

THE Villager

◦ NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS ◦

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Greetings!

Elizabeth Boris, co-president

I hope that you are enjoying our lovely lake and keeping cool!

The Lake Barcroft Village continues to grow, adding new members and more activities that allow us to socialize and enjoy our community. This has been a particularly busy summer for Village members as we kicked off the summer on May 18 with our third annual wine tasting provided by our generous Lake Barcroft neighbors of Wine Traditions (<https://winetraditions.com/home/>). This popular Lake Barcroft Village fundraising event brought together many Village Members and neighbors who enjoyed a lovely summer afternoon in the Beach 5 park with fine French wine and delicious cheeses, fruits, and desserts.

The music group led by Marcia Grabowski organized its second Village singalong on July 27 with Ron Martinson at the piano. It was a delightful afternoon with a reception after the singing. We're grateful to Rita Norton for hosting us in her lovely home.

Another new activity led by Ken Trotter and Daisy Birch is the Village Vitality Group. This group explores ways to foster wellness and vitality by focusing on "physical activity, nutritious eating, stress management, enjoyment, and social engagement." These, and many

other activities are open to all Village members. Members receive a monthly list of activities. These are also available on the Village website with photos and descriptions at <https://www.lakebarcroftvillage.org/> home. We hope that you join in the fun!

LAKE BARCROFT VILLAGE Board Doings

The Board is happy to welcome Ken Trotter who joined the Lake Barcroft Village Board and has agreed to be chair of the membership and marketing committee. You may have noticed the updates on Village activities that he posts to Lakelink.

Led by co-president, Ellen Raphaeli, the Lake Barcroft Village board met on June 12 to conduct routine business, including a review of revisions to the Village Bylaws. Once these are finalized, they will be posted on the Lake Barcroft Village website. We thank the committee led by Liz Gianturco that accomplished this important task.

Ellen Raphaeli also chaired a well-attended Lake Barcroft Village Quarterly Meeting on June 26 where members heard a presentation by Wendy Cohen of Fairfax Invasive Removal Alliance on the Invasive Plant Crisis in our area. A brief article about the presentation

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President's Message

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is elsewhere in this Villager. In addition, you can find slides explaining the crisis and what you can do to help on the Lake Barcroft Village website (lakebarcroftvillage.org).

Keeping in Touch Activities (KIT):

Village members are increasingly involved in neighborhood “keeping in touch” activities organized by coordinators in each of the four KIT sections of the Lake. These include regular coffees and mix and mingle opportunities. Marcia Grabowski wrote an article, “Keeping in Touch: Supporting the Goal of Our Village” describing these activities for the June 2025 *Lake Barcroft Newsletter*.

Upcoming Events:

Special Events coming up this fall include a Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue on September 13 at 5:00 pm at the home of Lake Barcroft Village executive director Cindy Waters and her husband George. This will be an

opportunity to thank the many volunteers that make our Lake Barcroft Village the special community resource that it is.

The next Lake Barcroft Village quarterly meeting will take place on September 25 at the Mason District Government Center on Columbia Pike in Arlington with a presentation by Toulia Gross, attorney and partner in the S&T Law Group, who will speak about estate planning.



WATCH FOR THE VILLAGE
“APPRAISAL ROAD SHOW”
COMING ON OCTOBER 25.

Details coming.

Regular activities will continue through the summer and into the fall. These include Happy Hours at the home of Lois and Marty Mandelberg, Coffee and Conversation meetings, Co-ed and Silver Fox Men’s lunches, as well as regular meetings of the special interest groups—Book Discussion, Chess, Memoir Writing, Music, Mystery Book Club, Vitality, and Walking. All are welcome at these events. Contact Cindy Waters, lbvcoord@gmail.com, a member of the board, or the coordinator of the group for information about the groups or to suggest additional activities.

Cheers!

Elizabeth Boris, *co-President*

If you are interested in joining the Village, donating to it, or volunteering for any of the Village activities and services, please contact Cindy Waters at 703-424-1299 or lbvcoord@gmail.com.

More photos from the Wine Tasting

See article on page 14



Photos by Cathy Williams

THE Villager

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Lake Barcroft Village July Singalong

Marcia Grabowski

It was a welcome antidote to a soggy Sunday afternoon. Lake Barcroft Villagers and friends gathered in the beautiful living room of Rita Norton's home on Pinetree Terrace to sing a medley of American songs, mostly from the 1920s through the 1970s.

Ron Martinson accompanied on the lovely Steinway grand piano. Playing up a storm by ear, Ron started the session. The session started off with "April Showers," a song introduced and sung by Al Jolson in the 1921 Broadway musical *Bombo*, written to showcase Jolson who was then at the top of his popularity. The group called out the names of songs whose lyrics were included in a list provided by the Martinsons. "I'll Be Seeing You" was first performed in the Broadway musical *Right This Way* in 1938. While the musical closed after just fifteen performances, the song became a beloved standard, especially during WWII, when it called to mind the British and American soldiers serving overseas.

By the way, Rita's Steinway is made of Kewazinga Bubinga wood from Africa. It is considered an exotic wood often used in luxury items, including musical instruments, due to its resistance to moisture. It is reddish in color with dark streaks, very unique, and with a warm, rich tone.

Wanda Martinson showcased her favorite standard, "Teddy Bear." This is a 1973 Barbara Fairchild tune that, after Wanda met Ron and he learned to play it, became "her song." Other songs called out by the audience included: "I'm in the Mood for Love," "Sentimental Journey" and "All the Things You Are." This last tune was written in 1939 for the musical *Very Warm for May*, about a Long Island society girl fleeing gangsters. Many more lovely standards were sung by the audience of 16 neighbors, after which wine, cheese and delightful desserts including homemade chocolate chip cookies, brownies and banana bread were served.

This event was organized by the Musical Friends, a group of Villagers interested in music of all kinds. The group usually meets once a month to discuss music and musical events of interest to the group and to the rest of the Villagers as well. ■



Photo by Marcia Grabowski

The Singalong at Rita Norton's



Photo by Marcia Grabowski

Wanda does her specialty



Photo by Elizabeth Boris

The best way to wrap up a singalong

Memoir Music

Carol Knowles

A QUOTE FROM BILLY JOEL:
“I think music in itself is healing. It is an explosive expression of humanity. It’s something we’re all touched by no matter what culture we’re from. Everyone loves music.”

And I would add: music is a universal language that expresses human emotions and that can inform and bring people of all ages together.

I began my musical journey when I was little when taking a bath at home. I’d cup my hands over the dripping faucet to hear the changing tones that were released and make up songs to the high and low sounds. At bedtime I begged my mother to keep the bedroom door open so that I could hear her play the piano until I drifted off to sleep; there were no words, just lovely melodies encircling me.

My parents had a baby grand piano and I loved to play simple tunes and discover what sounds the black and white keys would make.

In elementary school we learned to play the block flute (recorder) and sing songs from the now-out-of-print “The 55 song book.”

By the time I turned 11 years old I was encouraged to choose an instrument to learn to play. I was familiar with the piano and the violin but I had little idea of what other instruments sounded like so it was difficult to decide. However, it wasn’t long before one of the parents at summer camp performed a piece for flute and piano. Right away the beautiful tones of the flute resonated

with me and I knew that I wanted to learn to play the transverse flute. A few months later, my elementary school held a fall fair and my parents bought me an old-fashioned silver flute that had ornate baroque engraving. I was beside myself with excitement and a teacher across town offered to give me lessons Saturday mornings. I enthusiastically practiced every day in front of a mirror sounding like a dreadful foghorn. Nevertheless, I was so focused that it didn’t bother me and I completely forgot about the time and had to be reminded to come to dinner.

After six months it became difficult to play because the flute developed major problems. The keys loosened and had to be secured with rubber bands. Also, there was no embouchure (mouthpiece where one’s lower lip rests). My parents were told that the flute couldn’t be repaired and that it was necessary to find another flute; so I accompanied my father to see Mr. Weatherly who sold second-hand flutes. He recommended a well-made one that not only had a lovely sound but that allowed me to progress in my lessons. This flute became a best friend and I played it in amateur orchestras and chamber music groups and during summer breaks at music camp.

One time I played in an orchestra that performed the opera “Die Fledermaus” by Johann Strauss. During the show I realized that I no longer could hear myself or anyone else and thought “Oh no! Maybe I’m going to become deaf just like Beethoven!” What

a relief to find out that I had developed a common but painful ear infection.

When I was in my seventies, I injured my neck and it made holding the flute uncomfortable and so I began to sing in earnest. I joined a community chorus and after three years a local opera company that gave me an extraordinary opportunity to learn vocal technique, to sing in German, French and Italian and to act as a character in costume. My love of making music, learning foreign languages and acting that I had previously enjoyed doing separately were now all combined in one genre!

**When I see a child practicing
with love and devotion...**

**When I hear a symphony orchestra
tune up with the oboe...**

**When I sit in silence at the end
of a performance before the
applause...**

**When I see how making music
together enhances listening
and brings people together...**

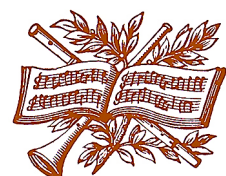
**When I hear the wind rustle
through the trees...**

When I hear songbirds chirping...

or

**Church bells chiming or waves
breaking to shore...**

**I know that music is all around
us and in each one of us.**



VILLAGERS TRAVEL

Awesome Alaska Adventure

Linda Woodrow

THE WACKY WANDERING Woodrows have been off on another adventure—this time cruising the inside passage in Alaska from Sitka to Juneau on the National Geographic/Lindblad ship, Venture. All five in my family flew to Sitka on June 20 to board the ship. However, first we toured Sitka which was settled by the Russians in the 19th century as a trading outpost of the Russian Empire. Sitka still retains Russian influence with the lovely Russian-style church, St. Michael's Cathedral, and shops carrying Matryoshka dolls. One shop was of special interest to me, the Pure Sea Salt Company. The salt is handmade from salt water, purified and sold as pure salt flakes or flavored salt. This really enhances the flavor of your food. Many tall wooden totem poles in the park remind you of the Tlingit native people who also settled here. The snow-capped mountains in the far distance



Saint Michael's Cathedral



The wacky, wandering Woodrows

gave us our first view of the magnificent vistas we would soon see.

In late afternoon, we embarked on the Venture, finding our cabins and getting ready for the mandatory lifeboat drill. Ninety-one passengers became acquainted while meeting the exceptional expedition team of naturalists, whale experts, glacier experts, divers and photographer. My granddaughters, 14 and 12, joined a Global Explorers program with their own naturalist/leader.

Our voyage took us through the various islands on the way to Glacier National Park and Preserve. Having many zodiacs (small rubber boats with motors) on board, kayaks and stand-up paddle boards (SUPS), meant

that all activity levels could be accommodated. Everyone had to wear knee-high rubber boots, waterproof pants, parkas, rain jackets, hat, gloves and life vests when riding in the zodiacs. Groups would go ashore by zodiac to explore the tidal flats, the temperate rain forest or venture farther. There were three levels

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Kayaking

Photos by Linda Woodrow

of activity and I chose the “casual” group while my family were much more adventurous. Sometimes we would have “wet” landings on the shore and you needed to sit on the rubber side of the zodiac, swing your legs around, slide off the side and wade to the shore in the shallow water. Several times we visited an island to observe wild flowers, moss- and fern-laden trees of alder and Sitka spruce. Hiking on one trail I saw bear scat and another group saw a bear pawprint but no bear. Always we had two leaders with us carrying bear spray.

At last we reached Glacier National Park and Preserve. Our ship had traveled more than 60 miles up a fjord to the mighty Margerie Glacier. What a sight—an ice wall extending about a mile across at the terminus of the glacier where it ended at the water. Along the way we spotted bald eagles, blowing and diving humpback whales, Steller sea lions, otters, puffins, mountain goats and at last a grizzly bear ambling along the shore. He probably was eating mostly vegetation we were told because it was a little early for the salmon runs. My favorite memory was



Grizzly bear



Margerie Glacier

observing a bald eagle floating by perched on an iceberg. A free ride but cold feet! We were surrounded by snow-laden peaks with massive glaciers flowing down the slopes. Such an awesome and glorious sight!



Bald eagle

We had delicious meals every day and, naturally, salmon was offered. I learned the five kinds of salmon were Chum, Sockeye, King, Silver and Pink.

Cruising through Icy Strait we anchored within the islands for more tours in search of wildlife.

Landing on the shore, we had to be careful to pile life jackets near the tree line to keep them safe; 12-foot tides are the norm on these islands.

Every day was a new adventure. On Thursday our ship docked in Petersburg, settled first by the Tlingit Nation and later Norwegian immigrants who retain their heritage of Norway. Fishing is the mainstay of the community. A replica Viking ship rests

outside the Sons of Norway hall and lovely Rosemaling paintings adorn some of the buildings. I enjoyed meeting the owner of the Sing Lee Ally book store and she was delighted to show me the newly hatched baby robins in a nest on her front porch. Neat! I bought the excellent book *Travels in Alaska* by John Muir. Perfect reading

for the trip. Other passengers had elected to go bike riding, hiking or visiting the town as I did.

The next day was spent in the majestic Endicott Arm Fjord which is about 28 miles long and 20% covered in ice. At the end of the fjord is the impressive Dawes Glacier with the ice face hundreds of feet tall. Zodiac tours allowed us to be nearer the glacier and the tremendous ice bergs floating in the bay. The medium bergs are called *growlers* and the smaller ones are called *bergy bits*. You feel so small looking at the impressive glaciers and the ice bergs surrounded by snow-capped mountains. While we were watching and taking photos, a large chunk of the glacier calved into the water with a huge splash. It was several minutes before we heard a tremendous BOOM from the sound of the falling ice followed by waves rocking all the ice bergs in the bay. Our zodiac driver diverted our attention with a tall tale about Vikings when suddenly we were “attacked” by four Viking Maidens complete with helmets with horns and yellow pigtails. It turns out they were friendly and offered us hot chocolate with a pink marshmallow or coffee with Bailey’s Liqueur. A welcome

drink in the middle of all that ice! On return to the ship we had to dodge sea lions, ice bergs and bergy bits—an obstacle course I didn't expect.

More kayaking after lunch and then several passengers, including my family, into the icy water. The ship doctor was near but all swam back to the ship safely. The Global Explorers had an active program learning to drive a Zodiac and use a microscope for viewing plant life they found. My granddaughters each received a certificate for completing the program.

Our cruise was fast coming to a close as we prepared to catch a plane in Juneau, then to Seattle and back home. My family thoroughly enjoyed the trip and declared it was a triple A cruise: Awesome Alaska Adventure. ■



Endicott Arm Fjord

Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue

The Volunteer Appreciation Barbecue will be held at the home of Cindy and George Waters on September 13th from 5:00–7:00. Call the Village office for information on the location: 703-424-1299.



Photo courtesy of the Celtic House wait staff

Left to right: Ken Berger, Clyde Williams, Walt Cooper, Don Christian, Will O'Neil and Mike Gaffen

Silver Fox Luncheon

Walt Cooper

Attention: Men of the Lake Barcroft Village! July's Silver Fox Luncheon took place at The Celtic House Irish Pub and Restaurant in Arlington. The Silver Foxes were Walt Cooper, Don Christian, Will O'Neil, Mike Gaffen, Ken Berger and Clyde Williams, who manages the program. Someone mentioned that the fish and chips dish is good, so just about everyone ordered it and no one was disappointed. The fellows talked about a wide range of interesting topics, including the ongoing deliberations in the Congress, the demise of moderate politicians, the distribution of water in Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria, construction delays along Columbia Pike, and low costs of going to undergraduate school back in the day. Don Christian told about his experiences as a "shooter" when

Lake Barcroft volunteers handled the annual fireworks at Beach 3. Discussion of other world problems was deferred to the next luncheon.

Silver Fox Luncheons are open to all men in the Lake Barcroft Village. If staying up with the news, sharing tales (real or imagined) about your past, or just enjoying the company of other guys interests you, make plans to be at our next luncheon on September 2, at noon (place to be announced—watch LakeLink for the location). Be sure to let Cindy Waters (lbvcoord@gmail.com) and Cathy Williams (cathlenewilliams@cox.net) know in advance so reservations can be made. You'll be glad you did! ■





Book Review: *The Art Thief: A True Story of Love, Crime and a Dangerous Obsession* by Michael Finkel

Priscilla Weck

STEPHANE BREITWIESSER lived in a strange world. He carried out more than two hundred heists over nearly eight years. He stole more than 300 objects worth more than two billion dollars from museums and cathedrals all over Europe. He never sold one.

He displayed all of his treasures in a pair of secret rooms where he could admire them. The rooms were in his mother's home above where she lived. Breitwieser had an accomplice: his girlfriend worked as his lookout until she pled with him.

Possessed with remarkable athleticism and an ability to circumvent practically any security system, he managed to pull off a breathtaking number of audacious thefts. Yet these strange talents bred a growing disregard for risk and an addict's need to score, leading him to ignore his girlfriend's pleas to stop. And then everything came crashing down.

This is a riveting story of art, crime, love and an insatiable hunger to possess beauty at any cost. The book delves deep into the human psyche exploring the lengths people will go to for love and obsession. What makes the book even more compelling is how the author weaves together perspectives from detectives, attorneys and even the thief himself, his girlfriend and his mother. And it's all true. ■

Coffee & Conversation at Pam Stoessel's house



Photo by Pam Stoessel

Left to right: Charlotte Flounders, Jan Barrett, Clyde Williams, Marcia Grabowski, Urmilla Khanna, Rick Kercz, Cathy Williams, John Wright (Pam's neighbor), Sam Rothman and Paul Napier

In Memoriam:

Gil Brown

Village member **Dr. Gilbert J. Brown**, PhD, age 77, formerly of Westford, MA, passed away on July 11 at home. As noted in the *Lowell Sun*, Dr. Brown earned his Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering from MIT and was a Nuclear Engineering professor at Lowell Technological Institute (now UMass Lowell), where he remained an active emeritus professor until his passing.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 55 years, Merri (Gallin); his son Craig, daughter-in-law Lauren, and their children Julian, Gabriel, and Isabel in Phoenix, AZ; and his daughter Shana and her children, Chaya and Ari. Gil and his wife Merri joined the Village within the last few months; it was his suggestion that the Village consider starting a bridge group which is still in its early stages of formation.

Moya Atkinson

Founding Village member and its first Executive Director, **Moya Atkinson**, passed away in South Africa on June 24 with her son Patrick and her grandson Jan at her side. She was 90 years old. She is survived by her sons, Patrick and Niall Bond, and daughter Kate Bond, and several grandchildren.

Moya laid an extraordinary groundwork for her successors in the Village Executive Director position and was very devoted to the cause of the Village. For those of you who visit Beach 3 and have occasion to use the handrail to get into and out of the lake, you have Moya to thank. Her advocacy for that assistive device led to a collaboration between the Village and the WID to have the railing designed and installed.

Quarterly Meeting: Lake Barcroft Village Hears Presentation: The Invasive Plant Crisis

Ellen Raphaeli

BUTTERFLY BUSH: It's colorful; it's available at local big box stores; it attracts butterflies. However, as we learned from Wendy Cohen a founding member of the Fairfax Invasive Removal Alliance (FIRA), and guest speaker at the Lake Barcroft Village June Quarterly Meeting, it is not a shrub we should be planting: it is invasive.

Terming a plant "invasive," Wendy explained, does not necessarily mean that it infiltrated from foreign soil; a plant native to one region of the U.S. and supportive of that region's wildlife can be invasive if it should suddenly appear in a different region of the country where its adaptability to the environment and its ability to reproduce enables it to crowd out indigenous plants and disrupt that area's ecosystem.

Fairfax County's website provides considerable information about invasive plants, identifying the most common and explaining their destructive effects on the local ecosystem. However, despite the county having 24,000 acres of parkland, 17,000 acres of which are wooded, Wendy noted, there are only two people in the office to deal with the problem of invasive plants, and the county must rely on volunteers to clear parks and VDOT property.

The problem goes beyond the English ivy and kudzu. One local problem is the tree of heaven, a fast-growing plant that, in addition to crowding out and poisoning the soil for native plants, attracts the spotted lantern fly.

Another is the porcelain berry—a vine that can grow 15 feet in a season and, like kudzu, smother the shrubs on which it climbs. Still another, and of particular relevance to Lake Barcroft residents, is the two-horned trap—a aquatic plant of Asian origin that can propagate quickly and form dense mats, choking out native aquatic plants and degrading water quality.

Wendy's organization, FIRA, "is a grassroots, all-volunteer organization bringing together homeowner, citizen, and condo associations to advocate for a healthier ecosystem in Fairfax County by saving trees and promoting biodiversity through the removal of invasive plants and the planting of natives." Wendy noted that there are about 132 invasive plants in Virginia. In addition to those whose seeds have been carried here by winds or birds or the grooves in automobile tires, some have been planted intentionally. Many are attractive, hardy, deer and insect resistant exotics that are sold by local nurseries even though they are listed on Fairfax County's website as invasive.

Back to the butterfly bush: According to Wendy, "90% of plant-eating insects are plant specialists," so if a native plant disappears, so does whatever insect needed it as a food source. The butterfly bush attracts butterflies but, unlike indigenous plants which it displaces, it fails to provide necessary nutrients for the butterfly's reproductive life cycle,



Wendy Cohen

Photo by Ellen Raphaeli

ultimately diminishing biodiversity and impacting the whole area ecosystem.

There is some good news. The Fairfax County website has a page devoted to its Invasive Management Program inviting volunteer participation. Also, by 2027, nurseries must have signage advising the public when a given plant is considered invasive.

FIRA's current campaign, in coordination with the Virginia Invasive Plant Coalition (VIPC), is to push for legislative changes to the Virginia Code to include the management of invasive plants as a power of service districts, thereby increasing local jurisdictions' ability to address problems in a more focused and timely manner.

Of course, FIRA needs volunteers to assist in its effort.

More information about Wendy's presentation and about FIRA is available on the Lake Barcroft Village website: <https://www.lakebarcroftvillage.org/invasive-plants-crisis-presentation>

Lake Barcroft Village is a community-based organization that provides assistance and opportunities for social interaction for members who wish to live independently and stay connected with their community. There is no age minimum or limit to join. ■

The LB Village Vitality Group

Stretching into Summer: A Rich Yogic Vitality! Evening

Daisy Birch

WE CAME TOGETHER for our monthly, third-Tuesday Vitality! group, from 6:30 to 8 p.m.—nine of us in person and on-line, in the tranquil Lake Barcroft home-studio of longtime yoga instructor Geri Falek. We had a broad range of body types, ages, and flexibility. The theme was Chair Yoga—with surprising depth, breadth, and delight that Geri Falek brings.

We breathed, stretched, balanced, centered. Then, with brief chants of well-wishing—to each other, to the world—we felt...resonance. This wasn't just movement, balance and luxuriously deep stretching. We were engaging in an ancient practice that science continually acknowledges as impacting brain, lung, blood pressure, muscular and cardiovascular function, pain, emotional and stress regulation; cellular longevity, inflammation, even DNA damage control.

This evening proved again that Vitality doesn't require any particular body type, just a willingness to be gently transformed. Geri, who still guides many loyal students, called this event a "refreshing shift." It was. We all felt it.

We closed in a circle sharing reflections, tea and healthy treats. We'll post recipes on Vitality's secure/private Facebook page. Visit it to enjoy countless Vitality-curated scientific publications, edu-comedies, inspiring films, all-level workouts, interviews, and meditation/music. Join us: Email Daisykbirch@gmail.com or Ken, ktrotter@ttrsir.com.



This Fall! Join us for Vitality's microplastic-free, nanoparticle-free, *Natural-Fiber Fashion Show!* Neighbor-models (all-body types, all ages), will don formal to casual-wear, flaunt easy, science-backed, breathable elegance. As neighbors strut, stroll, shuffle or wheel down the catwalk in 100% stylish comfort, we'll share life-changing health-science, describing how natural fibers preserve our brains, bodies and environment! ■



Photo by Ken Trotter



**WATCH FOR
THE VILLAGE
"APPRAISAL
ROAD SHOW"**



**COMING ON
OCTOBER 25.**

Watch for details

**FOR YOUR SAFETY
WHEN WALKING**

**ALWAYS WALK
ON THE LEFT
FACING
TRAFFIC**

The Villagers and Their Hobbies

Sending mail by water...

... and no, I am not talking about messages in bottles which are then tossed in the ocean. In an earlier article I referred to letters sent into Paris during the Franco-Prussian War. To recap, Paris was completely encircled by the Prussian army for several months, 1870–1871. There was absolutely no way for letters to be sent into the city. Couriers trying to slip through enemy lines who were caught could easily be executed as spies. Airplanes had not yet been invented. Balloons were not controllable. A homing pigeon could hardly carry even a single letter.

The French came up with the idea of placing letters in a sealed zinc ball, dropping the ball in the Seine River just upstream of Paris near the town of Moulins, letting the ball drift or roll along the river bed carried by the current and capturing the ball in Paris with nets strung across the river. A great idea in theory but not very effective in practice. The Seine is wide and divides into several channels due to islands in the river. Not all that many balls were recovered in Paris. Many were missed and made their way downstream eventually being found years later as far away as the Atlantic sea coast. Some balls leaked and the letters inside were almost undecipherable.

I have, in my collection, a letter from a zinc ball which was missed in Paris and finally found in 1894. The French government opened the ball and forwarded the letter to its recipient 23 years after it was written. On the letter's back is a hand stamp stating "letter



transported by Boule de Moulins in 1871, opened for the first time on 16/3/94 before M. Lang, Bailiff." Talk about prompt delivery!



Another way to send letters utilizing the sea was by tin can mail. The Kingdom of Tonga is comprised of numerous small islands. One such island is Niuafo'ou. Niuafo'ou is basically the top of a volcano and has

no harbors of any kind. Ships cannot land. Mail had to be placed in containers and paddled out to the ship waiting about a mile off shore. The bundle of letters was placed on a long pole and lifted by the canoeists to the waiting ship. The crew of the ship then tried to grab the bundle and hoist it on board. Letters to the island were placed in tin

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boxes and tossed into the sea to be retrieved by the canoeists. In 1934, the Matson Oceanic Cruise Line came up with an idea. For six cents per cover, one could have a letter sent from the island dispatched in a tin can. Some 16,000 covers were eventually created. Originally there was controversy over the genuineness of these covers or were they simply an advertising gimmick? Extensive research was done by a stamp collector and the results published in a stamp trade journal. Inquiries and one of these covers were sent to postal authorities in Tonga and later Britain for authentication. Both the British and Tonganese governments authenticated the cover. To explain why Britain was involved in this controversy, the Kingdom of Tonga was a British Protectorate from 1900–1970 and Britain oversaw Tonga's international postal service. Tin can mail continued to be used by the Tonganese until at least into the mid 1940s.



There were other attempts to send mail by water during the World War II era by submarine but these were very limited. Until I run across one of these, I don't have any examples to show and I have little knowledge of them.

Don Christian

The research for this article came from a *Newsletter de la maison Calves* #53 reprint of an article that appeared in *L'Écho de la Timbrologie* du 30 septembre 1948 and an old clipping from *Linn's Weekly Stamp News*. The photos are from my collection of stamps and stamp memorabilia.

Neighborly Insights Shifting Lives

Daisy Birch

Uber driver Ali was kind, insightful and gracious. We discussed rediscovering Falls Church—he with his young daughter, I returning with my husband here. You can cover much ground in a three-minute ride or coffee chat: sharing values, insights, even shifting life's trajectories.

We arrived at Lyn and Mike Gaffen's coffee and conversation gathering; sharing filled the air. I recalled with neighbor-author Urmilla Khanna her exquisite memoir from the Village's Memoir group. Her intriguing piece described her navigating early life-shifts of marriage and career, partly by having created an intricately luminous, woodchip-carved self-portrait, done before she became a beloved doctor, wife, parent, author. I'd kept its image on my phone—alas!—no phone! Urmilla noted how our minds fuse to our technology; it's such a part of us today.

Natalie quipped, "You get one chance to lose your phone." This was mine—I'd never lost one before. We called our Uber driver. I visualized Ali safely pulling over before answering. Finally, he did: "No problem, I'll be there within an hour."

At hour's end, Natalie and Urmilla (off to watch an

Indian film) and our gracious hosts made me promise to call if I needed anything—and to call the Village for any rides in future. "That's why we're here," Natalie reminded me. I'd ignored my own advice: Gracious people love to give. Gracious receiving is Giving's partner—a gift itself that builds and deepens bonds and trust.

While we were riding home, Ali said his joyous daughter has Down syndrome. I asked, "Have you watched *Down for Love*, a true series where adults with Down syndrome navigate dating and marriage?" "Oh!" he responded. "My girl could, someday, marry?" A new future entered the car and connected with every parent's basic hope.

What a visit. What a ride. ■



Art and photo by Urmilla Khanna

Home Sweet Home

Marcia Grabowski

A RECENT TRIP back to Michigan, where most of my ~40 cousins live, confirmed what I've felt for years about where I was born and raised: that it will always be home in my heart.

Michigan, being shaped like a mitten, makes it easy to show people where Bay City is: at the bottom of the "thumb," nestled in the Saginaw Bay area, which empties into Lake Huron. (By the way, a good way to remember the five "great lakes" is by the acronym "HOMES": Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior.) The population in 1970, the year before I left for college in Detroit, was ~50,000. Currently, it's 32,000. So what's it like having visited this small town every few years, and now, 50+ years later? I have the unique viewpoint--actually unique to all those who left after college and never returned to live there--of seeing it as an occasional observer, not as a lifelong resident.

It's actually a little like a 32,000-member village--think "neighbors helping neighbors"—and an area with a lowish median household income of around \$48,000. You can buy a nice, not even so small home there in a good neighborhood for less than \$100,000, and a large historic (4000+ sf) home for ~\$500,000.

Lumbering, milling and shipbuilding created many jobs, and the Saginaw River was used to float lumber to the mills and factories, many of which are now closed. Many of the early industrialists made large fortunes which they used to build

mansions on and in the neighborhoods around Center Avenue which starts at the river. Many of these are registered as historical landmarks by the state and federal governments. Defoe Shipbuilding built destroyer escorts, guided missile destroyers and patrol craft for the U.S. Navy and the Royal Australian Navy. Industrial Brownhoist, which constructed large industrial cranes, was another important part of the local industrial history.

At the start of WWI, Bay City had a largely German neighborhood called Salzburg, whose German minority clung tight to its heritage, while at the same time demanding that the rest of the city recognize them as Americans first and German-Americans second. Anti-German sentiment was strong, and hundreds of young men from Michigan went across the border to Canada to be part of the war effort by joining the Canadian Armed Forces.

I'd mentioned Bay City being like a large village: people help each other and speak to one another on the street. Neighbors shovel snow (and there's plenty of it) for neighbors. They help each other start their cars and cut down diseased and fallen trees.... yes, they are a different breed up there.

In Michigan, for relaxation, quiet and beautiful scenery and clear water, people go "up north" to the upper lower peninsula, or to the UP ("you-pea"), whose residents are known as "you-pers." Bay City is somewhat like the last outpost when traveling up north. Now

that the city has shrunk, while the beautiful old brick downtown buildings are mostly still there, the city has a different feeling, and too many of those buildings are now empty. It's still lively, and oddly enough more good restaurants are starting up there, but it's a bit lonely walking the quiet streets at night. However, then.... you come across a self-pedaling party ("drinking") bus being leisurely and noisily pedaled by about 15 happy campers!

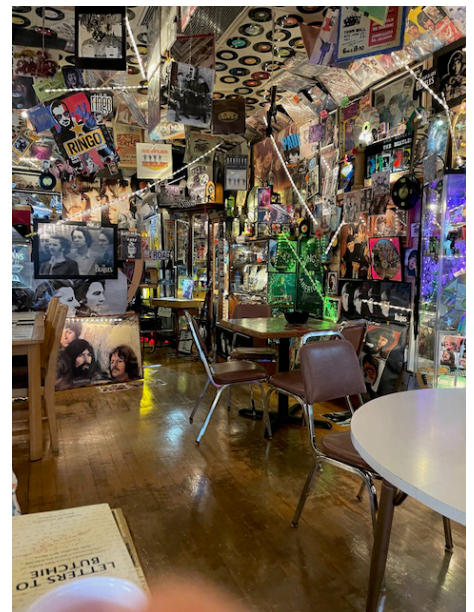


Photo by Marcia Grabowski

Beatles and Beans Emporium

Bay City has many other unique attractions: one of them is the Beatles and Beans Coffee Emporium. Practically every inch of this small cafe is covered with Beatles memorabilia. Yes, it's very kitschy, but all done in the spirit of fun. Another is the enormous 4th of July fireworks. People come from literally all over Michigan to view these. The Saginaw River runs through the downtown area, and the waterfront hotels offer special package deals which often sell out early. The riverfront itself is quite an attrac-

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Lake Barcroft Village Wine Tasting Fundraiser

Natalie Gluck



Photo by Cathy Williams

Michigan

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tion and has been developed in a natural way for several years now, with walking paths and attractive colorful benches. A band shell hosts different types of music on Thursday evenings during the summer.

I would be remiss in not mentioning that Bay City has a significant Polish population, with many Poles becoming established with churches and community organizations in the early 20th century. Many of the older beautiful churches—not including St. Stanislaus Kostka, the Polish church—are now shuttered for lack of attendance.

So while Bay City has declined in population and number of businesses throughout the years, it still has spirit and, not exactly “Gemuetlichkeit,” but a strong sense of that type of comfort, and home. ■

A WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER for the Lake Barcroft Village was held on the afternoon of May 18, 2025 at Beach 5. The weather was overcast to begin with, as befitted the end of a rainy week. Toward the later part of the afternoon and just in time for our fundraiser, a gentle breeze and soft dappled sunshine appeared, temperatures warmed into the low 70s, and loud birds (chiefly cardinals) began to sing.

About 40 people attended the event. Along with the wines, a tableful of cheese and crackers, fruits, a vegetable platter, and cookies and brownies contributed by Village members were offered.

Wines were provided by Ed Addiss and Barbara Selig of Wine Traditions Ltd (winetraditions.com). The Wine Traditions portfolio consists of wines, ciders, and spirits produced by small family-owned vineyards and orchards located throughout France.

Wine Traditions Ltd. began as the collaborative project of husband and wife, Edward Addiss and Barbara Selig. They set out to explore the appellations of Southwest France and the endless mosaic of vineyards that make up Bordeaux. Ed had been working in the wine business since 1980, both in retail and for two importer/distributors when, in the mid-1990s, he entered a liquor store on Manhattan’s lower east side intending to sell some of the California wines he represented. He did not make the sale but, instead, wound up buying an array of Bordeaux “petits chateaux” that the store’s owner declared unsalable, wines similar to those Ed had represented years before. Barbara and Ed found these wines to be direct, expressive, delicious, and affordable, all of which prompted the question, “Why was the U.S. market ignor-

ing them?” The answer resulted in the unanticipated decision to open an importing company.

Ed and Barbara make two buying trips to France per year, one in the spring and one in the fall. They spend about three weeks in France on each trip, visiting current suppliers as well as new prospects. They are looking for wines that convey a sense of place: small, local, unique terroir.

Ten French wines were offered for sampling: four whites, one rosé, four reds, and one white dessert wine.

Printed handouts with detailed descriptions of all the wines were provided. Also, Ed and Barbara provided helpful verbal commentary, advice, and context for the participants.

Attendees all had an enjoyable afternoon in the beautiful lake-side setting tasting wines that they would otherwise not have known about and discussing their merits. Everyone had their own favorites, although it was agreed that the dessert wine was lighter (less sweet) and more pleasant than most dessert wines.

Wine Traditions is licensed to sell wine to stores and restaurants, not to individuals. Their wine can be purchased at Arrowine and Cheese, 4508 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22207, 703-525-0990 ■