



The Bridge

*A QUARTERLY JOURNAL BY AND FOR
THE RESIDENTS OF NEWBRIDGE ON THE CHARLES IN DEDHAM, MA*

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

JANUARY 2013



Original Photo by Herb Schwedock

Remembrance of Winter Past

Notes from the Editor

A year ago, on January 1, 2012, the resident website of NewBridge on the Charles officially opened to the public.

The original idea was hatched by an informal committee of Ed Goldstein, John Averell, Beth Lowd and Marion Sanders that first met on October 30, 2011. The idea was to provide a complement to *The Bridge* journal created by and for residents of NewBridge.

The website now fulfills the need for an online source of daily, weekly, and monthly news, events, food menus, library holdings, and important forms that allow residents to submit requests and notifications to NBOC staff. In addition all issues of *The Bridge* and its supporting donors are listed online for friends and families.

The design, construction, and maintenance of the website was provided by Michael Goldstein, Ed's son, who gave much of his valuable time, advice, and trouble-shooting to Ed and helpers; he continues his support, as needed, with Ed as the Webmaster.

Now the successful running of the website depends on a number of resident volunteers who enter events and menus every weekend, in addition to other information as it arrives.

Needs for a successful and continuing website are two-fold:

- Volunteers who are able and willing to spend a few hours a week entering and updating items;
- Donors who will continue to give to the website through the HSL envelopes (at the library and main desks). Small donations of \$5 or \$10 are needed as much as large ones. (Financial support for the start-up was generously provided by NBOC.)
- The website has had 12,000 visits and 67,000 page views during the year. Keep it going Ed. Great job. •

Visit the Website

Use your browser (e.g. Safari, Firefox, Internet Explorer,) to navigate to:

www.newbridgeresidents.org

If you have problems or would like to have a User Name and Password, email Ed at **eg.nrdo@gmail.com**.

Flash! Assisted Living Residents To Join The Bridge

We are happy to add residents of the Assisted Living and its associated Memory Support facilities to our distribution list, beginning with this issue.

We invite residents of Assisted Living to submit stories, poems, and relevant art for consideration for future issues.

If you have material for submission, either send to or contact the Editor-in-Chief, John Averell, at:

Email: TheBridge.nbo@gmail.com

Phone: 781-234-2222 or 4-2222

Mail: 4126 Great Meadow Rd, Dedham 02026

Donations

We thank the following donors who have contributed to The Bridge since the last issue.

September 2012

Charles L. Blauer

Diana H. Bronner

Frances M. Budd

Janice L. Feffer

- *In appreciation of John Averell's efforts*

October 2012

Harriett T. Segal

- *In appreciation of John Averell's help in recovering my computer*

Shirley Averell

- *In memory of Leonard Gould*

Shirley Averell

- *In memory of Shirley Geller*

Dr. and Mrs. Maxwell G. Potter

- *The birth of our great-granddaughter, Jordan Lily Cahn*

Gloria and Harold Learner

- *In honor of Rosalie Geller's special birthday*

Phyllis W. Lichtin

- *In appreciation of The Bridge journal*

Carl E. Baylis

November 2012

Barbara and Mike Atlas

Shirley Averell

- *In honor of Edith Schaffer's 90th birthday*

Karen Drescher

- *Thank you to Marilyn Stone for the trip to Carney Hospital*

I'm Thinking About You

Rita Fireman



I'm thinking about you, home town
in the grey light of morning,
the street lamps still burning,
soot swirling in my hair,
my eyes stinging in the acrid air.
I run and skip over your cobbled hills
past street corners where men wait
for the buses going to the mills,
where I hurry because I can hardly wait
to get to the red brick Colfax school,
to Miss Wilkes' first grade class.

Our Father who art in heaven
hallowed be thy name ...

I pledge allegiance to the flag
and to the republic for which it stands ...

My day begins with homage
and Miss Wilkes will give me each day
the keys to the kingdom.
I will learn to read.

I'm thinking about you, mill town
in the dusky evening when the sun
is a red platter over the Boulevard of the Allies
and the Jones & Loughlin Mills spew
yellow flames over the Monongahela River
and I hear the fog horns of the iron ore barges
and the whistles of the P&LE freight trains
as they chug along the tracks west to Ohio.
My father is taking me down this road
to the Carnegie Library, a stone majesty
sitting on a throne of steps
guarded by grinning gargoyles.
We walk through huge doors and marble halls
that hush and echo, this is an important place.
The children's room is golden wood
and rows of books along the walls.

I have my library card.

I sign out "Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates"
under the green shaded lamplight.

I'm thinking about you, my home town
of the house on Morrowfield Avenue,
of the bedroom I share with my sister,
of my dresser drawer filled with dreamy
angora sweaters and real silk lingerie
my mother bought for me on my sixteenth birthday.
I walk in Frick woods with my best friend Eleanor
who tells me secrets that I swear to God
I'll never tell anyone else.

We play Monopoly on Lynn's front porch.

I always buy property on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Eddie and I ride the carousel in Schenly Park.

We hold hands and court as my white mare
and his black steed bob up and down and the music
goes round and round. Eddie loves me.

Some day after we graduate from Pitt

we will climb into his blue Ford

and ride away from Pittsburgh, our home town. •

Noble Tree

Estelle Ringer

NOBLE TREE

A MAJESTIC TREE:

SPREADING OUT -

STRETCHING UP -

SO SUPREME -

COTTER LEAVES -

SOON BARE -

PERFECTION!

NEEDS NO EMBELLISHMENTS.

E. Ringer

The Old Gray Mare *John Averell*

The first car I can remember will always stick in my mind.

It was a 1934 gray Plymouth sedan. I was only ten when World War II ended, so of course my family couldn't have bought another car during those war years. A lot of childhood memories surround that car.

That model had a foot starter pedal. In addition it also had a crank socket in the front, in case you couldn't get started. On cold days in Connecticut I could help my dad by giving the crank a quick turn while he pumped the gas. Had to be careful though! If you kept hold of the crank when the motor caught it could pull your arm off (or so he told me.)

There were several pull knobs on the dashboard. Most important was the choke. We used that every time we started. The throttle was sometimes useful. A knob labeled "Free Wheeling" was mysterious – I don't think we ever figured out what good it was.

And of course the gear shift and clutch were way too tricky for a little boy to handle, fortunately! It was several more years before I learned to drive (in a surplus jeep, at my uncle's farm).

Of course there was gas rationing (along with everything worth eating) so we really had to count the miles carefully. I remember that "A" sticker on the windshield. I think we did okay because my Dad was a chemist, working for American Cyanamid. After the war he realized that some of the work he did was part of the research on uranium that aided the Manhattan Project. He car-pooled with his colleagues every day, so that helped on gas.

We did manage to drive up to Boston from Darien occasionally to visit my dad's father and sister. In those days that was a substantial trip. The Merritt Parkway was the only "highway", and that stopped at Bridgeport then. No interstates or turnpikes. Just routes 5, 10, 15, 20 and on to Roslindale. My brother Rip and I sat in the back seat and fought, as siblings do.

Church was a big thing in our family. Whatever else, that was the priority on Sunday, and we hopped into the car for the five mile drive into Stamford.

To this day I remember the license number SV-840 of the old gray mare. It ain't what it used to be, but it served us well for many years. •

The Cricket and I *Karen Drescher*

Stepping out of the shower the other night, I saw a cricket on the floor. While standing there, dripping wet, I contemplated what I should do with you. Saying "hello" was not enough. I wondered where the rest of your family was, and do you travel alone as a scout seeking better lodgings? All kinds of questions came to my mind as we "looked" at each other in trepidation. How did you get in here anyway?

Okay, a towel is in order for me so I can at least go outdoors wrapped in terry cloth. Mom once said that a cricket was good luck. I think she meant on the hearth not the bathroom. But maybe our luck will hold for this occasion.

Knowing that you deserve more than a Royal Flush, I go in search of a small container for transport. As I try to pick you up in it, you start hopping around. I have no idea why that caused me to start screaming. There is no one else here, so what good does my screaming do? Maybe I should pull the emergency cord for security to come to our rescue?

Since the small container did not seem to be a satisfying option, I search for a larger vessel. Saying to you (the cricket) "I'll be right back," I go in search mode. An A-HA moment. I find what I need in my recycling bag (moral here).

Now, feeling confident about your soon departure, I head back to the bathroom. There you are, still waiting. As I bend over to let you hop into the container, you start jumping around. Have you realized your fate? I start screaming again, "get in there!"

Finally, in you go and we are off to the great outdoors. I put you and the container on the patio floor and open the lid for you to jump out. I leave you and go to bed to sleep knowing you are safely out.

In the a.m., I check on the container. OMG, you are still there!!

I tip the side a little, now realizing you were on your back. I watch you climb out of the container and slowly creep away, not hopping. I wonder, was the night too cold; did you exhaust yourself trying to get off your back; will you be able to make cricket noises again?

Alas, I will never know your fate. •

From Generation to Generation

Diana Bronner

There she sits, her back to me and
all I can recognize is her puff of white hair.
Her body in the chair looks so small,
like that of a child;
the shoulders are rounded and
almost seem to meet in front of her
her chest is hollowed out, no hollowed in.
She is my mother, I know because
her face lights up when she sees me
and she calls me "honey."

She walks bent over her walker, her "Cadillac";
She walks slowly as in a dream,
talking all the while about this and that,
oblivious to oncoming cars, to people.
I think if I walk just a little faster,
she'll somehow keep up with me,
then I feel guilty.
She is my mother. I know,
because she calls me "honey".

She stands in the grocery checkout line,
fumbling for her card,
what button to press,
people waiting in line behind
watch impatiently
—she is beautifully oblivious.
She tells me and her friends
that I am the Mommy now and
that she listens to me.
She dresses in her pressed white pants
and pressed embroidered blouse,
but meatloaf from the afternoon meal
leaves its stain and ruins the image.
She tucks in her blouse to hide the evidence.
She tries to please me by saying that
she turns off the water faucet;
she thanks me for helping her.

She so wants to be independent,
but it's so hard to be.
She is my mother, I know,
because she says "I love you".

What happened to my Mother,
the tall strong woman
who could so easily cast off
anyone who didn't meet her expectations?
What happened to the tall strong woman,
who dressed to the nines, proudly
walked NY's Fifth Avenue showing off
herself and her handsome Dalmatian dog?
What happened to those dark defiant eyes
that could be so angry?
What happened to the mother I didn't see
for so many long years
because she was too tough for me?
What happened to that woman
who was the life of the party
with her dirty jokes told
with her put-on Jewish accent?
Why am I having so much trouble
adjusting to this new mother/child of mine?

"No", my shout turns inward,
"this isn't my mother".
Where is she??
I too will reach this same stage,
old, frail, dependent.
Will my son recognize me?
Will he also be impatient
as I am with my mother?
Will he too be in denial, as I am?
What is this end of life?
It seems truly to take us right back
to the beginning of life,
a full circle, and if you believe so,
into a new beginning. •

Share Your Stories With Your Fellow Residents!

You enjoy reading stories from your fellow residents. They help you know your neighbors better. But have you noticed that relatively few authors account for most of the stories?

Many of you have interesting lives and many stories to tell, but you are not sure how to put down your thoughts and memories. Read Ed Goldstein's offer on page 10 and join a seminar to help make you a better writer for *The Bridge*.

We need your stories.

Poor and Homeless *Sybil Gladstone*

A friend showed me an article in the Boston Globe, describing a soup kitchen for women and their children. A recent retiree, I thought that volunteering there might be satisfying and worthwhile. Ahead of me lay an education in human suffering, compassion and acceptance.

In the dingy basement of the Church of the Covenant, volunteers and paid workers at The Women's Lunch Place struggled to provide a refuge, warm in winter tho' hot in summer, for women who had no home, who slept on church steps, who lingered at the Boston Public Library, or wore out their welcome at the homes of relatives. The most important aspect was the good hot lunch served daily, consumed by lonely, bitter, alienated women.

It became my responsibility to show up every Thursday before 11:30, to fill plates with well-balanced meals and to serve them to guests at cloth-bedecked tables decorated with fresh flowers. Those tablecloths went home every night with staff members and volunteers for laundering, and fresh flowers were supplied regularly by Newbury Street florists. Up and down the fashionable street, merchants were generous with donations of all kinds, and tolerant of the ladies who didn't fit into the neighborhood's aura.

This soup kitchen and day center was founded by Jane Alexander and Eileen Riley, who originally fitted out a van to hold containers of hot soup, which they provided to women who spent their nights on the streets of Boston. A subsequent development was the establishment of a welcoming place where women with no home or little money could find a daytime refuge, nutritious meals and friendly acceptance. There were already shelters providing a bed for a night, but a safe place to spend the day was needed.

During the years I volunteered at The Women's Lunch Place, I found myself singing Christmas carols as part of a holiday entertainment, scrubbing huge pots as part of the after-lunch cleanup, struggling through oppressive heat to reach the

T stop after my stint, feeling guilty about stopping for iced coffee, which our "guests" could not afford.

Most searing and memorable were experiences with individual women. Volunteers were requested to sit down with one of the women to share the lunch experience. "May I join you?" received varied responses. One guest did not reply to my question, but instead spread her paper napkin over her lunch plate, making clear that this was her territory, and I was not welcome. On a chilly April day, I complimented a woman who was wearing what appeared to be a nice warm coat with a fur collar, vintage unknown. She responded, "I'll have to leave it someplace soon, when it gets warmer." Leave it one must if one has no closet, no room, no home.

Another time I was shocked at my own insensitivity. Approaching a guest already seated, I made my usual proposition. When I asked permission to join her, she said, "Yes, if you won't ask me a lot of questions." I promptly asked, then regretted asking, "Oh, do people ask you a lot of questions?" It was her custom to check in to the Pine Street Inn daily at 4 PM in order to have a bed for the night, and each afternoon she was asked the same long list of questions. We got past that uncomfortable interchange, and proceeded to discuss our respective teaching experiences, our relationships with our daughters, and other sundry matters.

One winter day, in that overheated basement, I drew a chair up beside a woman wearing a heavy red coat and matching hat. After some idle chatter, I wondered aloud whether she might want to slip out of her coat. "Oh no, someone might steal it." She continued to swelter until closing time at two o'clock, then went home to Chelsea, one of the poor but not homeless guests.

Six years of Thursdays at The Women's Lunch Place taught me a lot about survival, about giving, about forbearance. Recently, the facility was enlarged, brightly illuminated and decorated, made more welcoming than ever. Varied programs enrich the lives of these poor and homeless women. Every guest is treated with dignity and respect, just as Jane Alexander and Eileen Riley envisioned many years ago. •

4/4/44

Edward Goldstein

Cavalry horses have lately been in the news, thanks to the Presidential campaign. Listening to President Obama's reference to them brought back memories.

I entered the Army of the United States at Ft. Snelling, Minnesota, on a date that is easy to remember: 4/4/44. On my fourth day there, I learned my first military chore — how to muck a horse stable. I should add that these horses were used exclusively by the officers stationed at Ft. Snelling.

It wasn't exactly what I had been trained for at the University of Minnesota, nor have I ever had occasion since then to make use of that skill.

Mucking a stable isn't really that much of an intellectual challenge. Basically, you need a wheelbarrow, a pitchfork, a shovel and a bucket. It also helps if you're not too fastidious about things you smell and step into.

I'll spare you the details, but the essentials are that you start out with a stall that has had a non-toilet-trained horse living in it for a day and you end up with a clean stall. And then you do the next stall. At the end of a day of mucking, especially if you've spent your entire life until then in intellectual rather than physical pursuits, you know you have done a day's work.

And you have made a definite, if negative, career choice: should anyone ask you, the Cavalry is not your preferred branch of the military service. Some of the Minnesota farm boys with whom I shared this chore seemed to enjoy it, however.

Just a few weeks earlier I had been more or less enjoying the life of an electrical engineering student, with the deferment from military service that came with that status, taking a full course load, working forty hours a week to support myself, being active in a Zionist youth organization and trying to have a social life. Oh yes, and sleeping maybe four to six hours a night.

The less pleasant aspects of that life included the uncomfortable feelings you have when perfect strangers accost you on the street wanting to know what an obviously healthy young man like you is doing out of uniform. Worse were my growing feelings that somehow it wasn't right that I should be sitting out the war against Hitler. This was a war

that I believed in for strong personal reasons as well as a sense that the future of the world literally depended on its outcome.

And so, a month or so earlier, when my deferment expired, I had marched down to my local draft board and requested that they draft me at the end of the next academic quarter. They were happy to oblige.

On the day I reported for duty I didn't have far to go. Ft. Snelling, built soon after the Louisiana Purchase at the intersection of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, was a short bus ride from downtown St. Paul. An olive-drab military bus picked up a bunch of us new recruits. When the bus arrived at its destination, several corporals and privates first class shouted commands mixed with obscenities at us and finally got us into a semblance of a military formation. We snaked our way through a large warehouse accumulating a load of sheets, blankets, boots, uniforms and all the other accoutrements of a military life. We dumped all that stuff on the bunks we were assigned in a wooden, white-painted barracks.

Next came the obligatory stop at the barbershop where, in less than a minute per person, we lost most of our hair.

The next couple of days went by in a blur: a quick physical exam to make sure we were still healthy, and then a blizzard of paperwork. Squeezed into the schedule was what turned out to be three very important hours: the Army General Classification Test, a fancy name for an IQ test.

We also learned the old army game of "hurry up and wait." It means that you double-time from one appointment to the next, only to wait and wait. Sometimes there would be days between the different elements of our processing and we learned that the Army strongly believes in keeping its soldiers, especially privates, from falling into idleness. That's where chores like mucking the stables, picking up trash and painting the barracks came in handy. And, of course, there was physical training early each morning.

On May 5, in the middle of a snowstorm, many of us boarded a troop train that would take us to the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Roberts in California, but that's another story. •

Chicken Farming

John Motture

Living in London during the the Second World War brought increasing food shortages. In those days Britain could only support about half its population with domestic food. The other half had to be imported, and this supply was increasingly threatened by the sinking of merchant ships by German submarines. Shipping losses were so great in 1941 for example, that ships were sunk at a greater rate than they could be built and replaced. Rationing of food was tightened: a person could expect, for example, to receive the following protein items per month in 1941 :

4 ounces of meat

1 egg

1 or 2 cans of SPAM or corned beef

Vegetables and fish (not always available) were not rationed. Bananas, considered unessential, were never seen for the duration of the war. Various schemes were set up to reduce the amount of food that had to be imported. One was to convert every available open space, especially grasslands, to growing vegetables; but that did not provide the much needed protein that the population was lacking.

Our family decided to raise chickens in our backyard to correct this deficiency. My father built an enclosed run for them, with an elevated shed housing the nesting boxes and a roosting bar. The shed was designed so that in the event of rain the chickens could shelter underneath the structure. Linking a small opening in the shed to the ground level was a sloped plank suitably ribbed so that the chickens could grip the wood on their way up and down to lay their eggs in the nesting boxes.

Somehow it became my job, as a teenager, to feed and look after these twelve chickens. My dad bought special eggs and we raised them as chicks under heat lamps in the house. When they reached the egg-laying stage they were transfered outside and put in the shed. I had to feed them grain each day, as well as make sure their water supply and grit (for shell making) was always plentiful. I also fed them table scraps and vegetable leaves, trimmed from the outside of cabbages and cauliflowers. Whenever I did not have enough of these leaves, I used to go on my bicycle about three miles to the local greengrocer shop to pick up off the floor all the outside leaves trimmed off the vegetables. I would stuff them into a large sack, and then pedal

proudly back home with my chicken 'feed', safe and sound with my haul.

For the exercise of the chickens I tied a bunch of leaves together with string and hung them just out of their reach. This made them jump up in order to grab a piece of leaf. They seemed to enjoy this activity. I never had a chicken die on me and I believed that I kept them healthy with this tempting, jumping exercise.

After a while, these twelve or so chickens were producing eight to ten eggs per day, more than we could eat. We gave some to our neighbours, especially to those who had given us their table scraps. Any surplus eggs were preserved by my mother in a special solution in a large ceramic pot for future use when egg production would decrease.

I became attached to these chickens, especially one which we called the "double yolker" because she always laid eggs with two yolks in them instead of the normal one. To compensate for this she only laid eggs every other day. She was different from the others: taller, quieter, and always took longer to lay each egg in the nesting box. After all, with two yolks in each egg, they were larger and she had to strain harder to get the egg out. From time to time if a chicken slowed its production of eggs, then it was killed for its meat. (My father did this.) Thus more protein was available for us to eat. But when the day came to kill this "double yolker," I could not watch my father do the deed. Without realizing it at the time, I had lost a friend. I had indeed grown attached to her.

At times, the responsibility I had for the welfare of these chickens became a chore that I resented. I had to get up earlier than normal in the mornings so that I could take care of them before going to school. Inevitably, I would sleep in and have no time to feed them and have my breakfast. The chickens came first so there were times when I went to school without breakfast.

Eventually, the Battle of the Atlantic turned, and the shipping losses slowed. Rationing of food was eased, and our chicken "farming" ceased. Looking back, I realize that it was a good experience for me at the time, gave me some responsibility, and helped feed us with a valuable protein at a critical time in the war. We didn't know then about the dangers of the saturated fat in the yolks of eggs! •

An Unexpected Journey

Max Potter

I was well beyond mid-life on a given Sunday morning when I realized that my breathing rate far exceeded that expected for the amount of physical activity I was doing. Tying my shoelaces became a Herculean task. Despite my own medical knowledge and experience and factoring in for possible denial, I thought it might be wise to consult the gentlemen of the Security Force. They arrived and in short order I found myself speeding in an ambulance to the BIDMC, Needham, and almost at once, from there onward to the “Mother” unit on Brookline Avenue. It was early in the morning, yet this was more excitement than I had had on a Sunday since I had given up driving or reading the *New York Review of Books*.

It was decided that further diagnostic goodies were in order, so instead of the usual Lucullan repast of hospitals, I was offered the less sustaining but possibly more edifying procedure of an echocardiogram.

“Congratulations, young man, you have just been awarded a cardiac catheterization, courtesy of Obamacare.”

“For this relief, much thanks.”

Soon a cheery nurse came in and announced, “Showtime!” That warmed my heart. I was plunked on a gurney and hauled away along miles of catacombs, through the automatic doors and sudden elevators that make up the infrastructure of the modern hospital journey, and was deposited in a bland, nondescript but sterile room with masked *persona*, some masculine, some feminine, but all serious. I was properly prepped, given a short-acting feel good drug, and fell into the pleasant half-sleep, half-awareness of the innocent on a benign toot. I noticed that I was on television or at least my heart was, but as usual, I didn’t have a really good view of it.

At the other end of the table a Gowned Group were mumbling something or other about me to themselves, but, alas, my hearing aids were not in, so I didn’t get the context. Still, I couldn’t help but feel that as a life-threatening experience, it was not

all that bad. I really wasn’t scared, and it was certainly the most interesting thing that had happened to me since I had hit NewBridge. I cannot say I enjoyed every minute of it, yet it beat a lot of the evening events.

Then there was a degree of silence. The nurse said she would be right back, which I soon learned was universal Nursing Language for “you will be alone for 30 minutes or more.” Soon from the distal end of the table I heard the vague sounds of action, metal on metal. Gradually I became aware of a mixture of vibrations, gyrations and abrasions.

I wished to holler out, “Ahoy, Mates, could we pause for an explanation.” I didn’t of course, and hence there was no response.

Instead I found myself subjected to the combined noise of a Toro mower and the full impact and torque of a large Roto-Rooter. For all I knew, the seven dwarves were singing “Hi-Ho, Hi-Ho, let’s drill down to his toe.”

Soon the jolly miners ceased, and Snow White the nurse came up and whispered, in essence, that they had found an obstruction in a major coronary artery, drilled it away, had inserted a stent, and even now were sweeping up the endo-arterial dust that lay scattered around and were preparing me for a life of revamped salubrity. Further, she assured me that the good doctors would be kind enough to show me the 8.5 by 11 glossies of the action. I heard in the middle distance the familiar snapping of elastic gloves on their way to being discarded – and it was done. The nurse gave me the obligatory reassurance, “I’ll be right back” and I was left in peace.

Soon the nurse returned from wherever it is that nurses have to go, and with the aid of a cohort, slid me, by using a shield-like implement, like a fallen hero, onto the traveling gurney, and I was dragged, pulled, and schlepped down the Labyrinthine Way — over hill, over dale to my room. My brief hour on the stage was over. Mercifully, there were no curtain calls.

As a surgical proctor of mine once said, “We have done all we can. The rest is in the hands of God. Let us hope He keeps His end of the bargain.” •

Once Upon a Time Gloria F. Rosenzweig

Once upon a time there was an organization in Boston called "Interface." It wafted in on the winds of change. "Holistic Health" they advertised and the world came to their door. For some inexplicable reason, I started to work there. The details are gone, along with other memories that I expected to cherish. It was a life changing experience. My naiveté did not desert me – I had no idea who the players were, where funding came from or what in the world they were talking about. I was always on the outside, looking in, trying to wipe off the haze on the window.

Stan and I went to most of their offerings, uncertain as to what we believed. Jon Kabat-Zinn led meditation groups – I think he was Jon Kabat then. There was *Feldenkrais*, rolfing, hands-on healing and a myriad of other workshops. We went to a massage workshop once but, when everyone began to take off their clothes, I left. Stan did not.

The goal of this story is to tell you about a once-upon-a-time experience. We were at a workshop with a healer named Dennis Faire. He was an ordinary looking man, white hair, red cheeks, a British accent. I cannot remember what he talked about but the large room was overflowing with people. At the end of the day he did personal healing. He talked about what he could heal and what he could not. Scoliosis was on his "do" list and our 14 year old daughter was home in a brace from neck to hips for her entire adolescence. Dennis agreed to see her the next morning before we drove her to a summer school. Karen did not want to go but we prevailed. They were together for about ten to fifteen minutes, when he came out he said, "I think she's cured now but check with her doctor." We drove her to her school – about two hours away – and forgot about it. When we picked her up one month later she was not wearing the brace. She said it broke. In a panic, we drove straight to Children's Hospital. Dr. Thompson, who had seen her originally, examined her and said, "I don't think she needs the brace anymore." Now, what do you make of that? Is it not a strange story? It happened 35 years ago. Karen is still slim and straight and beautiful.

The Boarder Estelle Schwedock

The boarder's name was Manny. The family always referred to him as "Manny the boarder".

Manny the boarder lived with us for several years helping my grandmother to sustain the family income during the 1930s. He was a handsome man, at least I thought so. I was ten years old and had a crush on him. He played the mandolin every night and I just about swooned while I watched him.

During the day he worked in a local butcher shop. One afternoon, to my delight, my grandmother sent me on an errand to purchase four lamb chops. I arrived at the store and waited on line, during which time I just stared at Manny. He was so handsome and obliging to all the women making their purchases. My heart was pounding as he approached me.

Just then a woman entered the shop, pushed me aside and quickly purchased lamb chops. As it turned out she had purchased the last four chops, and so I returned home in tears.

I explained the situation to my grandmother, divulging how I felt about Manny and my broken heart, and my disappointment in not completing my task. She phoned Manny explaining the situation.

That evening Manny returned home with four steaks as a gift and dedicated the evening song to me. •

Seminar for Potential Authors

Do you have a story for *The Bridge*, but need some help getting started? Do you want to try out your story ideas before a small, sympathetic audience?

If there are six or more of you out there, Ed Goldstein will re-start his *Telling Your Story* seminar.

In six 90-minute sessions, participants will read their stories and the other participants will discuss them, ask questions and make suggestions for improvements. Everyone learns.

If you are interested, send an email to Ed at eg.TheBridge@gmail.com.

Supreme Court Justice *Stanley P. Rosenzweig*

It was a beautiful spring day, years ago, when I picked up Phyllis, a psychiatric nurse who was on my staff at the VA Outpatient Clinic in Boston. She had indicated to me that she knew someone at Reed and Barton who had informed her of the possibility of making a donation to our program. I now do not recall exactly what Reed and Barton was offering us but it was something that could be used in some aspect of our VA program. Reed and Barton is an international business, manufacturing a multitude of silver and housewares products, probably best known for their Paul Revere bowls. We decided to take a trip to Taunton, the location of one of Reed and Barton's headquarters, to negotiate the transaction.

After a half hour drive we arrived at our destination and shortly met the person who Phyllis had known, a Mr. Dykstra, one of the senior administrators in their company. Dykstra, who was an engaging host, gave us a tour of the building, filling us in with details about their operation. After the tour we rapidly took care of the details of why we came. Our conversation began to drift into other matters and, eventually, I found myself speaking about an event that was coming up in my life. It was a reception for Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun. He was to be the commencement speaker at a graduate school for Psychology, from where Mr. Blackmun's daughter was graduating. I was, at the time, on the Board of this school. Mr. Dykstra seemed very interested in the upcoming event and apparently was something of a fan of Mr. Blackmun. He came up with an idea and an offer. He offered a gift from Reed and Barton to be given to the Justice at the reception. I was pleased and somewhat overwhelmed. Before we left he had given me a beautiful, engraved Paul Revere bowl. Naturally, I thanked him profusely.

A day or so later, when I spoke to the Administrators of the school about the gift for Justice Blackmun, they were delighted and asked me if I would introduce him, and present him with the bowl. Of course, I agreed. On the day of the reception, a considerable number of people had gathered. I was introduced to Justice Blackmun and found myself in conversation with him along with a number of other guests. He was a short, slim man with greying hair. He had a pleasant and open

manner and it was easy to engage him in conversation. I was trying to think of some way to find a link to him that I might use in my opening remarks. He came from Michigan and I went to graduate school there, but that did not seem too interesting. Then the conversation somehow got around to baseball. It turned out that he was a big Detroit Tigers fan. I myself had been an intense Dodger fan for many years. The Justice began to reminisce about a memorable World Series game that he attended many years ago, before I became a baseball fan. At this game the Tigers were winning and had two out in the ninth inning. The opponent batter hit a long fly to the outfield. The Tigers' outfielder got under the ball and the crowd became exhilarated, sensing that the game would end with a win for the home team. Unfortunately for Detroit, the outfielder dropped the ball and the other team went on to win this important World Series game.

My mind immediately went to the 1941 World Series when the Brooklyn Dodgers were playing the New York Yankees. In game four, just as it appeared that the batter had struck out and the Dodgers had won the game, the Brooklyn catcher, Mickey Owen, dropped the third strike, allowing the batter to get to first base and eventually allowing the Yankees to win the game. Without much difficulty the Yankees then went on to win the World Series, something the Dodgers had never done. This was a dark day for intense Dodger fans like me, and was something that became indelibly etched in fans' minds for eternity. The parallel to the game Blackmun had described hit me immediately and the link that connected me to this Supreme Court Judge became vividly apparent. This is what I could reference to enliven my introduction of Mr. Blackmun. And this is what I did. The entire experience went smoothly and well.

Thanks to a photographer who was there at the time I presented the Paul Revere bowl to Justice Blackmun, I now have that event preserved for all time. Ever since I received that photograph, I've had it displayed in my office, wherever it has been located over the years. The photo shows Justice Blackmun examining and admiring the bowl I had just presented him, with the president of the school in the background, smiling and applauding. Who knew that my interest in baseball and a silver bowl would allow me to have a link to a prominent Supreme Court Justice? •

The Making of a Shellback Al Rosen

The first time our ship crossed the Equator, we welcomed aboard King Neptune who engaged us in a ceremony of traditional nature known as the Holding of the Court of Neptunus Rex. This court is convened aboard any ship crossing the equator bearing persons who have never before crossed that line; its purpose is to initiate all such persons (known as “pollywogs”) into the Fraternity of the Deep. The ceremony is administered by those of the ship’s company who have crossed before and been initiated (known as “shellbacks”). The following description of that ceremony was taken from a letter that I wrote to my family shortly after the event.

Some time just before the crossing, Davy Jones comes aboard and serves the Orders of Neptunus Rex on the Captain, ordering him to stop the ship at the Equator and to let King Neptune and his party come aboard. He calls upon all the shellbacks aboard to assist him. The Captain, of course, endorses these orders with “Permission Granted.” The shellbacks then serve orders on the pollywogs describing the uniforms they shall wear at the opening of the Court. Mine was a ducky affair consisting of the bottom half of my underwear, my white shoes, a pair of leggings, a cook’s hat, a swab (mop) to use as a rifle and a hose nozzle to use as a spyglass. As an added effect I was to cry “Baa” like a sheep every five minutes. The other pollywog officers were ordered to wear equally ludicrous outfits, and the crewmembers who were as yet uninitiated wore shorts only. We were ordered to muster early the next morning on deck in our new uniforms and await the arrival of the King.

Next morning we were on deck, on time, to find ourselves completely in the hands of the shellbacks. They were dressed as pirates, in all sorts of weird costumes, made up of torn dungarees, painted undershirts, bits of signal bunting, and painted faces. They each had a skull and cross bones painted on their outfits; the Jolly Roger flew from the foremast. The King was about to arrive.

While awaiting this august personage and his court we were ordered to entertain the “Royal Jailers.” My own signalman ordered me to swab the deck and sing a song at the same time. I obliged with a fine job of swabbing and “The Minstrels Song of an English King.” I hope you have never heard it.

The First Lieutenant was jauntily attired in a pair of shorts and a diving helmet weighing fifty pounds, which they required him to wear. To make him happy they injected a wee bit of cigar smoke into the air intake. Ensign Reardon wore a noteworthy costume, an athletic supporter and a white coat on backwards, nothing more. The ship’s photographer took pains to capture a posterior view — for posterity, he said. My roommate, Ensign Fridlund, a small man barely out of his teens, wore a pair of shorts and a brassiere of his own design. As ordered, he did a dance with Radio Electrician Jenkins, a big burley man who, as expected, fooled with the brassiere until it fell away, revealing — nothing. A few of us played hockey using swabs as hockey sticks and a cigarette package as a puck.

Suddenly the ship came to a halt. The King had come. Up from forward he came, followed by his Royal Court. He wore long white robes, made of sailcloth, and his hair was long and yellow and wavy — a fine job of a lot of unraveled hemp rope. He wore a huge crown and carried a three-tined scepter. The Queen and two ladies in waiting, all wearing similar hair followed him. After them came a procession of the Royal Barber, Electrician, Doctor, Dentist, Undertaker, Chaplain, Jailers and a number of others, each in his own fantastic costume. We came to attention and gave Him and his Court full honors as they passed between us drawn up in two rows as side boys. They sat down on the throne and took possession of the ship. The officers were then ordered to go below and strip down to our shorts, and report back on deck with our summonses for trial. The fun was about to begin.

Arriving back on deck we were bunched together on the port side to await trial, officers first. While waiting, the Royal Jailers in charge of us ordered us to pay homage to the King. This consisted of kneeling down and praying Arab fashion, repeating “Allah” loudly while one of their number played a fire hose on us. When one’s turn came to go before the Royal Court he was urged along by repeated “taps” on his trailing end by blunt objects in the hands of the jailers. These objects were canvas tubes about two inches in diameter and two feet long, filled with wet sand. They looked like oversized billy clubs.

When my turn came King Neptune bade me to stand on a rubber mat studded with copper nails that was before him. I noticed that it was wired to a

magneto. A wand in the hands of the Queen was wired to another terminal. "She" reached out to touch me with it while the Royal Electrician cranked the magneto vigorously. Nothing happened. I am used to this stuff and didn't jump, so "she" desisted.

The King broke out my summons and read the first charge: eating ham with his hat off.

"Guilty or not?" he demanded.

"Not guilty," I responded, "I thought it was salmon."

"Guilty" he roared, and I was ordered to sing "My Wild Irish Rose" with a Jewish accent. I did. I was then pushed and clubbed into the arms of the Royal Doctor, who deposited me horizontal on his operating table. This table was a greased board leading out over the rail in one direction, with my head directed outboard. As the ship rolled in that direction I would tend to slide off the table into the ocean but for a piece of 2 x 4 the Doctor had fixed across the outboard end. The Doctor administered a medicine he had compounded consisting of Tabasco sauce, pepper, turpentine and smokeless gunpowder, proportions unspecified. He injected this concoction into my mouth with a syringe about two feet long that had been converted from a bilge pump. The medicine was guaranteed non-fatal. The syringe bore no guaranty.

Getting off the Doctor's table I tried to spit out this medicine but slipped and fell to the deck. As I tried to regain footing I was forced to remain on my knees. By frequent use of the billy clubs, I was made to crawl toward the chair of the Royal Barber, who proceeded to lather me for a shave. He used a lather made of four parts waterproof grease and one part graphite applied all over my face. That made it difficult for the Assistant Barber to trim my moustache — after several tries using wire cutters. Giving up on tonsorial attention, the Royal Barber tilted his chair backward and sent me sliding down a greased rubber chute into a tank of salt water located on the after deck below. There I was met by Jailers armed with billy clubs, who held me down while urging me to say "shellback." I hollered (or gurgled through water) "shellback" and was ejected from the tank. Landing on the deck I was welcomed into the ranks of the shellbacks. •

A Little Gold Ring *Sheila Klein*

When I was about six years old, I was asked to be the "Flower Girl" at my Aunt Annie's wedding. This caused a flurry of planning activity between my Mother, Grandmother and my Great Aunt Becky. What should I wear to the wedding? Becky was a skilled dressmaker and it was decided that she would make for me a long pink dress in a beautiful silk fabric. The dress she created had wide ruffles from the waist to the hem and I truly felt like a princess while wearing it. Actually, that dress would be very stylish now!

I was very serious about my flower scattering duties; I remember practicing very diligently for a long time before the wedding. I must have performed properly because I was rewarded with a little gold ring that had my initials on it. I loved that ring and wore it (with many sizing changes) for years. Unfortunately, when I was a teenager, I caught my hand in a car door and the ring had to be cut off my finger and was put away.

Many years later, when my daughter Wendy was eleven years old, I had the ring repaired and gave it to her as a birthday present. She was very excited to have this ring and refused to have the initials changed. She wore the ring until it was replaced by her wedding band when she married.

The current owner of the ring is my Granddaughter, Laura Shrago, who is Wendy's daughter. She also refused to have the initials changed and is so very proud to be wearing this family "heirloom." Hopefully, it will continue to be passed on! •

Sunset *Estelle Ringer*

The sun dipping low in the heavens
Splashing colors: yellow - orange - red
Blazingly gilding the horizon.

Can we preserve this magnificence
with brush or camera or memory?
Nature's glory for all to revere. •

The Smiling Lighthouse Irving Silverman



They learn that the reason it smiles
is that it does so much good for people
who come for Bible study
or who are privileged
to be married in this romantic, spiritual place.

Yes, this lighthouse smiles
because it has its own heart and a soul
given to it by its creator.

Her smile envelopes
the outer and inner framework of oak and glass.
It's not human, but humans inhabit it
and pursue their experiences.
They smile
and their smiles are stored. •

Can a lighthouse smile... of course, it can.
Just urge it to reveal its mass of memories.
The memory of the lovely lady
who built this lighthouse
for her loving husband who fervently wished
to have a majestic tower
of love and remembrance.

He wanted it to stand by the sea,
watching over the harbor
and seeing the cluster of lobster fishing boats
cast loving glances
at the lighthouse. Its southern face
clothed with dozens
of wooden colored lobster buoys
in memory of the Hardings

But to answer the question, can a lighthouse smile,
ask the thousands of people
who come from near and far
to photograph the lighthouse.

They smile in reflected pleasure
at the sight they are capturing
to remind them of their happy visit.

If they are more inquisitive,
they read a handout, *History of the Lighthouse*.

The Family Tree Rita Fireman

It
was less
than a foot
tall when we
brought the pine
tree home. Ed dug a hole
wide and deep and together
we tamped the earth around the
trunk to hold it steady and straight.

In the years to follow our children could
touch the top of the pine. When our son was ten
the tree outgrew him and soon us too. It shot
up over the rooftop to a place of its own in the sky.
Covered with snow, laden with pine cones, nesting
bough for the cardinals, evergreen with shade for
the wild day lilies that raise their orange heads in
homage, our little pine,
now king of
the hill is
50 years old.

Mr. Labonte's Barn *Glo Wittes*

The crash of 1929 ushered in my birth. A plane crash and the onset of World War Two, ten years later, ushered in my early adolescence. The years in-between, though marred by the Great Depression, were tender years, safe years, playful years for me. Most wonderful of all were the summers we spent at Little Lake Magog, east of Montreal, in a spacious cottage rented by my parents and my aunt and uncle. Next door to us was Mr. Labonte's boarding house which housed half of Montreal's West End Jews (or at least it felt that way). Mr. Labonte, a farmer, became an innkeeper in the summers. On weekends when all the fathers would come up from the city to be with their families, our house was packed with our parents' friends from Labonte's, playing cards in our living room or outside on the long lawn which led down to the lake. As for us kids, we were joined by the gang from Labonte's, either swimming in the lake, roaming Mr. Labonte's pastures or playing in his grey shambles of a barn across the road from our house, a magical place which was a source of endless delight to us.

The barn housed several stalls for a few cows and a workhorse, and all manner of animals that hung out there. The hayloft was where we told each other spooky stories, played games, including war games and kissing games, and performed various gymnastic feats. Occasionally we would help Mr. or Mrs. Labonte or Cleo milk the cows, but none of us liked pulling on the cows' teats and getting only a thin stream of milk for our efforts. Our parents forbade us to drink any of the unpasteurized milk, which was just as well since most of us hated its taste. The barn held other treasures and pleasures as well. Chief among these was looking at Cleo's stash of yellowed porno magazines, which he kept hidden under a floor board where his father was not likely to discover them. They smelled musty and almost fell apart in our hands but we found the pictures awesome, even though embarrassing to look at in mixed company.

We spent at least five summers at that cottage, the last being in 1939. The Germans had invaded Czechoslovakia in March, and in late August of our final stay there our parents and their friends spent many evenings huddled around our radio listening to the news of potential war in Europe. Stewart, our

neighbor's twenty-year-old son was travelling in Europe at the time, and his safety was a source of great concern.

At the end of August tragedy struck, not in some far-off place like Europe but literally across the road from our cottage. A low flying fighter plane from the nearby air force base crashed into Mr. Labonte's barn, clipping the roof of our house *en route*, and setting itself and the barn on fire. I was up in my bedroom at the time getting changed out of my swimsuit for the barbeque party our parents were holding out on the lawn. When I heard the drone of the falling plane become a roar I ran to my window and witnessed the disaster. I saw the grownups from our lawn party and from Labonte's boarding house rush to the site. From our front lawn I then saw them pull the pilot out of the burning plane and water the flames with water drawn up from the lake in long hoses that appeared from nowhere. It appeared that Mr. Labonte was one of the local fire brigade and had the hoses, which he commandeered. I saw the pilot, dazed and bloody with a long gash across his forehead. And I saw a neighbor come running down the road to the crash site, screaming, "Mine Joey, Mine Joey," and then sobbing with relief that the pilot was not her son. Apparently he had promised to buzz her house that afternoon when he was out on maneuvers. "Where was Joey?" I found myself wondering, as if his whereabouts were of the utmost importance rather than the pilot's plight. The question allowed me to avoid dwelling on my fears for the downed pilot. "Was he alright? Was he going to die? Was he going to die then and there in my presence?" I had never seen a dead person. I did not want to see one now. When the ambulance arrived and carted him away I cried with nervous relief.

A week later we returned to the city without once being allowed to go back to the barn. Not that we really wanted to. Its shorn side and ragged hole were frightening. It had somehow become a symbol of danger, of approaching war and ominous tomorrows. On September 1 of that Labor Day weekend Germany invaded Poland. On September 3 Britain and France declared war on Germany; Canada was swift to follow. Real war was now to replace the war games we had played in the hayloft. The barn's magical aura had gone up with the flames and our childhood ended in the embers. •

My Brother Joe Jerry Sands



My brother Joe is five years older than I. As kids growing up in Dorchester during the depression, our family probably would have qualified for food stamps if they had them back then. We never felt deprived, with lots of love and happiness in our apartment, and loads of cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents within walking distance.

One of my strongest memories as a youngster was our father telling all of us to make believe and picture a big peach basket filled with money in the living room. He said it wouldn't be his money, nor our mother's money; but it would be for anyone of us who would need it.

Apparently this hit home with my brother as well. Joe was always a hard working guy, and when he turned 16, with the help of his best friend Mel, they bought a used Drake's Cake vehicle and turned it into an ice cream truck "Melody Ice Cream". After school and during the nice weather, they covered much of Dorchester and Mattapan, with a stay in Nantasket during the summer months. I loved when they took me along as a helper, with Hoodsies, drum sticks, and push-ups within reach.

About three years later, Joe had saved up enough money not only to help with his college tuition, but also to purchase a brand new maroon Mercury convertible.



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NBOC residents are invited to submit essays, articles, short stories, poems and artwork of interest to the NBOC community.

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Photo of New Bridge in Nameplate by John Averell

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This was 1948, and the great migration from Dorchester to the western suburbs was in full force. My parents located what they felt would be our "dream house" in South Brookline, but the \$18,000 price tag was a bit more than they could handle. Without saying a word, Joe took it upon himself to sell his two month old car which he loved dearly and worked so hard for, to give the money to our parents to assist with the down payment.

Teenagers love the freedom of having their own cars, and my brother was no exception. However, he must have visualized that peach basket filled with money, and showed us all that my father's words meant a lot to him. I'm very lucky to have Joe as my big brother. •