account of the color of my skin, contrasted so strongly with my long and bitter experience in the United States, that I look with wonder and amazement at the transition."

When Douglass was ready to return home, the possibility of being recaptured still remained a distinct possibility. English friends raised the $710.96 and sent it to Hugh Auld and on December 5, 1846, Hugh Auld signed the papers that declared Douglass a free man. He was 28 years old.

Upon his return Douglass bought a house for his wife Ana and their children in Rochester, N.Y. He began a four page weekly newspaper *THE NORTH STAR*. His wife, Ana, had domestic skills and was hard working, which he appreciated, but was uneducated and uninterested in politics. He hired a teacher hoping to close the educational gap between them but this was unsuccessful. Although he was away form home a great deal, he was a proud and loving father.

In 1851 Douglass merged the *North Star* with Gerrit Smith's *Liberty Party Paper* to form *FREDERICK DOUGLASS' PAPER*. He reversed his earlier position that the
U.S. Constitution was pro-slavery and came to see it as an anti-slavery document. This change led to Douglass' coming to the belief that slavery would have to be ended by political means, but that pacifist means could not by themselves end slavery. In 1847, he had met the militant white abolitionist John Brown, who influenced this change from a pacifist point of view. Douglass began telling his audiences that he would be pleased to hear of slave uprisings and revolt. Ten years later he totally gave up on the idea that slavery could end peacefully. The final split between Douglass and Garrison took place in June 1851. Douglass publicly announced that he intended to urge the readers of the North Star to engage in politics.

In 1850, Douglass became more involved in the underground railroad and hid many people in his home. Altogether, he and Anna sheltered hundreds of escapees. In the mid 1850's, John Brown wanted to start a slave revolt in the South. In 1859 he decided to lead an attack on Harper's Ferry in northern Virginia. He wrote to Douglass asking him to a meeting in Pennsylvania. Douglass came, and Brown tried to persuade him to join him in the attack. Douglass refused. He agreed with Brown's earlier views but was against any attack on federal property, as he felt this would anger most Americans.

Douglass was implicated in the attack, as letters had been found linking him in the incident. He fled to Canada, where he defended himself by writing letters proclaiming his innocence. In 1859 he sailed for England on a lecture tour, but he returned to Rochester when his daughter died in May 1860.

Douglass backed Lincoln, though he was disappointed because Lincoln promised to uphold the fugitive slave laws and not to interfere in the states where slavery had already been established. His first priority was to restore the Union. When war began, Douglass fought for the emancipation of all slaves in the Confederacy and Union border states and for the rights of blacks to enlist in the armies of the North. He persuaded Lincoln to grant slaves their freedom; and in April 1862, the President outlawed slavery in Washington, D.C. Lincoln was afraid to do more and risk having the Union's border states join the Confederacy. In December 31, 1862, when the Union victory seemed assured, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation declaring that all slaves in areas not held by Union troops were free. The end of slavery was in sight. In 1863 Congress authorized black enlistment in the Union Army, and Douglass helped in the recruitment.

In 1864 Douglass wanted not only the liberation of slaves but he also wanted equality for his people. When Douglass and Lincoln had a meeting in August, 1864, the President, once more, was doubting the war could be won. He asked Douglass to develop plans for leading slaves out of the South should the Union fail. As a result,
Douglass was convinced that Lincoln was a friend of the blacks. Douglass was invited to Lincoln's second inaugural ball, and because he was black was refused entrance. He got word to Lincoln, and was quickly admitted. He was personally greeted by Lincoln who said "Here comes my friend Douglass." Douglass held several important political positions in D.C.,

He attended Abraham Lincoln's memorial. After an uninspired tribute given by a prominent attorney, Douglas was pressured by the people to stand up and speak; and though reluctant to do so, he gave in and spoke. The audience gave him a standing ovation. One person said "I have heard Clay speak and many fantastic men, but never have I heard a speech as impressive as that."

In 1868, he supported Ulysses S. Grant's campaign for president. In 1872, he became the first African American to be nominated for Vice President of the Untied States. Unbeknownst to him, the Equal Rights Party had his as Victoria Woodhull's running mate. He spoke at many schools around the country during the Reconstruction, and in 1877 purchased his first home in Washington D.C., Cedar Hill, which is now the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site on the banks of the Anacostia River.

Douglass was appointed a United States Marshall in 1877; and in 1881, he was appointed Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia. Anna Murray Douglass passed away in 1882. The loss of his wife left him in a state of depression. He became more involved in the feminist movement through his association with Ida B. Wells, which once again gave some meaning to his life.

In 1884, Douglass married Helen Pitts, a white feminist. She was a graduate of Mt. Holyoke College. The marriage caused much controversy. Her parents disassociated themselves from her, and Douglass' children felt it was a betrayal of their mother. The couple traveled to Europe and Egypt from 1886 to 1887.

In 1892, Douglass was appointed commissioner of the Chicago World's Fair Columbian exposition by the Haitian government.

On February 20, 1895 Douglass attended a meeting of the National Council of Women in Washington D.C. He was especially honored at the event and after returning home died of a massive heart attack. He was 77 years old.
Like the ecosystem, civilization is a highly complex and highly interdependent spider web. Break a few small strands and the spider can repair them. Break one or two of the major anchoring strands and the web may collapse and either be gone forever or take a long time to be repaired. Probably, the most important anchoring strand for all civilization is the world's total available supply of energy. Threatening this are weapons of mass destruction and overpopulation. For overpopulation think of the fates of Easter Island, Tikal, and Ankor Wat.

Rapa Nui or Easter Island was settled by Polynesians. It is 1400 miles from Pitcairn Island, the nearest land, and 2400 miles from Chile. It was a lush island paradise when they first arrived. It had a subtropical rain forest with large trees suitable for making seaworthy canoes for ocean trips to kill porpoises, a main staple of their diets. Population increased, eventually reaching an estimated 20,000. A flourishing, literate and artistic civilization arose with a hieroglyphic form of writing that was inscribed on thin sheets of wood. 700 years after being settled, the forests were gone, every species of land bird was extinct and they were unable to make the seafaring canoes to obtain porpoises. The people turned to intensive poultry production and rats became a dietary staple. Constant bloody war and cannibalism ensued. The wooden books were burned for fuel. Literacy was lost and the population declined to what could be sustained on a barren, treeless island.

The Mayan empire of Tikal and the Cambodian capitol of Ankor Wat suffered similar fates.

For controlling weapons of mass destruction (WMD), there are many groups that have come up with good ideas which are held back by differences among members of the United Nations and, more importantly, among members of the Security Council. These members have highly divergent ideas and agendas. Getting them to move in the same direction is like trying to herd a large number of cats from an old, familiar barn into a new one. The carrot and the stick approach can work, not only for donkeys, but also for cats or humans.

In 1972, Earl Cook, Dean of Geosciences at Texas A. & M. University, in an article titled "Energy for Millennium Three" in Technology Review. December 1972, pp. 16-23, traced the history of China from the years 800 to 2,000. He charted each increase in sources of energy. For a millennium, these were mainly improvements in agriculture which provided energy for human and animal work. Beginning with the age of steam, the chart shoots up abruptly. He compared this
with a chart showing advances in civilization culminating in overpopulation followed by abrupt declines that involved warfare and famine. The two charts closely resembled each other for the same years. (See p. 2a).

Japan's entry into WWII was keyed by a shortage of oil. They were at war with China, and their entire economy was geared for war. Heavy industry and production of aircraft had expanded. Weapons and strategic raw materials were stockpiled. On July 26, 1941 President Roosevelt froze Japanese assets in the U. S. to create an economic blockade of Japan. They no longer had the dollars to purchase oil and other war materials. This freeze was supported by the British and the Dutch. Admiral Osami Nagano told Emperor Hirohito that the fleet could be maintained under war conditions for only eighteen months. Plans were worked out to capture the rich Dutch and British possessions in Southeast Asia. The greatest single threat to this was the U. S. fleet at Pearl Harbor. The rest is well-known history.

The carrot
A carrot that might persuade many states to worry less about access to fossil fuels and uranium would be a new, sustainable sources of energy. The world has a large supply of coal which experts think would last for 300 years. It has the serious drawbacks that it pollutes the air and contributes to greenhouse gasses.

China has a rising standard of living, nuclear bombs, intercontinental missiles, coal and highly polluted air, but not a lot of oil or natural gas. The immense Yangtze Hypoelectric Dam is an attempt to partially alleviate their needs.

If China and everyone else had innovative technology that greatly enhanced their future energy needs, there would be much less of an incentive to aggressively pursue existing supplies of fossil fuels and uranium. Price rises in the cost of oil and natural gas have already encouraged the highly polluting extraction of oil from the low grade and difficult sources from sands in Canada, and should encourage energy-saving. Replacing a single incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent will save 500 lbs. of coal.

Without a big push from government, we may be condemned to rely on increasingly dirty fuels, such as coal and oil from shale and tar sands as cleaner fuels run out. The Holy Grail of future clean energy is atomic fusion. Unfortunately, one hundred million degrees Celsius is required is needed to start fusion. Meanwhile, the world has about a fifty year supply of Uranium. Presently, nuclear fission supplies 75% of the electric supply in France and 16% worldwide. Wind turbines supply 20% of Denmark's electricity. Europe's present turbines generate the power of 35 coal
fired plants. Ethanol from sugarcane supplies 50% of Brazil's auto fuel. Solar power, especially with nanotechnology, has great potential. Large solar panels need not cover agricultural land. There are a lot of rooftops in the world. Small, inexpensive solar panels could supply energy and raise the standard of living in remote villages in Africa and other sunny places. Where topography is favorable, water can be pumped to an uphill reservoir at times of surplus power and then run downhill through turbines when needed.

Honda, General Motors, Ford and Daimler-Chrysler are all betting billions of dollars that non-polluting hydrogen fueled cars will be the cars of the future. Hydrogen can be stripped from water to supply fuel for these cars but electricity is required to do the stripping. At present, coal, oil, or natural gas produce most of our electricity, but solar or wind power, which have problems in producing a steady stream of electricity, could be used to store energy in the form of hydrogen gas when the sun is shining or the wind is blowing. Better batteries for electric storage are also needed.

Many major innovations are needed to change the world's present reliance on fossil fuels, but while these new technologies are being developed, incentives for thriftiness and conservation are needed.

There are serious efforts by many international groups and regimes to reduce the threats to civilization from biological, nuclear and chemical weapons. The Nunn-Lugar bill has been effective in reducing biological threats from the former U.S.S.R. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and other nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons groups are all working in a worldwide generally beneficial direction and are attempting to keep WMD out of the hands of terrorists and rogue states. Each of these has wording for the implementation of regimes and protocols which they would, ideally, like to see adopted by the United Nations, but which, at present, are objectionable to various members, and, more importantly to certain members of the Security Council, e.g., the failure to adopt the Additional Protocol of the IAEA and the refusal of China to permit interdiction and searching of ships on the high seas that are suspected of carrying WMD.

The Stick
A nuclear or biological attack on the United States or Great Britain would not set fire to the cats' barn. Many members of the United Nations would profess words of sympathy, but would experience schadenfreude.
It is to be hoped that our recent experiences with Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma will have taught hard and important lessons to federal, state, and local governments in how to cope with huge emergencies and evacuations.

It is also to be hoped that coping with Ebola virus, SARS, and now Avian Flu, will help cooperation and rapid exchange of information between the World Health Organization, the National Center for Disease Control, local public health agencies, and producers of vaccines and antidotes. This will help to counter a deliberate biological attack anywhere.

However, if the cats' familiar old barn is set on fire by a major attack by terrorists or rogue states against one or more countries that are not particularly friendly toward the U.S.A., there might then be a short window of opportunity for all the international organizations interested in opposing and restricting WMD to have ready all that they would really like to see passed by the Security Council of the United Nations.

Meanwhile, The United States and Great Britain need to work on their planning for being attacked with WMD or mass disruption. They should also work on serious energy conservation and research for new sources of energy. These they should willingly share with the entire world.
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Beyond 2100, mankind's energy needs must be met by a combination of coal, nuclear power, and solar energy—beyond 2300, by technologies that are not yet known to be possible, much less economical.

China's history demonstrates the interrelationship of energy and culture (expressed here as standard of living). The introduction of raw food plants allowed cultivation of previously unusable land; new varieties of rice allowed double-cropping and planting on land above flood plains; maize and sweet potatoes could be planted on mountain sides, and the Irish potato on mountain tops. In each case, energy supply increased. But erosion, soil depletion, flooding and famine were inevitable, as was, apparently, a change in government when the energy supply receded.

From: Technology Review December 1972 p. 17
I leaned on my cane and surveyed the room. The early diners had left and the dining room was now occupied by a dozen or so customers busily eating. I always find it fascinating to look at people and imagine what they are like, where they come from, and what brings them to where they are. In the dining room, some couples were staring at each other or looking at their plates, silent except for the occasional clank of cutlery; others seemed engaged in animated conversation, waving a fork or laughing at something humorous.

At the far corner of the room, next to the waiter’s entrance, a lone lady sat, fiddling with the meat on her plate and staring off into space. She was dressed in a fashionable navy blue suit, with a white silk blouse showing through the jacket. I walked slowly toward her table. She appeared not to notice me until I stood directly in front of her. Her green eyes flashed upwards as I spoke. Would you mind terribly if I joined you for dinner? Before she could fathom a polite reply, I pulled out a chair and moved to sit down, “I really hate to eat alone. I know I’m being very forward, but I sincerely hope you won’t find my joining you objectionable.”

Her face showed embarrassment as she stammered a reply. “I, I, guess it will be alright.”

I sat down, smiling as courteously as I could. Realizing that introductions might be in order, I leaned over the table. “I’m sorry. My name is Jerry, Jerry Jamison.”

Her green eyes blinked. “Oh, I’m Jane Ratoff.”

“Are you a native of Glen Falls?” I asked.

She hesitated. “I guess the answer is yes and no.”

Before she could explain, the waiter approached, menu in hand. “Would you care for a drink, Sir?”

“Just water, thanks.” I looked at Jane’s green eyes. “Jane, I don’t want to interrupt your dinner. Please go ahead and eat.” I turned
toward the waiter,” I know what I want, an order of fried oysters with potatoes and a house salad.” I looked back at Jane. “You said “yes and no’?”

In between bites, Jane explained, “I was born and raised in Glen Falls. After earning a B.A. in sociology at Vassar, I took a job in Albany. That’s where I met my husband. Subsequently we bought a house in Glen Falls. After an unexpected divorce, I took a job as a marketing specialist in Ireland. For the last ten years I’ve been working in Dublin for the Oreal Corporation.”

“So that’s where you got those green eyes!”

“No, just a family trait.”

The waiter arrived with my dinner and I busied myself enjoying the oysters. Now that I was eating it was Jane’s turn to ask questions.

“Are you a native of Glen Falls?”

“No, I live and work in Boston.”

“So what brings you this far afield?”

“I’m the vice president of human resource in CeeBee Electronics. I’m here to attend a training program on “How to Develop Trainers’. Because our business has been expanding very rapidly, we need more experienced trainers in our marketing department. When I saw this program advertised I figured it might be helpful in fulfilling our needs. So here I am.”

I gulped down the last delicious oyster before continuing. “I assume you’re still working for Oreal. What brings you back to Glen Falls?”

“It’s not just to revisit my old homestead. Though my divorce was ten years ago, there are still some financial matters that have to be cleared up. I’d decided that I should meet personally with my lawyer and get everything formalized. At the same time, it does give me a chance to meet some old friends.” She leaned back in her chair and watched me clear my plate. “Will you have a chance to do some sightseeing while you are here?”

“I doubt if I’ll have much time. Classes start tomorrow and run
from nine in the morning to five in the afternoon and they run each
day from Monday through Friday. Saturday, I have to drive to Albany
to catch a flight home on United.”

“That’s a pity. There’s a lot of history inn Glen Falls and a lot to see. If you get any
free time, you should have a look at Cooper’s Cave. That’s the town’s most
popular tourist attraction. It’s reputed to be the cave described in James
Fennimore Cooper’s ‘The Last of the Mohicans’. It’s really an interesting place to
explore.”

“I’ll keep it in mind in case I manage to break away.”

“And,” she continued, “Glen Falls has some beautiful parks. In the winter, I used
to go skating on the pond and brooks that run through one park. That same park
has a very tall toboggan slide, built by the town. There are free toboggans for
residents to use. Glen Falls is the only town I know of that not only built a public
toboggan slide, but also offers free toboggans for use.”

“I get the feeling you enjoyed life in Glen Falls.”

“Oh, I did! It’s a beautiful town.”

“This hotel certainly is impressive. I read in the pamphlet in my room that with
modifications, Kingsbury Hotel dates back to Revolutionary War days.”

Jane pointed to the pictures on the wall. “That’s why the decorations show a
British influence. The portraits are mostly English royalty. The massive fireplace is
copied after an English estate. And I’m sure you noticed the exterior of Kingsbury
Hotel is patterned after English architecture.”

“It certainly is English,” I paused for a moment. “You know, you’ve been so helpful
in describing Glen Falls, you deserved a reward. Let me buy you a dessert.”

“You don’t have to do that.”

“I know, but I insist.” I beckoned to the waiter. “What sort of dessert can you
offer?”

“Well”, he replied, “we have pies and cakes, but if you want something special, try
our super strawberry sundaes.”

“Sounds good to me. How about you? I looked at Jane.
She nodded, “O.K.”

I took advantage of the free time to question her. “You’re attractive and obviously bright. What caused your divorce?”

“I blame it on myself.” I fell in love with a talented musician, a professional pianist. My parents and I always liked music. They’ve passed away now, but they heartily approved of my marrying a musician but after two years of marriage, I came to the conclusion that my husband was more interested in music than he was with me. When he wasn’t traveling, in his free time, he visited musical friends or entertained them in our home. His conversation was always directed to them and not to me. I felt lonely and ignored. Discussing my feelings with him made no impression and finally, I decided to break away. That’s when I took the job in Ireland.” She hesitated, reflecting. I can’t believe it. Here we are, just strangers and I’m telling you my life history.” Her head dropped as if in shame.

I apologized. “I really didn’t mean to pry.”

“I understand.” As our sundaes arrived, he looked up. “Now that you’ve heard my story, tell me a little about yourself.”

I took a spoonful of whipped cream, crushed strawberries and ice cream and let it linger in my mouth.” Well, I am what I believe is known as a confirmed bachelor. Back in my early years, when I was interested in beautiful, bright and charming girls such as you, I never met one. I kept looking until the draft pushed me into service. I wanted a year’s deferment so that I could complete my doctorate in social psychology at Yale, but the draft board felt otherwise. By fate and luck, I ended up as a civilian personnel officer in the Air Force. Because of this personnel experience, when I returned to graduate school, I switched my field to industrial psychology, the closest degree to personnel work that Yale offered. My first job was as director of human resources in a large textile corporation. After ten years, I took a position as vice president of human resources in the electronics company where I still am twenty-nine years later. As you can see, my job history is not in tune with the times where job changes average every five years. So, that brings me to the Kingsbury Hotel and dinner with Jane Ratoff.”

She smiled. “I must admit I was confused when you asked to sit at my table. The thought passed through my mind that if you were younger, I would suspect you were trying to pick me up. But the cane reassured me you weren’t that young and I felt, “why not?” No harm could come to me in a public restaurant.”
“I’m glad you didn’t object. If you had, I would have been embarrassed and at a loss for words.”

Jane looked at her wristwatch. “I wish I could stay and talk longer, but I have an appointment to meet my lawyer at eight o’clock in the lobby. I’m sorry I have to leave. I enjoyed our dinner, and thank you for your companionship.”

I stood up, leaned against the table and extended my hand to shake goodbye. “It has been a real pleasure to meet you. You have turned what would have been a lonely dinner into a very enjoyable experience. So thank you for sharing the time with me and good luck on your financial problem.”

As Jane departed, I turned and watched her. She walked, holding herself erect and striding confidently toward the exit. She looked like a lady who know who she was and where she was going. I felt a tug at my heart.
An Interesting Summer Job

Ken Fettig

Between years in graduate school I was fortunate to get a job at Westinghouse's nuclear operations in Clairton, Pennsylvania. The nuclear industry in 1959 was hot. Nuclear power was going to supply most of our domestic electricity needs in the near future and was also going to propel ships and possibly airplanes and trains. Westinghouse was out in front of the industry having built the first commercial power plant and supplied the reactor for the first nuclear submarine.

I was assigned to the purchasing department and worked as an expeditor for a gentleman who described himself modestly as the world's greatest expeditor. After a few routine tasks, he assigned me to locate a contractor who could extrude uranium-niobium cylinders into rectangular shaped bars. U/Nb was an experimental alloy which may have had applications in the naval reactor program. I went to the bible for all purchasing departments, the Thomas's Register and found that there were plenty of extruders but when I started calling them I found that what I needed was a company with heavy equipment that would be willing to tackle an experimental material and one that was naturally radioactive, although not enough to be dangerous in its natural form.

I located a firm that was willing to do the work on a cost-plus basis, the Harvey Aluminum Company in Adrian Michigan. A contract was drawn up and the material was shipped to Harvey. My boss suggested that I should fly out to Michigan when the work was being performed as he had learned in working with projects such as this that "Murphy's Law" applied with frequency. The extruding was to be done on a Thursday in July, so I requisitioned $200 to fly to Detroit and back, rent a car, and stay over one night if necessary (try that today). The flight was uneventful and after renting a car I arrived in Adrian shortly before lunch. Adrian is a college town, approximately 45 miles west of Detroit. Harvey was the largest employer after the college.

The ingots of U/Nb were heated up that morning and the press was heated as well so I arrived before the first extrusion. I could tell why Harvey might be interested in this work since the area of the plant where the work was to be done had not been used since the end of WWII and there was little demand for heavy extrusions. The first extrusion took place that afternoon and sure enough Mr. Murphy showed up. The press was simply not big enough to push the cherry red ingot through the die that was being used. After some consultation it was decided to use the larger press next to the one that failed and use a lubricant to facilitate the process. The lubricant of choice, believe it or not, was ground glass, which becomes viscous at
the temperatures we were operating at. However, the glass had to be ground and
the press heated up and since they did not want to do the work on the night shift,
the extrusion was put off until the next day. The engineer in charge of the project
told me this would be a short project once the extrusions were done and not to
worry. Just in case, however, I asked about working Saturday morning. That was
out of the question, I was told, since the plant was shutting down Friday at 5PM for
the annual two week vacation. You can imagine what my boss’s reaction to
hearing that news. He told me to do everything necessary to get that work done
on Friday.

The next morning things started well. The big press and the lubricant worked and
we extruded the first two of five ingots. Then Murphy showed up again. The die
through which we were extruding cracked. My panic was allayed when they told
me they could modify an existing die and be back extruding after lunch. In the
meantime they would process the extruded bars after they cooled down. All we
had to do was cut the bars into 18 inch lengths and cut a sample chip from each
bar. At about 3PM we started extruding again but in the meantime another
problem arose. The cutting process which was considered routine turned out to be
anything but. This material was very hard and abrasive and they were using up
carborundum blades at a rate of about two per bar and they didn't have enough
blades in stock. They ordered additional blades from a local supplier and I drove
out to get them. The final ingots were extruded at about 4PM but the bars took
almost an hour to cool and then we had to cut them up. By now the rest of the
plant was shutting down when Murphy showed up again. They had made
arrangements with a local trucker to pick up the finished pieces but he had
informed them that they had to be ready by 5PM as he was closing down for the
weekend. Since he couldn't pick up for two weeks that would not work.

I considered my possibilities and decided that I would get the finished product out
of the plant when it was done and then decide how to get it back to Pittsburg. I
drove to the Detroit airport, turned in my car and rented a panel truck. I also
checked the air freight terminal and they said they could fly the shipment out over
the weekend. However, they would close that night at 6PM but would be open
Saturday morning. By the time I arrived back at the plant everything was closed
except the area in which we were working.

Because the new die we were using was somewhat different from the previous
one the bars were taking longer to cool. Time dragged on and finally we started
cutting again. They had brought up another cutting machine to speed up the
process but it was still taking several minutes for each cut. The press operator left
and now we were down to four people, the engineer, two men on the cutting
machines and me. This was strictly a union shop but the men doing the cutting didn't mind a bit when the engineer and I stepped in to give them a break.

The last cut was made about 8PM and by the time the pieces were wrapped and palletized it was about 9PM. The sample chips were put in a Quaker Oats carton for me and the pallet was loaded onto the panel truck. I drove out at dusk through a large empty parking lot and noticed the last lights were being turned out. My feeling of euphoria at having completed the task lasted a few minutes until I realized that I was responsible for a truck containing valuable, possibly classified material which I had to protect overnight. Do I sleep in the truck, or get a motel room and just lock the truck? As I was pondering my predicament a possible solution came into view. I was about to pass the police station so I pulled in and asked the officer on duty if I could possibly park my truck in the police parking lot until morning. I explained that I had some valuable material but I couldn't deliver it until morning. He said sure without asking one question (try that today). After parking the truck I had another question for him. Was there anyplace near that I could stay for the night. He said there was a lady nearby that rented rooms and he called and made arrangements for me. I got to the house and we had obviously woken her up but she showed me to a room and told me that breakfast would be ready at 8AM.

Believe me I slept well and sure enough there was an ample breakfast in the morning. I hadn't asked the rate the night before but it seemed that $12 was so reasonable I gave her an extra dollar. The rest was easy. I delivered the pallet to Plying Tiger Airlines, turned in the truck and went into the terminal with my carton of sample chips. I boarded the afternoon flight with my Quaker Oats carton (try that today), and got back to Pittsburg that afternoon.

I would like to end by telling you that I was in on the ground floor of one of the greatest technical advancements in the history of nuclear power. Alas, I don't think the alloy was ever used in production. To make matters worse my boss did not seem to appreciate all that I had done and chastised me for keeping this classified material on the shelf in my-room over the weekend.
Berries

Oil on canvas

Marsha Wiggins
As the magenta majesty of the new day
Fondly kissed the velvet blackness farewell,
A woman
Walked along the sandy shore
Of the still sleepy sea,
Reflecting on her past and
Pondering her future.
A golden nymph arose from the silent water and
Said softly,
"Worry not, you have given knowledge to the unknowing.
Steadfastness to the fearful.
You have replaced sadness with joy and were
A friend to the lonely.
The woman rejoiced quietly in her heart.
As the sun careened against the azure heavens,
A thought came to the woman.
What is the future but a connection to an a
continuance of the past.
Suddenly before her eyes danced the spirits of
Joy, steadfastness, knowledge and love.
The woman's heart raced.
The sun slowly slipped from its zenith becoming
A deeper shade of crimson as it gave way to
The purple of night.
And the woman walked on, thankful for her past
And knowing she has seen her future.
The years have flung themselves star-like
against the umbrella sky-
weaving a mysterious kaleidoscopic array.

A wary traveler, riding on the wings of faith,
boldly soars to these celestial outposts
in search of meaning.

A solitary explorer seeking to unravel the hidden threads of the
tapestry of his life.
Echoing in his spirit is the preternatural
tolling of bells-
tolling, tolling, tolling-
images of rejoicing and regretting,
images of peace and conflict,
images of hope and despair.

The mystery of the kaleidoscope is revealed.
The tapestry, magnificent in its clarity, is woven
with his life’s reflections.

The joyful wanderer returns to his orb.
Soul awakened by the pealing of bells.
pealing, pealing, pealing-
In thanks and celebrations of life’s gifts.
It snowed last night.
The world changed.
Cars are sleeping polar bears.
Fence posts like sentries are lined
With caps of fairy white.
What are they protecting?
Sleeping bulbs, seeds, perhaps?
The sun threw down chunks
Of sunshine. The melting began.
My world is becoming familiar
Again.
Why does change frighten me so?
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We welcome writings of fiction, memoirs, poetry, essays, history, commentaries and/or research on current events, issues of interest, original artwork and photography.

The following are the existing guidelines:

- Articles cannot be previously published and author must be a current Osher LLI member.
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