

# The Bridge

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

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2

OCTOBER 2014



Comparing Notes

Photo by Herb Schwedock

## Notes to New Residents

I am writing especially to readers of The Bridge who have recently joined NBOC, or are considering residency. You ask yourself, "Will I fit in? Can I assimilate into life here? How do I find out what is going on, where to go, who to ask?"

When you moved in you received a packet from Nancy Sullivan, our wonderful and busy staff move-in coordinator. It is difficult to absorb and remember all the details right away, so here are some suggestions.

Everyone has to eat. Roz Holt, chairperson of the Hospitality Committee, has put together a number of opportunities to sit down to dinner with other residents and get to meet new friends through the sign-up book at Centro. Or take a seat at the open Friendship Table in Centro – no sign-up required. Many of us seek to invite others to dinner. These are all great contacts to ask questions of, get help, find the trash rooms, check out activities and programs, be a buddy with and to.

Don't forget that daily and weekly activities are listed and updated on our Resident Website, explained in detail in the facing column and text boxes.

Our wonderful Library is hosting an Open House on Monday, October 6 where you can see the collections of books, DVDs, Kindles, and how to reserve and make use of equipment there.

On Tuesday, October 14, a Fair for Committees and Clubs will be held to explain to all, especially to new or prospective residents, what all the opportunities are to make your lives more interesting, and how you can both join and participate in the fun.

Of course, in The Bridge journal each of you has an opportunity to share your own stories, some long past, some recent. It turns out each of us has something of interest. We need your stories, poems, art, and wisdom for our quarterly editions. There is a joy in seeing your name and story in print, and hearing from others, some you haven't even met yet, how much they enjoyed reading it. As you read through this issue, you can find out how to send your pieces along to the editor. •

### Community Website www.NewbridgeResidents.org

#### Registering

When you register for the website, we will assign you a User Name (usually your email address) and a Password of your choice.

If you have not registered — or have forgotten your user name or password — please get in touch with Ed Goldstein by email or telephone. The process takes only a few minutes.

#### Logging In

You can access most of the material on the site without logging in, but we would urge all residents to log in whenever they use the site.

It's easy. Next time you log in to the site, look at the log-in area in the left sidebar:

RESIDENTS: Please log in.

User Name

Password

Remember Me

[Forgot password?](#)

[Forgot username?](#)

Enter your User Name and Password and then click into the box next to **Remember Me**. The next time you go to the site your User Name and Password will have been filled in and all you have to do is to click on the **Log in** button.

Why log in? For one thing it gives you easy access to material you may not even realize is on the site, e.g., videos of presentations to the Men's Club. In addition, it provides information — e.g., how residents use the website — that helps us manage the website,.

## *Rambling with Biscuit*

*Diana Bronner*

It was a glorious day. After a long winter, Biscuit and I were finally able to do one of our together walks in Hamlen Woods, a sure sign that spring must be on the way. Circling the pond as best we could, I sat down on a rock at one of our favorite spots near the edge of the water. By now, the first 12 feet or so of the pond was free of ice, but beyond that it was still, for the most part, ice bound: warm and sunny, a perfect day to sit on 'our' rock and breathe in the fresh clean air, paying homage to the coming of Spring. Biscuit, after a bit of free lancing, came and cuddled with me on the warm rock. We sat together in peaceful silence.

Suddenly, from the far end of the pond, the air was rent with the honking of what sounded like a flock of geese coming closer and closer. I scanned the sky for the hordes, and all I could see was one lone goose, making enough noise for ten. He flew across the pond toward us. I watched breathlessly as he came in, making a neat touchdown about twenty feet from us, into a pool of water that was surrounded by ice.

Totally oblivious to our presence, he circled in his little watery domain, lifting his head to the sky, honking and honking, for all the world like a lost soul calling for his mate (they do mate for life and are extremely devoted to one another). I watched and listened spellbound to this call of the wild, a cry not unlike any other creature, human or otherwise, bereft and lonely.

It's not that we haven't all heard Canada Geese honking, but this was just the three of us, in this intimate, almost primordial setting, that belonged to him, not us.

Biscuit and I sat motionless for minutes listening to his plaintive cry for a mate that never came. Finally, he climbed out of the water. Once on ice, he took some running steps and soared up and away, back from whence he had come.

It was quiet and lonely after he left and I just sat, silently absorbing the magic of the moment. I felt awed and privileged to have shared those moments with one of Nature's beautiful creatures. •

## *What is a Friend?*

*Caryn B. Finard*

A friend

Is someone who makes me feel special

A friend

Is someone with whom I can share confidences

A friend

Is someone who listens patiently to my problems and always offers just the solution

A friend

Is someone I love and cherish

A friend

Is someone who worries about me and is always there to pick up the pieces

A friend

Is someone with whom I share both laughter and pain

A friend

Is someone who erases my concerns just by being there

A friend

Is someone I'd rather be with than anyone else

A friend

Is someone who never ceases to boost my morale

A friend

Is someone I feel as close to as my own family

A friend

Is someone I can always count on

A friend

Is someone who brings tears to my eyes when I think of how invaluable she is to me

A friend

Is someone with whom I don't have to justify my existence

A friend

Is someone who inherently knows how I am feeling just by saying "hello"

A friend

Is forever

## *The Meaning of Being Jewish* Frances Budd

When I received Rabbi Weiss' letter inviting me to speak on "What has being Jewish meant in my life", I said "Oh g-d, I can't do this".

As the days went by I found myself drawn to this question. In trying to express my thoughts in words, I recalled a quote credited to Robert Louis Stevenson — "Everyone who lives in any semblance of an inner life thinks more nobly and profoundly than he speaks." This paper is an expression of that quote.

It seems to me that my life has always been reactive rather than proactive; rather than making things happen I respond to circumstances. That is what I find myself doing now, answering the question posed by Rabbi Weiss. Looking back I realize that being Jewish evoked different feelings and attitudes in different stages of my life.

As a child growing up in Dorchester the whole world was Jewish. My friends were Jewish. Except for two very close families, my neighbors were Jewish, my schoolmates Jewish. The store keepers were Jewish. The air I breathed was free and warm and friendly.

During the high holy days we had our pick of synagogues. On Yom Kippur eve my father would ask me if I'd like to accompany him to Temple *Mishkan Tefila* to hear *Kol Nidre*. We'd either walk through Franklin Park or down Blue Hill Avenue and up Seaver Street and walk into the massive front doors of the temple, which I found in itself awe inspiring.

On *Simchas Torah* we'd walk in the other direction down Blue Hill Avenue to the Woodrow Ave *shul* and find a very *frailegh* crowd of parents and children with colorful flags in their hands, on which an apple and a lit candle were perched. We would walk in and out of the synagogue waving the candle-lit flag that radiated a warm orange yellow glow that filled the eyes with beauty and excitement, and one's soul with warmth and pleasure. There were no fire laws in those days. Shabbat meant my mother's cooking. The holidays were both spiritual and fun.

Another aspect of, "what being Jewish meant in my life" was my father's unique brand of discipline. Like any child I frequently misbehaved. On these occasions my mother would admonish: "Wait till your father comes home!"

We never confronted him with my misdeeds before dinner. But when dinner was over, my father was informed of that day's misbehavior; he seldom gave me the *putch in tukas* I probably deserved and would rather have received, then the gentle outstretched hand and his, "come here, sit beside me." He would relate to me the appropriate saying from the *perkay avot* for the particular misdeed. He would first recite a verse in Hebrew, then translate it into English, explain its meaning to me, and how he expected me to live by these ancient and honorable words that expressed the way a Jew should live his life. Quoting from the *perkay avot* was something my father never tired of doing.

My childhood years were the years of the Great Depression. But we were never depressed. The feelings of depression, despair and frustration came to us as a result of the Holocaust. Imperceptible at first, my Jewish world started changing.

Although we still observed our Jewish holidays and our Jewish way of life, the tragic events in Europe changed the feelings I had as to "what being Jewish meant in my life." The world wasn't all Jewish; it felt instead that the world hated the Jewish people.

When I was home on Sundays I would listen to the radio with my parents to Fr. Coughlin spewing his own brand of anti-Semitism, and feel my parents seething under his words. We caught short wave radio broadcasts of Hitler's frenzied speeches.

The mailman never ceased to deliver letters from Europe that revealed the plight of our relatives there. Many evenings my mother would sit at the kitchen table, behind a closed door, so that she could concentrate and answer these letters in the same language that she received them: German, Polish, Yiddish.

The most dreaded letters came from her cousin Marcus in Dachau. We always recognized the white envelope with the blue

ensorship strip on the side bearing a swastika with the bird on top. My parents desperately tried to save members of their family from Hitler's final solution.

My mother's trips to HIAS (the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) helped her secure passage for her cousin Sally, Marcus's sister, from Germany to England and ultimately to the United States. An audience with Mayor Curley and other influential non-Jewish citizens resulted in the release of Marcus from Dachau and his immigration to England and subsequent deportation to Canada as a German prisoner of war. He lived the rest of his life in Montreal. Their mother died in Vienna and their father fled to Palestine.

One day while walking with a friend on Blue Hill Avenue, I was attacked by a group of kids because they observed me wearing a Star of David on a chain around my neck. They yelled a few choice anti-Semitic phrases and decided to push me around. I was infuriated enough to fight them off. With the aid of a motorman who stopped his streetcar and our neighborhood policeman on the beat, we dispersed the gang.

My parents were neither intolerant nor bigoted, and neither was I. In high school and college some of my best friends were not Jewish. On a one-to-one basis I learned the transcendent importance of tolerance.

We became active and fully involved in Zionist activities. We spent many hours at meetings and many more hours walking the streets in our neighborhoods raising money for the UJA.

"What has being Jewish meant in my life," went from the feelings of a secure, warm, wonderful, carefree existence, a Jew with the world as my oyster, to one of shattered ideals.

The end of World War II brought an end to the Holocaust, but not an end to the struggles of the Jewish people for life and dignity. With a majority of favorable votes from the UN Assembly, the state of Israel came into being — a phoenix that came to

life out of the ashes of the six million slaughtered Jews.

The creation of the state of Israel and the subsequent revelation about the Jewish uprising in the Warsaw ghetto, the Jewish partisans that fought in the forest, the Danish king who took measures to protect his Jewish citizens, and the stories of the righteous gentiles who risked their own lives to save Jews, dramatically changed my feelings about, "what being a Jew meant in my life."

I felt secure in my being Jewish again and proud to be a Jew. I felt pride in myself and my friends, who in our own small way contributed through the Zionist movement in helping to create Israel.

The years following World War II witnessed an influx of Jewish families to the outlying suburbs. This resulted in the formation of Jewish communities and culminated in many instances in the creation of new temples. As a member of the Jewish community in two different towns I was a founding "mother" in the formation of two temples.

As I matured, my feelings about Judaism became more spiritual. Whether enervated or energized, services, especially at Temple Beth Elohim, always rejuvenated me spiritually and physically. When I would come to services with the burden of secular difficulties, the burden would be lifted, anxiety diminished, and I could face life again with renewed vigor.

Judaism sustained me through the life cycle events of marriage, the birth of my children, the loss of one of them, the loss of a young husband, *bar* and *bat mitzvahs*, remarriage, the marriage of my children, and the birth of my grandchildren. Judaism propelled me through the valley of loss, grief and despair to the hilltops of happiness and joy.

This is "What is being Jewish" has meant in my life. •

## *Mission to the Indians*

*By Rita Fireman*

The ladies from Los Alamos  
step off their tour bus  
into the August heat of Espanola.  
"You people have an hour here.  
Keep an eye on the time." The bus driver  
flips his cigarette in the dust and pops  
a bubble gum, then sucks it back behind  
his teeth. "See you ladies back at the bus."

"Watch your pocketbooks."  
Topaz and silver, cats eye and coral  
lie on tables in the stone courtyard  
of San Xavier Mission. The ladies  
wander among the tables looking,  
touching, buying. An old Papago squaw  
in a Woolworth cotton dress sits  
in a corner stringing beads. Her eyes  
say the dream is dead, the circle is broken.

She listens to her grandson answer  
the ladies' questions, sees him wink  
and cajole, knows he will soon reach  
for the bottle under the table. She looks up  
at the steeple of San Xavier and remembers  
the black robed man who offered the fruit  
of the vine and a wafer and  
"you who are last shall be first."

The shadows of late afternoon fall  
on the daughter of Red Pipe  
and on the wives  
of the men who made the atom bomb.  
The bus driver leans on his horn.  
The ladies hurry back to the bus.  
Their pocketbooks are bulging.

## *Yosemite Revisited*

*Liane Reif-Lehrer*

At night, the light of the moon guided us  
Up into those mountains of remembrance.  
Dark wisps of clouds  
Floated above the black cliffs,  
Pointing the way to the snowlit past.  
Occasional headlights — reminders  
That perhaps others had left memories  
here too,  
And we were not alone.

We were very young  
when first we came this way—  
Children ourselves—  
though it seemed not so then!  
Now two small slumbering figures  
lie huddled behind us;  
The ascent is quiet without their laughter.  
They will wake by morning light  
To the splendor of this place,  
The granite hung low with fog,  
Or shimmering reflections  
of warm daybreak;  
But they will not see the memories  
We find here in sun and black light.

Deepening lines on my face divulge  
Almost two decades have gone by  
Since last we wandered  
in this Temple of the Earth;  
No wrinkles mar its stones!  
They are as they had been long before us  
And as they shall be long after.  
These mighty rocks  
leave shadows on my brain;  
From our feet, in them,  
no traces will remain!

### **WHAT IS THE APPRECIATION FUND?**

Employees are forbidden to accept cash or gift gratuities from residents. Yet we all realize that we are being served daily in food service, security, maintenance, housekeeping, nursing assistants, and receptionists, whether we see them or not, and whether we are here or temporarily away in vacation homes. The fund was established so that you donate to the fund (not tax deductible), and the total is distributed to hourly employees based solely on number of hours worked in the six month period, regardless of pay grade.

This year residents are asked to contribute \$275 per person for six months, roughly \$1.50/day/person. This modest amount is much less than a "tip" you would consider for any of the services. We expect all to contribute. The total is distributed in one day events in December and June as checks that average over \$400 twice a year.

Employees are so grateful for these gifts that they often bring family and children to the event. For some this means support for school, transportation, clothes, and even food. Please support the Appreciation Fund and come to the distribution event to see our employees and family.

## *A Summer Adventure*

*Susan Green*

How did an unsophisticated fifteen-year-old find herself at LaGuardia Airport one summer afternoon climbing aboard a plane bound for London? It came about because of my father's penchant for bartering. As the owner of a Seventh Avenue women's clothing business my father enjoyed personal relations with colleagues in many countries. He provided them with access to American money in exchange for favors later given to him. In addition, he invited his favorites to spend a Sunday afternoon at our home. That is how Ida and Charles Butler, British nationals, came to be our guests one afternoon in 1949.

Since I was expected to share hostessing duties, it was easy to get to know and develop a liking for each other. The Butlers had no children of their own and within a few days I was surprised and pleased to receive an invitation to spend the summer with them sightseeing, relaxing at their home, and traveling.

The British Airways flight on which Charles had ticketed me was unusual because my compartment contained an *ensuite* toilet, and at night made up into a bunk bed. Arriving in London after a refreshing night's sleep I was eagerly awaiting whatever my hosts had in mind.

We settled at their home in Nottingham. The next night Charles announced that we were going square dancing. When I said "Oh, I've never done that," his instructions were to listen to the caller and to let him lead me in all the moves. He was definitely an expert, energetic and having fun and so I quickly realized that I enjoyed square dancing very much.

A few days later Charles informed me that he had to check on his horses. I had not known that he had several horses and a trainer, and that he rented stalls at the nearby track. When we arrived I realized that Charles had chosen a race day so that I could watch my first horse race. What an exciting day! The crowds, the other horses and jockeys, the enthusiasm: as a matter of fact I remember making a very small bet, although I've forgotten how it turned out.

Soon we began our travels. Scotland was the destination of choice. We stayed in charming inns and enjoyed delicious picnic lunches, usually stopping next to water in private scenic spots familiar to Charles. And I had a very specific mission while in the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. My father had decided that his next year's line would introduce a group of dresses and suits made of authentic Scottish fabrics. So my major purchases while in Scotland were several dozen colorful wool plaid scarves reflecting the major clans of the country.

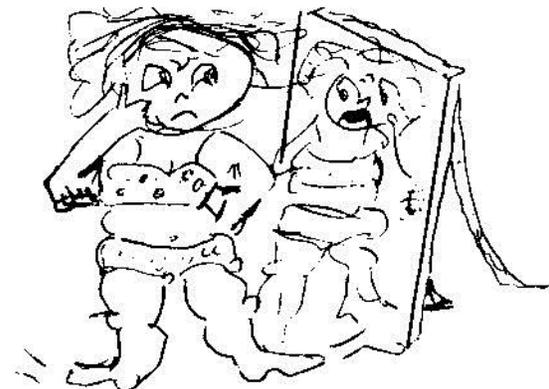
Returning to London we checked into a five-star hotel where we had adjoining rooms and spent a few days seeing plays, sightseeing, and enjoying fine English cooking. I was left alone for one day before meeting and visiting with Daddy's British cousins. I decided to use the tube to go across town to see a highly recommended but very sad movie. On the tube ride back to the hotel, as the tears rolled down my cheeks, I realized that no one in the whole world knew exactly where I was at that moment. Somehow that was a scary feeling. Back in my room at the hotel I ordered chocolate ice cream from service and soon felt much better.

It is evident that the special summer spent in Britain left me with memories that I will always cherish. •

## *Nightmare Thought*

*Estelle Ringer*

When bathing suit buying time arrives  
The very thought of it gives me hives! •



## *Voices* *Shoshanah Garshick*

Recently I read "A Voice in the Night" by Steven Millhauser, a poignant, evocative short story in the *New Yorker* magazine, of a compelling voice calling in the night. The voice awakens young, twelve-year-old Samuel, future prophet, sleeping soundly in his bed in the Temple; a seven-year-old child, haunted by this Sunday school story, lies sleepless, waiting for the voice to call his name. The sixtyish author, restless in his bed, worries that he has missed the voice over the busy years of his life.

Perhaps this story resonated because "voices" may be part of my genetic inheritance. My mother was a spiritual woman, at times, almost superstitious. She recited her prayers from the siddur every day, believed in the efficacy of prayer, miracles and the Bible. She used to say that there was a voice waking her up *erev yontif*. (Yiddish for holiday eve) and *erev shabbos* (Sabbath eve), telling her it was time to prepare the large quantities of *hallah*, *knishes* and traditional dishes the family loved. She also shared these dishes with neighbors who had less.

One very frigid, icy winter's day in the early thirties, a voice called her urgently. The telephone rang at 3:00 A.M. A neighbor was calling for help; he thought his wife Mary was dying. The doctor had refused to come. She had contracted whooping cough from her six-year-old daughter and could not breathe because of the severe coughing. Would my mother help? My father protested, his apprehension great. To this day, I hear his voice clearly, awakening the eight-year-old that I was, remonstrating about the brutal weather and the indecent time of day. I could sense the inner compulsion, the voice calling my mother. It was obvious to me that she would answer. Coincidentally, one of my mother's friends, Jenny Liss, was staying with us that whole week. She volunteered to accompany my mother for the two blocks to the house. On their arrival my mother quickly boiled a kettle of hot water, sat Mary down in front of the steaming spout, and covered her head with a light blanket. An old-fashioned vaporizer! Within minutes, she

caught her breath, eased and slowly recovered. This was neither the first nor the last of my mother's responses to voices calling her for help

I have memories of my freshman year at Boston University. I had gone home for Rosh Hashanah, missing a History of Contemporary Civilization class, returning to find a scheduled test announced in my absence. The professor explained that he would give four tests during the semester, counting the three highest. I had glanced at the textbook and extra readings, listened to the lectures, so I naively took the exam. Disaster! Not utter failure but a "D." I tried to prepare my parents for my failure. It was beyond their comprehension; they were paying so much money! I began to study not quite to the exclusion of my other courses. It was a fixation; I continuously worked and reworked the material assigned. The fatal day arrived; the blue books were passed out to the students. At the moment that I began to write, I sank into a daze-like unreality. Professor Nowak's classroom voice began reciting into my left ear the narrative for each question. His voice repeated the lectures as I sat there, carefully writing as if in a dream. It was a perfect exam. A voice relating the answers never happened again (unfortunately) through my undergraduate and graduate years.

Many years later I experienced a different episode of a voice. In 1981 three of us traveled to Spain, a business trip for my husband Al, vacation for me and my sixteen-year-old daughter Rachel. I was then a high school department head teaching Spanish and French, Rachel a high school junior. Al remained in conference in Madrid, while Rachel and I took the bus to visit Toledo. As we walked up the street in front of the convent once a synagogue, we could see the Samuel Halevy Synagogue-museum, *sinagoga del Transito*, at the end of the thoroughfare. Suddenly, I felt rather than heard something, someone, saying, "*la calle de los judios a la derecha*" (Jew Street on the right). A sense of unreality overcame me. In a daze I crossed the street, went to the right with Rachel asking, "Mom, what's the matter?" There was a souvenir store on  
— go to bottom of next column

*It's Here*  
Babs Radner

When I was in Elementary School I was told to write a poem. This is what I wrote:

Spring is here  
We all do cheer  
That time of year.

And now I write:

Old age is here  
And I still cheer.  
For I don't fear  
Each passing year.

As a matter of fact:

I look forward to future years.

— from previous page

the corner. I said to myself, "No, it was not a souvenir store then." But there it was — *Calle de los judios*. We walked down the crooked, narrow, deserted street. The white stucco buildings gleaming on either side appeared vacant. I was suddenly afraid of continuing farther. Had I been here before? Not in my remembrance. I have traveled much more in France than in Spain, but have never had this experience of *déjà vu* in France. I never returned to Spain.

Our multi-media society is filled with increasingly raucous voices besetting us from every direction and competing with the voices of family responsibilities. Registering this turmoil, the author of "Voice in the Night", who also is that seven-year-old child, concludes that he has, indeed, answered his "voice", his "call" in life. On the contrary, in my present solitude, I am filled with restlessness. Answering the demanding outer voices and challenges of the past 30 years has overwhelmed any inner voice. I am left with the tantalizing "Was I in Toledo before? What was I before?" •

*Waiting for Lefty*  
Charles Weinstein

My brother was always left-handed. He used a spoon with his left hand, and did most everything with his left hand. He was good looking with blue eyes like my mother and light skin like my father, and his hair was sort of blond. In kindergarten he had no troubles – everything was good. He liked school and liked the kids. After kindergarten he went to first grade to Miss Herbert's room. I knew she was trouble. I had Miss Baldwin in the first grade and she was great. Everyone knew that Herbert was trouble.

Miss Herbert didn't like that Bob was left-handed and she tried to change him right away. She couldn't teach him how to write, using the Palmer Method, if he was left-handed. The poor kid tried to change but he just couldn't. That's when Herbert got real bad and said she was going to send him back to kindergarten if he couldn't learn to write with his right hand.

Then "it" hit the fan. Bob said he wasn't going to go to school anymore. He couldn't change hands and he wasn't going back to kindergarten. My father tried like hell to get him to go back to school. Every morning for a week he tried – brought him right up to the schoolhouse doors, kicking and yelling and crying all the time.

So my dad and mom decided Bob wouldn't go to school that year – they would keep him home and next year they would get him into Miss Baldwin's class. She was real pretty and she smiled a lot. Bob stayed home that year and my mother showed him how to read and write. The next year he went back to school and he had Miss Baldwin and he did real good, and he's still a lefty, and boy, he's still pretty darn smart. •

**Do you have a story idea for *The Bridge*?**

Some residents have told us that they have an idea for a story but didn't know how to get started. If you have that problem call John Averell (4-2222) or Ed Goldstein (4-2251). One of them will sit down with you to explore the idea. He might ask questions about the subject matter and give you ideas about how best to structure a story. When you produce a first draft he will make suggestions about how it might be improved and guide you through the process until the story is ready for publication.

## *Women of Bangkok*

*Edward Goldstein*

"Beautiful sexy girls — very clean place." The cabby hands me a glossy, full-color brochure. It shows pictures of groups of dozens of doll-like, colorfully dressed young oriental women smiling seductively at the camera. The establishment boasts of the presence of more than a hundred "girls" on its clean, modern premises and, conveniently, provides a price list of the numerous services they will provide.

I have just arrived at the international airport of Bangkok. The humid heat is overpowering and I'm grateful for the air-conditioned cab that is taking me to my hotel. The English-speaking cabby is full of information, apparently assuming that I had come to Bangkok to sample its world-famous sex industry.

But my reason for being there is much more prosaic. I am part of a small World Bank mission advising the Thai government on the future of its telecommunications industry.

As we leave the limited-access highway and enter the city proper, the traffic becomes overwhelming. Trucks and cars of all vintages compete with gaudily painted three-wheeled vehicles that haul people and freight. Bicycles and pedestrians weave through the traffic. There's a cacophony of horns and revved engines. The air is thick with exhaust fumes. I had read about three-hour traffic jams, but the cabby tells me that we have missed the rush hour.

The hotel is set back from a busy road. Palm trees, lush lawns and colorful flowerbeds surround it. Fountains tinkle in the spacious lobby. I quickly check in. My room, overlooking the pool and gardens with their cages of exotic parrots, lives up to the promise of the rest of the establishment.

I call the head of the mission, whose room is below mine. I am the last to arrive and we quickly arrange to meet in the lobby bar. There are just three of us: Rashiv, the man from the World Bank; Frank, an economist from Berkeley, and I. We have all read the reports of previous missions and quickly agree on our approach.

At eight the next morning, the driver from the Ministry picks us up. He is young, well dressed, and doesn't speak a word of English. The Ministry occupies a huge gray, somewhat shabby office building. An attractive woman in her forties welcomes us; she is to be our host and point of contact for the rest of the week. We exchange business cards, but agree to call her Miss Harris since our Western tongue finds it impossible to pronounce her real name. She introduces us briefly to the deputy minister, who tells us — not very convincingly — that he is looking forward to our recommendations. With that formality out of the way, we are ready for the kick-off business meeting.

The first thing that strikes us is that most of the people from the Ministry are women. As the meeting progresses it becomes clear that they are rather high-level managers, technically knowledgeable and politically savvy. It also becomes clear that they are not at all convinced that the Thai telecom system needs to be changed. Or, for that matter, that they need advice from the World Bank, or anyone else.

And so begins a cat-and-mouse game. We ask questions and they do their best to avoid answering them. They are very polite. They never refuse outright to answer any question. They don't actually seem to lie. When backed into a corner, they will eventually produce some numbers and facts. And they always smile.

One of the tasks I have taken on is to get a picture of the economics of the current telecom system. What are their costs? What are their revenues? How much profit, if any, does the system produce?

But the assembled group apparently does not want me to get that picture. They provide bits and pieces of information, but no totals. So, one evening, I assemble the information they have given me, statistics from the World Telecommunications Union and data from prior World Bank missions and apply some approximate ratios based on my own experience in the business. I construct a straw-man financial statement for the operation and print it out on the hotel's printer.

The next morning, I hand the papers to the Thai members of our meeting and wait for their reactions. They don't seem happy.

"Very interesting. Where did you get these numbers?"

"Oh, here and there. Can you tell me if they're in the ballpark?"

I have to explain what ballpark I'm talking about.

"Well, they're very interesting numbers. Let's look at them overnight and we can talk tomorrow."

The next morning, Miss Harris smiles at me sweetly: "I dreamt about you last night, Mr. Goldstein."

I am nonplussed: nobody has ever said that to me in a business meeting.

"Was it a nightmare?"

Again that sweet smile: "Yes, it was. How did you know?"

Not wanting to pursue this particular path, I ask, also smiling sweetly:

"Before you went to sleep, did you get a chance to look at the numbers I gave you yesterday?"

She admits she did and, miraculously, agrees that they are probably somewhere "in the ballpark."

Of course, not all our time is taken up by business, although the meetings at the Ministry, our own team meetings, and the time we spend at our computers take up most of our waking time. But we do sneak in

a few quick dips in the hotel pool and, when the brutal heat has eased, explore Bangkok.

The most remarkable thing about the crowds you see on the sidewalk are the young women — high school girls in their black skirts and white blouses, young mothers with their babies, colorfully dressed working women from the large office towers. They are gorgeous and they smile. Always, they smile.

On our last day, we make our presentation to the Minister. We assemble in a conference room next to his office. A surprise awaits us: the women with whom we have met all week are dressed in military uniforms. It turns out that Miss Harris is a lieutenant colonel in the Thai army; the others are majors and captains.

The Minister, in a general's uniform, listens gravely to our presentations in which we recommend phased privatization and deregulation. There are no questions. He thanks us politely, and we know that our recommendations have been relegated to a bureaucratic limbo from which — barring a miracle or revolution — they will likely never emerge.

Colonel Harris walks us out of the conference room, thanks us for our work, and presents each of us with some flowers and a book on Thailand.

Oh, those women of Bangkok! •

---

### Wakefield Retired Men's Club Band

Photo by Herb Schwedock



## *Victory Garden Tale* *Estelle Schwedock*

To my recollection it was a cloudy, drizzly rainy day. The year was 1941; I was seven years old. It was the war years. We had been trained in school on the appropriate behavior during an actual air raid. In the classroom we were to scoot under our desk, curl up our bodies and cover our heads with our arms. If we had enough time we were to proceed to the hallway, always remaining in line, sit with our legs beneath us, bend forward and protect our head with our arms. The school administrators conducted drills every so often.

The administrators also decided that all schools if possible were to plant a "victory garden." Our class was given a small area in the garden for the students to plant, grow and harvest assorted vegetables. Since I lived on the same street as the school, and being closest to the garden, I was assigned a Saturday morning slot. I was to weed, water and eventually harvest the crop.

On one particular Saturday I had to deal with a difficult problem. It had rained for three days prior and the earth was quite saturated. I walked down the path, which was muddy and soft, only to find that I was quickly sinking into the mud. My right foot sank into the soft soil, and when I tried to retrieve my foot and shoe, my left foot also started to sink.

Within a moment or two both my feet were underground and I was unable to move. The only way to resolve the situation was to remove my feet from the shoes and walk home in my stocking feet and return with a shovel to dig out my shoes.

My father's reaction was my greatest fear. You see these were new shoes, just purchased for the Jewish holidays. To my surprise he found humor in the situation, although I didn't think it was funny. He did go to the garden and retrieve my new, rather soiled shoes. •

## *My Day in Hamilton* *Sheila Klein*

I accompanied Al, my husband, on a business trip to Hamilton, NY, where he had arranged to visit a plastics manufacturer located nearby. He deposited me at The Colgate Inn and went on to keep his appointment.

It was a lovely spring day and I set off to explore the town. My first stop was Colgate University where I joined a group of visiting parents on a tour of the campus. The tour was very enjoyable and interesting even though it involved much trudging up and down hills on the beautiful campus.

Afterward, I walked around in the center of the town and spent some time in a small museum filled with local crafts. I went to the local diner, sat at the counter, and had a delightful time chatting with the "regulars."

Whenever I accompanied Al on his business trips, I always brought along a book and a knitting project to keep me occupied while he was involved with his work. After lunch, I settled on a bench in a pretty little park near the center of town where I could read or knit.

Soon I noticed a construction crew installing poles for power lines close by the bench where I was sitting. Busybody that I am, I became very engrossed with watching the installation process. A short time later, the crew chief noticed my interest and called out "Hey Lady, did we set the pole straight?" Of course, I was delighted with his request and immediately joined in the fun by pretending to examine the positioning of the pole. The men waited patiently for my decision and carefully adjusted the pole "a little to the left" as I suggested.

After completing all the work at the first pole, the crew insisted that I continue to supervise their installation of the next two poles. I happily agreed to join them and spent a delightful afternoon "assisting them." Needless to say, there was much laughter all around during the process. When Al returned later that afternoon he was very amused when I recounted the activities of my "very busy" day. •

## *The Birth of a Feminist*

*Betty Taymor*

Before hormones, breasts, and boys, I gave very little thought to the implications of being female. One dramatic event, however, had a huge impact on me that changed all that.

One night, when my father was away in the West Virginia mountains on business, my mother woke me in the middle of the night. "Betty, wake up," she said, "Margaret is having a baby." Margaret was my mother's German immigrant live-in helper, who had been with us for a few months.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Because she is in great pain," she answered.

I didn't know very much about pregnancy or birth and hadn't given it much thought. I wondered, as I followed my mother to the telephone, how this had happened so suddenly. But there was no time for discussion. I watched my mother nervously dialing the black rotary phone to wake my Uncle Joe, a lawyer, and ask him how to handle this emergency. While she waited for him to answer, she told me to go back to Margaret's room and see how she was doing.

I carefully tiptoed past the bedroom of my four-and-a-half-year-old brother Danny and gingerly opened Margaret's bedroom door. To my astonishment, she was sitting upright in her bed, a pool of blood and her baby between her legs. I stood rooted to the floor, unable to speak or move for a moment. Then I ran crying to my mother, "She already had her baby, Mom."

My mother was on the phone arranging with the local fire department to come and take Margaret to the hospital. The firemen arrived within minutes, and while I was processing all of this drama they were already taking Margaret and her baby out of our house on a stretcher.

I numbly watched the procession. I felt repelled by the scene that I had just witnessed and was caught in the conflicting emotions of fear and fascination. I wondered what would happen to poor Margaret now,

with no husband and no family. I guessed that my parents would offer to help her.

I stood like a statue as one big, burly fireman patted me on the shoulder and asked, "Well, kid, whaddya think?" I gulped and answered slowly, "I think it is hard to be a woman." He smiled as he wisecracked, "Oh, kid, it's not so bad being a woman. Just think of us guys. We have to shave every day!" And then he was gone.

I didn't laugh. I didn't think he was funny. Even at my innocent age, I was stung by his insensitivity toward a woman's lot.

*Taken from my book "Running Against the Wind: The Struggle of Women in Massachusetts Politics", 2000, Northeastern publication. •*

## *Curiosity*

*Estelle Ringer*

As a teacher my personal life remained private. Christmas and Hanukah brought many queries. I tried to explain the religious implications, but couldn't set all the children at ease. After all, we were all good people and should adhere to the Golden Rule, I preached.

I really thought all was settled when Ann spoke up. "What are you Mrs. Ringer?" I looked at all the anxious faces waiting for me to be on their faith team. "I'm nothing", I replied. "Of course she's nothing" came from Ann. "If she's not Jewish, she's nothing." •



## *Primitive Needs*

*Murray Staub*

At a cocktail party some years ago, I met a real alpha male. He was a physician who was taking flying lessons. He was very excited and talked about the feelings of being free, etc. I told him I had never flown in a small plane. On the spot, he invited me to come with him the very next time he flew with his instructor.

Sure enough he called me a few days later. He sounded very convincing about the safety of the flight, since his instructor was very experienced and this was to be his final flight before he soloed.

He picked me up, and as we were driving to what I thought would be the local airport, he told me casually that today he was being checked out in a *seaplane*! Well, it was too late to back out so we came to a seaplane dock and boarded this tiny one-engine machine.

The instructor certainly looked and talked very confidently. He said he had filed the flight plan and we would fly from New Jersey to a lake in Connecticut, then fly on to Massachusetts to another lake, refuel and then return to New Jersey. I was seated behind the instructor and the pupil.

The student took us off and everything was great — wonderful scenery from the air, lots of snow. The instructor was on the radio and then says "The lake is frozen in Connecticut, but we will skip this landing and go on to Massachusetts."

By this time, I realized that I had not gone to the bathroom since we left home. I had had two cups of coffee and I was getting anxious. All I could think of was "I have to pee". Now we are approaching our landing site in Massachusetts, and this too is frozen in. The instructor then says, "Well, we will have to find some open water, because we will need fuel to get back to base."

Holy smoke! I have to go and now I have to wait for another hour. It never occurred to me that if you have to go, you just go and deal with the consequences later. This was important.

Well, the instructor was busy on the radio and announced that the closest open water was Long Island Sound. We will land there and he has arranged for fuel to be brought to the shore for us.

He landed in the Sound. It was too dangerous to taxi to the shore so he hopped off the plane and waded ashore in this freezing water. Meantime, the student flier and I clambered onto the wing, and together we answered nature's call. What a relief.

The instructor, carrying a five-gallon can of fuel each time, waded back to the plane several times. I now started to return to reality. Long Island Sound is very active water: plenty of waves, lots of wind and very cold. The instructor says he will take off, and now I am terrified. Can you imagine I was concerned about wetting my pants while we were in danger of getting killed?

Take-off speed in a small plane is around 60 miles per hour. He pours on the power and we are hurtling through the waves. Finally the plane lifts off, gets up a few feet and then plummets back into the water. Several times, up and down, and finally we stay in the air. At this point, I probably could have really gone in my pants. How stupid was I to subject myself to such a crazy event. I had a career; I had a family — how irresponsible.

After I recovered from this adventure, I reflected on my behavior during the flight. I realized how sophisticated we had become since the Stone Age; how our behavior is governed by "how it looks to others." See how much effort is put into advertisements for the latest fashion, the current "best restaurant." Listen for the "new words" that have come into our vocabulary: "Cool," "Awesome." The internet has brought communication to an incredible level. So here I was, trapped in thinking "How it would look" if I wet my pants. I suffered for hours foolishly, maintaining my place in our current society. I'm sure many others, in various forms, have gone through a similar battle between primitive needs and "How would it look?" •

## *Making the Memorial Book*

### *Fay Bussgang*

I have always felt that the NewBridge memorial service we have in the fall is an important way of honoring those who are no longer among us. However, whenever I looked over the memorial list of residents who had passed away during that year, even though the names were familiar, it was sometimes difficult to conjure up a picture of the person. The slide show of photos shown each year by Carol Gallagher was helpful, but the photos often showed a younger person whom I did not recognize. I thought how nice it would be if there were a more permanent book with photos of people as we knew them and a few words about them.

By the third year, I realized that no one else was going to make such a book, and if I wanted us to have one, I would have to do it. Since the next memorial service was almost a year away, there was plenty of time to work on it. How complicated could it be? Little did I know when I began the project.

I consulted Rabbi Judi Ehrlich and Steve Colwell, and both liked the idea very much. My first thought was to have the book available in the Library, but the Library Committee rejected that idea very quickly. Members felt it was too public a place for such private information. So it was decided that the book would be available at the yearly memorial service and otherwise be kept in Rabbi Judi's office and be made available upon request.

We set out to gather photographs and information. Online obituaries supplied birth and death dates and where people had lived before coming to NewBridge. I thought it might also be interesting to know where people were born and grew up and what their profession or main interests had been.

Rabbi Judi agreed to help me gather information from the families. With help from Kelly Hopkins, she sent out letters to family members. Many responded, but too many did not. Rabbi Judi contacted a few of these, I sent out secondary letters to others, made phone calls, and talked to surviving spouses still living at NewBridge. With a lot of effort

and patience, we finally obtained information about everyone. As for photos, I thought I could use the ones from the NewBridge Facebook, but there were no Facebooks during the first few years we were here.

The Security Office was able to locate a lot of the missing photos, but not all. Early photos were identified only by number, not by name, and Security personnel didn't know everyone by sight. Since I knew what most of the people looked like, I got permission from Security to search the database myself. Photos were grouped by date. As a member of the NBOC Hospitality Committee, I had move-in date information on residents, which proved to be a huge help. I knew in what section to look for a particular person. I scanned through hundreds of photos (staff photos and AL photos were mixed in with IL resident photos). It was painstaking work, but I recovered just about all those that were missing. For a few people, we had to request photos from family members. In the end, I was able to get photos for all of the 71 IL residents included in the book.

The next consideration was what kind of a book to get. It needed to be flexible in case people wanted to make changes. It needed to be organized in such a way that adding new people did not disrupt the whole book. A page should be large enough for several photos so that one could see a lot of people in little time.

After an exhaustive search at arts and crafts stores and online, I decided that a post-bound album — with plastic pages for inserts and room for expansion — would work best. I found a nice periwinkle leather album online that was dignified without being too solemn. Rabbi Judi and Steve readily accepted this choice, and the album was ordered—with "NewBridge on the Charles Memorial Book" engraved on its cover.

The book is organized by year of death, and within each year, alphabetically. Thus, new photos can be added without having to reorganize pictures from previous years. An index in the back will help viewers to find a particular person. The photo on the cover was taken by Marvin Ungar. •

## *Our Contributors*

### **June 2014**

- Judy Rosenberg: *In memory of Joseph Furman*
- Marilyn Stone & Sam Spiegel: *Thanks for computer help by John Averell*
- Harold & Nancy Parritz: *In honor of Malcolm and Susan Green's wedding anniversary*

### **July 2014**

- Anonymous: *To support the written words of our members*
- Phyllis Lichtin: *Thanks to Jay & Evelyn Matloff for kindness*
- Mr & Mrs Julian Busgang
- Harriet Segal
- Shirley & John Averell: *In memory of Joseph Furman*

### **August 2014**

- Mike & Barbara Atlas: *In memory of Shirley Alperin*
- Judith Rosenberg: *In honor of Sterra Tackeff's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday*
- Marilyn Stone: *In honor of Shirley Averell's birthday*
- Marilyn Stone: *In honor of Rosemarie De Vegvar's birthday*
- Mr & Mrs Charles Blauer: *In memory of Shirley Alperin*
- Lucille Huebscher



#### **Editor-in-Chief**

John Averell

#### **Editorial Staff**

Shirley Averell, Diana Bronner,  
Charles Weinstein,  
Rita Fireman, Sheila Klein, Al Rosen, Glo Wittes

#### **Layout & Production Manager**

Ed Goldstein

All 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](mailto: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

© 2014 *The Bridge* and individual authors



**”Being a celebrity every year is not healthy”**

**Animal Viewpoint Cartoon from Thomas Hollyday Studios**