

Ripples

Stories and Poems

by or about

Yellow Springs Elders

Volume 2, June 2015

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Hommage à Ma Chère Jeanne by Jon Hudson

Jean Barlow Hudson, my beautiful and very special mother, was a wonderfully creative and complicated person. Of all her accomplishments, my favorite is that she raised me and my three siblings—Rex, Chris, and Holly—under unusual and complex situations all around the world. Following that, she was the first and so far only woman mayor of Yellow Springs. (She served from 1987 to 1991—it's time for another woman!) She was from an early age a voracious reader and writer. A clear memory from the 1950s was of her working at a loom weaving beautiful fabrics. During this time and in the following years she was writing novels and, less obvious to us, poetry. She eventually was successful in having her novel *Rivers of Time* published and widely read. Written during and after living in Senegal for a year or so, it told the adventures of a woman in Africa, coming into her own. Other novels took place in South American, Beirut, and in the States. Following her passing in 1992, my brother Rex collected and edited her poetry into a book titled *Foreverness*.

During our travels overseas and even between trips she often had to tend the homestead herself as her husband, Ben, sometimes had to go on ahead to get an overseas project set up, find a home for us to live in, etc. before we would follow. This actually started in the beginning of their relationship. She received her degree in English literature from Ohio Wesleyan, following which

she was in Yellow Springs helping the then socialist candidate Norman Thomas for president in conjunction with Arthur Morgan. He also knew Ben and at some point introduced them, and the rest is history.

Ben decided that he needed to study something other than journalism if he was going to make a decent living to raise a family. They had a cousin in the defense industry in San Diego so they rode their Indian motorcycle out there and worked to raise enough money so Ben could go to the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, where they lived for about four years. Work was then obtained in the oil fields of Wyoming so they moved to Casper, where the boys were born and raised until 1950. Jean taught school there and wrote, publishing her poems, the most famous being "Wyoming Legends." They then traveled the country with an Airstream and the boys, booking a flea circus, giving geology lectures, and performing magic shows. They decided to settle down in Yellow Springs, until overseas travels would take them around the world many times over the years.

Jean was very involved with local writers like the Y.S. Writer's Group and writing columns for the *Y.S. News*; she often participated in Women's Voices Out Loud. She was also involved with the



Committee for a Barrier-free Community, Women's Economic Assistance Ventures, Women, Inc., and Women's World Banking. Jean was politically active from her early college years into the civil rights and anti-war periods. This activism led to her becoming mayor as a way of being effective in the community.

Jon Hudson, a world-renowned sculptor, has maintained the family tradition of keeping Yellow Springs as home base and working out in the world, along with his wife, Debbie Henderson. His brothers Rex and Chris and sister Holly tend to live elsewhere and occasionally return. His wife and siblings are all published writers.

That Legendary Old Number 70 by Virgil Hervey

I skate down the ice, moving the puck from side to side on the blade of my stick, forcing my way into the crowd of players in front of the crease. When I reach the last defender, I fake left and, in a sudden sweeping motion, pull the puck wide to my right and get off a snapshot with my forehand. I've aimed it high on the goalie's blocker side—it slips through low on his glove side.

"Nice shot, Virgil!" someone shouts, and there are fist bumps all around.

They call that "stick handling in a phone booth," and I'm too old to be getting away with it. I head back to the bench and another player goes over the boards to replace me. I smell a rat. Many of these guys are 19-20-year-olds. Almost all of them are under 40. If someone had just lifted my stick with theirs, or poked sharply at the puck, I never would have made it through for a shot on goal. They'd better not be taking it easy on me, I think. I'm going to have to talk to that defense man the next time I see him.

This is what they call "Drop-in Hockey," pickup games that are scheduled a couple times a week at the NTPRD Chiller rink in Springfield. I also play in the adult recreational league on Sunday nights, where the games are competitive and the opposition doesn't cut me any slack. I prefer it that way. On Tuesday mornings I go to "Stick & Puck" sessions, where I am free to practice my skills without the rigors of a game. But if enough like-minded

players show up, we might end up playing a little three-on-three or four-on-four, half-ice with no goaltender. On Fridays, I go up for "Noon Skate," where I work solely on skating skills. I have been skating four to five times a week since shortly after the rink opened in October 2013.

As kids growing up in Queens, we played in the streets on steel wheels with wooden sticks and a pink rubber ball. When it got cold enough, we played pond hockey on the Saw Mill River or on city playgrounds frozen over for that purpose. When my father moved the family to the suburbs, we skated on a pond on a golf course in town.

I have been a life-long fan of the game. In the days of the old six-team National Hockey League, I was a Rangers fan. When I was a freshman at Colby, we had one of the top teams in the nation. In four years of college, I never missed a home game. In the mornings before class, I would sneak into the empty arena with a stick and a puck and fire shots into an empty goal, imagining the roar of the crowd every time the puck hit the back of the net. Years later, I had season tickets to the Islanders. These days I watch college hockey webcasts over the Internet. But I never had the opportunity to play organized hockey. The closest I ever came was the inter-fraternity league in college. But my brothers on the team, who had all grown up playing in New England, would never put me

in a game.

NTPRD Chiller, however, is supportive of people like me. They offer "Learn to Play Hockey" classes and make sure that everybody with even minimal skills gets a chance to play, including women. Up until now, I have been the oldest hockey player in Springfield. But in the locker room or on the bench my age rarely comes up. The others usually treat me like just another hockey player. I may, however, be getting a bit too protective of my status. A few days ago, as we were suiting up for a drop-in hockey session, someone mentioned that there had been an old guy at stick and puck, who said he was 71.

"What? There's a guy older than me wants to play hockey?" I shouted in mock indignation. "Where is he? I'll kick his butt!" The entire locker room erupted in fits of laughter.

In a few minutes I will pack my big hockey bag with what seems like 50 pounds of equipment, including a jersey with a big number 70 on the back, put my sticks in the car, and head up to the rink. When I skate out onto the ice, if everyone doesn't already know my name, at least they'll know my age.

[For more information about the NTPRD Chiller rink in Springfield check out <http://ntprchiller.com>.]

Virgil Hervey is the originator of the Yellow Springs 10-Minute Play Festival. His poetry, fiction, and articles have been widely published in the small press; one of his short stories was nominated for a 2002 Pushcart Prize.

SOME THREE-LINE POEMS

by *Rubin Battino*

lone tree in a field
scratchy stubble surrounds it
and, yet, there are crows!

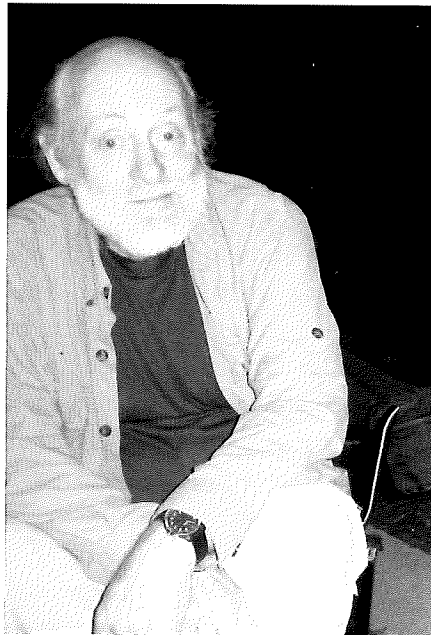
to smile and not to cry
the small boy held very still
fearing his feelings

to a baby's hand
the world is something to grasp
its life is touching

lightning cracks on high
what does a firefly think
of heavenly light?

a mushroom shades itself
with a spongy umbrella
soft and succulent

trees along a ridge
scratch shadows against the sky
a breeze tumbles through



Harold Wright is professor emeritus of Japanese Language, Literature, and Culture at Antioch College, where he taught for over 30 years. An award-winning translator of Japanese poetry, he has several books to his credit. From 1992 through 2005, he developed a semester of study in Japan each summer, through Antioch Education Abroad at their sister college, Kyoto Seika University.

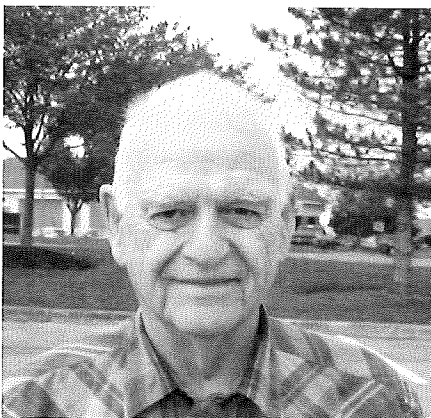
I GO TO DOCTORS

I go to doctors
just to have them tell me
"You are doing fine,
come and see me in a year."

Docs deserve pay and praise
for poking here, thumping there,
jotting down numbers,
or cheering me with lame jokes
about "that pound of cake"
all with a big hearty grin.

But if, with a long face,
they talk about "procedures"
or "prescriptions" for some pills
I question their schooling and add
"My AGE is higher than your IQ!"

Harold Wright, Age 83



Rubin Battino is a licensed professional clinical counselor, professor emeritus of chemistry, playwright, author, and traveler. He facilitates the Charlie Brown Exceptional Patient and Caregiver Support Group in Yellow Springs.

In Defense of Stuff by Jewel Graham

No question about it. Stuff has a bad name. Most of the time I am in the anti-stuff camp, especially now that I am trying to simplify my life—to rid myself of the accumulated detritus of many years. However, in the face of the unrelenting attacks, I am feeling obliged to speak in defense of stuff.

Yes, we have too much of it, and yes, it's painful to dispose of it. On the other hand, there must be some pretty good reasons that its hold on us is so ferocious. On me. But I have to confess that my stuff is different. My stuff is necessary. My stuff is important. My stuff is me. It is the visual part of my autobiography. My stuff documents the significant events and passages of my long and active life. How else can I recall the past landmarks? Giving it up is a kind of dying—or at least like cutting off a limb. Or so it seems.

Admittedly, I have stuff that I don't need now (if I ever did), or that I don't use any longer, but I have to keep it because I might need it in the future. After all, I do remember the Great Depression and the lean years that followed. There could be another one. My twenty-year-old coat is perfectly usable. And these empty mayonnaise jars make great storage containers. Although maybe I don't need quite so many. And, in fact, I may not have time to read all of the fascinating magazine articles I have saved for the last two decades.

My stuff has great sentimental value. My mother's good set of

china, which I guess I use only for rare Grand Occasions. Cleaning my grandmother's sterling flatware is more work than I have time for. But I have to keep these heirlooms for the grandchildren, the children having opted out of the succession. I out of hand reject the implication that I am being "anal" or "anal-retentive" or whatever. My mother has never suggested that I had any problems with potty-training.

Of course, some of it comes from my need to "keep up with the Joneses." It's just that I am sure that others assess my worth, my importance, my desirability as a friend, from what I have. I feel that my status among my friends, neighbors, and relatives depends on the quantity—and the quality—of my possessions. Maybe I could do with one car, one that is smaller and older. But what would that make me look like? I have to keep up with the times—especially the digital age. Not only do I need multiple devices, I need to keep up with the upgrades. Not to mention my civic duty to obtain the latest energy-efficient appliances. I can keep the old ones as back-ups (in case the new ones don't work).

It is also true that a president himself (Bush 2), searching for a way to boost the economy, urged us to buy, buy, buy. It is a truism that our economy is consumer based, and it might come to a grinding halt if we consumers don't take our job seriously. I feel obliged to do my patriotic duty.

I have heard that there actu-

ally are folks who are sensible and practical about stuff, who buy only what they use, and who match each acquisition with a discard. I admire those people. Sometimes I aim to imitate them, but my resolve disappears pretty quickly. Society rewards them with names like "tightwad" or "stingy," "cheap," or, more kindly, "frugal."

On the other hand, stuff's critics point out that we have no use for all of this stuff, that too much of it is harmful to us personally, clutters our homes (basements, attics, and garages), abuses the resources of the earth, creates an enormous problem of disposal—and so on. Those are good arguments—and true. We could enrich our lives by collecting experiences rather than stuff. We could abandon our hunger for stuff and find meaning for our lives in other ways. Yes, I agree—we could do that.

So—maybe it's just MY stuff that I am defending. Maybe I can "let go"—choose the present and the future over the past. Occupy myself with "being" over "having"—even over "doing." Maybe I can finally make some progress in my effort to simplify my life.

Jewel Graham (BA, MSSA, JD) is emerita professor of social welfare and legal studies at Antioch College. A long career in community activism has won her many honors, including induction into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame in 1988. She has served as president of the U.S. and World YWCA.

Who Were Nolan and Richard Miller?

by Victor Ayoub

Those who were acquainted with the Millers or knew of them were probably surprised to learn that they (actually Nolan) had accumulated enough wealth to endow a program that united public-service organizations in Yellow Springs and work opportunities for Antioch College students. The Miller Fellowships program is administered through the Yellow Springs Community Foundation.

Death has taken both brothers: Nolan, the older of the two, in 2006; Richard in 2009. They left no heirs. Memories can fade quickly, in this case leaving only an institutionalized name: The Nolan J. And Richard D. Miller Endowment. Their story deserves more. From my point of view, it is more Nolan's story than Richard's, though it is in many ways difficult, if not impossible, to separate the two.

When I first met Nolan, in 1940, he was an English composition teacher at Mackenzie High School in Detroit, Michigan, where I was a student. I did not, however, meet him in a classroom, though teacher he was to me from that first meeting. I met him at his home, which he shared with his mother and Richard. A friend took me there, where, along with four other young people, I enjoyed a richly textured, casually rendered introduction to music, art, and, most emphatically, the then-contemporary literature. Then and many times after.

Mrs. Miller was a gentle, matronly lady, a homemaker—a status once cherished though insuf-

ficiently honored, as it may now be honored though insufficiently cherished. Richard was deaf; he had been so from infancy, diagnosed when eighteen months old. He was also mute for any practical purpose, though he resented being called so as he could articulate speech, difficult as it was for anyone to understand. But therein rested the close bond between the brothers, fostered by their mother as long as she lived, and carried on by Nolan thereafter. Nolan, from the time of the Great Depression, was the threesome's breadwinner. The father had died. Two older brothers, married, were virtually out of the picture. Thus this pipe-smoking, tweed-jacketed, literary-minded high school teacher began to invest in order to protect.

Nolan was a writer as well as a teacher. He had gained some recognition as a short-story writer, and had published in such magazines as *The Saturday Evening Post*, then a periodical of high repute. His first novel was published in 1946. It was as a Writer in Residence that he came to Antioch in 1945.

At the end of World War II, with peace and triumph reigning in the country, it became a mark of academic excellence to harbor a Writer in Residence on campuses as colleges and universities expanded and began to flourish. Antioch College was not neglectful in this matter. Acting President Algo Henderson asked a New York editor-friend to recommend someone for the appointment. He suggested

Nolan Miller, reflecting the recognition Nolan was beginning to get in the publishing industry.

After some hesitation, Nolan accepted the appointment with the understanding that he would give it a try. The "try" never ended.

In April 1946 the above-mentioned friend and I, both recently discharged from the army, eager to visit with Nolan, discovered he was at a college, Antioch, of which we had never heard, in a town, Yellow Springs, equally unknown to us. Whither he goeth, we will go (I did so literally).

We found Nolan, Richard, and their mother, relocated only a few months earlier, comfortably settled, already embraced by new friends. Nolan joined the English (later the Literature) Department not long after arriving—a professor as well as a Writer in Residence. The Miller family was here to stay.

Nolan knew, though there may have been other reasons, that the move from Detroit to Yellow Springs would benefit Mrs. Miller and Richard. In Detroit, Mrs. Miller's social life was largely restricted to her sons and one or two of Nolan's students with whom she had developed an attachment. As devoted as she was to them and they to her, Richard and Nolan were not sons who fit the mold easily recognized and understood by a gentle, matronly homemaker of little worldliness and education.

This outside-the-expected mold was particularly so with regard to Richard. He was an artist: a

skilled painter and potter. He had spent a year by himself in New York studying art and was listed, by someone considered qualified to make up such lists, as one of a hundred promising painters in the U.S.

Richard was self-reliant in many ways. However, the liability that prevented him from living as full a life as he could observe in others was often a source of frustration. Yellow Springs offered him, as it did Mrs. Miller, opportunities he could not have comfortably found in Detroit. He became in many ways independent of Nolan. He made his own friends, enjoyed the Little Art Theatre, and much more.

The move to Yellow Springs benefitted Nolan as well. Among other things, not the least his long association with *The Antioch Review*, it was the college student body that provided him more scope for what he could teach. The increase to be found in the maturity of the male students helped as well, especially during those immediate post-World War II years.

Almost every college was burgeoning with recently discharged soldiers taking advantage of the GI Bill. And with aspiring writers among them ready to put pen to paper (or hands to typewriter) to recount manifold experiences. Their enthusiasm helped them put aside the lost years.

At Antioch, Rod Serling was one such student. There were others. Nolan, however, disclaimed any credit for teaching anyone to write, though he "taught" a writing class for years. "If you want to be a writer, you write" (and read, read, read) and do so with disciplined routine.

Just as Nolan did. At home or away, he spent the early hours of all but few mornings writing. He was, of course, a voracious reader. What he



could do well for aspiring writers, as he himself would have acknowledged, was edit work and comment on it, leaving the author to learn by drawing necessary and helpful inferences. And, perhaps most importantly, he could introduce the would-be writer to the publishing industry: for example, finding an agent, knowing editors at publishing houses, the ins-and-outs of getting work in print.

Nolan retired from teaching in 1972. Continuing to write. Aging. Living together, Richard was the cook while Nolan cleaned up after. This had been the routine for many years, after their mother had died.

During the course of years that I was a student, then friend, then colleague to Nolan, there were long time lapses when we kept only occasional contact with one another. I am not an ardent letter writer. On meeting again, as is often said about friends of long standing, it would have been difficult to recognize any lapse. The longest one came about after I retired from the Antioch Faculty and moved away from Yellow Springs.

I returned to live in Yellow Springs in 2001, almost 15 years later. I found

the relationship between the brothers had reversed. Nolan was all but blind, unable to see more than shadowy figures: just enough, not more, to navigate with great hesitation to the dinner table, the bathroom, his bedroom. Richard was caring for Nolan as Nolan had cared for him.

In 2004, Richard was hospitalized for a few days. Nolan moved to the Friends Care Assisted Living residence, expecting eventually to return to his sofa and his routine at home. It did not happen. Richard, now on the cusp of 90, told me that he could no longer take care of Nolan. It was a sorrowfully expressed admission.

Nolan remained in Assisted Living until the staff there did not have the resources to continue caring for him. He was moved to the Friends Care Nursing Complex.

He began to despair. His face showed it. For a long time, his imagination helped him to cope: he imagined stories and related them. At home, a student had taken his dictation. At Friends Care, he would tell me plots, narrative bits, characters that he had imagined since the previous visit.

(continued on next page)

The Doctors Agna by Barbara Brookshire

There is no way to speak of Mary Agna without also speaking about her beloved spouse, Jim. Mary is no longer with us, but Jim is.

This is a couple who, after graduation from Cincinnati School of Medicine, could have lived a life of typical upper-class MDs with their own practices, treating their patients and living "the good life." Instead they joined the US Public Health Service and took off for Burma, even though Mary was expecting their first child!

For three years they treated their Burmese patients for everything from malaria to cholera in an unforgiving climate and a constant demand on their public and private lives. Mary's love of Burma was apparent at her dinner parties when she served exotic—and delicious—dishes full of spice and "fire."

After their time in Burma and

a brief respite at home in the USA, they went to Haiti to treat more people stricken with raging third-world diseases. When their children were of school age, they decided to return to Yellow Springs in 1956 and raise them in the town's welcoming environment.

Their dedication to treating the needy over so many years restores my faith in the good that caring people can do in this ever-challenging world.

"All work and no play" was not Mary's philosophy. She knew the importance of nourishing her creative self. I don't remember her sitting for more than a minute or two without knitting needles and yarn in her lap. To own a pair of Mary's lovely knitted socks was and is a true treasure.

There was also her great love of horses. From the time she was a child until well into her old age

Mary rode one of her many prized horses. These were the special times just for herself that enabled her to go on with caring for others. Truly hers was a life well lived.

Barbara Brookshire, RN, lives in Yellow Springs. A transplanted Californian, she arrived here with her husband and three children in 1972. She has been an active RN at Antioch College, Friends Care Center, the Greene County Health Department and now manages the YSSC's Homemaker program.

(Nolan and Richard Miller, continued)

On one such visit, he began to describe the story he had begun earlier. He was looking away from me as he spoke, as though viewing something at a distance, as a blind person is wont to do in a conversation: looking away, seeming to address the empty space in front of him. Unexpectedly, he stopped in mid-description, reflected briefly. Then, quietly, to himself, he said simply, "I enjoy me."

This was not hubris. It was a simple and sudden recognition of what a rich imagination can mean to anyone.

Nolan died shortly thereafter, seven months short of his 100th birthday. He left his brother well protected. Richard died three years later.

And from that the Nolan J. and Richard D. Miller Endowment came into being.

Victor Ayoub graduated from Antioch College in 1949. He was on its faculty as a professor of anthropology between 1956 and 1987.



Mary and Jim Agna with a grandson.

MAGNOLIA BLOSSOMS, AND OTHER
DANCING LIGHTS

by Liz Porter

She used to lie under the tree looking up
through the lighted petals, dreaming,
drinking, filling her spirit needs.
Years later, still my child
she comes again, her wisdom intact,
a namer, drawing forth from darkness
the necessary.
I've grown used to her rummaging through drawers
chests, closets, cupboards—
each visit another treasure:
a bead, a set of pewter buttons,
a necklace from a great-grandmother, a tee shirt, a book . . .
She comes and it is unsaid that she will poke and sieve
when she can quietly savor the taste of
past and future, dusty yet fragrant
with new life that only she can provide.
I prepare myself beforehand,
list that with which I cannot part,
that which no longer matters,
that which I have neglected to know.
I re-evaluate the trinkets of my mother's life,
of her mother's life, of my own . . .
piles of tiny fragments, sparkling with
forgotten beauty. She comes down the stairs
wearing my totem sweater and I think
"She can't have it!" or "She can have it all!"
depending on my mood.
I love her presence, knowing that she is upstairs
when I am down, downstairs
when I am up, peering into desire and history,
connecting and collecting fragments of self, all
that has been fingered and palmed before.

Liz Porter, a recently retired RN, has spent most of her career working in Hospice. For the last 25 years she has practiced Massage, Chakra Balancing, and Reiki.

A New Beginning by Joan Champie

"Joan, when are you coming to visit me?" asked my friend of thirty years. So I did. At the end of October in 2013 I left Texas's prolonged summer and arrived in Yellow Springs to a refreshing nip in the air and surroundings reminiscent of past homes.

I was charmed by Yellow Springs. Towering trees not yet in their full glory of autumn colors lined the streets, and each house was attractive and unique. We had coffee at the Emporium, looked into several book and food stores, and hiked in John Bryan State Park. On Saturday morning we went to the farmers' market for potatoes, garlic, and the last peppers, and in the afternoon to the Air Force Museum. Everywhere I was impressed by the people I saw—with intelligent, friendly faces and an aura of vitality. I wanted to meet them all! I felt a strong spirit in the community quite different from the impersonal disregard of a big city.

I left wishing I could move here. For many years I had had a strong desire to leave Texas and its hot summers, but I never found the right place. Online I researched prices for Yellow Springs houses, checked the expected sale price of my house, and realized this was indeed possible. In November I put my house on the market and had a buyer within a month. In mid-December I flew to house hunt with a realtor whom I remember with great warmth and gratitude, and I decided on this house in Park Meadows.

After signing the contract and arranging details about closing, I returned to Austin and packed in earnest for a move in January, just two and a half months after my initial glimpse of Yellow Springs. I left with few regrets except for the acorn that I'd planted thirty years earlier, now an oak that looked down upon my house.

Planning the long drive between Austin and Yellow Springs (1300 miles) in a car with two cats in carriers, litter box, their food and water supplies, plus two accordions and suitcases, I visualized dire scenarios: car problems, fatigue from driving, blizzards, yowling cats, difficulty arriving on schedule for my movers. A friend suddenly volunteered to help with the drive, a marvelous boost for me and extra arms for smuggling the cats into motels. I had anticipated crawling under motel beds to retrieve reluctant cats each morning, but the rooms had platform beds, no "under." Incredibly the trip was uneventful, without snow until the final stretch in Cincinnati, and the cats slept the whole way.

The cats and I arrived on January 18 in the midst of the snowiest winter Yellow Springs had experienced in years. Minutes after I'd settled the cats in a safe area and borrowed a snow shovel to clear the front walk, the giant moving truck backed down my narrow road. In a surprisingly short time my dining room was filled with 120 boxes, furniture placed in logical places, and the movers were gone.

The next few weeks were challenging as I learned my way around and became less frightened of driving in the snow. Gradually I established connections for volunteer work, joined the Senior Center, obtained a library card, discovered the Glen, attended concerts and lectures, and met many wonderful new friends who helped immensely as I settled into my new life.

When asked why I moved here, I always say "for the weather." This startles or amuses people when the snow is deep or we are wading in gray slush, but I rejoice in the seasonal changes. Every snowflake is a small miracle of design, spring is a glorious burst of color and budding trees, and the brilliance of fall takes my breath away when leaves of vibrant red, gold, vermillion, and the near purple of sweet gum carpet the ground.

On my daily walks I meet other walkers (a rarity in Texas), pass countless charming houses, listen to bird songs, watch gray squirrels scampering away from me, greet owners and their dogs. This village comforts me. My initial impression of Yellow Springs remains true and is enriched by the experiences and friends of the past year.

I grew up in the San Francisco area and at eighteen went to Philadelphia to study oboe. I played professionally there for many years, had two children, then went to college and graduate school for a degree in deaf education. This took me to Texas, where I lived until this tale begins.

Downsizing by Joan Horn

Downsizing. That's not just a euphemism for firing people when a company needs to contract its employee roster. It's something I, and a lot of others, are now doing to cut back on personal possessions. It requires a lot of determination, a need for reducing the number of items when space is at a premium (perhaps brought on by an incipient move to a smaller place), or a decision to make some money from unnecessary holdings. Just too much stuff, whatever the motivation.

In my case, two of my adult children were visiting me and in a fit of zeal one indolent afternoon, one of them decided to clean up and clean out the garage. I had kept putting it off because the weather was a mess, the temperature was too cold to work outside for long, and I wasn't moving, so why bother just now?

By the end of the day, there was a heap of "stuff" on the curb, awaiting the trash pickup the next morning. My son had asked me about certain items he thought I might need or want sometime soon. Maybe there were some things that I had obviously been collecting for years and might one day want to hold for a Significant Display similar to the Smithsonian exhibits in Washington, D.C. Much of the rest of the heap piled on the curb was of no earthly use to me. Good riddance: his reaction and mine to what he had hauled down the driveway and deposited in a significant midden by the street.

Fortunately, a couple with a

red pick-up truck came by three different times to cast an eye on the growing pile at the curb, removing some of the things to take away. They missed a bunch of great stuff by not returning a fourth time after dusk.

When the sun came up the next day, I began to go through the items left behind in the garage. It was like one gigantic nudge to my memories of earlier times and places, of people no longer here. One of the most incredible reminders of former times and friends I'd made through my life was a very large box labeled "Precious Possessions."

As I gently pawed through a batch of newspaper-wrapped surprises, there was a small yellow paper that said "Ghana, Japan, and India." Japan was the only place I had been in earlier travels, but Ghana and India evoked memories of visitors I'd had from those countries.

The Ghanaian, part of an international exchange program I'd participated in, had brought me a "wish whisk" made from a horse's tail, bound at one end by a piece of leather with a handle on it. I had been instructed to face the east when confronting a thorny issue, shake the whip three times while silently telling myself something I wished for. I was not to tell anyone else what that was. Eventually, this new friend told me, I would realize my dream.

From India I had been given some small clay pots gaily painted

with bright colors—large enough to hold some paperclips perhaps, and a raffia-wound padded circle women used to carry heavy loads on their heads.

From Japan there was a long, delicate bamboo scoop to use in tea ceremonies, encased in a hollow wooden box beautifully decorated with inked designs. There was also a rectangular stamp made of some sort of multicolored marble with a small bird carved at one end. On the other flat end was inscribed lettering or symbolism to denote a person who might have painted a scroll or picture that was identified by this stamped insignia which was neatly fitted into a small, dark green embroidered box held closed by an ivory peg fitting into a loop.

Who knows whatever happened to these gift-givers? And what on earth could I do with these "precious possessions"? There were also several small sculptures of glass, ceramic, wood, and metal—birds, fish, elephants, and such. Even my most insensitive self could not just put them out on the curb to be hauled to a landfill. Or picked up by a red pickup truck. Or sold (or even given away) at a possible garage sale in the spring.

Clearly, I need to give my remaining garage contents a little more thought.

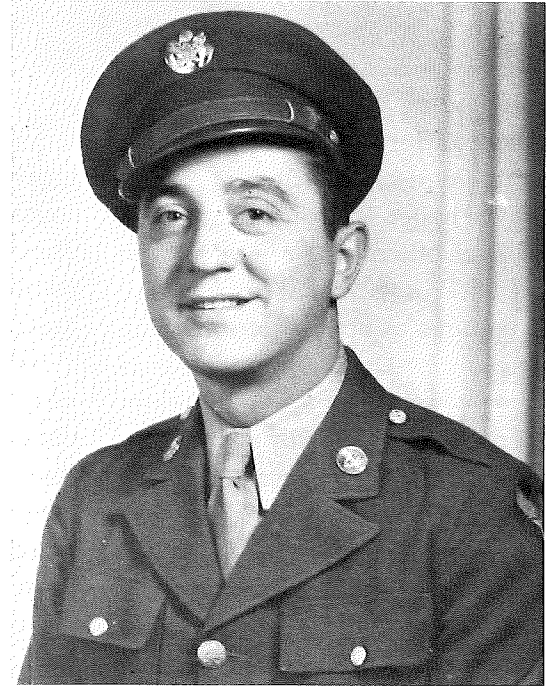
Joan Horn has written a book, Playing On All the Keys: The Life of Walter F. Anderson, available at the Yellow Springs Library. She continues to write for pure enjoyment.

Uncle Frank by Peter Whitson

Hello, Christian,
James Politan sent me a copy of your email to him about the passing of Uncle Frank Politan, your grandfather. I am a nephew of Uncle Frank. My name is Peter and I am the son of Frank's brother, Salvatore (Saul). I live here in Ohio, just outside Yellow Springs. I wish to convey to you my sympathy with Uncle Frank's passing. He was a real influence on my life from early childhood to the present. I worked for him and my father starting when I was 9 or 10. (Actually early on was more like tagging along)

One of my earliest memories of him was that he helped me to save for a cool Firestone/Schwinn bike. It had a battery-powered horn in the side tanks and a heavy-duty back carrier. When we went to get it at the bike store, he reminded me not to look too excited about it because he wanted to see if he could negotiate a better deal for the bike. It really didn't work, though, I couldn't contain myself.

He also helped me save for the first car I bought after I got my license. It was actually the company car he and my father used to drive back and forth to work. They had a shared arrangement about cars. There was the '50 Buick that went back and forth to work and there was the '53 Packard Patrician 300 they each drove when they were not at work. Anyway, over the year of 1956, Uncle Frank withheld money from my pay until I saved up enough to buy the '50 Buick. That was a nice car—lots of chrome and a big engine. I would not have been able to get it, though, if Uncle



Sergeant Frank Politan

Frank hadn't helped me save for it. I can still hear him saying to me each week as I asked him to postpone the withholding, "No, no; you want that car, don't you? If you take that money now, you won't be able to get the car." He kept me on track. I got the car.

He also guided me through some tough decisions I had to make about the draft and military service. He was a sergeant in WWII and knew his way around the service. He helped me a lot. This is a whole other story that would take some time to tell. I am putting it together for a Veterans' Day service at our church and will send you a copy later, if you would like.

I will miss Uncle Frank. I used to call him every once in a while, particularly for his birthday, which was a day before mine. He was always sharp as a tack and I told him he was an inspiration to my approaching old age. I hope, if I get there, I'm in

as good a shape as he was. God rest his soul.

Peter Whitson, nephew

Hello again, Christian,
It was very good to talk with you by phone. I have not been in touch with my relatives as much as I should and unfortunately it is usually a circumstance such as this that reminds me. You spoke like you were very close to your grandfather and that is the best gift—both to give and to get.

Our conversation jogged my memory to another story about Uncle Frank that you might find interesting. It begins in 1950, about the time he, his wife, Marie, and your father (who was a baby in arms) moved down to the Jersey shore on Sairs Ave with us in West End. It was shortly after they were settled in and things were working their way into a fairly normal routine.

Well, as part of that routine, both your grandfather and my father would each go up to Newark one day a week to visit their mother, Grandma Politan, and their brothers. They did this religiously every week, rain or shine, summer or winter. They always said they felt obligated to go and visit her—to, in their words, “make sure things were doing okay at home.” Home to them was 152 S. Eighth St., Newark, N.J. (no zip yet). This, of course, was the way things were then, even though both men were grown and gone, with families of their own. They would go “home” and make sure everything was okay—no other way about it.

Well, every week my father would go up on Mondays and Uncle Frank (your grandfather) would go up on Thursdays. Strangely enough, though, as part of this routine, Uncle Frank would bring back four large bottles of Borden’s milk on his return from his Newark visit. This he did just about every week. Thursday was “Milk delivery day,” my mother would chuckle under her breath as she made note of this curiosity to us kids, who just laughed when we tried to figure it out aloud: “Sheffield Farms distribution center, right behind the house in West End, and Uncle Frank has to bring milk back from Newark.”

Now I don’t know if you knew it, but within short walking distance, right behind our house in West End, was a Sheffield Farms distribution center that has been there for years. And if you walked over there for milk or other dairy products they handled, they would sell them to you at wholesale prices, which were substantially less than what you would pay at the grocery

store. And this was the strangest of all, because everyone knew Uncle Frank was a frugal man. My mother would puzzle with us over this unusual behavior of Uncle Frank’s for several months, until one day she could not contain herself any longer.

One Thursday evening as Uncle Frank was returning from visiting Grandma Politan in Newark, my mother greeted him at the driveway as he was getting out of the car with four glass quart bottles of Borden’s milk. She intended to get to the bottom of this mystery. My brothers, Louie, Widgie, and I, were crouched under an open window sill in the kitchen, close enough to hear what was going on but not be seen. We were going to find out, too, by golly.

“Hello, Frank. Did you have a nice visit with your mother?” my mother asked.

“Hello, Nancy. Yes, I did. She is well. Thanks for asking,” Frank replied.

“Speaking of asking, Frank, do you mind if I ask you a question?”

“Why no, Nancy, go right ahead.”

“Frank, every week when you go up to Newark to visit your mother, you come back with four glass quart bottles of Borden’s milk. This puzzles me a bit. You could get milk over at Sheffield’s behind us for about half as much as what you pay for milk in Newark.” My mother’s voice was a question looking for an answer. Meanwhile, hidden beneath the window sill, my brothers Louie and Widgie and I held our breath.

“Nancy, the answer is simple.” And without fanfare, he added, “I like Newark water.”

“Frank, what on earth does

Newark water have to do with it?” She sounded even more puzzled.

“Borden’s up in Newark uses Newark water to make their milk. Sheffield’s down here uses West End water to make their milk. Too sandy, too light; I like milk made from Newark water. It tastes better, much richer,” stated Uncle Frank rather matter-of-factly.

Louie, Widgie, and I could not contain ourselves. We rolled on the floor trying to muffle our laughter. It was very difficult. Everyone knew milk comes from cows. They don’t make milk from water. I have to hand it to my mother, though, she held herself together like the trouper she was.

“Oh, I see,” she said, “Sounds good to me, if that’s what you like.” She then came back into the house only to see us rolling around on the floor laughing our heads off. “What are you hyenas laughing about? What do you think is so funny?”

“Newark water,” we chimed in unison—milk from Newark water.” And from that day on, whenever Louie, Widgie, or I wanted a laugh on Uncle Frank, all we had to say to each other was, “Newark water.”

It’s strange, though, after all these years I couldn’t understand why my mother didn’t find the humor here. I mean, it’s not like she didn’t know milk comes from cows and not from Newark water. She had relatives and friends from the dairy communities in New Jersey. It wasn’t as if she didn’t know. And then one day about a year ago I found out who really had the last laugh.

I was talking to a friend who was a Greene County librarian. Martha is also a person with an

urban ethnic background similar to mine. We were swapping stories from our youth as storytellers are inclined to do when, of course, Uncle Frank and the “Newark water” story was recounted. We both laughed. But then, she went on, “You know, I don’t know if he didn’t know that milk comes from cows, though. Even if he was a city boy,” she added

“What do you mean, Martha?” I asked.

“Well, you said he was in WWII, right?”

“Oh yeah, served honorably,” I added.

“Okay, but from what I understand about all those ‘K’ rations they had at the time of the war, all they had was powdered milk. To make ‘milk’ milk, they had to mix it with water—” I interrupted her, suddenly realizing where she was going. I whacked the palm of my hand to my forehead.

“And if Frank drank milk made with Newark water, to him it tastes better, much richer.”

“That’s the way I would see it.” She shrugged her shoulders.

Oh, my God, he knew what he was talking about after all. After all these years, what do we wind up with in the end? Frank Politan may not have been the world’s best crap shooter, but he knew there was a lot of water in milk. He saw how they made it when he was in the service—water was the main ingredient you mixed with the powdered milk. He was a city boy and so far as he was concerned, “Borden’s up in Newark uses Newark water to make their milk. Sheffield’s uses West End water to make their milk. Too sandy, too light; I like milk made from Newark water. It tastes better, much richer.”

VINTAGE ME

By Pat Stempfly

Like wine and cheese I shall improve with age.
I shall be valued like a prized antique or vintage wine.

My ages and stages have become one and
I finally know all that I need is inside of me.

I am ready for
The dessert of my life,
The sweetness of the feast,
The sacred journey that is mine.

My vision widens as the path narrows.
At last I may sing my song and dance my dance knowing
I am part of the continuum that is forever.

Uncle Frank, that makes good sense to me now . . . so I guess you get the last laugh and the hyenas were nothing more than hyenas after all.

Anyway, that’s the story, Christian. And it’s a real story about your grandfather and my Uncle Frank. I know we’ll both miss him.
Peter (the hyena)

Note: This piece is an email between me and my Uncle Frank’s grandson, Christian. My Uncle Frank was a bigger-than-life character with many values and faults, like all of us. The email communication was sent shortly after his passing at age 101. The story contained in the email was written by me a while ago. It is a true story and it is about an incident that took place in my

childhood. I grew up in West End, New Jersey. West End is a small section of Long Branch, which is the college town of Monmouth College. It reminded me very much of Yellow Springs— except there was an ocean close by. I hope you find the story interesting.

Peter Whitson was born in New York City by accident, raised on the Jersey shore in West End, transplanted to the Midwest after military service, went to WSU, lived around the area, and recently decided to move into Yellow Springs because it reminded him of West End—even if it doesn’t have a beach.

The Pencil by Sandy Parker

He was hired because he showed up with a pencil, at least that's what Steve and Jonathan Brown said. During the four years Bruce Parker worked for Brown Construction, he learned a lot about building passive solar houses, helped build the Community Children's Center, and met skilled craftspeople who would influence his work for years.

Bruce was twenty-seven years old when he built a house on Green Street in Yellow Springs for his budding family. That same year, Bruce was hired to build a house for a customer of his own, and Azur Contracting was born. In the past twenty-nine years, Bruce has designed and built over a dozen houses in Yellow Springs, and he has worked on more than he can count, every house bearing Bruce's artistic expression, his environmental conservation, and his philosophy of refurbishing, recycling, and reusing—values he no doubt absorbed while growing up in Yellow Springs.

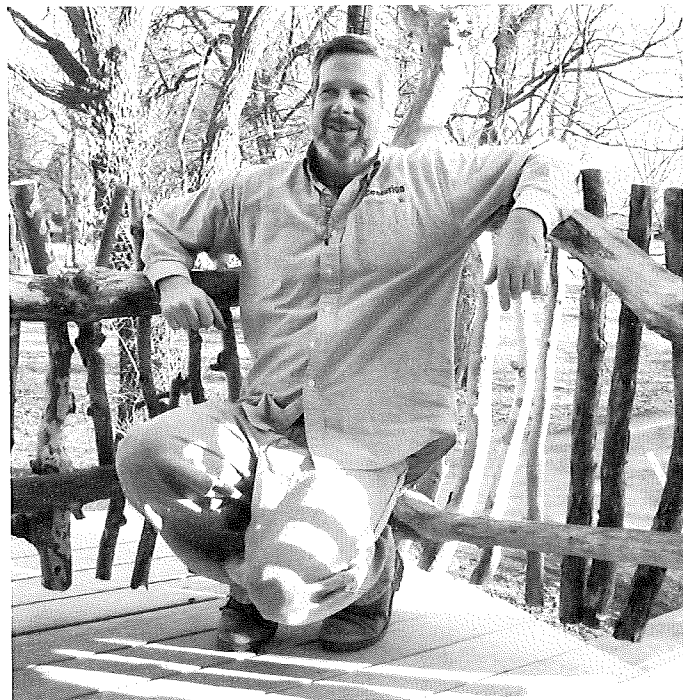
Moving to Yellow Springs as a freshman in high school, Bruce took as many art classes as he could and was encouraged by his community. During that year, his art teacher, Dorothy Zopf, arranged a display of his class's art at the Miami Deposit Bank downtown. Bruce remembers one Saturday in particular, as he was collecting for his newspaper route, Mary Jane Bachtell, a customer of his, commented on seeing his art at the bank. He was surprised that she knew which piece was his, and the

fact that she told him he had real talent made a lasting impression on him.

Buce knew he wanted to have a career in art, but didn't know what type of artistic career it would be. Coaxed by a friend, he decided to attend the Greene County Career Center for his junior and senior years. He signed up for the commercial arts program, but it was full. Having grown up with "foodie" parents and having worked with his uncle in a kitchen at a summer camp in Vermont, he took the culinary arts program instead. After graduation, he gallivanted around the United States as a journeyman chef, working at places like the Arizona Biltmore, Chez Nancy in Key West, Florida, and the Golden Lamb in Lebanon, Ohio.

After three years, he decided he wanted to create art that lasted longer than it took a person to consume a meal, and left the restaurant business. Interestingly enough, he was hired by his landlord as an assistant cabinet maker. That is when he fell in love with wood. Due to a recession, however, he left Vermont and the cabinet-making shop and returned to Yellow Springs. Steve and Jonathan Brown hired him the day after he returned — it was April 1, 1982, but this was no joke; it was a twist of fate.

In 1989, he refurbished an old house on Limestone Street that had no indoor plumbing. The house had stood empty for a couple of years and was in great need of repair. The results were so visibly remarkable that people couldn't help



Bruce Parker on the deck of The Stilts House

but take notice. In 1993, he built a house on Lawson Place completely out of nontoxic materials, which was bought later by Joyce and Darrel Murphy.

Loving a challenge, Bruce more recently built a straw bale house with solar radiant heat, and a house on stilts that challenged building inspectors as well. These are perhaps his most notable works, but each of his creations has been unique, bearing the values of Yellow Springs in one way or another.

Some of the people for whom Bruce has worked have been more like friends than customers. Some have given him a blank slate and said, "I trust you to create something I will enjoy." Several go to all of his open houses, and ask what project he will be working on next. Many years have passed since he was a freshman in high school, but the Yellow Springs community still offers him opportunity, encouragement, and support, for which he is grateful.

It has been thirty-three years since Bruce began his career in construction. Though it may seem strange that the Browns hired Bruce because he showed up with a pencil, perhaps that small wooden cylinder that most take for granted made an important statement:

Bruce Parker was, and still is, no ordinary construction worker. He is professional, he is prepared, and above all else, he is an artist.

Sandy Parker is best known in Yellow Springs for baking gourmet pies in the '80s. She has been a preschool teacher, a cook/baker/caterer, and a crisis intervention specialist. She is the wife of Bruce Parker, and the daughter-in-law of Donna Cottrell and the late Jim Parker.

Chiffon by Dee Krieg



Demaris Krieg

It was 1959, I remember, and I had dressed myself in my mother's peach chiffon nightgown after I had carefully brought it out of her lingerie drawer full of silken pretties. I was thirteen, tall for my age, and I stood at her dresser and put on her lipstick. I looked at myself in her mirror, pleased at my image.

I heard a gasp and turned; there was my young mother in her crisp cotton housedress looking at me with a mixture of love and apprehension. She had understood immediately that I would soon become a big girl, experiencing all the pleasures of adolescence and its uncertainties.

We were still for several minutes, I smiling at her affectionate reaction, and so we stood together, the summer's sun shining through filmy curtains onto the peach-pink chiffon falling over my young body, picking out the pink lace lying along my neck and arms, glancing off the pale lipstick I had

so carefully smeared onto my lips with my little finger, making sure to outline the cupid's-bow upper lip.

I can sense it now, the quiet, the golden summer sunlight, my mother full of love for her daughter, and I moving softly in the clinging cloth in that long-ago summer afternoon, full of beginnings.

After 52 years of living, learning, and loving in Yellow Springs, I moved to Seattle in 2005 and live next door to my family, Pip McCaslin, Rebecca Sikes, and Marley Sikes McCaslin. I've continued to host informal writers' groups in community centers, bookstores, and bars/restaurants. These are not workshops; we read, gently critique, and laugh a lot. Life is a bowl of cherries.

Baby by Dee Krieg

Here she was, finally, secure in my place, rosy, flushed, at peace, after my days of searching, running back and forth, hunting records, negotiating her legalisms, uncovering her family tree, and agreeing on all the expenses attendant upon my eventual sweet ownership of her—ah, how I had yearned to clasp her to me, to pledge my love and affection for her always, even though my friends, a few at least who talked straight to me, wondered if I should embark upon this stupendous responsibility and care of her at my age, an age when I should apparently be content to read and rock. But I rallied when one or another gently tried to “talk sense into me,” as they called it, and told one and all I was emotionally ready, I was physically taut and rested and knew precisely what lay ahead

once I got her home, and I was not to be deterred; and so they realized I was firm, and proved themselves good friends by promising to come to my aid should a small crisis build, should I find myself away from home in desperate need of a companion to help me, or should I discover that even though this was my love’s labor I had freely chosen, I had become exhausted after the stress of planning and waiting for the day she was delivered to my welcoming arms. So, yes, she is here with me, her newness and beauty everything I had wanted to share myself with, to show off to these kind friends and acquaintances, who would, I knew, be as engaged as I am with the loveliness of my bright red 1998 Ford Escort ZX2 two-door Coupe!



YELLOW SPRINGS HAIKU

by Janeal Ravndal

1. Walking into town I
pass rows of Naked Ladies,
not one overweight.
2. On this August day,
walking in blazing light, I
long for each tree’s shade.
3. Leaves under my feet
compete for today’s prize
in seasonal art.
4. Another snow day.
Small steps aim to balance
beauty and slippery.

After living and working in a series of Quaker educational communities, Janeal and Chris Ravndal retired to Yellow Springs. They live in Friends Care Community.

Mistaken Perception by Joyce McCurdy

Years ago, in 1957, Pat and I drove aimlessly over a dilapidated bridge above a railroad track, and turned right on almost a one-way gravel road, not knowing where it was to end. A farm with horses, a school, and then a geodesic dome appeared. Many children were playing near a row of vehicles, some being repaired in the rear. As we continued, a train buzzed by, and the conductor waved to the children, who were jumping up and down, waving back; then they ran toward the ravine. We approached what appeared to be a settlement with a few small homes snuggled around a circular drive with a central community playground. Driving slowly, avoiding surprised residents' suspicious looks, a barking dog, we maneuvered around the community area, quickly exiting. We felt intrusive and tried to frame what we had discovered. Perhaps the colony might be a sect, a religious enclave, an Appalachian homestead, or just ne'er-do-wells living on the fringe. They might shoot us or at least start a fight. We nervously anticipated the worst.

How far from reality are first impressions! Years later, meeting the men, women, and children who lived simply within that working, wooded society, we refrained from revealing how fearful we were when we first saw The Vale. We were ashamed of our earlier superficial vision. They used skills and determination to work as a community, to make the world a better place. They were dedicated to liv-

ing wisely and simply, opposing war, analyzing political issues, encouraging wellness, loving music. They were remarkable.

Whatever project they touched was done with humble perfection. The dynamic energy to start with a premise very contained and then broaden it into a major community project was amazing. From the renovation of John Bryan Building, the beginning of Friends Music Camp, the idea for Friends Care, they studied every aspect and guaranteed successful completion. Their belief in service reached out to others.

The strength lay in the support of families living in a shared area. The community was incorporated in the fifties; Glen Helen and this land had been given to Antioch in the thirties by Hugh Taylor Birch. Antioch gave the land that became

The Vale to Arthur and Lucy Morgan. In the forties Arthur and Lucy gave parcels to their sons, Griscom and Ernest. Griscom and Jane Morgan invited other families to build homes there. When the Dayton Journal Herald interviewed residents, their responses revealed the uniqueness of The Vale. Wilberta Eastman described The Vale as a very subtle thing; her work building their home, hewing timber, gardening, placed a lasting signature on this sacred spot. Ken Champney loved raising children there. He was "nostalgic for the days when 17 children under 12 ran about." Mary Schumacher appreciated everyone's support, simply stating, "you know they're there." The Vale is "A Gift Outright" to Yellow Springs. So many projects were sparked, beginning simple and



The John Eastman covered bridge, dedicated July 2014

small, becoming milestones, the undeveloped peacefulness so uncommon but planned. Subtle was the precise word.

Knowing what we later learned, our reduction in 1957 of this community into a frame so small, so limiting, so stereotypical was without foresight. Unaware, aloof, and certain, we had trod on the intentional design of others, making quick assumptions, seeing their world through our lens. We were like an invading army carelessly marching into villages in Vietnam, disruptive, not knowing the culture. This startling unwarranted visit showed little sensitivity to that which was sacred, untoward, and unbelievable. Through our high-school eyes, the contrast with the homes on the other side of the bridge was so distinctive that we hastily concluded that the tracks divided the affluent from the poor. How dreadfully wrong first impressions can be!

The pinhole vision of that afternoon in 1957 revealed nothing but our limited life experiences. Actually, what we had seen as dangerous and frightening represented the heart. To live in harmony with others and nature requires purpose and intent. The uniqueness of Yellow Springs lay in this and The Vale's members' values: simplicity, truth, work, and discipline.

Joyce McCurdy taught gifted sixth graders and seventh through twelfth grades during what she considered peak times of Yellow Springs. She taught for forty-four years and used these stories in the classroom as examples of community life.

WORN THREADS

by Maxine Skuba

Once again I returned to the island of my youth,
each trip a continuing meditation.

Last year I wanted to rise from my cushion,
not liking being in my homeland,
marking off the days before I returned to Ohio,
like a high school senior in the spring.

Last summer I loved the sun, the lake,
the dogs shaking their swim over me.
But the cottage had mold and mildew,
leftovers from the winter's broken pipes.
There were chores of bleaching and washing.
My poor little cottage.
My dreams had burst along with the pipes.

The threads that had woven me there had begun to unravel,
worn bare by holding me and the shoreline together.
The sun and rain fraying them too.

The years wear us down.
There are worn spots on our hearts.
The filaments need shoring up.
It is true.
Clouds drift through every love affair.

So for next year's visit, I must weave strong thread
that will withstand the storms
that invariably follow
in the wake
of the sun.

Maxine Skuba, a longtime resident of Yellow Springs, has been writing poetry for the past twenty years. She has many threads that take her back to Maine. She will never truly retire and maintains a career counseling practice in Yellow Springs, Dayton, and Columbus.

Changing Lens by Joyce McCurdy

Coming to Yellow Springs in the mid-sixties was a trip down the rabbit hole. So many strange and wonderful memories exist when I met incredible students and equally incredible parents. The parent-teacher conferences here were many, amazing, informative, and shattering compared with my prior schools where conferences were few, shallow, and flattering. The Yellow Springs conversations questioned traditional standards, analyzed the curriculum content, and questioned everything I knew.

I was a traditional American girl, a 1950s version of success, perfectly styled from bottom to top; my lectures were delivered with the precision of a Stepford wife. Standing in the classroom, holding a signature calfskin briefcase, wearing tailored suits in dark blue or black, correcting papers with a Waterman fountain pen, curling tightly the long hair into a chignon, encasing the leg, concealing its curvature with knee-high soft leather boots zipped tightly and suggestively, I was confidence personified. Every part of me was locked securely like a Lincoln Log creating the model printed on the box cover.

The conferences, however, questioned this assurance and I, like Alice, was bewildered and listened to other possibilities. Perhaps the boots indicated a change forthcoming, perhaps the principal's advice "to let your hair down," perhaps the death of Martin Luther King that spring, perhaps the ur-

gency prompted by the rioting that America was no longer the seamless, predictable society with clear-cut definitions of place, purpose, and position. Multiple explosions: the Vietnam War, the Mississippi Project, the grape boycott, New Directions—all shook the silent hypocrisy of post-war America, quickened the conscience of a nation reeling with contradictions and struggling to be sure-footed on uncertain terrain. The nation awakened from a Rip Van Winkle slumber; I learned certainties were not absolute and recognized other possibilities.

One parent wondered why the text and I falsely explained the story of America. Another handed me a copy of *I. F. Stone Weekly*. A pacifist regretted that this philosophy is overlooked because texts chronologically list, glorify, and idealize war. Of course, history is storytelling and a story has many layers. Interpretations twist historical conclusions. Reviewing my models, advisors, and professors, my presentations resembled theirs, especially the Arkansas civil war buff, a Vanderbilt graduate who annually refought the civil war, idolizing Robert E. Lee and romanticizing the plantation South with the fervor of *Gone with the Wind*. This "lost cause" school, designed post Reconstruction, emphasized a history without error, with great men prevailing, concealing any impropriety, and erasing dissidents. The classic heroes bore no blem-

ishes, suffered no missteps; their interests benefited the nation's greatness. These alluring tales were stirring and satisfying to some, but distasteful to others.

This imperfection was never mentioned at the university, in graduate school, in recommended texts. Not until a parent at John Bryan Middle School parent-teacher conferences stated that my lack of historical knowledge made "tears stream from her child's eyes." Her words pressed my face, burning my cheeks, as a hot iron burns a hole in a fine linen shirt. She pressed harder and harder, without pausing for a breath, without placating my unrest, without hesitation to allow a response; she was on a mission, unwilling to stop until she fulfilled her purpose. Her words like a tornado flattened all I held dear. My attempts to explain were feeble and pedantic. Using degrees, awards, evaluations as my support meant nothing. She shrugged as if I were not listening. Continuing, I explained the new text, well-written by contemporary scholars, was recently purchased. "So what," she persisted. "Where did the authors go to school?" "Who chose the text?"

She shifted to me and asked, "Where did you go to school?" Before I could murmur a response, she exclaimed, "This white world suffocates our children, destroys their pride, offers no connecting models." Flabbergasted, I timidly replied that I would try, but

Dying by Dee Krieg

thought I do not know where to search. So unnerved, I did not complete this thought or ask her for help. The conversation replayed in my mind, haunting, debilitating. My confidence, self-respect were dashed; if what she said were true, my models might be false prophets. Exhausted and drained, the conference ended with a final request, "be kind to my daughter." Catching her breath, reaching for an inhaler, she left muttering that the hallowed halls did not treat all students equally.

I immediately consulted with the principal, who instinctively recognized how disturbing the conversation had been. Asked what to do, he suggested that John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom* might be a good place to begin. Then, seeing U. S. history through a new lens, recognizing that white denial is comfortable, my desire was to unlock this hidden history to everyone. This chore to bring the people's history alive is ongoing. Black History is American History.

As Obama's speech at the 2015 Selma March mentioned, air-brushed history distorts the true story which should include the ugly with the good. This issue is as pertinent today as it was fifty years ago.

Author's note: The blatant racism today might be alleviated with a requirement that all students take courses that emphasize civil and human rights struggles; awareness creates empathy. The South Pacific song "You have to be taught to hate all the people your relatives hate" would then read, "You have to be taught to love all the people your relatives hate."

I looked sideways at Izzy, my sweet mother. I could feel the gradual downward plunge of the Constellation, its four motors roaring, my feet pressing against the plane's cabin floor. I thought she might awaken at the muted scream of the engines, their increasing whine, but she did not, sleeping on as we fell nearer and nearer toward the night-black Atlantic.

I thrust my back against my seat, I tightened my seat belt, realizing all the while these were child-like gestures of hope, that nothing really would prevent our descent toward the enveloping waves and oblivion.

I looked again at mother and for those few seconds re-lived the fun we had experienced this final month of 1950, rollicking over Europe, meeting strangers who became friends, missing planes and trains, and giggling through the surprises and misadventures. Ah, the laughter, the tears in our eyes from the hilarities!

I felt the plane jolt and lurch several times, I looked at the passengers along the aisle but all appeared to be deep in sleep, leaving me alone, overwhelmed and rigid with fear.

I felt my body begin to press against my seat belt, I struggled to sit upright and moved my arm so that it curled around my sleeping mother's shoulders, I gazed at her, hugging her for one last time and, as I did so, a sweet peacefulness engulfed me, I felt my muscles



*Isabelle Kucinski Krieg
Lugano, Switzerland*

and bones melt into the warmth of my seat, and I smiled and lay back, giving myself to the spinning quiet, closing my eyes.

Of a sudden I awakened—surprised, I saw the seat in front of me, turned to Mother; she was still sleeping and beyond her profile, out the cabin window, I could see the dark curve of the Newfoundland shore lighted by the pink of sunrise, and knew that in good time we would begin our descent toward New York.

Our adventure was now at an end, I realized, Iz and I were together, fully alive but, deep within myself I felt a melancholy tug, a desire to once again, if only for a moment, experience that sense of bliss and release that had carried me ever so deeply into silken nothingness.

SEYMOUR'S CHOICES

by Janeal Ravndal

PARADOX

by Pat Stempfly

If I awakened tomorrow and
my white face was black,
And my friend awakened and
her black face was white,
Our blackness and whiteness
would be strangely reversed.
I wonder if we would believe
the mirror's reflection
That says we are different,
Or our heart that says we are one.

COLOR ME

by Pat Stempfly

Color me black,
Color me white,
Color me all the shades of the
rainbow.
It doesn't matter what my color be,
As long as I am loved for being me.

Pat Stempfly is new to Yellow Springs and writing but is enjoying both very much. She likes to write about real stuff in her books (most recently Keep Movin' Your Energy for Body, Mind, and Spirit) and simple poems. She feels Ripples is a very good way to get acquainted in this great community.

—A sonnet, Shakespearian in rhyme scheme,
to mark Seymour Wexler's 90 years

He chose fine craftsmanship in silver, gold,
of watch or ring or locket, then found gems
of *wordly* beauty William Shakespeare sold
him on: full-brilliant, sterling words that stem
also from skill, are precious at the core,
in quality outshining merchant's ware.
That's what I know of Seymour, not much more
but that his gifts of warmth, humor and care
stretch kind and clear from Texas' city to
our village, small and chillier, but rich
with chamber music, which, when Seymour knew,
determined for him they would make the switch.

Of course the best choice of dear Seymour's life
was choosing lovely Shirley for his wife.

A CHEER FOR THE ALL-STARS

by Janeal Ravndal

Let's hear it for *Friends Care Community All-Stars*,
our team who keep so many balls up in the air
they sure out-do mere sports professionals.
You know those Buckeyes, Pirates, Cavaliers,
etcetera have not got work-outs scheduled for
twelve hours at a single stretch, or the ability to
run devotedly and still be kind, greet every
visitor they meet, continue listening to all
complaints with smiles and sympathy, the while
performing labors, little miracles, and paperwork
with no crowd cheering in the stadium. Our local
team performs, no doubt, the greater exercise.
They're ALL stars worthy of their five-star prize.

Center Stage Memories

by Kay Reimers

Yellow Springs has had a long and vibrant history of theater. A community theater named Center Stage, founded and run by the late Jean Hooper, existed from 1971 to 2003 and mounted over 100 productions in those 32 years. It produced a wide variety of work; including musicals, all the Gilbert and Sullivan light operas, Shakespeare, modern and classic comedy and drama, as well as the work of local writers. It was a remarkable accomplishment for a volunteer theater group in a small community. Center Stage had humble beginnings in the gym of John Bryan Center, but by 1975 had moved to its own theater on Dayton Street, nicknamed the Ford Theater because the previous tenant had been a car dealership.

Husband and wife performers Flo Lorenz and Leon Holster were active in Center Stage for most of its existence. Over coffee at the Emporium, they were asked if they could name a favorite production from all those years. They were in complete agreement as to the show that held the most emotional resiliency for them. That production was clearly significant to the village as well. The date was 1974, a difficult year for Yellow Springs. Problems at Antioch College resulted in a bitter and divisive student strike that shocked and alienated many people in the community. That same year a tornado swept through Xenia, resulting in such devastation that President Richard Nixon visited the blighted area. While Yellow

Springs itself was not struck, there was a great deal of damage as hail the size of baseballs rained down on the village. With such a dispirited year for Yellow Springs, a healing came through art. Center Stage staged a musical about another village that faced difficult times with humor, resiliency, and a strong if at times imperfect sense of community: *Fiddler on the Roof*. Leon Holster directed and starred as the poor milkman Tevya, with Flo Lorenz as Tevya's wife, Golde.

"The show seemed to be just what was needed to lift everyone's spirits," recalled Flo. "There was such a strong response to the message of the story. So many people became involved that it seemed half of Yellow Springs was on stage, and the other half in the audience. Children of all ages came to audition. There were no actual roles for them, but Leon simply added everyone into the show anyway."

Leon Holster was familiar with life in the shtetl. A child of Jewish immigrants who settled in Brooklyn, Leon integrated his personal memories into the musical. When he was a child in their small, crowded apartment, relatives would gather on Friday nights to play pinochle. Leon would lie on the sofa, lulled to sleep by the adults laughing and arguing long into the night. It was like a personal lullaby. In the production, the children played around the stage, then fell asleep as the adults danced, sang, argued, and created a racket around them. Leon brought the spirit of his own

childhood culture to authenticate the production. There were certain problems in his approach. What stumped Leon was the apparent inability of Yellow Springs citizens to dance wildly while balancing bottles on their heads. That problem was solved by taping velcro to the dancers' hats and the bottom of the bottles. The director's command to "aim for the velcro" was able to get the people of Yellow Springs to perform in true Russian style.

With such an enthusiastic response from the community, the production charged ahead without filling the critical position of a technical director. During rehearsals the "Miracle of Miracles" arrived. A professional technical director walked in literally off the street and volunteered his efforts. "It was as the lyrics of the song pointed out to us, miracles don't always have to be major events. Just take them as they are and appreciate them when they arrive," said Flo, laughing.

Looking back on the experience it was clear it wasn't just the show itself that created the powerful emotional response, it was also the process itself in creating a positive event for the community at a very difficult time. Forty years later the memory of that process still brought back smiles on the faces of Flo Lorenz and Leon Holster. An indication of the true power of art.

Kay Reimers grew up in Yellow Springs as a member of the McConville family. She graduated from Yellow Springs High School and Ohio University, then served in the Peace Corps teaching English on the island of Palau. After living in Los Angeles for over 20 years she returned to Yellow Springs with her husband to raise their two sons in her hometown.

FLYING HIGH FOREVERMORE

by Ross L. Morgan

As I sat at my piled-high kitchen table, came a tapping, a gentle tapping, tapping at my front door. I arose to see, who it might *be*, visiting *me*, at this hour, at my door. It could be one or two, three or four, or—maybe more—at my front door. I looked and looked—but, all that I could see—as plain—as plain—could be —was the mailman—leaving my front door. It was he, and nothing more, leaving my front door.

No! No! Not *nothing* more! There! There! That familiar *box*—at my front door. A box—a box—of *something* more—at my front door.

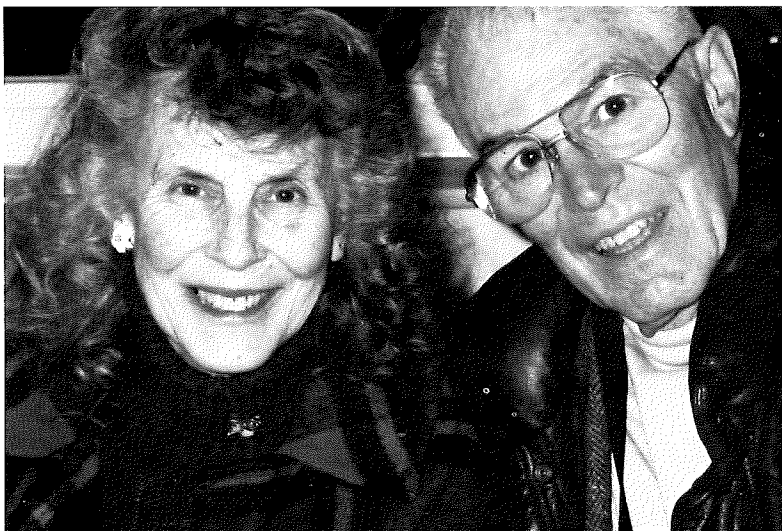
That box is from a friend. I know him well. On him, I can depend. I *should* have *known*. *Again*. *Again*, with *something* more—at my front door.

In the box, the image of a flying witch—so light, so bright and quick, hurrying and scurrying on her appointed rounds. So young. So young appearing. So appealing. Once again, re-appearing.

Could it be? Ah, *yes*, it *is*—arriving once again, at my front door. Once again, she flies—with sparks and Halloween—in her eyes. Once again, now and forevermore—right at my front door.

It is wonderful—yet, hard to take. Bright, young and beautiful—no mistake. Yes, the Spirit flies, now and forevermore. Ah, yes, forevermore, forevermore. The Sprit is flying high, forevermore. Flying high, forevermore.

But, not alone. Sweet fledglings in her wake. Sweet fledglings, all partake. All partake—and never fake. No, never fake. Now, and forevermore. Flying high, forevermore.



Mary and Ross Morgan

Comments: Admiration, appreciation and apologies to Edgar Allan Poe. Special thanks to our son, Ted, whose recent Halloween Box precipitated the whole sketch. All references to the witch are, of course, to Mary E. Morgan. The "sweet fledglings" are her descendants who provide "the air beneath her wings." Mary's Spirit is perpetuated by "those of good cheer, who seek wisdom, promote fellowship, and love, always." RLM

*The current Yellow Springs Senior Center Board of Trustees
answers the question “What does this Senior Center mean to you?”*

“I feel that the Center demonstrates that our community cares about our older adults and is willing to support our Center’s mission to provide physical, educational, social, and support services to seniors.”
—Phyllis Evans

“It’s a warm and welcoming haven for all elders, offering recreation, social outlet, and health services, and the opportunity to be your personal best at every level. We are Yellow Springs’ answer to the AARP, without the commercials!”—Robert Harris

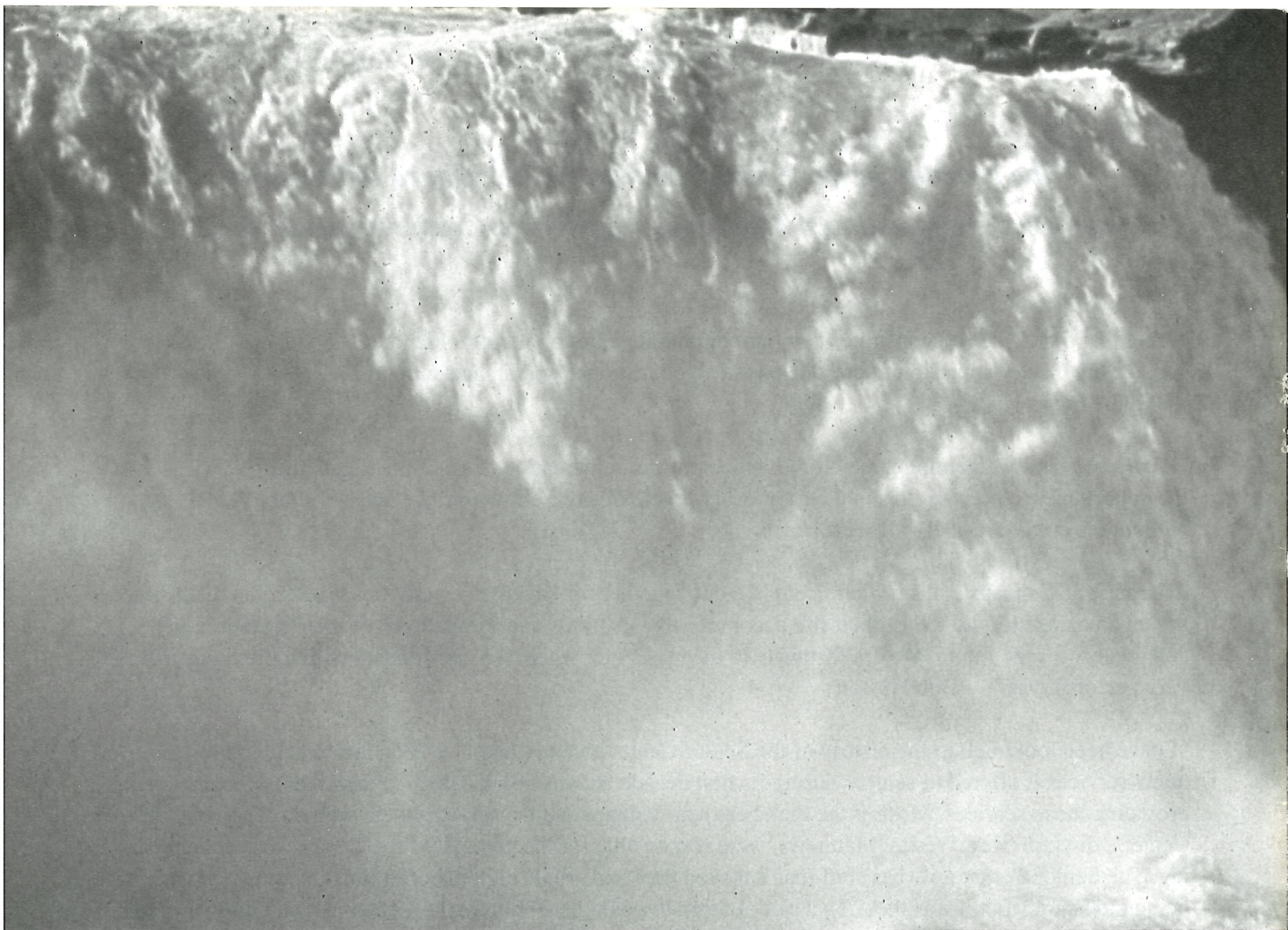
“To me, YSSC means a place where people come together for friendship, activities, and events. Each elder has an amazing story to tell of their life accomplishments, trials and tribulations, of their current projects, and dreams for the future. We are fortunate to have a Center where we can connect with individuals in a very personal way.” —Bob Huston

“I have been looking into the history of the Senior Center recently and I’ve been impressed both by the many services it offered to seniors during its first decade and also by the deep involvement of members in providing those services. Most of the members who volunteered the services were women. They and the Center’s director, Rev. Wesley Matthews, were responsible for the great good the Center was accomplishing. The Senior Center now has staff that it lacked then and, while certain constraints of aging persist, being old is not what it was then. That said, I think it would be a boon to the Center if it can find ways to interest individuals among its current membership to become involved in its life along the lines of those pioneer members during the 1960s.”—Ken Huber

“When I was in my forties, working full time, my mother came to visit us in Yellow Springs. One day, when I had to work, Jeff took Mom to the 80s+ birthday luncheon sponsored by the YSSC. I remember how sparkling she was when I came home. The YSSC members had made her feel so welcome. I determined then that when the opportunity came, I would join the YSSC and try to help perpetuate the sort of community they demonstrated to my mother. When I retired in 2011, one of the first things I did was join the YSSC board. I’m so glad I did!”—Lee Huntington

“The Center is the people, the diverse seniors who come to exercise, to learn, to laugh, to share their lives, their joys and sorrows, and support one another. This is what the Center means to me.” —Fran LaSalle

“In the beginning I needed help with navigating insurance options; once the senior center door opened, everything—programs of learning, exercise, outings, fun—became known, including opportunities to volunteer. One person befriended me that made all the difference in my trying a new venue.”
—Suzanne Patterson



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