



# The Bridge

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

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2013



Photo by Diana Bronner

**Reflections on the Charles River from its banks at NewBridge**

## *Notes from the Editor*

In this issue we welcome an article and a sketch from our Assisted Living residents, as well as donations. We encourage all our residents to dredge up those personal memoirs and memories and submit them to The Bridge. We love to read them. •

### *Donations*

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

#### **February 2013**

##### **Mr. and Mrs. John Averell**

- *In honor of Shirley Gray's three new great-grandchildren*

##### **Charles Blauer**

- *In memory of Jane M. Fialkow*

##### **Marilyn M. Feinberg**

- *In honor of a very good last issue . . . snow wonderland . . . ode to NewBridge. Kudos to all who extended helping hands*

##### **Else Gerstel**

**Ruth Kay:** *In memory of Marcelle Levine*

**Gloria and Harold Learner:** *In memory of Jane Fialkow*

##### **Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Rosenzweig**

#### **January 2013**

##### **Mr. and Mrs. John Averell**

- *In memory of Thelma Bloom*

##### **Mr. and Mrs. John Averell**

- *In memory of Jane Fialkow*

##### **Mr. and Mrs. John Averell**

- *In memory of Hugh Gallagher*

##### **Mr. and Mrs. John Averell**

- *In memory of Bernard Resnick*

##### **Charlotte and Irving Backman**

##### **Edith and Arthur Luskin**

- *In appreciation of Jack Goldberg's computer help*

##### **Harold and Nancy Parritz**

- *In appreciation of John Averell's efforts*

##### **Jay and Barbara Rosenfield**

##### **Mary Rosenfield**

- *In memory of Gail Harrison*

#### **December 2012**

##### **The Honorable Raya Dreben**

##### **Helene S. Ross**

## *Nice Jewish Boy in the FBI*

*Harvey Burstein*

Late July 1941, an 18-year-old "nice Jewish boy" from Omaha, Nebraska, joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation, assigned to the Identification Division's Duplicating Room. At the time FBI headquarters, the Identification Division included, was located in the Department of Justice Building. His job was to send copies of existing criminal histories to law enforcement agencies in response to arrested persons' fingerprints submitted to the FBI.

About two months later he was promoted and sent to school to become a fingerprint classifier. One night during training the instructor asked if anyone in the class knew Yiddish; he said "I do". He and the instructor stepped into the hallway where he was questioned further on the subject. The instructor explained that two other Jewish "old-time" clerical employees had been asked and said they could speak a little Yiddish but could not read or write it. A police department had sent the Bureau what was thought to be an extortion letter in Yiddish, asking for its translation.

Confirming that the letter was written in Yiddish, he was asked to translate it. This was done within a short time but for one word. He wracked his brain to no avail. He was given permission to go to the Library of Congress and access its outstanding section of Semitic languages, and its Yiddish-English and Hebrew-English dictionaries. Checking and crosschecking several versions he remained unable to translate the one word and left to return to work.

It was a clear night. Disgusted for not being able to translate the word, he chose to walk back to the Department of Justice Building rather than take a streetcar. *En route* he kept repeating the word to himself when it dawned on him; it was an English word written phonetically in Yiddish, and he completed the translation.

This single incident had an unforeseen consequence. Thereafter, in addition to his regular assignment as a fingerprint classifier, and years later as a special agent, he was the FBI's only Yiddish-Hebrew translator.

I was that "nice Jewish boy." •

*Jazz Riff*  
*Myrna and Paul Fruitt*  
(Interviewed by Frankie Wolff)

**Myrna:** When I was 14, I took a streetcar into Boston to a Jazz Club called *The Hi-Hat*. My girlfriends and I took the streetcar and that day there was a show with someone called Dizzy Gillespie. There were programs every Sunday. We had lunch there — Boy! Was that something!

We used to tell the musicians how we felt about the music. We saw Illinois Jaquet. A jazz lover knows who THAT is! It was in the forties. We would be there every Sunday — a wonderful day: lunch and jazz.

**Paul joined in:** I think we had fried chicken — it was a Black club.

**Myrna:** I loved Sundays. The place was very dark and long — the prime Jazz place in Boston, in the South End. I wasn't afraid to go; my Mother wasn't afraid to let me go — those were peaceful days. I loved it! The music was sensational! The guys came over to our table. There were jam sessions. I had a coke. I could sit with it for three hours!

**Myrna was smiling:** I remember the people and the musicians — wonderful vocalists. Great place for people to hear jazz and have lunch. It was really something; everyone there loved music. Anybody around that day could just play. We never knew who we were going to see and that was fun! Any place that was open for jazz and didn't cost too much.

**Paul:** Earl Bostick?

**Myrna:** I LOVED Earl Bostick! What did he play? Sax, and he was good at it! I'm trying to remember who my favorite vocalists were — Billie Holiday!

**Paul:** The Stables? Herb Pomeroy. Did you go to the Savoy to see Sabby Lewis? Nina Simone, pianist and jazz vocalist?

**Myrna:** *Hi-Hat* had mixed audiences; there were never any fights; people were there to listen. My two closest friends I had in high school — I'm glad I remembered that — Barbara and Jo Ann; and they both died young.

I have been involved with Jazz ever since my teenage years — even now at NewBridge with Leonard Lyons!

Since the 1950's, one of my continuing favorites was Dave Brubeck and his quartet. We used to follow him everywhere; saw him at Fenway Park in the 60's, in the Melody Tent on Cape Cod and later at Berklee and Symphony Hall. He was in his 80's the last time we saw him and he still played *Take Five*, just as he did in the 50's! He died last year.

A radio DJ named Tony Cennamo was a big influence on my jazz education. I liked talking to Tony. He was very knowledgeable — I'd call him and talk to him on the radio — we'd have regular phone conversations about once a week. I couldn't wait to talk to him.

If anyone talked about Jazz and knew what he was talking about — oh, I was a Groupie! He knew everything jazz. He introduced me to about 24 jazz personalities — bandleaders. If they had a new record he'd play it, and I'd call and ask about the sax player and he'd tell me about him — Dexter Gordon in the 70's — a brilliant sax player. He was a big hit in Europe. *Round Midnight* — one of my favorites. (Myrna hums it) and he wrote it himself!

We went to New Orleans on a business trip in the 80's where we heard the Preservation Hall Dixieland Jazz Band. Myrna remembers seeing them in a crowded hall, sitting on a bench, without air conditioning. We stayed for two hours!

The high point of our trip was completely unexpected. We were walking along Bourbon Street in the afternoon and, hearing piano music, we stopped and listened. A lone piano player was playing and singing *Body and Soul*.

"Come on in." So we did. "Sit down." We stayed about an hour. James Booker was playing. He looked sad to me. We found out afterwards he had been an alcoholic; he died a few months later — looked like he had a hard life — but a good pianist, known as the Piano Prince of New Orleans. Excellent phrasing.

It made our New Orleans trip most worthwhile...

I have wanted to talk about these stories for three years, but I'm not a writer. I'm a painter! •

## *Going Back* Diana Bronner

It all started when I received a brochure from a travel company called Canadian Mountain Holidays advertising a trip of Heli-Hiking in the mountains of Canada. Innocuous enough, but it brought back a flood of memories. I had done this sort of trip exactly 28 years prior and it had changed my life. Until that moment, I hadn't realized how much I wanted to go back to relive the experience. The timing was right; I was in good physical condition and, I reasoned, in another few years I wouldn't be able to do it. So, before I knew it, there I was, on Air Canada, flying into Calgary with a thrill in my heart and trepidation in my chest, asking myself, "can one really go back and do it over again?" I was going to find out.

Now, 28 years later and here I am, off heli-hiking, to do it once more and, I'm sure, for the last time. I'm now 70 years old.

Again, *en route* to the mountains, the group stayed at Chateau Lake Louise. Again, I awoke early in the a.m. to watch the sun rise on the magnificent glacier. To my sorrow, I found the glacier had much retreated, as all glaciers are doing, and the rising sun did not have as much to illuminate. I sat alone on the cold rocks in the dawning light, facing what remained of the glacier and still, it was beautiful. I tried to think profound thoughts as I watched this new day come, when I realized that profound thoughts were not what I, or this moment wanted. So I sat in Stillness to become *present* and *one* with the changing light, the distant glacier and the spirit that surrounded it. This was not me of 28 years ago; this was a new me with the wisdom of how to just Be. This was not going back.

From Lake Louise, we drove to the helicopter pad. Once again, there I was flying over the mountains, the old thrill of seeing this panorama spread out under me. Now this was going *back*. At the lodge, we were outfitted for hiking boots, backpack, warm jacket and then the anticipated question, "What level group?" "Intermediate, please" and there I stayed, not by choice but by necessity. This now-older body could

never have met the challenge of the higher group, nor did I want the challenge. This was not going *back*.

It was extremely hot as we waited for the helicopter to pick us up near the lodge; we couldn't imagine having to put on all the rain and cold weather gear we toted in our backpacks. So what a shock when we crawled out of the 'copter high atop a mountain peak to find it wildly windy, cold, with the sky darkening to the tune of thunder and lightening. We were told to put on a warm sweater and rain gear quickly, and like good troopers, we did. I watched as the helicopter took off, leaving us behind. I looked in horror at the steep ridge to be climbed, imaging myself being promptly blown away, thinking "I can't do this." The guide took one look at all his fearful greenhorns and immediately called for the copter to come back and pluck us out of there. Like magic we were transported to a lovely, serene alpine meadow 1000 feet lower.

Alpine flowers in all their glory, carpeted the floor of the meadow. It is not an easy feat to survive the harsh winter climate up here. It takes years for a tiny flower to push its way up to the surface, to burst out of the ground at just the right time in a glorious rainbow of colors, sizes, shapes. I stooped to admire the perfection of the tiniest ones barely visible to the casual hiker. I knew the group would wait for me, or I would catch up at my leisure. In my own time, in my own space, I took in the snow covered mountains, the tarns, the beautiful shale ground cover, the geological history and the extravagant cloud formations. I breathed the clean fresh air, majesty, silence and stillness as I stood in awe. I remembered hiking an alpine meadow on that first glorious trip, but then I was so busy putting one foot in front of the other, challenging myself, racing to keep up with the others, that I didn't see the beauty around me. But now, I saw it. This was not going *back*.

What I had so looked forward to, hiking on a glacier, could not be done here. Perhaps with global warming, it had become too dangerous. This was not going *back*.

On my last day, I took an afternoon walk by myself, on a nearby trail. It was a gentle

and quiet woodland trail with its own little ecosystem. I sat on a log feeling a hush in the warm damp air as I listened to the flowing waters of a nearby creek. I looked at this perfect environment where everything had its place, from the maidenhair ferns to the miniature woodland flowers, to the tiny insects that do their own thing. I felt in this peace the continuity of life. A long-ago fallen tree, now decaying and decomposing, cradled in its protective hollow, a perfectly formed minute mushroom. Here, nothing is wasted, not even this decaying log acting as nursemaid to the mushroom. In nature, everything has a purpose for being. As I sat there I felt a peace descend upon me, time became meaningless, no where to go. Just to Be in this space, in this place. This was not me of many years ago — who had time or inclination for such reflection? This was not going *back*. It was going beautifully *inward*.

I ask myself, "why did I receive that card from Canadian Mountain Holidays and why did I respond to it?" Perhaps it was to learn another of life's lessons. I had thought I could go *back*, but I find there is no going "back" — ever. I am not the same in this moment as I was in the previous moment, nor will I be the same in the next moment. I can only be in this very moment with all that is around me in *its* present moment. I saw this trip through new eyes as if for the very first time, and found the trip was as it should have been, not as it had been.

I still at times dwell in the experience of that last day, the walk into the solitude of my little woodland niche, and draw upon it when needed to find, once again, the peace, calm and wholeness I felt there. I had gone on the trip to climb mountains, hike once again alpine meadows, to see vastness, but found instead, a little treasure, an unassuming niche, always there to retreat to as needed. •

## *Momma's Law* *Estelle Schwedock*

It was a bright, sunny day and I had a free afternoon. My sister Rita agreed to care for our son Eric, age six, and our daughter Julie, age four. Instructions were left for any emergencies that might develop, and lunch sandwiches were made, covered, and in the refrigerator, so off I went. After spending a delightful day clothes shopping I returned home to find Eric playing with friends in the backyard garden, and Rita reclining on a lounge reading a book, but no Julie. Upon questioning my sister as to Julie's whereabouts she said she was outside in the front of the house playing by herself. *What! You left a four year old alone? Never, never do that, you must be with her!*

We both rushed out front looking for her. Julie was nowhere to be seen. We both started to canvas the neighborhood, especially the backyard gardens where there were deep swimming pools. We were in a panic when I spotted her on the other side of the street playing with her friend Jackie. Great relief, but how did she get across the street since she had never been permitted to cross the street without an adult? Upon questioning her she said that she held Jackie's hand and he was bigger than she. Well he was, although the same age as Julie he was a head taller, I couldn't fault her on that fact. So I implemented "Momma's Law". In the future only I could cross her.

Several days later I received a phone call from a neighbor; Julie was standing in front of her house crying. She had been visiting my parents who lived on the other side of our street, and she now wanted to return home, but refused to allow her grandfather, grandmother, or aunt to cross her. Would I please remedy the situation and cross this poor child. My sweet obedient daughter had followed Momma's Law. Every now and then, at the age of 43 she calls me from Arlington, asking permission if she may cross the street. •

### **Download *The Bridge***

Go to the Community website at: <http://newbridgeresidents.org>.

On the Home Page click on:

**"Click here for Download: Latest and Prior issues of *The Bridge*."**

## *Ethiopia* *Charlotte Feldman*

1974 was a year of great upheaval in Ethiopia, both politically and environmentally. Let me tell you how our brief visit that year affected my husband and me.

Harold, my husband, was going to attend an international conference in Nairobi, Kenya in June, 1974; of course, I would tag along on such a fascinating trip. It was our habit whenever we traveled overseas to stay about three weeks. Our plan was to spend the first week in Ethiopia, the second at the conference, and the last week on safari in Tanzania.

We were very excited at the prospect of a trip to Africa. In describing it to family and friends, we were delighted when a niece told us she knew a young Ethiopian, Joseph, who was studying at Harvard and working as a janitor where she worked.

Through our niece, Joseph asked if we would deliver a birthday gift to his young sister back home. We agreed of course, and invited Joseph to dinner. He was dressed casually in a tee shirt and chinos and spoke English very well. He had a serious demeanor and seemed totally dedicated to the welfare of his country. Although he didn't tell us much about his family, we could tell he was very close to them.

A plan to meet his brother, an uncle, and a friend was set up, and Joseph left the gift (a dress he had purchased at Filene's basement) and a large manila envelope with our niece for us to deliver.

Our trip started with an unusual and upsetting event. Our plane was scheduled to land in Asmara, stay for a day, and set off for Addis Ababa. Instead we flew directly to Addis Ababa, landed in the airport, and were told we would wait there, and then fly to Asmara, go to our hotel, and wake at 4 A.M. to return to Addis Ababa.

The reason given was that Asmara's airfield was flooded and muddy, making it impossible to land. This made no sense since Ethiopia was suffering from a severe drought. We all felt the reason given was far from the truth. Needless to say, there was a near revolt from the passengers at this outrageous plan. After hours of negotiating,

it was settled that we would stay in Addis Ababa and wait at the airport while our hotel rooms were readied.

Our disappointment at missing a visit to Asmara was palpable; after all, this is the area where Ethiopian Jews were reputed to live. In retrospect, when at home a few weeks later, we felt there was a political reason for the inability to land in Asmara.

After the mess at the airport, it was no wonder that some of our luggage was lost. The hotel clerk suggested that Harold take a taxi to the airport to try to find it. It was quite late by then, and Harold was nervous when he was denied entrance to the airport by armed guards carrying large weapons. He finally made himself understood, and he was able to enter and retrieve our suitcase. We didn't realize the significance of the armed guards until later in the week.

Our trip went smoothly as we freely walked the beautiful area of Addis Ababa with its wide tree-lined streets. We heard chanting from a church and were invited in by the Coptic parishioners who insisted we chant with them, and presented us with long staffs to pound on the floor. This was one of many gracious and friendly gestures of Ethiopian hospitality we encountered in Addis Ababa during our stay.

It was time to meet Joseph's family and friend for a typical Ethiopian meal at a restaurant. Joseph's Uncle Adam was an elegant, handsome man in his early thirties who owned the only advertising agency in Ethiopia. He was wearing a tweed blazer with dark slacks. Brother Samuel was also a strikingly handsome man in the middle twenties, dressed in a blue blazer with brass buttons and a light blue shirt with a white collar and cuff-linked white cuffs. He worked as a detail man for pharmaceuticals, but I could not picture him on the road having to stay in whatever hotels Ethiopian cities and towns had to offer. Friend Joshua, about thirty, worked in the export-import department of a bank, and was dressed in a fine dark suit that we westerners might expect of a banker back in the 70's. I mention these details because these men were such a great contrast to other men walking around in their long, white cotton robes. The robes of many men in the streets

had become a dusty, tan color from the drought because they had walked many miles from the north in search of work.

At the restaurant our evening started off with a damp dish towel being passed around for each to "cleanse" our hands. I can only tell you I did it without revealing a visible sign of squeamishness. Then it was on to dinner, Injura and Wot, a huge bowl of stew which we all ate by dipping into with pieces of flat bread. It was delicious, and again I managed to ignore the fact that most of us were double dipping.

We took photos which we promised to send to them. As we talked during and after dinner, we were surprised at how shocked these young men were about the social and sexual revolution in the U.S. They could not understand students interrupting their education with demonstrations.

We learned that the brothers' father, the governor of a southern province, got along well with Haile Selassie, but they were worried about his future in office and his life, as public officials were in great danger from the Emperor and the corruption in his government. They anxiously read the newspapers daily fearing what they might find.

All three men idolized Joseph, and they gave us the impression they regarded him as a future leader of their country.

There was a curfew in force, of which we had been unaware, and our hosts were eager to be back home in time to avoid trouble and danger. Later, back at our hotel, we heard tanks rumbling through the street and shots in the distance.

The remainder of our week was uneventful as far as our association with Joseph's family was concerned, and we enjoyed the rest of our trip.

Back home I phoned my niece in order to get in touch with Joseph, only to discover he no longer worked at her building. No one knew anything about why he left or where he was. Being the gentle, considerate person he was, they could not understand that he would leave in this manner.

*--continued at bottom of next column*

## *Alone* Liane Reif Lehrer

Alone is a very long word.  
It stretches from birth to death,  
Down dark highways  
Of rolling wheels,  
From one end of dinner  
To the other,  
And across endless expanses  
Of king-size beds,  
It is loudest at twilight,  
And vies with sleep  
For a place in night's mind.  
By day it weaves in and out  
Of mundane forgetfulness.  
It is chronic,  
And not to be undone.  
It is a shy word,  
And hides sometimes  
In the presence of others –  
But it does not go away. •

---

*-- continued from previous column*

I telephoned Harvard to inquire about Joseph. I was told he never went to classes there. They knew nothing about him.

We were mystified and worried and didn't know what else to do except to contact his family, but we were afraid communication from anyone outside Ethiopia might be harmful to the family in light of Joseph's disappearance. Our imaginations had run away with all sorts of ideas. So, we did nothing.

Haile Selassie was deposed in September 1974, a few months after our stay, by military officers who formed a new government, promising to institute reforms. There was much disruption in the following years as citizens demanded civilian rule and fighting continued among various factions.

We will never know if idealistic Joseph took part in any of these changes in Ethiopia, or how his family and he fared; we can only imagine how devastated he would be at how things turned out. •

## *Saluting Hitler* Edward Goldstein

It was a sunny day in November of 1933. I was ten years old, almost eleven. Students and faculty were gathered – in marching formation by class – in the schoolyard of the *Helmholtz Realgymnasium* in Essen, Germany. Only a few months earlier we had met in that same place to cheer the Hitler Youth and brown-shirted storm troopers as they burnt books by Jewish and other non-desirable authors in a huge bonfire.

But this time we had gathered for a more festive occasion. We would march the few blocks to a broad shopping street a few blocks away where we would be able to cheer the *Führer* of the German *Reich* as he passed us in his motorcade.

Our teachers were dressed in dark suits and white shirts with starched collars or in uniforms. While some of the students were in the tan uniforms of the Hitler Youth, most of us were dressed in shorts, sweaters and knee-high socks and wearing our colored school caps.

Excitement ran high. With a few exceptions, my classmates adored the *Führer*. None of them had ever seen him in person. His picture appeared often in the daily newspapers and we could see his moving likeness in the newsreels when we went to the movies. But seeing him in person would be something to remember — in one way or another — for the rest of our lives.

Finally, the time came for us to move out of the courtyard and to march, more or less in step, the few blocks to where space had been reserved for us along the route of the *Führer's* motorcade. Sidewalks were crowded to overflowing with spectators who included men, women and children of all ages. Many were in the various uniforms of the SA, the SS and the Labor Corps. Police were out in force.

Brown-shirted Nazis kept order, pressing back the crowd. Flags, red with a white circle

containing a black swastika, were everywhere. From time to time, the excited crowd broke into song — usually *The Horst Wessel* or other Nazi party songs. Those in front craned their necks toward the direction from which the motorcade was scheduled to arrive any moment.

Soon, we could hear the muffled roar of the crowd a few blocks away. Necks were craned as the noise came nearer. Then we saw the motorcade. First came a few open trucks carrying black-uniformed members of Hitler's SS guard. Then a large open Mercedes Benz passed slowly. Hitler stood, his face serious as usual, his left hand at his belt buckle and returning the *Heil Hitler* salutes that were coming from the cheering crowd.

My classmates were cheering wildly, their right arms stretched into the air. As I remember it, I remained silent but my right arm had moved in conformity with theirs.

After the motorcade had passed, we marched back to school and resumed class.

I have often wondered about that day. I am sure about the central point of this story: Hitler came to Essen, the students of the *Helmholtz Realgymnasium* marched out to watch his motorcade, I was among them and I had my arm raised in the Hitler salute when he passed us. The rest of the story may have happened just as I described it, but I am not completely sure of that.

What was I thinking as Hitler passed the spot on which I was standing?

I remember being torn. At age ten, I had only a vague understanding of what Hitler and Nazism stood for. But I certainly understood that he was a bad man and a threat to Jews. I would not bring myself to cheer him.

But what about that raised right arm of mine? I remember that, at the time, I felt ashamed of raising it. But I have forgiven that child, raised in two cultures — German and Jewish — that placed very little value on non-conformity. •



## *The Old-Fashioned Way*

*Max Potter*

When I attended the University of Alabama Medical School right after World War II it had a Chief of Obstetrics who thought it was a great idea for the students to learn to deliver babies at home, and that became a requirement — ten home deliveries before graduation

Here is how it was planned. Two students and a student nurse were to go out with a foot locker that contained all sorts of sterile linens, implements and utensils that might be needed. The University, some ten blocks away would provide a vehicle to get us there and back. The birth would be a multipara — i.e., a third or later baby; hence, a simple, non-complicated birth, one that could be delivered by a “Grannie” or today fashionably by a midwife in a birthing center on Park Avenue or similar milieu. One student would drive the car and the others were passengers.

Naturally, it didn’t work out as planned (it frequently doesn’t). For one thing, there was no crushing demand by expectant mothers to have birth at home. A decent labor room was fine, and offered a mini-vacation. Hence, no one got anywhere near ten deliveries.

Secondly, this was immediately post-WWII and the assembly of automobiles had just restarted; none were available to the medical school. Like the French Army in WWI we were sent to the Front in taxicabs, armed with minimal obstetrical knowledge and experience.

On our first experience my roommate, Bill MacDonald, one of the smartest and most naive people I have ever known, set out with a lovely student nurse, whose name I don’t recall, for an unpainted house some ten blocks away. The cab let us out with our footlocker and we three post-adolescents approached the door and identified ourselves as “The Doctors” very much like in a baroque farce. Inside were at least three generations of a welcoming, accepting and concerned family looking to us for guidance and professional performance. We peered around, scratched our beardless chins and

had no idea what to do. Finally, a figure stood up and asked if there was anything to be done. I had seen many movies. “Yes, please. Boil some water.” “How much?” “A lot.” I had no idea what to do with the water, but it worked. I had space.

We waited a long time. It was now time to assess the patient. I was the chosen *accoucher* with Bill my assistant. Part of the reason might have been that delivery would take place on a couch some twelve inches off the floor, and I was the shorter. Charlene — a possible name for a Southern nurse — draped the couch and centered the patient who was in splendid and efficient labor. But I couldn’t bend over enough to catch the baby; and besides I was sterile. So Bill and Charlene helped me kneel like the Cantor on *Yom Kippur*, on my knees. In the background, a little boy cried out to see the stork, but was assured that it was not really feasible at this time.

The baby came out vigorously, and lustily cried out his birth. I tied the cord, retrieved the placenta and cleaned up the patient. It was all a success until the grandfather came in and wanted to know what to do with the gallons of boiling water. I was very grateful and unnecessarily dumped the bloody instruments in the water.

All in all, a splendid experience. It was 3:00 am or so and time to go back to the hospital.

One problem; we had no way of getting back to the hospital. No cell phones then. Maybe family didn’t have a phone. If you are young, you are adaptable and also a little stupid. To say nothing of a university which didn’t have its act together.

At 4 am, we picked up the footlocker, one person at each end, and started down the street. We would go a block, stop, switch carriers and occasionally sit down and chat. We made it back safely and acknowledged having had a helluva good evening; the only thing missing was a beer and cheeseburger.

The sun wasn’t quite up when we returned, but I was. It happened that a nurse I was dating at that time was on night study so I stopped in to visit her and we watched the sun rise together from the fire escape. •

## *What I Want*

*Rita Fireman*

I want to sit at the dining room table  
with you, white dishes on the straw mats,  
the flame of candles between us.  
I want to sip red wine and sing  
*l'chayim* to life, to life.  
I want to chant the Sabbath prayer  
over the braided challa,  
to dip the slices in honey  
for a sweet life.  
I want to linger over tea  
and talk and laugh at corny jokes.  
I want to sit in our easy chairs,  
read the Globe, watch the ten o'clock news.  
I want to be in bed with you  
and curve my leg around your leg  
under the quilt. I want to lay my head  
on your chest and feel the steady beat  
of your heart. I want to wake up  
next to you on Saturday morning,  
the whole day ahead of us,  
wanting nothing. •

## *Dirge*

*Rita Fireman*

A cold April sun slams his death bed.  
In the shadow of his shade  
I bend down beside his grave.  
Men sway and chant prayers for the dead.  
Women embrace me, kiss me. I am alone.  
I cry out, I want you back, I want you back.  
The drone of voices doesn't stop.  
I claw and clutch at the unveiled stone.  
Bile rises in my throat, my heart pounds.  
What is cannot be.  
Will the earth swallow me?  
I want to lie down on the green mound.  
I touch the place for my name. •



**Drawing by Helene Ross**

## *Painting*

*Hal Learner*

Several years ago prior to moving here I saw a photograph in a calendar and thought it was a scene I would like to put on canvas. I asked Gloria to get me a large canvas and proceeded to draw this lovely scene. As we were packing up to move Gloria asked me what I planned to do with the drawing; I told her that it was going with us and perhaps I would paint it in the art studio.

I started to paint the very "busy" canvas and got support from Ruth Stanger, who would wander over and give me advice as I was progressing. It was a challenge and I was enjoying myself very much.

One day I went to the studio to continue, and found that all my paints and brushes had been taken, but the canvas was still there. I was very disheartened and brought the canvas back to our unit. Now it is fully two years that have passed and my hand is not as steady as it was. I was afraid that I would botch it up if I continued, so I asked Ruth if she would like to finish it, which she did just prior to going south.



We feel that it really came out wonderful and it was a terrific collaborative effort. It is signed "Hal +Ruth/12", and can be seen hanging in our unit 3208. Everyone welcome! •

## *City Room* *Sybil Gladstone*

Clanging bells, racing copy boys, Associated and United Press printers noisily spewing out the latest versions of the news. The stern, highly alert, sleeves-rolled-up City Editor and the subservient reporters, all combined to create a scene out of fiction, but existing in actuality when The Boston Traveler hired me. Fresh from a year in the classroom where I had taught grade-eight English grammar and composition, I took a train to Boston one June day with three addresses in my purse: The Boston Post, The Boston Globe, and The Boston Traveler. Wanting to fulfill a longtime dream, I hoped to be hired by one of these newspapers. First I headed to Newspaper Row in downtown Boston, and the desk of the City Editor at each establishment. "No," said the Post, they were not ready to hire a reporter. "No," said the Globe, too. I travelled further to 80 Mason Street, and took the elevator to the fifth floor Boston Traveler City Room, which was shockingly empty because the late afternoon edition had gone to press. In lonely silence at a distant desk sat handsome, white haired City Editor Ray Kierman.

After informing me that there were no openings, Ray suggested I fill out an application, pointing to a nearby typewriter. "I see you can spell," was his comment as he offered me a job in the Newscast Room. In that tiny office I would type the latest headlines, which would perforate a tape that sent the news in lights to a moving sign on South Station. Overjoyed at being hired, I dreamed of the feature stories I would write in my free time, and that the City Editor would accept, paying me by the column inch.

Riding the streetcar from Brookline to work in Boston quickly brought forth the idea of interviewing a "conductorette," a wartime innovation on Conference Cars, which were three cars linked together. The young woman would collect fares on the second and third cars, while the conductor officiated in front. These ladies replaced men who had gone to war.

My supportive City Editor suggested sending a photographer to meet me at the Cleveland Circle Carhouse, where we

happened upon Louise Henshon, counting coins at a counter facing a mirror. A singularly pretty young woman, wearing an overseas cap and conductor's uniform, was celebrating her first anniversary in her job. She shared the story of her fiance, Cpl. George Kennedy, who had sent his parachute to her from which to fashion her wedding dress. Later I received a letter from him, thanking me for writing a story about his Louise. Our lovely conductorette shared the lingo of the streetcars: passengers were called "freight", and "getting hit with a run" meant being assigned a day's work, while "banging in a trip" meant being unable to take out a car because of illness.

Enjoying my adventurous day off, I quickly returned to the City Room to type and submit my story, which earned page one placement and a byline. This thrilling development convinced me that journalism was going to be my career, and I promptly resigned from my teaching position.

Newspaper people are exceptionally generous, and many reporters gave me tips to follow up for stories. John Fenton, who was a member of the Coast Guard Temporary Reserves, or TR's, gave me a telephone number to call to arrange a visit to the Boston lifeboat station that guarded the entrance to Boston Harbor. It was the only Coast Guard station in the country operated by TR's on 24-hour duty.

Another good-hearted staff member, who wore the most outrageous hats in town atop her frizzy curls, was Marjorie Mills, the Society Editor, who knew everybody who was anybody in our city. Her assistant informed me that a group of ladies had opened a coffee shop at the Newton Hospital, and were seeking publicity. The photographer and I were plied with every item on their menu; they got their story. In the meantime, I did my regular stint in the Newscast Room five days a week, working 7-2 or 2-9, and basked in the warmth of the City Room. All of this came to an end when I met and married Dick Gladstone, who surprised me with the news that he had been a Coast Guard TR before enlisting in the US Army. We bought a house in Newton and settled down to suburban life. •

## *Our African Safari*

*Dorothy Tobin Sacks*

In February 1995 Lenny and I went to Kenya on a three week safari. For weeks before the trip, we took immunization shots for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, polio, yellow fever and pills for malaria. Lenny was ecstatically looking forward to this trip but I was having lots of second thoughts. Will it be dangerous, will we get sick, will we be safe? Now that it's all over, I must say, it truly was a trip of a lifetime. Being in that part of Africa was like being on earth before civilization. All kinds of animals roam freely; many magnificent birds color the atmosphere. We saw prides of lions, herds of elephants, cape buffalo, wildebeests, two types of giraffe, zebras, hippos, rhinos, gazelles, impala, cheetahs, hyenas, and jackals. We saw animals we had never heard of such as topi, hartebeests, gerenuks and many more. In the dead of the night, you could hear the roar of a lion and the rumbling noise of the elephants.

We traveled to seven locations in Kenya and our accommodations were superb. Usually we stayed in private bungalows, each with a veranda, beds with canopies and mosquito netting, and some with large showers made of brick. At 6:30 each morning, six of us (the same group every day) drove to a game reserve in a closed white van with our driver, David, who was from the Kikuyu tribe. Driving on the nonexistent roads in Kenya was like riding on a bucking bronco. The vans need new tires every two months. The roof of the van is raised so we could stand up to photograph and view the animals. We went on two game runs daily, in the early morning for two to three hours and at 4:00 in the afternoon until just before dark. In the evening, we would never just walk out of our bungalow to go to the dining hall. First we opened the door a crack to make sure there were no monkeys or baboons on our porch. Then when the guards saw our door open they would come to get us, armed with either a gun, a bow and arrow or a huge club. The food was good. We tasted some very unusual dishes such as: zebra, ostrich, impala, giraffe, peanut soup and coconut soup. Once

we stayed in a five story hotel. The balcony in each room faced a huge watering hole. Day and night the animals came to drink. During the night, if you requested, you would be awakened when a new group of animals appeared, so that you could view them from your balcony. In this hotel there was a subterranean passage where you could quietly see the animals up close through a barred opening.

One afternoon a monkey jumped onto a balcony one floor below us, running from room to room, rummaging through open suitcases and finally grabbing two bottles of medication from one woman (who fortunately had taken extras with her.)

We then stayed at William Holden's elegant Mt. Kenya Safari Club. (Holden was a famous movie star.) Everything about the place was exquisite. In the evening, logs were put in our fireplace and the fire kept our room warm all night long. Even though we were right on the equator, we were more than 7,000 feet high, so the mornings and evenings were very cool.

Our next stop was Sweetwater, which was a tented village. Some tents were on stilts, but the tent we got was smack on the ground and exactly 10 steps away from the barbed wire. The barbed wire was in a ditch that was four feet wide. What would stop any animal from jumping over the ditch and landing right in front of our tent? Lenny fell asleep but I lay there in my little single bed, with one eye opened, saying "I'm sorry, this is not for me." I unzipped the doorway to our tent and went to look for our tour guide. I wanted to be in a tent on stilts. Yes there was one, but it was at the very end next to the boundary of the reserve. I didn't care – that was fine. I woke Lenny up and said "we're moving." Unhappily he said "Okay" and happily the new tent had a big double bed, equipped with two hot water bottles. So I finally relaxed.

Then we went to the Masai Mara for four days. The game reserve there covers an area of 700 square miles, which offers every form of African wildlife imaginable. One night it had rained. In the morning, David said that because the ground was wet he would wait until afternoon to take us on a game run, but if anyone really wanted to go he would gladly

take us. There were 24 people on our tour and the only one who wanted to go was Lenny. I then agreed to go along, and another woman joined us. Because we were the only van going out, one of the other drivers decided to keep David company. It's a good thing he did because our van got stuck in the mud. This was not a pleasant predicament to be in. The vans were not equipped with two-way radios, nor does the driver have any type of protection against a wild animal. The two drivers asked us to watch out for anything moving in the bush while they took turns pushing the van and shoveling out the mud. We were there well over an hour, when we saw a van in the distance. We pounded on the window to get their attention and we never saw two guys move so fast. They bolted into the van; their feet hardly touched the ground. They were so frightened. They both thought we had seen a lion. You can imagine their relief when they saw the other van. With the help of the third driver we finally got out of the mud. On the way back to the lodge, I asked if either of them were in a disabled van for a long period of time. David's friend said he and six tourists were stranded, with a flat tire, for 18 hours. They had no food, no bathroom and one woman fainted. He said the lions were circling the van and it was very scary. Luckily for them, in the early morning a balloon glided by and alerted someone as to their whereabouts. The next day was our last day on safari. Shortly after a very interesting visit to a Masai village, David thought he saw a leopard. (The leopard was the only animal we had not seen.) David veered off the road and, believe it or not, we again sank in the mud – twice in two days. There was no leopard. It was only a big hyena. Thirty feet in front of us were nine or ten elephants; to our left was a huge bush which completely blocked our view. Now David was alone, without his friend to help him, and today he had a full van of tourists – there were six of us. He couldn't and wouldn't ask us for help because if we stepped out of the van it was at our own risk. He revved up the motor, he pushed the van and shoveled the mud. He was sweating profusely and he was exhausted. Finally David climbed on to the

roof of the van frantically waving his jacket in the air. We were there more than two hours, when not one but two vans came to our rescue. The two drivers left their vans up on the high road and walked down the hill to help us. They had a little meeting and then asked us to "please get out of the van." With the six of us in it, the van was too heavy for them to push. What could we do? We had no choice. I grabbed our camera – who would ever believe this? After what seemed like an eternity, the van lurched out of the mud and the driver backed all the way up the hill, leaving us to walk up after him. As I photographed our group walking "Out of Africa", the tourists in the other two vans said they were holding their breath and praying that no wild animal would appear out of nowhere and attack us. When it was all over, the three drivers told us that their biggest concern was the poisonous snakes that could have been anywhere in the tall grass. Ignorance is bliss. Not one of us ever thought of being bitten by a snake, and to think we have all of this on film. All's well that ends well. Back in Nairobi, our last day on vacation was our 48th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY. Everyone in our group helped us celebrate at the Norfolk Hotel, the oldest and most elegant hotel in all of Kenya. •



## *Uncle Louie*

*Gloria Rosenzweig*

Uncle Louie died at 91 years young. He had no wrinkles, no memory problems, no aches or pains. Sitting on his hospital bed some hours before he died, he was telling me jokes and asking about our family. As I recall, he was giving me the "only two things to worry about" story – one of his mainstays. I told him I was a little worried about a trip we were taking. He said, "You only have two things to worry about. Either it will go well or it won't. If it goes well you have nothing to worry about, if it doesn't, you only have two things to worry about. Life will get better or it won't. If it gets better you have nothing to worry about. If it doesn't, you have only two things to worry about." He stretched these stories out until we both cried "Uncle".

He called the teacher at the Ledge Street School in Worcester "Skinny McGinnes" and he regaled us with stories about his antics with her. Once he put a tack on her chair, another time a mouse in her coat pocket. All of these "wonderful" things, he told us, sent other children into peals of laughter.

As a young man, he learned to fly a plane. After he had crashed several times my grandmother said to him, "Louis, you're not a bird!"

He traveled the country in a boxcar, always looking for adventure. He spent several years working as an extra in the movies. He was still getting Xmas cards from old time stars, like Ronald Reagan.

My first memory of him was of sitting on a chair in grandma's kitchen while she massaged his head with pickle juice and herbs to keep his hair growing.

Uncle Louie was portly. In truth, he was fat with red cheeks and a fair complexion. There was little hair on his head, despite grandma, but he had sparkling blue eyes and a funny, very kind disposition. I loved him.

My mother didn't drive, so every Sunday he and Aunt Rose took the extended family on an expedition to some place of interest. In those days you could pile into the car without benefit of seat belts. Some of the places we liked to visit were the Abner Wheeler House for pecan rolls, the Louisa May Alcott house, the New London Beach and all sorts of museums. His wife, also a Rose, never came with us. She was, in modern parlance, agoraphobic.

Which brings me to the story of his marriage. He was getting on in years when grandma decided to find him a wife. Her friend, Mrs. Reed, offered two eligible daughters whom she was anxious to marry off. My cousin Aubrey, who accompanied Louie on this project, would tell the story in hilarious detail. The gist was that they sat down to a sumptuous dinner while Uncle Louie looked over the girls. Mrs. Reed was a wonderful cook, as I found out in years to come. Louie chose Rose, a quiet, shy, very pretty girl. Aubrey poked him in the ribs and said that Edith was much livelier. But, the die was cast.

As far as I know, they were happy together. They had two beautiful daughters and ran a grocery store together. Louie remained an adventurer, taking all kinds of trips with the extended family. Rose, his wife, almost always stayed home, afraid of the world.

Louie probably died a rich man but it didn't matter. He never bought or wanted anything. His pleasures, in his older years, were going to the synagogue, inventing things in his basement workshop and being with his family.

When it was over, he left a legacy of a joyous, devout life. He is a part of who I am. Often, in my mind, I travel again with Uncle Louie, looking for fun, bathed in love and laughter. •

## *My Dad* *Bob Weinstein*



**Bob's Parents, Sam and Clara Weinstein (ca. 1945)**

My Dad, Samuel Weinstein, was born in Poland in Eastern Europe, in the year 1900. Because of the poor conditions for Jews in Eastern Europe, my Dad's father and older brother left together for America in the early 1900's, hoping to earn enough money to bring the rest of the family to the U.S. Unfortunately, before that happened, my Dad's mother died of typhoid fever, leaving him (then in his very early teens) and his young sister and younger brother in Poland.

The youngsters were given shelter in the home of the sister of my Dad's late Mother where my Dad and his siblings lived with their Aunt and her two sons, Mendel and Shmuel. During that time, my Dad as a young teenager did forced labor for the German Army which then occupied part of Poland.

After several years, my Dad's father was able to send him enough money so that my Dad and his brother and sister were able to travel, in ship steerage, to the United States. My Dad's Aunt remained in Poland with her two sons, one of whom later married and had a child.

Just before the beginning of World War II, the Russian Army entered Poland (parts of Poland seemed to become parts of Germany or Russia at various times), and my Dad's

cousins, Mendel and Shmuel, were sent by the Russians to Siberia to do forced labor. Mendel and Shmuel's mother (my Dad's Aunt) decided to go to Siberia with her sons to take care of them there, leaving the wife and child of her son Mendel in Poland where she thought they would be safer than in Siberia.

Then the Germans invaded Poland at the start of World War II and all the Jews of the village (including Mendel's wife and child) were sent to concentration camps and perished. When World War II ended, my Dad's Aunt and her 2 sons were sent to a displaced persons camp in Munich, Germany.

When I was a teenager, my Dad worked tirelessly to bring his Aunt and her two sons from Munich to the United States, lobbying congressmen to get the proper documentation, sponsoring and getting other relatives to be sponsors, raising money from relatives for their passage and enlisting the aid of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, HIAS.

After several years, my Dad was able to bring them to our home town of Holyoke, Massachusetts where he found the family an apartment, furnished the apartment with furniture from his furniture store, gave Shmuel (who became Sam) a job in my Dad's furniture store selling furniture, even though Sam then knew only a few words of English, and otherwise supported the family until Sam and Mendel (who became Max) learned enough English to get jobs on their own.

When my Dad died, the funeral was at our local synagogue in Holyoke. When the service ended, Max and Sam rushed to the closed casket and kissed the Talith that enveloped the casket. Because my Dad did not let people know what he did for his Aunt, Max and Sam, I heard people ask: "Why did Max and Sam do that?"

My Dad helped others without expecting any reward or recognition. He related his experiences to me hoping that I would learn from them. I have related this portrait of my father to my children and grandchildren hoping that they will learn from this glimpse of goodness and humanity. •

*Pirates*  
*Howard Kravets*

We had just left Little Palm Island, off the coast of Florida on our forty-eight foot Viking motor yacht. The island is known to have fabulous food and, I'm sure, we had both put on a few pounds. When my first mate and lovely wife, Julie, asked a new acquaintance how long she had been on the island, she responded, "Ten Pounds."

When we left the island, reluctantly, the sea was flat. There was no wind and our visibility was to the far horizon where there seemed to be only the lonely sea.

Julie scanned the horizon and asked, "Do you think there are really pirates out here?" "Oh, yes there are," I replied assuredly, "but you have nothing to fear. We have a twelve gauge shotgun and you know I know how to use it. Besides I'm a black belt. I know how to take care of us." I boasted and puffed out my chest. "Fear not, no pirates are going to get by me."

Suddenly, from nowhere, a voice boomed from a bull horn, "Captain, cut your engines!" I looked down at a black boat with four big 200-horsepower engines. Four men all dressed in black wearing Kevlar vests, one of which was pointing an ugly automatic weapon at me. I immediately put up my hands, hero that I am.

Julie screamed, "It's Pirates!"

I looked at Julie, her face was white and contorted with fear. I whispered, "Get down!" My head was spinning, my heart jumping out of my chest. What could I do? Hit the throttle? No, I could never outrun those powerful engines. Where was my shotgun? Even if I had it, I was not only caught off guard, but certainly outgunned and outnumbered.

The man holding the ugly gun looked at me menacingly as I tried my best to put on a bold front. "All right," I said, "what do ya want?" with as much bravado as I could muster. Was I ever surprised when he asked "Where is your home port?" "Where is your next destination". "Do you have any contraband?" I answered all the questions



**Editor-in-Chief**

John Averell

**Editorial Staff**

Shirley Averell, Diana Bronner, Rita Fireman, Sheila Klein, Maxwell Potter, Al Rosen, Glo Wittes

**Layout & Production Manager**

Edward Goldstein

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

**Contact Us:**

Email: TheBridge.NBOC@gmail.com

Mail: John Averell, 4126 Great Meadow Road, Dedham, MA 02026

Phone: 781-234-2222

Please use the envelopes for HSL Funds (available in the Library) to designate *The Bridge* as a beneficiary

Photo of New Bridge in Nameplate by John Averell

© 2013 *The Bridge* and individual authors

carefully as I suddenly realized that these were not pirates but from the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency), thank G-d. A moment passed as the agent put down his ugly weapon, realizing that we were simply innocent boaters. He thanked me as the black boat's motors roared and sped away. Only moments later it was invisible.

I turned to Julie as I wiped the sweat from my face and said, "See, I told you not to be worried about Pirates. You could have gone down to the master stateroom and got the shotgun in the closet behind the ironing board, then the bullets somewhere in my desk in the salon and . . .". We both burst out laughing until the tears filled our eyes. So much for my incredible ability to defend us from pirates. •