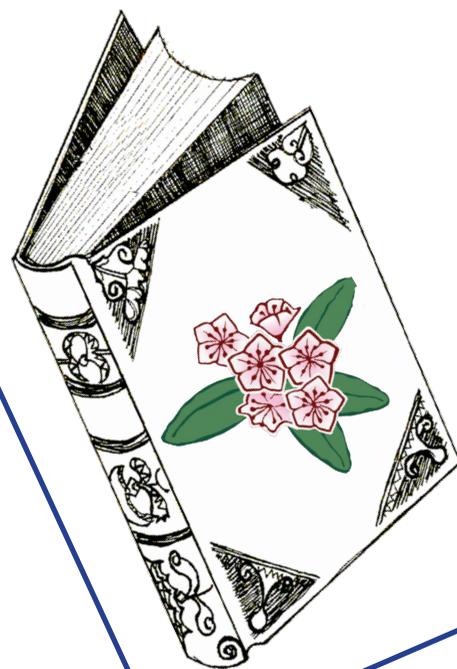


LAURELMEAD JOURNAL

OCTOBER 2018
VOLUME VIII, ISSUE IV



THE LAURELMEAD JOURNAL

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The aim of the Laurelmead Journal is to enrich the enjoyment of living at Laurelmead by presenting articles about the history, governance and setting, with profiles and memoirs of both residents and staff.

While editors retain the right of selection, we urge all residents to offer any stories, poems, articles, letters-to-the-editors or memoirs they wish to submit.

Please send your submissions to nickynichtern@gmail.com or put in Ruth Samdperil's mailbox.

Articles should not exceed 600 words in length.

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Laurelmead 2018!

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Photographs courtesy of Susan Vartian



EARLY DAYS AT LAURELMEAD

Remembered by Isabelle Carter
as told to Judith Spindell

Picture this. Laurelmead virtually empty. Uncarpeted concrete hallways laden with cabinets, toilets and appliances, stacked against the walls. No dining room. No library. No resistance room and almost no people... except, that is, for the skeleton staff and the 14 plucky souls who became the first residents of the newly established, but only partially constructed Laurelmead.

Among them, and still here, are Martha Sherman, Elizabeth Schumann, Barbara Linnell, and Isabelle Carter who so cheerfully gave me an account of those primitive but historic days .

Isabelle and her husband Frank arrived in November, 1994, and settled into their apartment on the third floor where she still resides. The fourth and fifth floors were there, but not ready, so everyone lived on floor three. No sales office space, so the shares/apartments were sold from an office trailer using the blueprints.

While there was security coverage, Isabelle remembers a very quiet atmosphere with a friendly staff and nice neighbors, but sometimes just a touch, “ghostly”.

A highlight for the fourteen residents who called themselves “the pioneers”, was when they all signed their names on the main beam which connected the north wing to the south wing. “We called it capping the beam,” said Isabelle, with a smile of fond remembrance.

Days were quiet. No meetings. No activities. Nights had no movies, no lectures, not even TV at first. Meals were served in the Café for at least six months.

Susan Vartian led exercise classes in the almost completed Odeon. There was no pool yet. While it was becoming a reality, Isabelle offered her services to Susan as a volunteer lifeguard to “help keep expenses down.” The trouble was she couldn’t swim! “I got turned down”, she said, with a mischievous grin.

Isabelle wanted us to know that before she left her Rumford home to move here, she and Frank came to see then Mayor Cianci lift the first shovel of dirt that would become her home and in time ours as well.

Now, very comfortable in her cozy apartment, Isabelle is working on her 83rd knitting project of hats and scarves for the homeless and for nursing homes. At 93, she still drives, goes to exercise classes 2 to 3 times a week, takes great pride in her children, grandchildren, and great-grands, totaling some 24 progeny!



Except for wishing that “the carrots at dinner were cooked more”, (did I detect a twinkle in her eye?), Isabelle does enjoy the dining, socializing, and appreciates the wonderful staff.

Isabelle revels in all the aspects of being a long time resident, and is so grateful for feeling safe and happy and still to be living at Laurelmead.

CIEN AÑOS DE EDAD, SI NO DE SOLEDAD

Julian Lopez-Morillas

son of Frances Lopez-Morillas

written to her on the occasion of her 100th birthday!

I’ve seen the world, I’ve risked my life in places mean and scary, an’
There’s many kinds of folks in foreign lands where I’ve been tarryin’.
I’ve seen them all, they’re all distinct, all far from ordinary, an’
I ask myself, are they alike, or are they always varyin’?

So many diff’rent types of people: rabbi, seminarian,
Conquistador, *indigeno*, the mongrel and the Aryan,
The jaded reprobate, the maid of virtue prelapsarian,
The connoisseur of barbecue, the vegan, piscetarian,
The gender-studies graduate, the hoary antiquarian,
The Marxist and Ayn Randian, the Whig, the libertarian...

So what unites the monarchist and the egalitarian,
The apparatchik and the sober parliamentarian,
Believer and contrarian, Baha’i and Unitarian,
The Baptist and the Sufi and the shaggy Rastafarian?
That when it comes to birthdays, there’s one tune they all are carryin’:
Equally fervent in their worship of our centenarian.

The Merry Men in “Robin Hood,” they needed their Maid Marian,
What would our Sherwood Forest be without our centenarian?
Gregorians in abbey choirs would praise the Virgin Mary in
No sweeter melismata than we owe our centenarian.
Now even Bloom and Derrida their hatchets they are buryin’
Their voices raised in harmony to praise our centenarian.

So raise a glass to Spanish Juan for comin’ here and marryin’
The lady who one day would be our fav’rite centenarian.

THE HEART

Who ever imagined
that the heart
was a piece of rope
with many strands
connecting.

That it could be in
a tug of war,
or pull an ocean liner,
and bring disparate people
together,
and when torn
could cause so many
to cry for their loneliness.

Perhaps, it is not a rope
but a ship at sea
due to pass through storms
and go aground
on the Cape of Hope,
or the Cape of Fear,
before it finally goes down.
with all hands lost,
destined for the briny bottom,
or to wash up on a sandy shore.

Maybe it's not a ship at all,
but a wave in a large ocean,
rising and falling,
or thunder in a dark night.

Who is to say
what the heart is,
or what it's made of,
or what it's destiny.

But in the end
contribute mine
to the science of poetry
for dissection.

I donate it
in the name of love,
to all who can use it.

by Lowell Rubin



NEW - OLD LOVE

Written for the marriage of
Francis L. McNelis to June S. Bubier

by Frank's daughter, Marian McNelis
and read at their wedding
on April 6, 1991

Relationships
are usually complicated
Some people insist
it takes "Hard Work"
to make a marriage last
So why are these two
taking on
the ominous task
Of starting all over and
learning to live together?
It MUST be LOVE;
not blind love or foolhardy love -
certainly not Young love ...
It is a balance
of reason and emotion -
a new - old love
that has inspired
commitment.
This man and this woman
bring Wisdom
to their marriage.

TURNING EIGHTY



By Rosemary Colt

I live in a retirement community and so turning eighty shouldn't be a big deal. The average age of our residents hovers in the mid-eighties and so reaching that magic number just means joining the crowd. But I moved here when I was 73 and so for a while, a bit smugly, I considered myself one of the younger members of the population, as in fact I was.

My 75th birthday arrived in January, four months after my husband's death the previous September. I thought it was important to mark the day as he would have--with a party--and so I invited my family and a few close friends to a dinner. Our chef rose to the challenge of producing a special meal and, at least from my perspective, it was a festive evening that made turning 75 seem almost pleasant.

Moreover, with no major health problems and plenty of energy I was still able to travel extensively and do pretty much as I wished. But alas, how quickly the next five years sped by. I gradually found myself plagued by some decreased mobility and muscular aches and pains. After the inevitable medical explorations, I was forced to accept some physical limitations, not serious ones but still.

So there I was, confronting 80 and feeling it. I recalled my mother announcing when she turned 40 (40!) that she didn't know whether to bury her head in the sand or break out the champagne. Around mid-November before the fatal day in January, that's exactly how I felt. Given the choice, I

chose breaking out the champagne and hoped my family would rise to the occasion since I'd done so five years before. I wasn't asking for anything elaborate--a family dinner would have sufficed--but silence reigned. I dropped some heavy hints about wondering how to mark such a MAJOR BIRTHDAY, but all I got in return was the same deafening silence.

Eventually and sulkily, I decided that if they weren't going to pick up the ball I'd have to do it myself. But rather than throw another party I decided to take my daughter to New York for two nights. I hadn't been to the city for quite a while and I remembered the good times my husband and I had doing just that, and often to mark my birthday because hotels were cheaper at the end of January. Anyhow, it seemed like a plan.

My daughter and I reserved train tickets, a hotel room and at considerable expense got theater tickets for two shows with excellent reviews. But alas, the fates didn't smile on us. The first signs of trouble appeared when the school where my daughter teaches gave her two days off instead of the three she'd requested, which meant she'd have to leave the city late on the second day. But although this was a blow it wasn't fatal and I quickly found a friend to go to the theater with me the second night.

Admittedly, I wasn't entirely happy about the prospect of getting myself home on the train alone but I told myself to buck up, I'd done it a hundred times before. The catch was that my confidence in dealing with challenging situation--like Penn Station and potentially icy sidewalks--had lessened. I suspect that one of the reasons I'd initially come up with the New York plan was to prove to myself I could still do it, but I hadn't figured on doing it alone.

Then, about a week before we were to go, my daughter came down with a bad case of the flu and it was clear there was no chance of her recovering in time for the trip. For a few days I thought about going ahead on my own, but as hard as I tried to persuade myself, I couldn't. Sadly--

awash in self-pity--I cancelled the train and the hotel reservations. A friend took one set of theater tickets and the other was forfeited.

The end of January is not the best time for a birthday under any circumstances because the weather is so often an issue. What's more, most potential gift givers haven't recovered from Christmas and even if they have there's nothing left in the stores. For years, my husband used to buy whatever nightgown hadn't sold before, usually for a good reason. But I didn't care so much about presents and that same husband always exerted himself to commemorate landmark birthdays, fifty, sixty-five and seventy. So where was he now when I needed him?

As far as I could tell, nobody else was going to do anything. Well I'd show them by moping around my apartment, hoping somehow this would make "them" feel bad - I'm not sure whom I had in mind but that wasn't the point. Then out of the blue and just a few days before the dreaded date, one of my friends confessed that she and a few others had planned a surprise birthday dinner for me. I can't remember why they had to tell me ahead of time but it was a blessing they did.

I can't recall ever having experienced such an abrupt change of mood; I'd been rescued from the "slough of despond," as John Bunyan famously puts it, and released from the jail of self-absorption into which I'd locked myself. Torn between remorse that I'd allowed myself to give in to self-pity and gratitude for the kindness of my friends, I felt like a new person, if one who was a bit older and creakier.

So that's how turning eighty came and went. On the day itself almost everyone in my family called - no doubt prompted by my daughter, who had recovered enough to come to the dinner. The celebration included plenty of Prosecco and a delectable cake from my favorite bakery. I went to bed feeling as if I'd won the lottery and determined to forge ahead to eighty-five if at all possible. And if I make it I'll plan my own party again, with pleasure.

SOME THINGS ABOUT SAM

Sylvia Craft talks with Dr. Samuel Bender

Soon after Samuel Bender's birth on March 10, 1916 in Brooklyn, NY, his family moved to a farm in upstate New York. Growing up with all kinds of animals--horses, cows, chickens and domestic pets--it seemed natural, he explains, to think of becoming a veterinarian. Which, indeed, he did, graduating in the class of 1941 from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. In 2016 he attended his 75th reunion. Since retiring, Sam has kept busy designing jewelry, weaving tapestries, dabbling with inventions, plus daily work-outs in Laurelmead's fitness department. His wife of 73 years, Shirley, passed away in 2014; children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren fill the family tree.

EARLY YEARS AS A VET



"I got out of school newly married and with a job as U.S. Government meat inspector in Chicago. It was on the killing floor. Needless to say, it was very colorful. I soon traded it for a post as meat and milk inspector for the New York City Health Department, later winding up as an inspector in upstate Greenwich, NY. It was a town with more cattle than people, which was fine for me...an ideal place to hang out my shingle. In a short time I had built up a successful mixed animal practice."

WHY DID YOU MOVE?

"The town was isolated and lacked conveniences, and my wife, Shirley, was a city girl and longed to return to New York. It was not an easy decision, but I loved my wife a lot more than horses and cows, and the move proved to be the smartest and wisest one I ever made."

-Did it require an adjustment?

"It was a different kind of practice, this time treating city people's pets. Taking care of 4-legged animals is easy, but it took some time getting used to the two-legged owners."

-Is there a type of animal or bird you preferred not to treat?

"Yes. The parrot. Their beaks are very, very hard, and they hurt!"

STAYING FIT

"I've always done some gym work. In the early days, there were no tranquilizers for animals, so brute strength was needed, which is why there were so few female vets at the time. I've had a bad back since I was 27 years old from having to treat ailing and scared large animals, and have had to learn to work through the pain. The animal had to be roped or hog-tied, mostly with help from the farmers. Sometimes they used brandy. Since moving to Laurelmead some five years ago, I've been doing the same work-out just about every day. That includes using weights, the treadmill, Nustep and doing special leg exercises. And at least once a week I'm in the pool swimming across the 50-foot length in one breath, then repeating it about 6-8 times."

MEDICATION

“Some 20 years ago I needed a triple by-pass, but the medication nearly killed me. I started researching herbs, and now take 8-10 different types of herbs and vitamins in irregular doses during the day. My cholesterol level dropped as soon as I started on herbs.”

-So, what about alcohol? Do you drink?

“Oh, yes. What a question. I have some Jack Daniels every night.”

-What about food?

“I’ve been a meat-eater all my life. I eat whatever looks good on the menu.”

-Do you take a daily nap?

“No.”

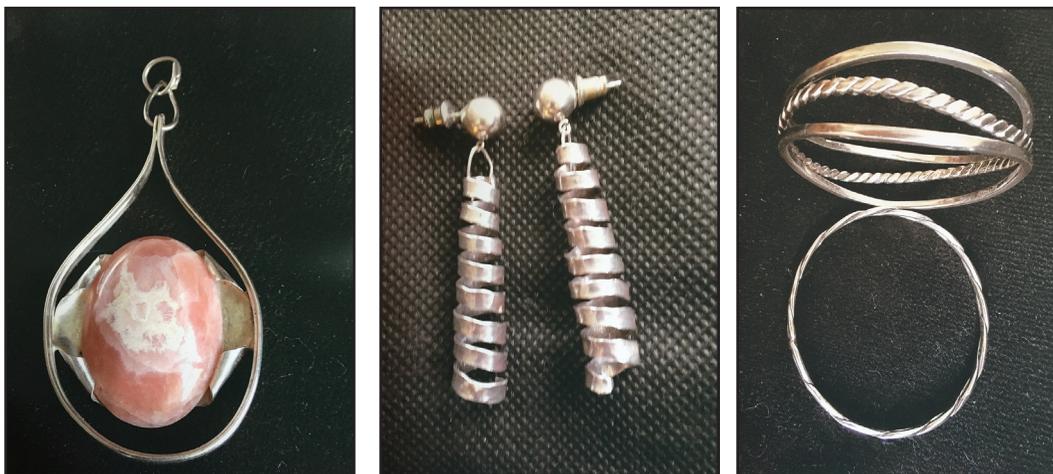
-How’s your memory?

“Not what it used to be, but so far, nothing dramatic.” (Writer’s note: That’s a very modest understatement.)

-To what do you attribute your longevity?

“Simply genes. My father and grandfather lived into their late 90’s.”

KEEPING BUSY AFTER RETIREMENT



“Early on, my wife and I traveled extensively. Shirley was fluent in French and German, and we shared many adventures. One led to a new hobby: on a trip to Montreal we were both intrigued by a simple loom set up in the hotel lobby. It turned out to be for sale, and I was able to figure out how it worked. The fun was creating designs, and in our subsequent travels, we’d seek out interesting yarns and colors. I made scarves, pillow cases and tapestries. Some years later, I took a course in jewelry making, again creating my own designs. And then, there are the patents: one is a medicine bottle cap with a dial that holds a day’s worth of medicine. Another is a curtain ring utilizing plastic tubing that allows it to slide easily. I’ve also an idea about an improved golf club utilizing the hollow shaft.”

OTHER CREATIVE ADVENTURES?

“Well, yes. Some time ago I came across some film shot in the past, but never developed. So I had prints made. But the film had been damaged, and the images defied reality. So I busied myself creating fanciful titles, and they were displayed for some time near the Great Room.”

-In looking back, how have things changed over the years?

“The other day, my grandson called to tell me he had bought a pup for \$2,000. ‘David,’ I said, ‘that was my first year’s salary.’ “



NOBODY'S STORY

By Ruth King Freymann

“I’m nobody! Who are you?

Are you nobody, too?

Then there’s a pair of us!

Don’t tell! They’d advertise, you know!

How dreary to be somebody!

How public, like a frog

To tell one’s name the live long June

To an admiring bog!!”

Barely below my adult surface, a child lives. If I really tell the truth, in fact I’d have to admit that there may be more times than I’m usually willing to acknowledge when she, that child, dominates and directs Oh-So-Adult me. Emily Dickinson’s poem was the credo long before my grown-up self came along, and I’m never sure whether it has the most meaning to my child or to my adult self.

Ask me what it means, and I can only tell you it means I am my very own self! As much as I am able to explain it, being nobody says to me I can live on my own terms and that I don’t ever have to pretend to be somebody I am not. It means that who I am is nobody except who I say I am.

That verse is forever twinned in me with the two others in a poem entitled “Invictus” by William Ernest Henley. I’m sure we read it in English class in high school, and among its several verses these are the bits that got imbedded in my sub-conscious:

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever Gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

Then it goes on for some words that are meaningless to me and finally says these that are absolutely seared into my soul:

I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

What brings me to three more quotations that abide in my personal credo. First, Shakespeare’s immortal words from Polonius to his son Laertes;

This above all: to think own self be true.
And it must follow, as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Equally important to me: Mark Twain said: “it is easier to live with familiar problems than with unfamiliar solutions.”

And Eleanor Roosevelt gave me an enormous gift when she said:

“No one can make you feel inferior without your permission.”

All these precious words set a personal standard for me and one by which I quite consciously try to live. I don’t always meet my own standards, to be sure, yet these words resonate in me and often serve to remind me that the only authentic thing I can be in this world is ME.

When I was a kid I thought I’d be a kid until I got all finished with that, then I’d be a grown up. I wasn’t quite sure what being a grown-up was, but I sure knew it was different from being a kid. We were US, and they were THEM, and those boundaries were forever sealed. That’s what I thought.



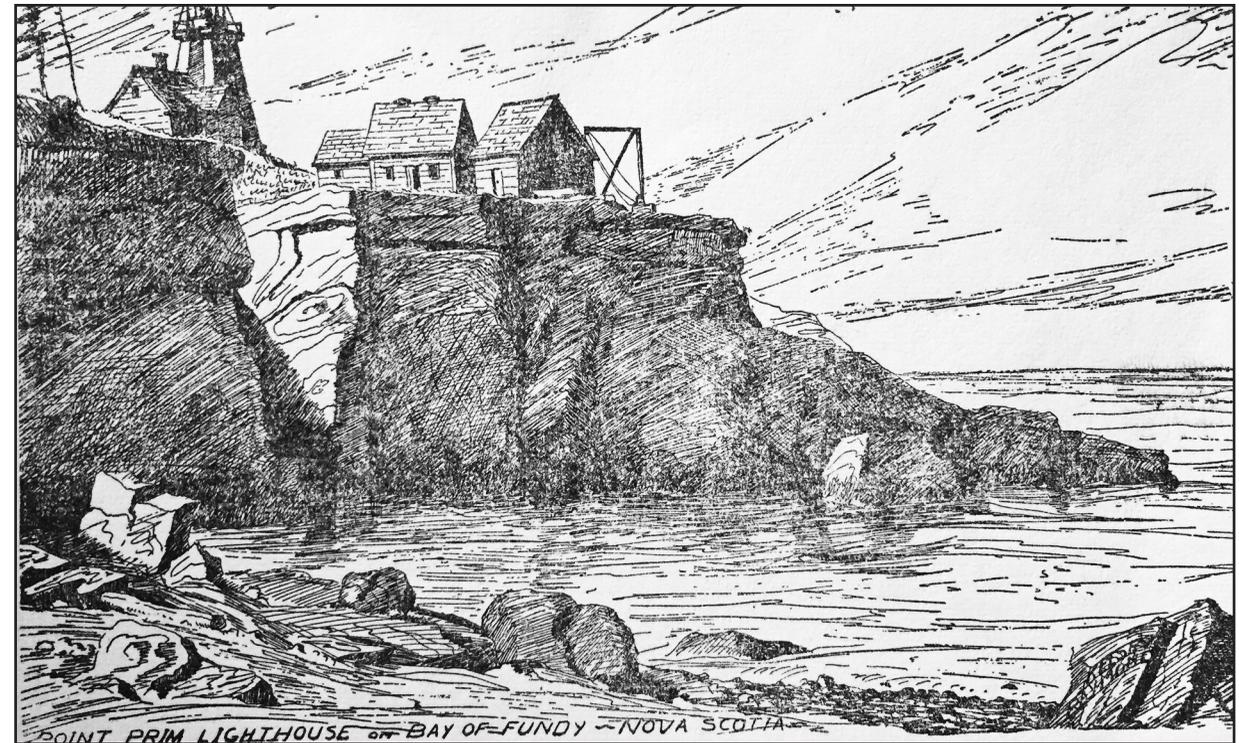
There are still times when I feel betrayed that that didn't turn out to be true, and times when I feel awkward or dumb or painfully naïve. In other words... childish in that negative sense we adults attach to it. Yet what I would not willingly give up is that with any great burst of joy or surprise or wonder or awe, and also any great pain, whether to my soma or to my psyche, and there she is, that little kid, right there in me completely committed to experiencing whatever it is. The same way she always has. The difference is that now there is an adult me right beside her, tempering and shaping my response knowing that the experience is probably neither as good nor as bad as it seems; that life goes right on, and the whole shebang is but an episode which will inevitably, take its place in the context of my life.

All my adult life, when I've talked about my childhood or my thoughts about life, sooner or later someone has said, "You should write that down". So now at last the two of us, me and my child-self, have a story to tell. About the life we've had, about the people we've loved, about our biases, our pettiness, our hurts, about our joys, our celebrations, about all manner of thoughts we want to share with you. True to Emily Dickinson's poem, these sketches are offered not because they are at all important, but rather because they are not. Truly then, they are a story told by a nobody. My hope is that because that's so, in reading them you may find something of yourself there too.

Introduction to *Nobody's Story*

A Memoir written by Ruth King Freyermann

2012



WHIPLASH: A MOMENT IN THE MARITIMES

By Carol Cook

While Susan was driving the second of five miles to Bixby from Smith's Cove, her shoulders finally dropped from their hunched position just below her ears, losing the tension built up during the preparations for the trip. It was always a prolonged search to find the car keys – used infrequently as they were here at the shore, exasperating to track down the receipt required to claim the photos from the film left to be developed a few weeks before, enervating to round up the three children. Restlessly eager as they were to go into town, the boys balked at putting their feet into shoes, and delayed the departure by whining and wheedling to have their way in the matter.

Finally, having produced the shoes from under their crazy-quilt covered cots, they were ready. The car keys and film receipt found, Susan ushered the boys through the open screen door, wondering all the time whether the car would really start, or whether the motor would merely

produce the sickly cough which indicated that once again the Nova Scotia dampness had gotten to the wires.

But today, after twenty-four hours of really hot sun, the motor did not disappoint. But this day Susan would really not have minded if they had been stranded at their cottage. It was jolly to escape with the boys to town when the fog had come in as far as the front steps; or the rain beat on the roof for the third straight day; or the wind pushed under your jacket and blew sand in your eyes so irritatingly that even walking on the shore was impossible. The camaraderie of the sun, however, enjoined one to stay with it on the shadowless beach. First to romp, then to give oneself up to the drowsiness, to the freckles bestowed with generosity in warm friendship.

Yet a promise is a promise, and Susan had given her word to the children that they would make an excursion to the carnival when it arrived in Bixby. Announced by posters on trees and fences everywhere, and in the Joggin Bridge grocery store, their source of loaves of brown bread and jars of peanut butter between trips to the larger shopping area four miles distant. They had seen the poster there first, and got home from their errand sooner than usual, shouting out the date and attractions of the carnival as they burst through the kitchen door.

They would have preferred to push their way through the crowds at night, to walk under the bright lights that outlined the carnival encampment all across the waters that separated Bixby from Smith's Cove. The northern latitude of Nova Scotia abetted by Daylight Savings Time gave them long light evenings; so an after-dinner excursion to begin after the dark finally came would have brought the children home to bed much too late.

Charles, the boys' father, had stayed at the cottage. Thoughts of his family, his wife and three sons, kept pulling him up from the manuscript to gaze out of the small second story window overlooking the Bay of Fundy. He soon began to feel a little guilty for not having taken the children himself. He really liked the atmosphere of a carnival, or rather,

he liked to contract its mood with the rest of his life. He sensed that Susan did not feel comfortable in the honky-tonk atmosphere, but he knew she was a good sport and that the boys would. He felt confident, thinking she was having the time of her life even though it might take her twice as long to melt her way through her cotton candy as they needed to dissolve the sugary fluff in their mouths and lick clean their pink crystal-coated fingers. Nor would she state her refusal to go on the roller-coaster in any way that might lessen their own anticipation of the thrill of the ride is designed to impart.

Susan drove straight through to the town's one parking lot down near the wharf, having pushed away the temptation to stop at the antique store whose triptych window wraps around the corner from Main Street onto Wharf Street. She had been there two weeks ago, and she wondered whether some of the gewgaws she had not bid on at the South Shore Auction had since become part of the stock of Mr. Graham's "Gone but Not Forgotten Shoppe." She would take a quick look after they had been to the carnival, whose tinny music seemed to be everywhere.

The boys jumped from the car before they key was out of the ignition switch. In their wild desire to get close to the music, to stand under the Ferris wheel, to watch the grown youths shoot at the ducks and drakes, they forgot to argue over whose turn it was to put the money in the parking meter. Good, thought Susan. Maybe they will not argue at all this afternoon, which would make missing the sun on the beach worthwhile. They seemed to be so sweetly reasonable now that their afternoon pleasure was about to be consummated.

Susan decided that they could be left alone for a few minutes while she bought shellfish for dinner in the store at the wharf. If she delayed they were likely to be out of fresh scallops. The frozen supply, they had always on hand were not nearly as good. The wharf store was empty of customers, Bixby people having shopped in the morning for the dinner they ate at noon. She was served up her order of scallops and out of the store in no time, despite the conversation she had with the fish purveyor

about the pulp wood being loaded onto the immense transport docked at the far end of the wharf. Ships fascinated Susan, as did much about the ocean. It was purely a romantic fascination, for Susan was no sailor. She had not even learned to swim after many lessons.

Throughout the past week the outline of the merchant vessel and its slowly heightening load appeared and disappeared and reappeared on the Bixby horizon with the wind-blown fogs alternately lifting and settling over the town. It took some days to load these gigantic logs, and to secure them on deck for the long voyage to Japan. The figure of a very tall lumberjack-sailor stood balanced on the splintery cargo, his left hand shading his eyes as he stared in the direction of the carnival, the other hand on his slim hip. Susan's reverie was blown apart by the tinny music. She remembered the children. She ran back to the car to stow the scallops in the cool truck, and then to the admissions kiosk on the carnival grounds.

Susan had given David ten dollars to buy tickets for himself and his brothers. The rides were fifty cents each. He did not have the four dollars in change he should have had from the ten-dollar bill. He said he told the ticket seller he needed more money back from his ten dollars, and he was told to go back to school and study some more arithmetic. When Susan returned with David to the ticket seller, she noticed the "carney" was keeping cool in a white tank top soiled around the armpits and over the chest. A nest of black hair curled over the top of his sleeveless shirt. A large silver-colored crucifix hung below the mass of hair, suspended from a heavy chain which tinted green the skin of his grimy neck. He had a strikingly handsome but somehow cruel face.

His cheating of a child and the presence of the crucifix reinforced Susan's attitude about the value of religion. There was no budging the "carney" in his story that "the kid probably lost the two bucks or spent it." The rides now assured, David, Danny, and Jonathan, voiced their choices of carnival fun. David desperately wanted a chance to shoulder a rifle and carefully aim shots at the moving targets; Danny wanted to throw the balls at weighted, comic dolls; Jonathan wanted to "fish" into a bucket of

surprise bags. All of this was prelude to the rides, where they would seek the real thrills, the feeling of being out of yourself, while laughing and crying and screaming released the usually inhibited expression of primal feelings.

The warm-up activities exhausted, they elbowed through the ever-increasing numbers of men, women and children to reach the machine of orgasmic delight; the roller-coaster. Everyone from the ride just ending was being unloaded, a car a time. Most people stepped onto terra firma a little unsteadily, giddily laughing, holding their stomachs or their mouths. Three boys were strapped into their car, Jonathan, the youngest, in the middle. Their tickets were collected, a last inspection made of leather belts and the machinery was put in motion by the bored attendant. Susan did not want to watch and hoped that all her cautionary words to her sons would be heeded. With closed eyes she heard the screams after the first dip in the tracks. She thought she recognized Jonathan's voice. She panicked. How could she have allowed a five-year-old to go on the "Bottoms Up" roller coaster? What if he were tossed up or slid under the belt, and his brothers could not hold him? If only they were all back on the beach looking for agates washed up with the last time. How crazy to come to a carnival? That's not what you come to do in Nova Scotia. Oh God, she thought, keep them safe. He did. They returned, drained of color, the big grins changed to weak smiles, but steady on their feet.

A Coke seemed to calm their queasiness. The last drops of coke had run down the inside of the upturned bottles into their throats from mouths dried from excitement and screaming. They were pawing the ground to go off to the rest of the rides. First the Ferris wheel, and then the merry-go-round – this a concession to the youngest.

And finally came the Whip. It looked rather tame as it sat empty between sets of thrusting gyrations. The boys urged their mother to join them in this one. Partly because each car held only two people, and if she got in with one of them it evened things out. Worn down by their enthusiastic pleas, Susan bought herself a ticket, and they took turns at

climbing into the padded boxes now beginning to fill up with flushed teenagers and wide-eyed children. Starting off easy, the cars stayed smoothly level with each other for the first two flights around the hub of the equipment. Who designed these instruments of gleeful torture, Susan wondered, as the current of air increased in her ears. She was glad that she had put Jonathan in with David, and was herself sharing the gondola with Danny, big for his age and not dependent on her for support. With the first thrust of the cars extended on cast iron spokes radiating from the center, something pushed into her throat – was it the proverbial fear or some physical organ, or the watery preliminary to the total contents of her stomach? The current of air increased ever more on her ears. Then the smoothness gave way to abrupt changes in altitude, snapping the cars through the air vertically – up, down, down further, up. She heard horrible screams and then registered that they were her own. So, she could scream, but the articulation of words was impossible. She tried to yell “Stop, please stop” to the operator standing surprisingly close to her, but no words came out. “I’ll die of fright. I must not die of fright. I am dying of fright!” The blood had drained from head to stomach, but not all of it. She did not faint. The agonizing movements in the cycle had slowed but not ceased. Saliva returned. Now she could shout “Please stop.” She was angry. This man, with his hand on the long, glinting metal lever stood impassively looking up at her, at everyone. Her distress as being ignored by this huge, stolid black man. The expression on his face changed, slowly, from dead-pan to a spreading smile, mocking. She closed her eyes. She felt weak, spent. She heard the lever ratchet down a notch. Anger, her strongest emotion, was reviving her so that by the time the lever had hit the bottom of the control slot, she felt enough strength in her knees to stand erect, then put one foot in front of the other down the one step to the ground. Followed by the grinning children, not just hers, she felt like the Pied Piper. She found an opening in the crowd and motioned to her sons. Heading for the last roundup. They slid onto the benches of one of the two picnic tables set up for the convenience of

family carnival-goers. Susan put her head down on her folded arms. The children looked at each other. “Are you okay, Mom?” she heard David ask. “No,” she said, but I will be. She had to be, for she had to drive back to the shore, she reminded herself. The children were saying that they did not realize she would feel so awful after the ride. She laughed, raising her head, saying that nobody could have known because it was her first such ride. If not now, when – why not – don’t be a chicken forever – take a chance for a change, raise your risk-taking profile before the age of thirty-five. She thought of the amusement park at Sylvan Beach to which her parents took her and her little sister on hot weekends during Upstate New York summers. She could not remember anything except the wonderful Dodgem autos with their tall, sparking antennae which gave the little cars their power to whirr and bump and whirr and bump again as the little drivers furiously and recklessly turned the miniature non-steering wheels. Such a safe thrill.

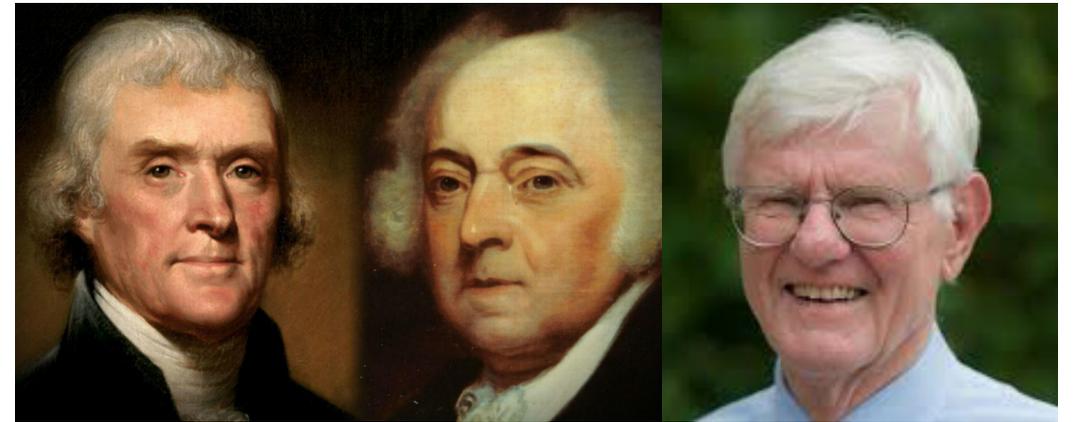
And then another flashback to the Sylvan Beach Amusement Park; the Dart Games run by the soft-spoken Japanese couple. They seem so out of place standing side by side patiently awaiting the arrival of customers; surrounded by the rows of prizes displayed on painted plywood shelves in their cubicles, little bags of ball-and-jacks, little beige limpet shells holding folded tissue paper guaranteed to release floating flowers when dropped into water, thin bamboo canes with bright blue, red or yellow feathers on the heads of celluloid dolls tied to the canes. Susan remembered staring at the couple’s Asian faces, their almond eyes, thin delicate hands, pleased with what she saw; liking the differences between them and all the other hawkers, and happily reminded of the books of Japanese fairy tales which as a child, she so enjoyed reading with their illustrations of kimono-clad male and female figures not easily distinguishable as to sex; standing stiffly against groves of bamboo trees or, arms akimbo, bowing to each other over the cups on a black and orange-red lacquered tray.

She raised her head again from the picnic table, cued from the dust being kicked up around her and tickling her nostrils that the three boys were

chasing each other around the table, and regaining their usual rowdiness and teasing attitude toward each other. For her the outing was over, the news to be firmly stated to the children. To Susan's surprise they tacitly agreed at once, and followed her to their car through a field of corn-flowers, buttercups and tall grass, adjoining the parking lot. The sky was still blue, unbroken by clouds, but the last afternoon sun was moving to the west. Their beige Peugeot station wagon was the only one on the lot with U.S. plates; and the only French car among the English Fords and the Morris Minors, one ancient Bentley, and some dusty pickup trucks of a generic sort. The engine responded as soon as the key flipped the starter to the on position, and the boys clapped their hands unexpectedly. They must have been worried too that they would be stranded five miles from their supper.

Susan and the car were by now imprinted with the return route to Smith's Cove. Very little traffic meant that one could give most of one's mind to reflection, rather than fixed concentration on negotiating the dips and turns of the county route. Susan's anger returned, and she puzzled over why she was so angry at whom. The man who operated the Whip - he was the one responsible, she felt, for her misery, her feeling of humiliation and of helplessness. She wondered how she could find out whether once the ride was set in motion there was any way for human hands to slow it down, to stop it, or whether it mechanically ran its set course.

Obviously if the latter were the case she could not hold this grudge against the black man at the controls. She could not suspect him of having taken his revenge on the white race by ignoring her screams for relief. And then she felt very ashamed of herself, very childish, and very white. But she planned to use some excuse to go into the town tomorrow, without the knowledge of the children - perhaps while they were digging clams on the beach with their father - to observe from the edge of the crowd how the Whip worked. She would go even if her neck still ached, and the cords of her throat continued to feel strained.



EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW AGAIN

Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Gordon Wood

Throughout much of our history Thomas Jefferson has been the founder who has been most honored. With his Declaration of Independence stating that all men are created equal and his belief in American exceptionalism, Jefferson has always been the supreme spokesman for our democracy. Most Americans have thought of Jefferson much as our first professional biographer, James Parton, did. "If Jefferson was wrong," wrote Parton in 1874, "America is wrong. If American is right, Jefferson was right."

But in today's climate perhaps a slave-holding aristocrat has become much less relevant as a symbol of our democracy. Perhaps crusty John Adams, our second president, ought to be the symbol for our times. Adams certainly thought that he had some depressing truths about our republic that we Americans should heed.

Adams would certainly not have been surprised by the emergence of Donald Trump or by the gross inequalities of our society. Although he had been an ardent revolutionary, probably the most important figure behind the Continental Congress's decision to break from Great Britain, he had expressed doubts about the possibilities of popular government from the beginning. There was, he said in 1776, "so much rascality, so

much Venality and Corruption, so much Avarice and Ambition, such a Rage for Profit and Commerce among all Ranks and Degrees of Men” that American republicanism inevitably had to be a precarious experiment. Over the succeeding decade his doubts about democracy deepened. Americans, he said in the 1780s, had “never merited the Character of very exalted Virtue,” and it was foolish to have “expected that they should have grown much better.” He did not believe in American exceptionalism. It became clear to him that there was “no special providence for Americans, and their nature is the same with that of others.” Despite what Jefferson and many others of his countrymen were saying about the uniqueness of America, he was convinced that Americans were after all “like all other people, and shall do like other nations.”

Adams came to believe that social inequality was inevitable. “The great and perpetual distinction in civilized societies,” he said over and over, “has been between the rich who are few, and the poor who are many,” and his sympathies were generally with the many. He even came to question the basic premise of the Declaration of Independence--that all men are created equal. To the contrary, he said in 1787, all men are created unequal. Some are born smarter, taller, and handsomer than others, and these differences create the social inequalities that we see all around us. The inequalities among people, he said, are “not peculiar to any age,” but are “common to every people, and can never be altered by any, because they are founded in the constitution of nature.” Jefferson and other Americans had counted on the capacity of education to level the differences among people and make the society more equal and more virtuous. But by the late 1780s Adams had lost much of his earlier confidence in education. Citizens in a small community, he said, might be taught to be wise and virtuous and to become more equal. “But the education of a great nation can never accomplish so great an end. Millions must be brought up, whom no principles, no sentiments derived from education can restrain from trampling on the laws.” In other words,

nurture would by itself never be enough to offset the forces of nature.

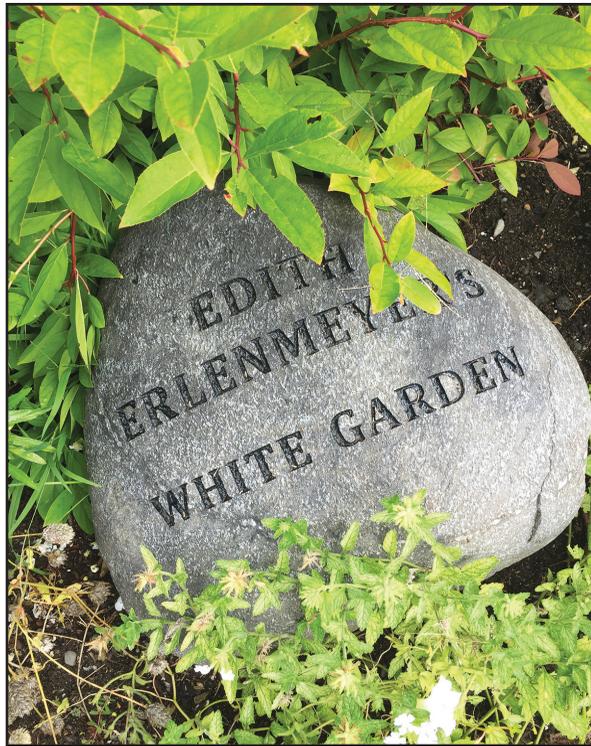
Such assumptions made Adams a traditional conservative. He was cynical about human nature and had serious doubts about the capacity of ordinary people to govern themselves; inevitably, like Edmund Burke, whom he admired, he was a bitter opponent of the French Revolution. He was not a monarchist, however. He was willing to give republican government a chance. Elections were fine, he said in 1796, if “soberly made.” But since electing the high offices of president and senators was such a “hazardous experiment,” so liable to be disturbed by parties, drunkenness, bribes, and corruption, the people sooner or later would discover that the electoral process was not working well. They would find that the only recourse they had was to reduce the frequency of elections by lengthening the terms of the chief magistrate and senators gradually “till they become for life; and if this not found to be an adequate remedy, there will remain no other but to make them hereditary.”

In the meantime, he said, Americans must do the best they could to balance the powers of society. The few at the top of the social hierarchy were to be as much feared as the many below them, perhaps even more so because the privileged few had such sly and insidious means of influence. The only hope, he concluded, was to not grant anyone or any institution of government too much power and instead try to balance those powers against one another.

In the end, however, Adams’s ideas can never be the basis of a great democratic nation, and certainly not the basis of the United States. He was too negative, too pessimistic, and too cynical for the kind of people Americans strive to be. As Adams said on his death bed on July 4, 1826, “Jefferson still survives.” Although Jefferson had actually died five hours or so earlier on that same day, Adams never uttered a more profound truth.

White Garden at Laurelmead

by Peg Megowen



As you face the entrance to Laurelmead you will see pillars on the right and the White Garden on the left. The garden is frequently admired and enjoyed by all who pass through it. So what is the White Garden? Why is it here? And where did it come from?

The White Garden was the idea of Edith Erlenmeyer, a former Laurelmead resident who left a bequest of \$40,000 to create and maintain this garden.

Edie was born in Germany and came to the US in the 1930's. She was a graduate of Smith College and also studied at Harvard and the Sorbonne. She taught French at The Wheeler School for many years and had a house in Saunderstown, RI. She frequently took students on trips abroad and also traveled extensively with her many friends. She had a white garden in Saunderstown, and loved the idea of a white garden at Laurelmead

The most famous White Garden is at Sissinghurst in Kent, England, If Edie did not visit there, she surely must have read the many articles about it. Sissinghurst Castle is a garden built inside the ruin of a 12th century castle by Vita Sackville-West and her husband Harold Nicholson. Vita was a well-known English garden writer and the garden was open to the public after WWII.



In 1967 the garden was bequeathed to The National Trust along with 270 acres of the surrounding farm. The garden design is of separate rooms. Some of the rooms are for the seasons. Others are of predominant colors: such as orange and yellow, dark blue and purple, and white, The White Garden is considered by many as 'the most beautiful garden at Sissinghurst, and indeed all of England'. All the flowers are white or grey and it is edged with boxwood hedges.

Originally, the White Garden at Laurelmead was maintained by Bob Matthews. He was involved with the original design along with Ralph Hartman, a landscape architect, and Lois Pickard, Edie's friend and Laurelmead resident. There are 2 benches and a stone with Edie's name on it. The garden began with 3 magnolias and now includes Narcissus 'Thalia', crocus, hyacinths grape hyacinths, variegated hostas, Valerian, a white scented iris, heucheras, hellebores, lamium, daisies, sedums, peonies, a rose, Clematis maximowicziana, Rhododendron 'Chionodes', Kalmia 'Elf', boxwood, buddleia, variegated dogwood, and numerous white annuals.

When Lois Pickard was ill, she asked if I would keep an eye on the White Garden going forward. Bob Matthews and the former resident Gardener cared for the Garden for many years and Joyce Aicher made a financial contribution which included plants for inside Laurelmead, as well as the White Garden. Currently, it is fully planted and is under the care of Building and Grounds and the Plant Committee. Gardens are always in transition as by their very nature, plants multiply, die, and grow.

How do I know my youth is all spent?

My get up and go has got up and went
But in spite of it all I'm able to grin
And think of the places my get up has been
Old age is golden so I've heard said
But sometimes I wonder as I crawl into bed
With my ears in a drawer, my teeth in a cup
My eyes on the table until I wake up
As sleep dims my vision I say to myself
Is there anything else I should lay on the shelf?
But though nations are warring and business is vexed
I'll stick around to see what happens next
How do I know my youth is all spent?
My get up and go has got up and went
But in spite of it all I'm able to grin
And think of the places my get up has been
When I was young my slippers were red
I could kick up my heels right over my head
When I was older my slippers were blue
But still I could dance the whole night thru
Now I am older my slippers are black
I huff to the store and I puff my way back
But never you laugh; I don't mind at all
I'd rather be huffing than not puff at all
How do I know my youth is all spent?
My get up and go has got up and went
But in spite of it all I'm able to grin
And think of the places my get up has been

I get up each morning and dust off my wits
Open the paper and read the obits
If I'm not there I know I'm not dead
So I eat a good breakfast and go back to bed
How do I know my youth is all spent?
My get up and go has got up and went
But in spite of it all I'm able to grin
And think of the places my get up has been.



Author Unknown but song sung by Pete Seeger and Arlo Guthrie

Art by Nicky Nichtern



LAURELMEAD

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