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LifeTimes

A CREATIVE ARTS JOURNAL
ISSUE 11 | WINTER 2023



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Founded in 1972, the Friends of the Lexington Council on Aging is celebrating its 50th year of providing services to Lexington seniors. The FCOA, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, is funded by the generous donations of Lexington citizens and managed by a volunteer board of residents. Working

Celebrating 50

closely with the Town's Human Services Department and Council on Aging, FCOA funding enriches the quality of life and supplements critical services for Lexington seniors such as special lunches, age-sensitive counselling and recreation, out of town cultural trips, health and wellness programs, and affordable transportation (Lexpress and Lex Connect). FCOA also provides enrichment programs such as the OWLL educational courses and this creative arts journal, and seeks new ways to serve via our Bright Ideas grant funding.

You can support the Journal, and the activities of the FCOA, by making a gift to the Friends of the Lexington Council on Aging. If you wish to be recognized as a Patron, please note this on your check or on the donation envelope or online form.

Submission guidelines for future editions can be found on the Friends of the Lexington Council on Aging website:

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ON THE COVERS

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BY JUDITH COOPER

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And then there were none

BY CHARLES KETCHAM



Seeds

BY ELIZABETH ROZAN

AN ACORN, like a human, has a heart beat, lying within the capped time capsule. A seed, so small, is overtaken by a force without warning, and begins its forward, upward journey, looking for the light, responding to the call. There is a magnificence to the circling of birds who inadvertently drop new life, which takes root where it falls and sprouts a surprising beech tree or a blanket of snow alyssum. Size does not matter; life seeks out conditions for growth. Life calls to happen, across species, in any location, ready to bloom, to grow, to shelter.

All trees are beautiful; I have a favorite every season. In spring it is the weeping cherry, especially if it is planted with enough space around it so as not to be stifled or stunted. It shows its pink initials now, at the end of April, and it always reminds me of you, born in the season of renewed beauty. In the cemetery, one was planted as a remembrance, as a channel for connecting, next to a bench for reflection. With this tree, the seed found its place where Earth and sky meet, sending roots deep and branches wide and graceful, rooted, like you in your short life.

I sit with the inquiry: Why did you leave so suddenly, so unexpectedly? What was the hurry? Many layers of grief spilled forward from the hearts of those attending your memorial service. The cello spoke without

words. To each left behind, there is the memory of life worth the world. The moment of the news of death is a shocking violence to the heart. Fathers, stunned beyond belief that one is here one minute and gone the next, stand as Poseidon without the trident, having lost control of the ocean of emotion. Mothers fall to the ground at the gravesite, cracking the ground like an earthquake; their moans can be heard across the hills, above the tornado's roar. The tree reflects the beauty of your soul.

If one's soul upon death, as it sometimes is said, becomes a star, your star is pouring down its starlight as I sit on the bench, feeling life in the weeping cherry, remembering your glorious growth in response to the life force. I am still unable to make sense of a death without reason. Your star pours down like fairy dust, shapeshifting into a child's hug, your grey-blue eyes, the tilt of your head, the sound of your voice in laughter, your nimble hands holding a ship you made from a kit. Everyday that soul filled hearts. Now the ship sits on the window sill that is filled with heart shaped stones collected from the beaches of childhood, picked up as we walked hand-in-hand, heartbeat to heartbeat. My eyes return to the bark and the blossoms; the wonders of the world persist, like the acorn, like the seed. ♦



Particalized

BY BARBARA BOOLS

Ways in which I know I am preparing for my last lap of life come to me
in dreams.

Nighttime dreams. Daytime dreams . . .

And in the shift from “in the world” to “not of the world” felt moments
and experiences.

The spark of life.

The flash of light.

The miracle of seeing you, of knowing you, of sharing time and space
with you, of loving you . . .

Has been mine.

My dreams are of the infinite tiny particles calling me to join the dance
of all that is.

Random particles pulled together for those moments of form, then . . .

Pulled apart and scattered on an unknown canvas.

Moved by the Spirit

JUDITH COOPER'S art explores her spiritual life to create a bridge from the artist to the viewer that provides hope and healing. She draws on origin stories and oral traditions to bring sacred knowledge into view.

Holding Onto Hope II (2021)



Low fire white clay, underglazes, aspen sticks, wood block, feather & cheesecloth
13”h x 26”w x 10”d

Sacred Teaching, Sacred Text (2019)



Pastel, rusted metal, archival mat board
48" x 28"

Art Lessons

BY LEE BRAMI

A MASS OF CRINKLY BROWN HAIR surrounded her face, which seemed to have a thousand wrinkles to my seven-year-old eyes. Her smile was wide and welcoming, and she had kind, bright brown eyes. She was a small woman, compared to my parents and most of my other teachers, and she was plump. She always wore an art smock, tied in the back and streaked with yellows, oranges, reds and other colors in front. It hid most of her skirt and blouse, and she wore flat brown Oxford shoes: what my mother called “sensible shoes.”

Mrs. Weissberger was my second grade art teacher in that long-ago time when my sister and I wore cotton dresses and red Oxfords and white ankle socks to school. No school girl would ever think of wearing pants.

Mrs. Weissberger got excited about every art project she created for us, and her excitement rippled out to us. She would gather us around the large wooden table in the art room and announce the new project, and she would let us know that we were going to have a lot of fun creating a different type of art. She pronounced “w’s like “v”s, and when I asked her why she did that, she told me with a smile that she had an accent. She said it was a German accent, because she grew up in a country called Germany.

“Ok, children,” she would say, “We’re going to start a new project today! What do you think it will be?”

None of us could guess, but we were excited

about all the possibilities. It was November, and we had painted pictures on large pieces of off-white paper clipped to our easels, using primary color paints. In Kindergarten and first grade, we finger-painted, with red and yellow and blue, and I liked that.

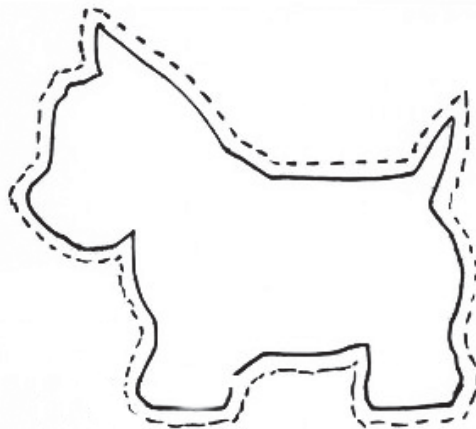
But Mrs. Weissberger taught us to make extra colors by mixing the primary colors to make green and purple and orange and brown in separate paper cups. I could have painted all year long, but I was excited to start a new project, too.

“This time,” she said, “we are going to make shapes or people or animals — real

or even imaginary animals - using felt and yarn.” First, we could draw an outline of what we wanted to make; next, we would choose which color felt we wanted to use and cut two identical pieces of felt using our outline as a pattern to trace the shape. Then we would sew, as best we could, half of the two identical pieces together, with yarn and a very large-eyed needle. Finally, we got to stuff wads of cotton in between the two pieces of felt and sew up the rest of the figure. Mrs. Weissberger helped us with the sewing. I chose red felt and made a Santa Claus, and I glued on a white beard and a black felt belt and buttons and eyes and nose and a red mouth. But I didn’t think he looked right.

“Mrs. Weissberger, I made my Santa Claus too thin. I couldn’t stuff enough cotton into him to give him a fat tummy” I told her.

“That’s all right,” she said. “I think he looks



like a very real Santa. Maybe this is how Santa looked when he was younger, before he got so plump.” That made me feel better.

I always loved coming to art class every week in the basement of our elementary school, and I was sure she loved teaching us, in contrast to my first grade teacher, the year before, who seldom smiled. I could feel how much she loved having children around her .

At the beginning of each class, we put on our smocks, and she helped us tie our sashes in back. After we put on our smocks, we were ready to make art.

Once we completed our felt art projects, Mrs. Weissberger taught us about clay art. When she told us we would be playing with clay and making our clay into objects- maybe even clay creatures - I couldn't wait to get my hands into the clay and squish it around, especially after she took a glob of clay and pounded and squished it on a small brown wooden board. I liked the smell of the clay: moist and dark and earthy.

She also taught us how to flatten out a rolled mound of clay so we could push our hands hard into it and make a “fossil record” of our 7-year-old hands.

After we painted our “fossilized” hands came the best part of all: gathering around the ceramic kiln at a safe distance, in a circle, while Mrs. Weissberger carefully placed each piece in the kiln. To us, it was like a magical oven that got hotter and hotter until it was over 1000 degrees. We couldn't get too near it, she was very firm about that, but we were all entranced by the heat and the glow of it. The following week, after our projects got baked, our clay “fossil” hands would be glazed to make them even more beautiful.

One day, after scooping out clay from a large circular cardboard container, Mrs. Weissberger was covered with clay up to her elbows. I wanted to ask her a question

about my new clay creature, so I followed her to the deep sink in one corner of the art room, where she was scrubbing her arms and hands. I had come up behind her, waiting until she finished washing, when I noticed that she had several small black numbers tattooed in a line on the underside of one forearm.

“Mrs. Weissberger, what are those numbers on your arm? What do they mean?” I asked her.

She looked startled for a moment, then she smiled at me: “Oh, they don't really mean anything. They're just numbers. Like a design.” So it was a kind of number art, I thought.

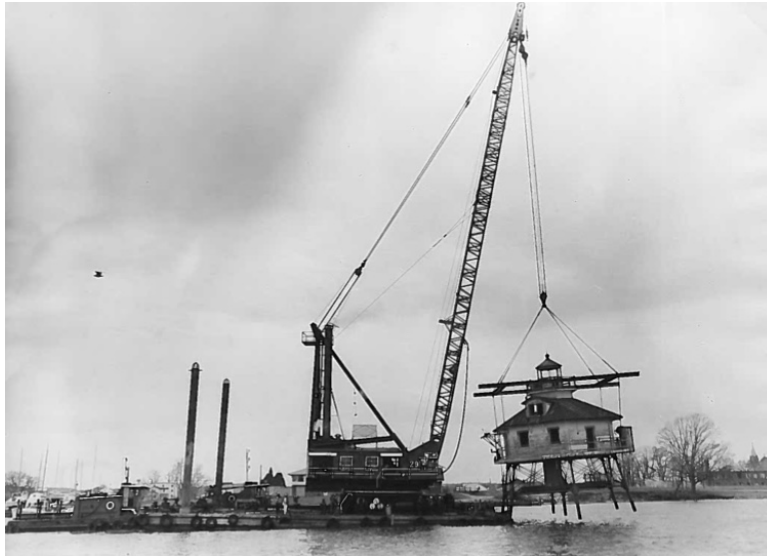
It didn't occur to me until many years later that Mrs. Weissberger must have been a death camp survivor during World War II. By the time I realized it, I was in 9th grade, reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* with the rest of my English class, horrified as I learned about the arm tattoos and the ovens. I wondered why I hadn't heard about the Holocaust before. Around the same time, Adolph Eichmann was captured by the Israelis in Argentina, where he had hidden safely for 15 years. The papers and television were full of the news, and it was almost impossible for anyone to ignore the Holocaust anymore. One of the main architects of the “Final Solution,” Eichmann was tried in Jerusalem, found guilty, and executed.

By then, Mrs. Weissberger had long since retired.

As I look back now, so many decades later, I realize what a remarkable woman she was. I still wonder how she managed, not simply to survive the horror but to transcend it and find joy in making art — joy she shared with hundreds of school children, after the War was over. ♦

The Bell at the Drum Point Light

BY MOUNA ANDERSON



IF YOU SAILED along the shore of the Chesapeake Bay, in the mid 19th century, you would have seen an occasional spider-like object, standing in the water close to the shore. These objects were Screw Pile Lighthouses, chosen for their unique design which made them ideal for anchorage in sand or mud. In Maryland, four of these lighthouses were built where the waters of the Potomac River, the South River, the Wicomico River and the Patuxent River entered the bay.

I first learned of these interesting structures while visiting my brother in Calvert County, Maryland. At a local motel, a brochure featuring the Calvert Marine Museum and the Drum Point Lighthouse caught my attention. The eye catching name, “Drum Point,” and the unusual shape of the lighthouse were instrumental in arousing my interest. Intrigued, I lost no time in getting into my car. Destination: Drum Point.

It was a perfect autumn day with clear, sunny skies—a day made for adventure. I leaned back against the seat of the car and breathed in deeply the crisp autumn air. My heart raced with pleasure and excitement

as I headed south on Routes 2-4 toward the town of

Solomons. At the point where Route 2 peels off from Route 4, I exited onto Route 2 and drove under the Thomas Johnson bridge. In the distance, a low, red roofed building appeared. It hugged the shore with the ease of a friendly embrace. An American flag atop the building’s roof waved merrily in the breeze, welcoming all who entered the parking lot below.

This was the Calvert Marine Museum. It is a small museum that houses an eclectic collection of marine-related objects. Since it was the lighthouse that brought me here, the first order of business was to take a tour of it. On this tour, the docent talked about a rash of thefts from abandoned lighthouses in the bay. “Sometime in the mid 1970s,” she said, “the bell mysteriously disappeared from this lighthouse. Later, when the lighthouse was moved to the museum, it just as mysteriously reappeared. No one knows who stole it or how such a heavy object could vanish. It is believed that a local judge may have been involved in its abduction.”

Hmm, I thought, I wonder if my friend,

Judge Bowen, knows anything about this bell. I will ask him about it when I visit him tomorrow. Judge Perry Bowen II had lived in Calvert County, Maryland most of his life. He was a much loved and highly respected member of this community. If anyone knew anything about the lighthouse bell it would be the judge.

Judge Bowen and I had an easy friendship of long standing. While chatting with him the next day, I said, "Judge, I took a tour of the Drum Point Lighthouse yesterday. A story about the disappearance of its bell made me long for more information. Do you know anything about that bell?"

The judge's face lit up. The story burst from his lips with the speed and energy of water rushing over a precipice. My pen raced across the paper in a determined effort to keep up.

"This type of bell contains silver," the judge began. "The tone of each bell is determined by the amount of silver it contains. Naturally, the high melt value of these bells attracted thieves."

"I was sitting in my office in Prince Fredrick," he continued, "when the telephone rang. A friend of mine, Leroy 'Pepper' Langley was on the line. I knew Pepper because he was deeply involved with municipal activities in Solomons. Pepper said, 'Judge, I want you to help me to steal a bell.'"

"At that time the lighthouse was on the edge of the shoreline of Plum Point. Initially it had been out in the water, but the shoreline gradually silted up until the shore was up under the lighthouse. Because the lighthouse was now on land, thieves could get to it easily."

"An attempt to steal the bell the previous week had failed. However, the thieves had succeeded in unbolting it. Pepper thought that the thieves would surely come back the

next weekend. At that time the bell would be gone. There was no time to lose."

"I said, 'I can't authorize you to steal that bell. It is Federal property.'"

Pepper was not easily deterred from his mission, 'I can get that bell off the lighthouse and put it in a safe place,' he persisted. 'If I don't do that it will be gone this weekend.'"

"I really wanted to see the lighthouse moved and restored to its original condition, so I said to Pepper, 'If they arrest us, maybe they'll put us in the same cell. At least we'll have good company. Go ahead and get the bell. If anyone asks, tell them that I authorized you to do it.' Pepper lost no time in getting a crew together. The crew took the bell down and Pepper kept it safe until the lighthouse was moved to the museum."

After a thoughtful pause, the judge continued. "An interesting sideline is that the source of light for that lighthouse was a single candle. When magnified through a Fresnel lens, the light of that one candle could be seen at a distance of 13 nautical miles on a clear night. This seemingly magical feat of amplification was achieved by the lens's multiple mirrors."

"At one point, the lens had been moved from our lighthouse to a lighthouse on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Eventually, it was agreed that the lens was to be returned to its original home. Unfortunately, when it was returned, the metal base needed for mounting it was missing. When Dr. Eshelman, who was head of the museum, came to work one day he was astonished to find that base leaning up against his office door. To this day no one knows who had that base or who returned it."

The judge shifted slightly in his chair before continuing. "The plan was to move the lighthouse from Plum Point to the museum at Drum Point. In order to do this, several

challenges had to be overcome. First, since the lighthouse was Federal property, we needed to get approval from Congress. One Congressman, Jack Davis from Beaumont, Texas blocked our efforts. Three of us, John Broome, Wally Ewalt and I went to Davis's office to explain the problem. It took several visits with Congressman Davis to persuade him of the value of moving the lighthouse to the museum where it would be restored and preserved. His approval was the reward for our persistence."

"A second source of opposition came from a prominent resident of Solomons. After many discussions with that gentleman, we were finally able to get him to support our effort."

"Once permission was granted, we were faced with the practical matter of actually moving the lighthouse. At first, we considered using a helicopter. This turned out not to be an option since we could not get accurate figures for the weight of the lighthouse."

"As luck would have it, B.F. Diamond Corp. was building a bridge across the Patuxent River from Saint Mary's County to Solomons. They had, on site, a huge steam crane mounted on a barge that would be perfect for the job. Would B. F. Diamond be willing to move the lighthouse for the \$1,000.00 in our budget? Yes, they very graciously agreed to do it for \$1,000.00."

"First, they made a yoke that could fit over the lighthouse. With that yoke, they caught the lighthouse under the main beam and tried to lift it up. To their amazement, the supports were solid. The lighthouse would not move."

"Then, the supports would have to be cut. As a crew worked to cut the supports there were some anxious moments. Because the tide was starting to come in, those men who were lying on their backs to do the work

were in danger of drowning. To everyone's relief, a frantic attempt to cut the supports, before the tide came in, succeeded without a minute to spare."

"Now that the lighthouse was free of the supports, a crane picked it up clear of the cuts and placed it on the barge. A tugboat pushed the barge to the lighthouse's new location behind the museum."

"It was fortuitous that there was a barge there for building the bridge at just the right time. Otherwise, we could never have paid for a barge and the lighthouse would not have been moved."

"Once the lighthouse was firmly settled in its new location, Pepper and a bunch of his cronies put the bell back. They knew just how to do it."

"The only person in the county who had been born in the lighthouse, Anna Williams Ewald, helped the Historical Society locate period furniture for the lighthouse."

"B.F. Diamond Corporation built the bridge."

"Mr. Allen Handen, a local attorney, was counsel for Diamond in Calvert County. He was instrumental in getting Diamond to help us."

This is where the judge's story ended. I felt excited that my simple question had solved the mystery of the missing bell. I looked Judge Bowen in the eye and said, "Thank you for telling me the story of the missing bell. An interesting bit of history, such as this, deserves to be written."

Judge Bowen winked at me and said, "Sugah, go ahead." ♦

This story is dedicated to the memory of the author's brother, Naji P. Maloof and to the memories of their good friends, Judge Perry G. Bowen and his wife Virginia.

With thanks to Mr. John R. Johnson, Director of the Calvert County Historical Society, for his kind assistance and permission to use the photograph of the lighthouse.

The Needle Factory

BY ANITA MYER

College student, first real job.
Through oppressive swinging doors
An antiseptic building,
Tasteless and cold.
Introduction to grown-up life
Paying my way through college.
Yes! I will shine! I will excel!

Fast moving assembly line of small injection needles
Moving, moving, moving along
Relentless needles to be placed
In sectioned containers.
How simple, how boring,
How wrong I was.

Repeatedly called to the supervisor's office
Too many burrs on inspected needles!
Warnings and demotion floated in the air.
Now, in a basement to clip in solitude
Those thousands of IV connectors
— Only to be fired.

Tedium is the master and chorus
Of repeat performance.
But assembly workers find a way
To cast their philosophic net
Of acceptance and endurance.
Unlike the butterfly, a transient—
Who elicits the spoils and flies away.

Accessibility

BY JAMES BALDWIN

A HORRIBLE THING happened to me a few days ago. My remote Apple keyboard stopped working. It couldn't keep up with my keystrokes. It would type a few words then slow down with letters piling on top of each other mid-sentence like tiny cars crashing into an unseen wall. The space bar wouldn't space, delete wouldn't delete.

The built-in keyboard on my laptop still worked, but it was slow, sticky. Some of the keys required pounding to make an impression and my fingers are way too big for it. In my life, my roomy and responsive remote keyboard not working counts as a disaster, because I love to write.

I'm the most dedicated kind of writer. I'm one of those writers who writes because I love to. At 80 years old and long retired it is, simply, what I do. So, to be without a keyboard? It's like a concert pianist suddenly without his piano. My cat without his litter box.

I struggle to find a solution, hunting and pecking, pounding keys into the search field of that amazing thing called Google, the source of answers to all of life's most vexing questions.

Ads pop up. A pageful. Most of them point me to those dreaded words, "current operating system." At age 80, my operating system is anything but current. I try to download and install Monterey 12.2 only to be sabotaged at the very start. Naturally, I don't have enough space available on something called my hard drive. It sounds vaguely sexual and quite appropriate that, at my age, there is no space left on it and not enough to even start engaging with this bright young operating system. Unless, I create some space by cleaning my computer

of unneeded files. One look at the rows and columns of files on my desktop alone gives me my answer to this suggestion. No.

I abandon Monterey 12.2 and search Google for other solutions. All of them involve various ways to "Force, Quit" and "Restart." Is it just me, I wonder, or are all these suggestions intentionally suggestive? Doesn't Google know I'm 80?

After countless efforts force-quitting, re-starting—holding down control, option, command with three left-handed fingers; holding down shift, delete, and the power button with an assortment of fingers on my right, my keyboard remains as unforgiving as a lock with the wrong combination.

I'm now several hours into the process of trying to get my keyboard to grab the life preserver I've thrown its way. I give up. Time for an online 'chat' with an apple 'genius.' I have had past experience with these people. They raise respect for the term "Geek" to epic levels.

After a click or two, I'm led to an appointment page. It appears they have appointments available starting in just 15 minutes and at 15-minute intervals for the rest of the day. Just what I need. Instant help. I'll have my keyboard—and my life—back in minutes.

I click on 15 minutes from now only to find no appointments available. 30 minutes. No appointments available. Ok. Ok. I'll go out an hour. No. Two hours. Still no. Fixing my keyboard reminds me of looking for an appointment for my Covid shot. Actually, it is the very same experience. Finally, I get a phone appointment. The next morning. With Mark.

The Apple wizards are intelligent, articulate, and impeccably courteous. “Hello. This is Mark. Who do I have the pleasure of speaking with this morning?” His baritone oozes confidence.

“Let me ask you just a few questions, James, and we’ll have you up and running in no time.”

Despite his best, most respectful efforts, Mark didn’t have me up and running in no time. He asked me questions. He cleaned my hard-drive after I gave him control of my computer—and my life? He had my fingers twisting like pretzels on various key combinations I’d never tried before. We shut down. We waited 10 seconds. We re-started. Several times.

There were two more of these conversations with geniuses. I even bought an external hard-drive on the last one’s recommendation. I updated to the latest operating system—by myself! An homeric victory for me. I changed batteries and re-started...again. The keys stayed slow, choppy. The space bar still didn’t work. Neither did the delete key. I was losing hope.

Finally, Isabella came to my rescue. She tried everything her predecessors tried with the same result, but Isabella could make an appointment for me at a live Genius Bar in an Apple Store.

It was a half hour drive away, but I grabbed it. Life working with my laptop’s built-in keyboard was not worth living. I’d spent nearly three hours on the phone with three Apple geeks over two days. Now, on the third day, I had landed a live appointment, still not knowing if the problem was the keyboard or my computer. I also had to admit that, given my own technological incompetence, the culprit in all this might well be me.

Keyboard and laptop in my briefcase, I flashed the QR code on my iPhone to the

friendly 20-something who greeted me warmly at the Apple Store entrance. Amazing I thought. Showing a QR code as an entry and then having a very young man say, “Welcome to Apple Mr. Baldwin. You’re a few minutes early, so feel free to browse around. I’ll come and get you when we’re ready for you.”

I was the oldest person in the store by perhaps a century. Everything gleamed. The desk tops, the Macbooks. The young, glowing people. And the phones. My god, the phones. Some big enough to be entire computers, but still small enough to fit in my pocket. The latest iPhone 13 drew me like the \$1000 magnet it was. I’d never spend that much money on a phone—and I hoped I wouldn’t have to spend it on a keyboard—but, it had its allure. I picked it up. It was smooth and shining in my hand, a pleasant feeling. I looked at its back. Sure enough. Three, yes three! camera lenses. I pressed on video and looked through the screen. It looked sharper than my vision. This phone could see and reproduce things more clearly than my own eyes. Enter an Apple Store at your own risk.

“Mr. Baldwin.” A follow-me nod of the head.

I was escorted to the Genius Bar, and a barstool. There were single customers on either side of me. Laid my briefcase on the bar, pulled out my Macbook Air, then the recalcitrant keyboard. I opened my computer and started it, confidently using touch ID. I was ready for my Genius.

She approached from my left. I heard her call out, “James?” I felt as if I was next at the doctor’s office. I raised my hand and wiggled it.

She moved in front of me smiling. “Are you James?”

“Yes, that’s me,” I said.

“Hi. I’m Carrie Ann,” she said. “Happy to help you today.”

Her brown hair was short and curly framing a stark white face with full cheeks and bright red lips. Her blue eyes seemed beady peering through round glasses with thick lenses. She gave no indication that she would have anything but success in dealing with my problem.

I started to give some background. She interrupted.

“Oh, I’ve reviewed your case,” she said. “Let me just have a look around. Would you open your preferences, please.”

The jokester in me stirred. I wanted to say, “What? Open my preferences? We’ve only just met.” “Sure,” I said.

Confidently, she swirled my laptop sideways. Our shoulders nearly met over the bar as we peered together into my mystery.

“And hand me your keyboard, please.” She held the keyboard, pushed the button to turn it on.

She talked me through various steps I’d tried before. By now they were quite familiar. Obvious clicks on Bluetooth and Keyboard Preferences. Oh, I thought. I know as much about this as she does.

Then Carrie Ann stopped. She put the keyboard down and brought her right hand up to her chin. The Thinker, I thought.

She leaned back slightly and with the hand that was on her chin pointed at my computer screen like a painter considering her masterpiece. She leaned forward pointing at my preferences. “Click on Accessibility,” she ordered.

“Accessibility?” I’d never clicked on Accessibility in my life. Didn’t know it existed.

I looked at the Accessibility Icon. It was a ghost-like image of a human, arms and legs splayed out like the target for a knife thrower at a carnival. I opened it to find a number of options that would slow down and completely screw up a keyboard if it

were used at a normal typing pace. Most of them were checked.

“Uncheck all those options and close out of it.” Carrie Ann said.

I did.

Then she said, “Open Notes.”

She laid the keyboard next to me and quickly typed. I watched the words appear on my screen, one by one, flawlessly. I THINK WE’VE FIXED THE PROBLEM.

I was speechless. I gawked at the words. I looked up at her. “Let me see that keyboard,” I challenged. Surely it was scared of Carrie Anne, but certainly not me.

She nudged it over in front of me.

HAVE WE ACTUALLY FIXED THIS DAMN KEYBOARD? I typed.

The keyboard was responsive, quick. Good as new. Better even. It felt like stepping on the accelerator of one of those new electric cars.

“You’re all set James.”

I looked up at her again. “Really,” I said. “It was Accessibility? That’s all?”

“Yup.” She replied.

“I don’t believe it. Three different geniuses, 3 hours on the phone, and nobody even mentioned Accessibility.”

“Well, I had the benefit of their reports on the problem, don’t forget that.” She paused, glanced at my screen again, then at me. “Thanks for coming in today, James.” There was a hint of smile. “I’ve gotta move on.”

I wanted to hug her but she wasn’t accessible. The bar was in my way.

When I got home, I went back to Google. I searched for “accessibility on Mac” and got this. “Accessibility features are designed to help people with disabilities use technology more easily.” Incredible I thought. Google has a sense of humor. ♦

Bee Mused

BY JOHN R. EHRENFELD

I woke up with a bee in my bonnet,
Abuzz with a burning urge to create.
Perhaps, a villanelle or a sonnet,
Or a pantoum—an old form quite ornate.
But, first, I have to summon up my muse,
Whose presence is most unreliable.
She does much better than a glass of booze.
My need for her is undeniable.
Without her near me, my words get stuck.
Most of them never make it to the page.
The ones that do are just garbage and muck.
Might be a sign of my advancing age.
Nevertheless, poetry's worth trying.
At ninety-one, much better than dying.

Sky Lights

PETER SHAW's photographic compositions are more than meets his eye. He loves to photograph the world at night, as seen in this urban moonset at the Bunker Hill Monument in East Boston and in the expanse of the Milky Way at Shenandoah National Park. The twilight blue haze on the Green Mountains in winter captures the texture and movement inherent in the Vermont landscape.



Bunker Hill Moonset (2022)



Vermont Blueberry Hill Winter (2018)



Milky Way Shenandoah Composite (2022)

A Seat at the Table

BY MARY LEVIN KOCH

AROUND THE TIME I turned 70, moving into a senior-living facility looked to be in my future. My aunt, nearly 100, resided at Cabot Park Village in Newton where she attended lectures and movies, participated in group sing-alongs, wrote for the quarterly news magazine, served on several committees, and made many new friends. That she was thriving inspired me to seek a similar place where I would live out my golden years.

But unlike my aunt, neither governance, gardening, nor get together committees would be in my future, and so, making friends in a new environment seemed daunting. However, while skimming through the Community Center Bulletin, I read about a weekly canasta game open to all. Hmmm, learning how to play this popular card game might ease my entry into senior-living society.

With this in mind, on a crisp autumn morning I drive to the Center and sit in a sun-filled garden room that is set up with bridge tables. For several hours, I watch four women play canasta. It is obvious that they are not only experienced players but also good friends. While winning is preferable to losing, for these women the outcome is far less important than the camaraderie. Between hands they chat amiably about many topics.

I like these ladies and canasta looks like fun. I resolve to learn how to play and become a regular at the Thursday morning table. So, I begin to study the many rules, and the complicated scoring. My brain is working on all cylinders, and I welcome this mental challenge. It's a pleasant alternative to the daily crossword.

Then, one morning I arrive at the Center to find only three of the regulars. Without

any hesitation, I am asked to be the fourth. I think I am not ready for this, but the ladies insist. I agree, after extracting promises of help. And help they do, answering question after question until, by game's end, I am getting the hang of it.

Over the following months, other women join the group. Although new to canasta, many of them are seasoned mahjong players. One woman, as it turns out, offers lessons and encourages me to join an upcoming class. I quickly agree; surely the ability to play two "parlor" games will increase my popularity when I move into senior housing.

Life, however, has thrown me a curve ball and my plans have changed. Senior-living will not be in my future. With the sudden deaths of my daughter and her husband, I am now permanent guardian to my granddaughter. I am chauffeur, chicken-nuggets-chef, bath-giver, bed-time-story-teller, hugger-in-chief.

Raising a youngster in my eighth decade is both challenging and life changing. Traveling, fine dining, and movie-going have taken a backseat to visits to the playground, swim lessons, birthday parties, and screening children's television programs. Mr. Rogers has passed away and "Sesame Street" is so yesterday. Now, it's "Peppa Pig," "Pinkalicious," and "Paw Patrol." Still, I am happy to sit on the couch and watch 21st century cartoons alongside my granddaughter. I am all in; saddled up for my second rodeo—available 24/7, well almost 24/7. There is one—make that two—exceptions: there will be no messing with my mahjong Tuesdays and canasta Thursdays. Senior-living may be off the table, but my seat at the game table is sacrosanct. ♦

Feelin' Good

BY JOHN R. EHRENFELD

There are moments when I am in the flow.
No longer trapped inside my cage,
I can feel the warmth of an inner glow.

It never seems to last; that much I know.
I'll have to turn another page.
There were moments when I was in the flow.

If only I could let my shackles go
And stop thinking about my age,
I will feel the warmth of that inner glow.

How do these feelings happen, I don't know.
I see myself upon a stage.
These are moments when I am in the flow.

It's like I'm in a moving picture show
That's turning out to be the rage.
Then I feel the warmth of my inner glow.

My drunken thoughts are bouncing to and fro.
Their sense is very hard to gauge.
There were moments when I was in the flow,
And I felt the warmth of that inner glow.

Jet Blues

BY JAY R. KAUFMAN

THURSDAY, JUNE 16. JetBlue flight 2654, Washington (DCA) to Boston, scheduled departure 4:30 p.m.

On board, gate pullback just a few minutes behind schedule. I'm in an aisle seat with an interesting woman in the window seat to my right. By the time we taxied and were second in line for takeoff, I had already learned that her name was Leora and that she worked for the Office of Naval Research (ONR), had a PhD in physics, studied high altitude weather, and had a boss who was totally lacking in curiosity about, and respect for, basic scientific research (if not science itself). In addition, he was not much in the "people person" or "wise manager" department.

Leora is on her way home to the old farmhouse she shares with her husband in Maine, having spent the workweek, as usual, moving between ONR in Arlington, Virginia and her small condo nearby. She's getting tired of the weekly interstate commute, but both she and her husband love their three acres and the old house, much of which he has rebuilt with his own hands. Leora and her husband are on the phone deciding where to go for dinner after meeting in Boston.

Not so fast. . .Engines revved up and. . . what's this? We're leaving the takeoff lineup and taking up a position on the side of the tarmac. "Sorry folks," the captain offers. "Boston's backed up and has asked for no more incoming flights for an hour. We'll stay here and report back to you." Whispers all around, experienced passengers were already sensing an hour turning into two, and two into yet worse. Leora called her husband again with news of the delayed departure.

By now, I know that she and her husband

have no kids. He isn't eager to sell the house and move to DC, as she would like. She loves what he's done with the house, but it takes a lot of his time and attention. Heard several times that he loves being with her, but never heard that his desires were reciprocated. She's editing a report with tables, graphs, 3D images, and accounts of cosmic rays and their impact on International Space Station scientists, sun activity and associated disruptions to the earth's electric grid and the nation's defense system. She's making notes with different colored markers.

Then from the cockpit we hear, "Sorry, folks, Boston has asked us to hold for another hour. We're looking for an open gate to get you back into the terminal while we wait." Now the chatter on board was louder and decidedly more pessimistic. This flight was on borrowed time.

Leora called her husband, "I won't be coming home this weekend after all." She then called a friend, also stranded at DCA, and arranged to meet for a drink at Legal Seafood in the terminal. She invited me to join her. "My friend's really nice. You'll like her."

I wasn't prepared to give up on getting home so I declined the offer, grabbed a yogurt, and hoped for a late departure. Nope. Soon flight 2654 was officially canceled. None of JetBlue's later flights were taking off, and all were fully booked anyway.

The next three hours were spent online, and on the phone, with JetBlue, American, Delta. There was nothing available—not Thursday evening, not any time on Friday, nothing until Saturday. Okay, so maybe Amtrak? I had to enter lots of information (name, credit card number, etc.) only to find

out there were no seats left on the train, and then enter that same information for the next train, only to find out it too was fully booked. There was nothing Thursday evening or Friday, nothing—until Saturday morning.

Yet more evidence that you don't have to believe the overwhelming evidence that the U.S barely survived a coup attempt, to know that we live in a flailing, if not failing, country. I recall an Amtrak trip from Boston to New York several years ago, right after returning home from Japan and travel on the Shinkansen at 300+ miles an hour, smooth, reliable, quiet travel. Not here!

Fast forward to 9pm. I'm finally booked on a 1:40 a.m. Greyhound bus from Greyhound's DC terminal near Union Station to Port Authority in New York, and then, after a two-hour layover, another Greyhound to Boston. That will get me home 18 hours later than planned with ten hours on buses as opposed to an hour and a half on a plane, but at least I'll get home.

With four hours to kill, I took the Metro back to town and settled into the lounge of the Phoenix Park Hotel, near Union Station where I had stayed for four nights while leading a workshop for county officials from across the country. I treated myself to a late (much-needed) dinner of corned beef and cabbage at the hotel's Irish Pub, the Dubliner. When in an Irish pub. . .Then, back to the lounge to watch a recap of the day's January 6 Commission hearing.

Meanwhile, Leora was probably safely asleep in Arlington.

Around 1 a.m., I left my Phoenix Park perch (did I mention that a security guard came by to ask what I was doing there) and walked the five minutes to Union Station and its bus depot, only to find Union Station locked up tight. There are no signs of a bus depot—not one. The Greyhound address given online

doesn't exist. Now I started to worry. I didn't want to miss this bus. I saw the flashing lights of a police cruiser nearby, raced to it, schlepping my suitcase, and was told to walk around the left side of Union Station and up a ramp. Maybe a sign or two would be helpful? So, this "ramp" was a chained-off driveway in serious need of repaving. I dragged myself, and my bag, over the chain, and walked up the long driveway only to find the top blocked again—no signage, no buses in sight. I worked my way around and over the barrier, kept walking, and finally saw a bus in the distance. Still no signage. Finally, I spotted a Greyhound shed. In DC, a city of secrets, one of the best-kept secrets is the location of its public bus depot. Although it was getting close, it wasn't yet 1:40 a.m. I made it.

Yes, I made it, but the very pleasant young man behind the counter told me the bus driver hadn't, and the 1:40 a.m. to Port Authority had been scrubbed. A call, text or email would have been nice, no?

Half an hour later, it's by now, nearly 2:30 a.m., this nice young man had booked me on the 8:10 a.m. to New York. I retraced my steps, stumbled back to the Phoenix Park, and checked in for the few hours of shuteye and the shower I desperately needed. I laughed as my head hit the pillow.

Three hours later, I woke, dressed, grabbed some breakfast and food for the bus ride, walked back to Union Station, dragging my bag, around the left side, over and around the barriers, up the damaged ramp, all the while wondering what else could go wrong. Miraculously, all that could go wrong had already gone wrong, and two buses and 12 hours later, the bus pulled into Boston's South Station.

Nearly 9 p.m., 27 hours late, but finally home.

I wondered what Leora was up to. ♦

Memorable Women in the American Shakespeare's Plays

BY MARION KILSON

DURING THE PANDEMIC WINTER of 2020-21, my play-reading group was an oasis in an otherwise isolating desert. Our seven members gathered from early November to early April to read through August Wilson's century cycle of plays, beginning with *Gem of the Ocean* set in 1904 and ending with *Radio Golf* set in 1997, although interestingly, they were not written or publicly performed in that order. Six of us lived in Massachusetts. One joined from Seattle via Zoom. Three of us identified as African-American and four as European-American. We ranged in age from 54 to 84 and represented a variety of occupations—lawyer, fabric designer, high school teacher, college instructor, college dean, and social worker.

When I think of August Wilson's plays, I think of the lyrical banter of working class African-American men thwarted in their ambitions by the injustices of a racist society. But Wilson also wrote memorably about women although he acknowledged it was hard for him to do as a man. In an interview with Vera Sheppard, he said, "I am cautious in writing women characters; I am respectful of them as I would be of my mother."¹ He told another interviewer, "I try to look at women as defined by themselves, and not as defined by men."² Four of these women characters stand out in my memory: Aunt Ester, Ma Rainey, Rose Maxson, and Berniece Charles.

Aunt Ester first appears in *Gem of the Ocean*. She's as old as the African-American experience in America. In 1904 she is 285 years old and living in the Hill District of Pittsburgh where Wilson grew up. Her name closely resembles "ancestor." Wilson described her as the mother of all the other

characters he created. She washes people's souls so that they can become whole again. In *Gem* she takes Citizen Barlow, who stole a bucket of nails for which another man was falsely accused and died, to the City of Bones populated by those who died during the Middle Passage from Africa to America. She tells Citizen, "When we get to the City of Bones, I'm gonna show you what happen when all the people call on God with the one voice. God got beautiful splendors."³ There are other references to Aunt Ester's redemptive healing in *Two Trains Running* and *Seven Guitars*; her death is announced in 1985 in *King Hedley II*; *Radio Golf* focuses on the potential destruction of her house during urban renewal. For me, Aunt Ester will always be Phylicia Rashad, who played her in *Gem's* pre-Broadway run at the Huntington Theater in 2004.

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom takes place in a 1927 recording studio in Detroit, the only Wilson play to be set outside of Pittsburgh. The play introduces us to the blues which Wilson considered embodied African-America's philosophy. Ma Rainey, an early blues singer, says, "White folks don't understand about the blues. They don't understand that's life's way of talking. You don't sing to feel better. You sing 'cause that's a way of understanding life."⁴ Ma is portrayed in the play as complicated and demanding respect but savvy in understanding how the music industry exploits African-Americans. "They don't care nothing about me. All they want is my voice. Well, I done learned that, and they gonna treat me like I want to be treated no matter how much it hurt them. As soon as they get my voice down on them

recording machines, then it's just like if I'd be some whore and they roll over and put their pants on."⁵ Viola Davis gave an outstanding performance of Ma in Denzel Washington's recent film production of Wilson's play.

When *Fences* opens in 1957, Rose Maxson is the truth-telling devoted wife of Troy Maxson, whose baseball career was over before the integration of the major leagues and who has worked as a garbage collector throughout their 18-year marriage. Troy takes his family responsibilities seriously—he turns his weekly pay over to Rose, demands that his adolescent son defer to his wishes by not participating in school sports and engaging in after-school work though it means that Cory must abandon his dream of a college football scholarship, and bails out his brother whenever he disturbs the peace due to his cognitive wartime injury. Troy expects respect and deference to his wishes.

August Wilson once told an interviewer, "I aspire to write tragedies, which includes the fall of a flawed character."⁶ Troy's flaw is not that he is illiterate. His flaw is that he lacks empathy. His inability to empathize with others impacts all his major relationships, especially with Rose. When he finally tells her that he is fathering a child with another woman, Rose is devastated. She says "Don't you think I ever wanted other things? Don't you think I had dreams and hopes? What about my life? I planted myself inside you and waited to bloom. And it didn't take me no eighteen years to find out the soil was hard and rocky and it wasn't never gonna bloom. But I held on to you, Troy. I held you tighter. You was my husband. I owed you everything I had."⁷ When Troy's girlfriend dies in childbirth, Rose agrees to mother the child, but tells Troy "You a womanless man." Troy's betrayal of Rose changes the dynamic in the household as Troy loses his authority

to Rose and the respect of his son.

Wilson said that he wanted to write a play with a woman character as large as Troy. Inspired by a Romare Bearden collage, *The Piano Lesson* is set in 1936 and has two principal characters: widowed Berniece Charles and her brother Boy Willie. The play revolves around their dispute over the piano on which their grandfather carved portraits of their forebears. Berniece, who tellingly asserts that as a woman she is not defined by her relationship with a man, wants to keep the piano because it represents their family heritage, though she no longer plays it; Boy Willie wants to sell the piano so that he can buy land and become a successful farmer. When a ghostly presence throws Boy Willie down the stairs, Berniece invokes the ancestors with blues chords on the piano to save the household from the ghost. As the play closes, Boy Willie threatens to return with the ghost if Berniece doesn't continue to play the piano.

During their pre-Broadway runs Wilson's plays appeared at regional theaters where he finetuned his masterpieces. Boston's Huntington Theatre was one of those locations, so that many of us had the opportunity to see his work on its way to Broadway. The Huntington Theatre is committed to August Wilson's work, as America's Shakespeare, in their educational programs and performance schedules. And Denzel Washington has announced his intention to create films of all of Wilson's plays. ♦

1. Vera Sheppard, *August Wilson: An Interview* (1990), reprinted in *Conversations with August Wilson*, edited by Jackson R. Bryer and Mary C. Hartig (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2006), p. 69.

2. Carol Rosen, *August Wilson: Bard of the Blues* (1996), reprinted in *Conversations with August Wilson*, p. 199.

3. August Wilson, *Gem of the Ocean* (NY: Theatre Communications Group, 2007), p.69.

4. August Wilson, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (NY: Theatre Communications Group, 2007), p. 66.

5. *Ibid*, p. 63.

6. Sheppard, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

7. August Wilson, *Fences* (NY: Theatre Communications Group, 2007), p. 67.

Memory Precipice

BY JAYANTHI RANGAN

I am a senior citizen
terrified of dementia
if ever my recall fails
will I be still alive
in swaddled chaos –
tamp-tucked
like a lone cicada
in a crept whereabouts

To distract my worry
I pick up a novel
the cover looks foggy
like a fading intimacy
I flip and read the gist
yes, I remember this
book – *Migrations* –
and wonder
if my *mental* relocation
will end my full screen
and put me in a home
where I will see the road
but the sign will read
these pathways
are closed –
find alternate routes

Hair

BY TARA MENON

Her hair was like a black, black river,
flowing, flowing, flowering with jasmine.
Sometimes she pinned her tresses into a bun
that didn't allow any wisps to escape.
At other times, she sported a single long braid
that swung like a silky rope.
When the sun shone on her hair,
blue-black strands sparkled.

Chemo dried up the black river.
A bald pate now shines in place of her luxuriant hair.
Her tresses will someday float past her waist again.
Down, down, down her raven hair will spill
and become a river of hope.

She stands in front of the mirror
and slips on her blue velvet hat
adorned with felt strips.
Then she wears her new blue dress
and a string of white pearls that enhance
the beauty of her delicate clavicles.
A faint vertical line appears on her forehead
as she longs for her tresses,
but the delight in her hat and dress
brings forth the slightest of smiles on her lips.

How GPS Works

BY LARRY HO

*The article “Before Samantha” by Irene Hannigan in the Summer 2022 issue of **Lexington LifeTimes** prompted me to write the article below to illustrate what we engineers do for a living.*

What follows is an explanation of how the Global Positioning System works using everyday knowledge and nothing beyond high school algebra.

THE UBIQUITOUS GPS that is present in most automobiles and smart phones nowadays actually utilizes mathematical and scientific knowledge that span the entire history of human civilization, from the ancient geometry of Euclid to Newton’s laws of motion in the Middle Ages to Einstein’s theory of relativity in the 20th century. While there is no Nobel Prize in Engineering, the US National Academy of Engineering established an equivalent prize for all engineering disciplines in the 1980s that also carries a prize amount of one million dollars. The prize is called the Draper Prize in honor of Dr. Charles Draper of MIT Draper Lab fame. The Global Positioning System actually won three Draper Prizes over the years – one for conceiving the idea, one for actually implementing the scheme, and one for the important mathematical algorithm that made the GPS work with uncanny accuracy. Let me give you an account of this remarkable development to give you a taste of what we engineers do to earn a living.

Everyone has heard of how sailors in ancient times determined their position on the open seas. They used a sextant to measure angles from their position to several known fixed stars at night. From these measurements and knowledge of solid geometry and trigonometry, they could calculate the position of their ship on Earth via a method commonly known as “triangulation.” You may not know, or have forgotten, the details

of the geometry/trigonometry used. But we all appreciate the mental picture in two dimensions of how two intersecting lines determine a point in the plane. “Triangulation for position determination” is basically the same idea in three dimensions. Without this technology, ancient mariners would have been totally lost. However, this method of position determination suffers one big flaw – it can only be done at night, without bad weather or clouds. Because of this flaw, the modern idea of GPS was born.

The idea is that we establish a system of 24 satellites circling the earth constantly so that no matter where on earth you are at any one time, there will be at least four such satellites in your direct lines of sight. You can electrically establish the angles of your line of sight with these satellites and do the same ancient calculations to determine your position on earth. But wait! You will immediately object that, unlike fixed stars, these satellites are moving very fast relative to the stationary position where you are making the angular measurements, which will also depend on the time and place you make the measurements. How can you make the ancient geometry/trigonometry calculations?

This is where Newton’s third and fourth laws of motion come in. While we may not understand the physics behind Newton’s laws, we know they have enabled accurate determination of the position of heavenly

bodies, such as the various planets of our solar system, since the Middle Ages, as well as enabling all the guidance and control behind rockets and missiles to the moon and beyond the horizon. Using Newton's laws, we can basically subtract out the motion of the satellites to make them appear stationary. And then we can do the calculations the same way the ancient mariners did.

Ah! So this is how GPS works, you say. Now I throw in another twist. Again, while most of us do not understand the physics behind Einstein's theory of relativity, we have all heard and believe that an object moving under gravity experiences time differently compared to a stationary object. Lower gravity makes time move faster and higher speed makes time move more slowly. (Remember the metaphor often used to explain relativity by way of identical twins? One of the twins traveled at the speed of light in the cosmos for twenty years and returned to Earth not aged at all while his identical twin brother is 20 years older.) Thus, in order to use Newton's laws, which used time to subtract out the motion of the satellites moving very fast relative to us on Earth and which experience less gravity than we do since they are miles away from earth, we must make two corrections according to relativity theory. Otherwise, the GPS calculations will be off by miles rather than feet, as in current auto and phone GPS systems. (Actually, what we civilians use is a less accurate version of GPS than in military applications, where the accuracy can be in inches.) So, our account of how the development of GPS used mathematical and scientific knowledge gained over the length of human history shows a spectacular accomplishment of the human mind!

But this is still not all. GPS ultimately uses "measurements" which inevitably

contain errors or noise. These errors are due to the quality of the instruments used. Consequently, these errors will propagate in our calculations, resulting in position determination errors. How can we eliminate or minimize these errors? Common sense says, "Let us average out these errors/noise by making more measurements." A very good idea! But more easily said than done. Recall, we are talking about angular measurements made under different space and time on objects moving very fast in relativistic terms. Thinking about it boggles our minds.

It turns out that an MIT dropout, whom I personally know and who is arguably the greatest scientist/engineer in my discipline in the second half of the 20th century, worked out a general sophisticated scheme which can carry out this "averaging out the error/noise" under all kinds of environments and conditions. He was amply rewarded for his invention of this methodology, including one of the Draper Prizes mentioned earlier. This scheme was named the "Kalman Filter" in honor of Dr. Rudolf Kalman (1930-2016) by myself since I understood and actually simplified the explanation of his invention early in the 1960s. With this understanding, you can actually re-invent or re-derive the Kalman filter algorithm using nothing more complicated than high school algebra. But that is hindsight, easy when you know the answer you wanted.

So, there you are. You now can claim that you really understand the workings of one of the most remarkable human inventions in history, equivalent to three Nobel Prizes. ♦

Postscript: Readers who are interested in an illustrated PowerPoint talk on this subject can contact the author at ho@seas.harvard.edu for the slides.

Fabric Fascination



Spring Volcano (2022)

Textile art
12" x 21"

Quilt artist DIANA BAILEY has always been in love with fabric: the shimmer of silk, the smoothness of satin, the crispness of cotton, the gossamer of tulle, the swish of organza, the furry pile of velvet, the knobby slubs of linen. She pays homage to the quilt makers of the past, drawing inspiration from their designs and techniques and, above all else, gets enjoyment just from fondling the fabric.



Maritime Pine Bark (2020)
Textile art
23" x 31"

Growing Future Caretakers of the Earth

ARTWORK AND STORY BY CAROLYN FLEISS

MY CLIMATE STORY starts with my mom, a stay-at-home housewife with 5 children who grew to love gardening as a form of respite from running the household. One of her volunteer activities in the late 1960s was to help establish a pilot program for the first environmental education curriculum for elementary grade children in the state of Maine.

Not surprising at that time, Rachel Carson was her hero. When I came across a recent story about an essay Carson wrote called *Help Your Child to Wonder*, I realized that my mom's way of engaging young children may have been taken from this piece. The timing seemed right. The author's suggestion was to show each child the joy in discovery with no particular need to name things. Take the time to imagine what it would be like to live so closely, even

on top of or intertwined with, your neighbors as these living species do. Look at the colors, the shapes, the smells. Sit and draw what you see, even what you feel. While I do remember my mom kneeling down with us to look closely, to gently touch and encourage us to do the same, she was my mom and my appreciation for what she did grew only when I got older. At this time, I feel a great responsibility to nurture an awareness and love of our very precious earth as did she.

Now I have grandchildren and, no surprise, I find myself observing on hands and knees, carting baskets of flora and fauna or pointing with surprise and wonder at a bird or butterfly. Recently my 5-year-old granddaughter and I were playing in her backyard. We happened to look up at a towering tree 20 feet away and observed a redheaded woodpecker looking out from its perfectly round hole. We were both delighted but then she said, "That tree is dangerous and it's going to be cut down." She was right. It was an Ash tree hollowed out by the Emerald Ash Borer and it presented a threat to the family and their home. Mila (that's her name) asked what would happen to the bird. With simple questions from me, she surmised that the bird could find another home because there were Ash trees all around her house and surrounding

neighborhood. I explained that woodpeckers love to eat Ash Borers and that this bird would live on to perhaps help save the next tree. We went on to talk about the importance of dead trees lying on the forest floor providing shelter and food for creatures that live there. She seemed to hear the idea that animals and plants in nature are important to each other but I didn't belabor the point. She was happy about the woodpecker and I was sure she would remember our talk. ♦



Garden Offering (2017)

Acrylic
6" x 8"

CONTRIBUTORS



MOUNA MALOOF ANDERSON, a long-time resident of Lexington, spent her early childhood in Zahle, Lebanon. “The General” is a memoir-based story written as a legacy gift to her children.



For 50 years, DR. DIANA BAILEY worked in mental health rehabilitation. Upon retirement, bed quilting, which evolved into art quilting, became a passion.

JAMES BALDWIN is a retired advertising agency principal and high school English teacher. Rediscovering writing in his retirement, he covers sports for Gatehouse Media and the Lexington Minuteman and maintains his own blog at www.Storyguy.net.



President of Bools&Assoc. since 1980, co-founder of Advertising Worth Watching, co-author of *Power Failure*, pro-vote activist, and Walt Disney alum, BARBARA BOOLS was born in Hollywood, California, lived in Chicago 30 years, and Lexington 22.



LEE BRAMI has lived in the Boston area since 1973, and in Lexington since 1987. She has been writing short memoirs and short fiction for the past 20 years.



With degrees from BU and Lesley, JUDITH COOPER taught art in public schools for 30 years. Since retiring, she has focused on her own art and facilitates workshops around creativity and self-exploration. See her work at www.jcooperstudio.com.

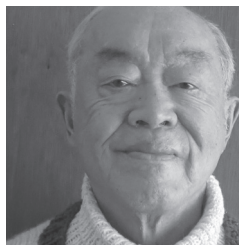


JOHN EHRENFELD came late to poetry. A long-retired MIT-trained chemical engineer, he returned there after working in the environmental field for many years. He authored *Sustainability by Design* and *The Right Way to Flourish: Reconnecting with the Real World*.



CAROLYN FLIESS is a retired clinical Social Worker who has been making art for 25 years. She has lived in Lexington for 37 years with her husband having raised three children here who are currently harboring their five grandchildren in various cities around the country.

YU-CHI (LARRY) HO holds a BS from MIT and a Harvard PhD. He has been on the faculties of Harvard (1961-2007) and Tsinghua University (2001-). He is a blogger on ScienceNet China.





JAY KAUFMAN is the founding president of Beacon Leadership Collaborative, a nonprofit dedicated to enhancing public sector leadership. From 1995 to 2019, he was a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.



An Emeritus Professor of Religion at Allegheny and Smith Colleges, CHARLES KETCHAM has been an amateur photographer all his life. He has concentrated on photos of the North Shore of Massachusetts, Scotland, and Rome.



Anthropologist MARION KILSON received her PhD in 1967 and retired as Graduate School Dean at Salem State University in 2001. Her previous publications include eight books and numerous articles on African and African American topics.



With degrees from the Universities of Wisconsin and Georgia, MARY LEVIN KOCH has worked in art museums, published scholarly articles and coauthored a book on Athens, Georgia. Now retired she chronicles her family's history and their current comings and goings!

TARA MENON'S poetry, fiction, and essays have been published in many journals. A finalist for the 2020 Willow Run Poetry Book Award, her poems have appeared in *Indolent Books*, *Wards Literary Magazine*, *Emrys Journal Online*, and *Rigorous*.



DR. ANITA MYER practiced as a neurofeedback psychologist in Lexington center for many years. A former English teacher, she continues to enjoy a creative writing group. She has previously written columns for the Lexington newspaper.

JAYANTHI RANGAN has taught science and breathed it all her life. Her short stories have appeared in many publications including *Bookends Review*, *Twisted Vine Literary Journal* and *Corner Club Press*. Her poetry is mostly topical and has appeared in *Poet's Choice* and anthologies.



ELIZABETH ROZAN has lived in Lexington since 1988. Having recently retired from a career with various public schools, she works with symbols and metaphors in both writing and the visual arts.



PETER SHAW, now retired from computer software work, focuses on starry nights in Boston, out on the Cape, and other occasional interesting landscapes, wherever he wanders. ♦



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