

Melissa Cusick, Our Community Wellness Manager

by Judy Jo Small

COVID brought The Forest's exercise programs to a near halt. It's no surprise that some of us slacked off. Still, in all kinds of weather, lots of valiant residents kept up their outdoor walks, some went hiking or jogging, some rode bikes, a few rode tricycles, and many others worked out at home—some in pajamas—along with the exercise routines that Sheri Sampson led on Channel 1390. A little later, Sheri and others learned to use Zoom technology, and residents could enjoy a sense of *group* exercise. Though it wasn't ideal, people were grateful. So, it was a big disappointment in January when Sheri left TFAD for a job closer to her home and children.

Rescue came in early April in the form of Melissa Cusick, our new manager of fitness programs. Melissa immediately wowed everyone here with her bright, winning personality. As Sarah Haney says, Melissa radiates "positivity."

Melissa possesses stellar qualifications, too. She has brought experience as an Exercise Physiologist in CCRCs in Chicago IL and in Louisville KY. Her position here is similar, and demanding. It involves not only teaching (in person and on Zoom) and one-on-one relations with a large number of individual residents but also management of a complex array of fitness programs, ranging from walking and balance to T'ai Chi and Zumba, including cardio, dance, aqua aerobics, meditation, and games such as table tennis and volleyball. She's responsible for hiring and oversight of contract employees (ten of them at present) who teach various fitness classes. More and more residents are returning to serious pursuit of their personal fitness goals. Demand for classes is high and expanding. A list of the current core of contract instructors is attached to the end



of this article (see pages 6 and 7).

Melissa, a Midwesterner, has been actively engaged in sports since she was scarcely more than a toddler. She joined her first soccer team at age three. Soon afterward, she joined a swim team. In elementary school through junior high, she added to her activities basketball, figure skating, tennis, softball, and playing the viola. In sixth grade, she entered an Olympic development program in soccer.

After graduating from Ball State University, she went on to earn an MS at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), with a major in exercise physiology and a minor in geriatrics. She also took medical chronic diseases courses that have been useful in her work with patients coping with various limitations. Similarly, her undergraduate minor in psychology has remained crucial to her understanding of working with people and embracing all dimensions of wellness: *mind, body, and spirit*. She comments, "It's been an amazing experience building a

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The Forester

The newsletter of the Residents' Association of The Forest at Duke, Inc., 2701 Pickett Rd., Durham NC 27705. Published monthly except July, August, and September by and for the residents:

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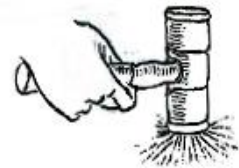
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President's Podium



by Carol Carson

li·ai·son/'lēə,zän, lē'azän/Origin: 17th century cookery term, from French *lier*, "to bind." Noun: 1. An entity that acts as a link in communication. 2. The act of being a link in communication.

Why this spotlight on liaison? Because "serve as a liaison between residents and the management..." is a stated purpose of the Residents' Association (RA). This purpose is set out in the Articles of Incorporation, signed in 1996 and under which the RA continues to function. Although the RA carries out liaison in several ways, the by-laws make it clear that its standing committees play a key role. The by-laws actually use the word *liaison* in listing the duties for several committees. For example, the General Services Committee is mandated to "maintain close liaison" with the General Services Department. The duties for some other committees embody different words but similar intent. The Health Committee, for example, is mandated to "promote dialogue" with the Health and Wellness staff.

Arguably the RA's liaison between residents and the Leadership Team is especially critical now as the community deals with stress and frustration stemming from the evolving Covid virus and its social consequences, a nationwide shortage of service staff, and supply constraints and price increases for much of what The Forest purchases. This situation clearly calls for the RA Board to lean into being an effective liaison. But effective liaison needs to start at the grass roots. That is, liaison starts with residents...

- seeking to be informed, by attending such as the Life at the Forest series and reading committee reports;
- communicating concerns and suggestions, through the RA committees and caucuses; and
- participating in RA committees, subcommittees, and volunteer groups, etc.

Where's this heading? Consider this to be an invitation to all residents to become more engaged in the RA's role of liaison. †

In Memoriam

Erika Radcliff	October 14, 2022
Carol Scott	October 19, 2022
Dale Harris	October 21, 2022

Calling All Pets!

Our presentation in the May 2022 *Forester* of "Nine Forest Best Friends" was the first of a promised series on pets at The Forest. Those nine best friends were dogs but, we're sure, only a sample of dogs at The Forest. We're equally sure there are many well-loved cats ... and perhaps other more unconventional pets.

If you have a winsome photo of your pet, please send us a copy for publication. Please email electronic photo files to Sharon Dexter forestersjd@gmail.com, Managing Editor. Or send her a photograph that we may copy, returning the original to you. Please tell us your pet's name, predominant breed, noteworthy tricks, and favorite activity. †

Library Science 101

by Carol Reese

How far we've come

After nearly 30 years, the Library's collection has grown from a few books on a single bookshelf to a collection of over 4,300 items consisting of books, DVDs, CDs, and puzzles. As of this October, books make up 90 percent of the collection--approximately 840 are mysteries; 1,600 are fiction; 630 are in large print (both fiction and mystery); and about another 70 were written by Forest residents. The other 10 percent consists of approximately 190 DVDs, 50 audiobooks, and 110 puzzles.

And how the collection grows

As most of you know, the majority of the collection growth has depended on donations from the residents. Just these past four months (June through September), residents have donated almost 900 items—most of them either hardcover or softcover (trade paperback) books. It is then the job of library volunteers to compare the donations to the actual collection to make sure we don't duplicate titles. The next step is to determine what would enhance the collection based on the Library's goals. From these donations (plus some large print books purchased with Library funds) the Library added nearly 85 new books.

The rest of the donations were put aside for the time being. In our effort to support locally owned businesses, we have partnered with a local bookstore owner, Land Arnold of Letters Bookstore in Durham, who specializes in selling good quality used books. When we have enough books for him to view, Mr. Arnold selects those suited for his bookstore and pays the Library for each item. These funds then go toward purchasing new books for the Library. The Library has been able to add several hundreds of dollars to its book budget over the years which we spend mostly on large print books for our residents.

Once the book buyer has had his chance, the Library usually holds a sale for Forest residents and team members. Here they can pick up gifts for

themselves or others at very reasonable prices—you can't beat \$1.00 for a book!

Finally, the last step in our collection development process is to support the Friends of the County Library by packing up what is left of all the book donations and giving them to the Friends so that they may sell them at their large, countywide sales. The funds they raise go to support the Durham County Library system and its many programs such as OASIS for the seniors living within the county.

Behind the scenes

All these activities (reviewing, selecting, organizing, labeling, shelving, etc.) are done by resident volunteers who give of their time not only to maintain but to grow the Library's collection. They work hard to make the Library's collection available to all the residents to enjoy. If you have any recommendations or suggestions for new purchases or services, please drop us a note. You can just leave it on the Circulation Desk or place it in my internal mailbox, number 4035. 🌱

Join *The Forester*

If you've ever written for, or helped publish, a newsletter or school newspaper, or would like to do so, *The Forester* wants you—creating content, editing articles and poetry submitted by residents, laying out pages of text and/or graphics/photos, writing features on subjects of your own and resident interest, writing new-resident bios (an opportunity to meet and welcome arriving residents), and adapting content to our desktop publishing software. **We need you; we want you.** Please call or email Managing Editor Sharon Dexter

forestersjd@gmail.com

or any of the editors! 🌱



Welcome New Residents

Vesna Besarabic & Howard Goldsweig

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Vesna was born in Yugoslavia. The family escaped to Venezuela when she was 11, and she continued her schooling there in a new language. She received an American Field Service (AFS) scholarship to study in the United States (Lynbrook NY) for her last year of high school. She then went to McGill University and graduated with a BS in Biochemistry/Molecular Genetics.

Howard grew up in New Jersey and went to Franklin and Marshall College, earning a BS in Physical Chemistry. He then received his MD degree at SUNY Downstate Medical School. He went to Montreal for his residency at the McGill University Faculty of Medicine. This was where they met.

Vesna and Howard moved to Chicago for Howard's fellowship in medical oncology at Northwestern Cancer Center. There they married and Vesna enrolled at Northwestern to earn an MBA at the Kellogg School of Management.

They then moved to New York where Howard joined the faculty at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. His professional focus gradually shifted to anticancer drugs and along the way he worked with some major drug companies in New York. Vesna, in spite of her science background, found work in advertising. She held executive positions in several Madison Avenue agencies. Because of her bilingual/bicultural background, she was, later in her career, recruited by a global ad agency to manage Spanish language advertising.

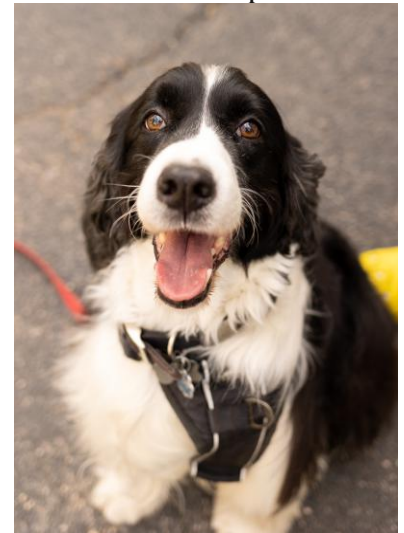
In retirement, Vesna volunteered for AFS helping exchange students. Howard volunteered as a biology teacher in a public school and in a private school. Later he returned to the workforce



Vesna and Howard

at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York, working on the development of machine-reading software that could convert medical record text into a searchable database format.

Avocations for Vesna are soft sculpture and graphic design. For Howard, being active, biking, walking, and other athletic pursuits as well as dabbling in chess, the piano, and watercolor portraiture keep him busy. Their mutual love of dogs is apparent at The Forest where they are seen often with



James

James, the big friendly one, out for walks or sitting in the Rose Garden. 🌿

Welcome New Residents

Donna Goldstein

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The Forest is happy to welcome band director Donna Goldstein, a trailblazer as women worldwide “come out” with increasing frequency as leaders of both bands and orchestras! Born in Philadelphia, Donna grew up in Long Beach, Long Island NY and also lived in Coram and Middle Island there. She is a graduate of SUNY Fredonia in New York with a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education. Her major instruments were oboe, piano, and clarinet. After graduation, she taught in Saratoga Springs NY for two years. She then attended SUNY Stony Brook for a Master’s in Music and Dowling College for a Master’s in School Administration.



Donna’s life’s vocation for 35 years has been first as an elementary school teacher of general music, chorus, band, and orchestra, later moving to the junior high school from which she retired. She learned to play all wind instruments, plus percussion. Donna is a Past President of Suffolk County Music Educators Association as well as an adjudicator for New York All-State ensembles. She is also a member of MENC (Music Educators National Conference) and taught at the International School in Kfar Shmaryahu, Israel.

Donna retired to Chapel Hill in 1995, moving to this area to attend Structure House in Durham, a long-term wellness center for lifestyle change. Active in the Conservative Synagogue of Durham, she has worked as a Hebrew School music teacher and adult Hebrew language instructor. Speaking fluent Hebrew and Spanish, Donna is interested in current events and languages as well as all musical events. At The Forest, she hopes to attend seated yoga classes, concerts, and a book group. She will be happy meeting anyone who plays an instrument and shares the great love she has for music. ♪

Jane Lloyd—Pet Portraitist

by Shannon Purves

Readers of *The Forester* will likely remember the May 2022 centerfold that featured “Nine Forest Best Friends”—beloved TFAD pets in photographs contributed by their devoted owners. In the following issue (June 2022), a pencil drawing by **Jane Lloyd** of one of the nine—**Kathleen Allen’s** “Tulip”—was featured in the centerfold piece about Kaidy Lewis, “Heart of the Henry Rogers Art Program.”

As the owners of one of those Best Friends, “Kenzie,” my husband and I were surprised and delighted recipients of a bookmark and a note card featuring Jane Lloyd’s drawing of her (water colored by Kaidy Lewis) and a note from Jane ending, “If you would like any more bookmarks or cards, we would love to hear from you. And donation to the Henry Rogers Art Program is greatly appreciated.” Six other owners enjoyed delivery (by Kaidy) of those very special gifts.

I jumped at the chance to order more bookmarks and, because Jane and Kaidy won’t charge for them, I sent a contribution to the Henry Rogers Art Program to help supply some of the needs listed in the June article.

I’ve now had the further pleasure of talking with this amazing team and learning how and why eight-year TFAD resident Jane Lloyd came up with this endeavor. An avid athlete, Jane retired as Associate Professor of Physical Education at Duke after 32 years there, during which time she established and coached the first Duke women’s golf team. She has another lifelong passion—for dogs. As she explained it, “At four years of age, I didn’t want to push a baby carriage with a doll. I wanted to push a dog.” And, even though dogs can’t be permanent guests at TFAD’s Health and Wellness Center, Jane’s ten-year old Miniature Dachshund, “Drake,” spends four days a week with her in her rooms in Carlton. (He spends the rest of



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Melissa Cusick...

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culture of wellness in these communities.”

Melissa plans to carry out—for residents who sign up for it—semi-annual assessments of each individual’s fitness progress and goals. Though she says that “we want our residents to do as much as they want to do,” she’s clear that her aim is to encourage movement that will keep us as physically fit as we can be and to build a community culture of wellness—optimistic and full of life.



Melissa demonstrating elastic bands in a sitting fitness exercise

As most of us know all too well from personal experience, when an exercise routine isn’t enjoyable or doesn’t meet our needs, it’s likely to be abandoned. Each individual has different tastes, preferences, and physical abilities. Likes differ. Do you love exercise in water? Do you like intense, competitive sports? Is your goal to improve your muscle strength? Do you prefer dancing with music? Do you need to improve your balance? Do you long to become less anxious, calmer, and more centered? Whatever it is, there’s a class right for you! 🌿

Meet the Fitness Instructors

“It is my extreme honor to be part of such a talented fitness and wellness team. Each instructor brings unique and diverse experience to the fitness department which contributes to the robust set of group fitness classes that is constantly evolving based on the needs of our residents and community,” Melissa says.

Cheryl Fenner Brown is an integrative Yoga Therapist and master teacher with 17 years of experience working with older adults and cancer patients and training other yoga teachers how to work with these populations. She has instructed at TFAD for over six years.



Carly Cusick graduated with a BS in Dance Education from Bowling Green State University in 2008. Since then, she has been a teacher, choreographer, and performer in styles ranging from Jazz to Modern to Ballroom to Salsa. She is certified through the American Council on Exercise as a Group Fitness Instructor, Senior Fitness Specialist, and Functional Aging Group Fitness Specialist.



Durham native Alana Ennis began teaching fitness classes, including yoga, upon retirement after 29 years as a police officer and several more in private sector security. She returned to Durham in 2010 and has been working at the Jewish for Good Center for 11 years and at The Forest at Duke for over eight years.



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Fitness Instructors ...

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Nina Maier began studying T'ai Chi and Qigong (energy work) in 1994 and has been teaching these ancient art forms in the Triangle area since 1998. Nina has been with The Forest for almost ten years.



Benita Harris Perkins teaches a variety of exercise classes and is certified to teach Zumba, Pilates, Pound and Step classes. Her company, Benie Girl Healthy Lifestyle Branding Events, works to communicate brand association with a healthy lifestyle for women. Certified by the Aerobics Fitness Association of America and the National Association of Sports Medicine, Benita has been with TFAD for over four years.



Julia Rose has been an instructor at TFAD for more than a decade and teaches Fit & Tone Pilates-style classes and Balance. After 20+ years teaching grades K-8, Julia became an ACE certified personal trainer and fitness instructor in a variety of settings in the Triangle area. She graduated cum laude from Colby College, Waterville ME.



Rena Springer, MS, NCPT, is a Pilates instructor and personal trainer with over 25 years of experience. Classically trained in the Pilates Method through Equinox Teacher Training Institute in New York, she is an active member of the Pilates



Method Alliance and the National Pilates Certification Program. Rena has worked as a group fitness instructor in mat Pilates, barre, and strength. She joined TFAD in September 2022.

Jennifer Strobel has been a fitness professional for more than 30 years, working in city parks & recreation, YMCAs, private clubs, community centers, corporate, and collegiate fitness. Her true passion is Aquatics. Her teaching style is a hybrid tailored to the individual. Jenn's coaching, teaching, and training philosophy is to help individuals achieve their goals with a focused emphasis on simple effective exercise technique and stroke mechanics. Jenn is joining the fitness team as a sub for Aqua Boot Camp, Hydroblast, and Aqua Therapeutics. She's the newest instructor, having come on board in October 2022.



Carol Uphoff joined TFAD over seven years ago as the lead instructor for the Therapeutic Aqua class, Cardio/Strength Circuit, and Seated Exercise classes. When she's not teaching group fitness classes, she provides personal training, and nutrition education. She is certified with the Interactive Fitness Trainers of America.



Heidi White has studied and taught dance throughout her life, both in the United States and abroad. She has loved teaching Zumba since 2009 and currently teaches Zumba and Pound Fitness for private companies, fitness centers/gyms, and recreation centers. Licensed to teach many forms of Zumba—Gold, Kids & Kids Jr., Aqua, Toning, Sentao, and just plain Zumba. Heidi joined TFAD in September 2022. ‡



Durham's First Madam Mayor

by Catherine Berg

Newcomers to The Forest at Duke's Heartwood Cafe often find that the first-come, first-served "long table" is full. No matter. There are other welcoming tables and conversations with fascinating and modest citizens. Sometime, newcomers might sit across from the warm and welcoming smiles of **Greg Lockhead** and **Sylvia Kerckhoff**.

After Greg's gently teasing questions have drawn the newcomers into sharing a bit of their own life histories, he will gently but proudly reveal that their modest dinner companion is, in fact, the former first-elected woman mayor of the City of Durham, whose influence during the period 1981–97 was a major factor in the transformation of the quiet Durham town into the present Dynamic Durham.

Sylvia's story was reported in *The Forester* in November 2016, but for all of us who have moved here since then, it is definitely worth reprising. After earning a BS at the University of Wisconsin, Sylvia began a teaching career in the Durham Public Schools. She later earned a Master of Arts in Teaching from Duke University. She was active in civic affairs and a long-time member and board member of the Durham League of Women Voters.

In her 2016 article, "*Cracking the Glass Ceiling*" (its title referring to Carol K. Adair's book of the same title), Sylvia wrote that after she left her teaching career in Durham schools to care for her ill mother, friends from the League of Women Voters asked her to run for a seat on the Durham City Council, which she won.

She says that, when in 1993 she decided to run for mayor, her family wondered whether she was "becoming mentally disturbed or just silly to think she could win such a contest!" But friends who were active in the political scene assisted in presenting "a platform based on the rehabilitation of downtown Durham, improving inner-city neighborhoods, and spurring economic development in the city."

As the election approached, Sylvia visited all of the Durham precincts with her supporters to



*Sylvia Kerckhoff and Greg Lockhead
in Heartwood Cafe*

share her vision for the city, learning "what was asked for and what was needed." She won with 63% of the vote in 1993, was reelected in 1995, and so served two terms as the first female mayor of Durham. Particularly, she earned praise for saving Durham's Carolina Theatre from destruction and for creating the very successful Durham Bulls Athletic ballpark. Sylvia was listed as one of the "20 most powerful women in the Triangle" in 1986 and received the *Durham Chamber of Commerce Civic Honor Award* in 2015.

If you are fortunate enough to share a meal with gregarious Greg and modest Sylvia, you might not hear about any of this! But if you are newcomers to the area as my husband and I are, you will enjoy thinking of Sylvia as you explore the lively, growing City of Durham. ♣

Catherine Berg, a former English teacher, and her husband, Sanford, a former professor of economics, have just celebrated the first anniversary of their arrival at TFAD and are grateful for the many kind and fascinating people they have met!

Girl's Eye View

by Joan Seiffert

Now it seems silly, all of us gathered around the Gothic-arched Emerson radio in the walnut case, looking at it while we listened to the news, actually *looking* at it, like we could hear Lowell Thomas better. The radio sat in the hall on Aunt Elizabeth's chest, an honored piece of furniture, but not in an honored place. This represented my parents' split opinions, their couple's playful arguing.

Papa, the eternal activist, thought that we should be playing outdoors with the neighborhood kids, not sitting around listening to the radio; Mama thought we should keep abreast of world affairs. (I was curious about that phrasing—"keep abreast of" since "breast" was the formal word for "boobies," and that was a word I was not supposed to say in front of Mama. (She had them, I did not. Yet.)

I sided with Mama about the radio, mostly so I could listen to the soaps. I admit feigning illness sometimes so that I could stay home from school and listen all day to Stella Dallas and her daughter, Laurel, Our Gal Sunday, Young Widder Brown. I loved them all. I kept the volume low so that when Mama came up to check on me, I could pretend to be asleep, not really listening, as she thought radio was only for world affairs. I preferred the affairs that I heard obliquely referred to on WJZ, New York. That was another confusion—"affairs." On the radio I heard about two kinds of affairs, both world ones and also something else, something to do with stuff that grown-ups did. Radio soaps were shady with innuendo, deep sighs, romantic music and kissing noises, breathy and moanful. Too subtle for me to quite grasp.

Looking back, I realize that radio sounds were better for me than pictures. Not until we went to the movies one Saturday, all dressed up like church, to watch the feature film and "The Eyes and Ears of the World," the newsreel. Small binocular-type goggles got bigger and bigger until they filled the movie screen like giant eyes we were looking through in the dark and just about to take me in when they broke away and we saw a report from Germany, Poland, or some other place

over there. "Over There" was a song I'd been hearing on the radio. Today we saw bodies, stacks of them. Mama put her hand over my eyes. But I peeked between her fingers and I *saw*. Saw the bony bodies, all naked with open scared staring eyes. Not subtle. But oh, I did understand that *this* was world affairs.

I still sigh deep as I remember going from boobies to bodies. I remember the confusion inside me as, eleven years old, I came out of the haze of school books and jump rope, spelling tests and bicycles, into the jarring window of life beyond mama and papa, home and hearth. My world on Harrison Avenue was small.

Until the newsreel.

Mama and Papa didn't say anything about it, not a word about the bodies. Speechless. Their blank faces turned grey. And my view burst open. †

Jane Lloyd ...

(Continued from Page 5)

his time in the care of a longtime friend.)

And then there's Jane's love of art. Greatly enthusiastic about the opportunities to practice it offered by the Art Program under Kaidy's direction, Jane came up with the idea of illustrating TFAD dogs for use on gift items. And now other TFAD dog's parents are being offered this chance to get their own.

Kaidy gives the details: "Jane's drawings keep getting better! She and I meet once a week, and Jane asks me to paint them a little and advises me on the correct color, tone and details of the breed of each dog. She is a fine example of how the art program engages and develops creative skills that not only improve the focus and experience of residents in the Health Center but can also spread delight to others. As so often Art can. Please, if you have a pet that you would like a small painting of, contact me at

kaidylewis34@gmail.com

There is no charge associated with ordering these notecards and/or bookmarks. Donations are welcome and appreciated to continue and advance the program. Thank you!" †

What Would Gene Do?

by John Howell

My sole ambition at the age of fifteen was to become a jazz drummer. But I wasn't sure how to get there. Today I could go online and watch a dozen or so talented drummers illustrate techniques and routines. In 1948, though, I was limited to watching Gene Krupa play drums in the movies.

Gene Krupa's parents had hoped he would become a priest. Instead, he became the most popular and influential jazz drummer of the swing era. More than anyone else, he popularized drums as a solo instrument, beginning in the 1930s with his recorded tom-tom solos on "Sing, Sing, Sing" for Benny Goodman's orchestra—and continuing with the many recorded solos he played for his own orchestra. By 1948, he had appeared in ten feature films and five "Music Film Shorts." Drummers not only copied his playing but also adopted his pearl marine drum kit and his Zildjian cymbals.

Even though the grand total of my drumming experience was two years in a high school marching band, I wanted the Gene Krupa drum kit. A week after I moved with my parents from Toronto to Regina, Saskatchewan, I went to see the kit at Dojack's Music Store. Mr Dojack said the kit was too expensive to keep in stock, but he gave me instead a large picture of Gene Krupa and introduced me to Jim Wightman, who owned the kit. Jim invited me to see it—and he became a good friend.

Meanwhile, my father, echoing Mr Dojack, said the kit cost too much for "a passing fancy." He bought me a snare drum instead and turned "the whole drum business" over to my mother.

Regina, in the Canadian West, was famous for its cowboy rodeos, football team ("The Roughriders") and country-western music. Helpful as always, my mother found a newspaper ad saying that Bud Carson was forming a country-western band and wanted "an accordion player, a fiddler, and a drummer." When I said I just wanted to play jazz, she convinced me that I should start with "simpler" music.



A poster of Gene Krupa playing on a drum kit that every young aspiring drummer wanted

So, I called Bud Carson, and he invited me to his cottage in what my mother called a "rough part of town." Though it's been over 70 years, I remember my surprise when I saw him dressed in work clothes. I also remember my relief when I told him I didn't own a drum kit and he answered that a snare drum would be "great."

Since he didn't have a stool for me to sit on while playing on the snare, he said it would also be "great" if I just sat on the arm of his couch. I was still sitting there when Herman and Billy came in. Like Bud, Herman, the fiddler, didn't look like my idea of a musician either—he was a heavysset man of about forty with a crew cut, silver-rimmed granny glasses, and a T-shirt that said "Regina Plumbing." By contrast, Billy, the accordion player, was all about "western," with a white Stetson hat and shirt. Although he was an auto mechanic by trade, he was more interested in talking about rodeos and cowboy "Fast Draw" gun contests.

Sitting on the arm of the couch, wondering what I was going to play, I watched them warm up on

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What Would Gene Do...

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their instruments—Billy fingering arpeggios on his accordion, Herman sawing on his violin, and Bud strumming his guitar and humming to himself.

I didn't know that Bud was humming Eddie Arnold's hit song "Bouquet of Roses," and I had no idea what I was going to play on my snare until he started singing and Herman and Billy started playing.

Gene Krupa saved me. When Bud said, "Let's play 'Bouquet of Roses'" and patted a beat with his foot, I just imitated Gene, swirling a drum brush across the snare with my left hand while playing a skip beat (tsk-ta-tsk) with my right hand—as Bud sang:

I'm sending you a big bouquet of roses

One for every time you broke my heart

I continued the skip beat as Bud sang and strummed his guitar, Herman played melodic variations on the violin, and Billy played block chords and arpeggios on the accordion. When we ended, Bud smiled at me and said "That was great!" At least I thought he smiled at me—he had a squint in one eye, so I wasn't sure. But when he smiled again, I was certain of it, so I continued to play the skip beat as we covered songs by Eddie Arnold and other country-western singers until Bud said "Great. Let's quit for the night." And Nell, his wife, brought out chocolate cake and coffee. I learned then that he drove the yellow creamery truck in front of his cottage.

We agreed to call the group "The Prairie Ramblers" and to play twice a week. Everything seemed to go well until Bud insisted that we play for a dance at the Hungarian Hall. We polished some country songs over and over, and I thought they sounded better—but Herman frowned a lot, so I wasn't sure. When my mother heard that we were going to play at the Hungarian Hall, she bought me a used drum kit. The drums were blue and gray instead of pearl marine, and the heads were dark with use, but the kit included Zildjian cymbals. It was not what I really wanted, but it was what I needed if I was going to play at the Hungarian Hall. Meanwhile, Jim

Wightman showed me how to sock the "hi-hat" cymbals together with my left foot while playing the bass drum with my right foot, and a skip beat on the "ride cymbal" with my right hand. And as Gene Krupa looked down like a deity from his picture on my wall, I played the drums along with his records at full blast from 4:00 to 5:00 each day, while my mother winced in the kitchen below and Reverend Kennedy prayed in the Presbyterian manse next door.

God didn't smile on "The Prairie Ramblers." Bud kept saying we were great, but he didn't have a great voice and he knew only three or four chords. When our big night arrived, only eleven people came to the Hungarian Hall. Still worse, Herman came drunk and had trouble playing the music.

"The Prairie Ramblers" died that night. But I survived, bought the Gene Krupa kit, studied percussion in Chicago—and worked with various bands in the States as well as in Canada.

Finally, six years later, I met my one-time idol in New York. After playing in a gambling joint for three months outside Hattiesburg, Mississippi, I took my ill-gotten gains and headed for Europe. The night before I sailed, I went to see him at The Embers jazz club. He was playing with just a pianist, bassist, and tenor saxophonist instead of with a full orchestra, but he was still the same histrionic performer I had seen in the movies, twirling his sticks and hovering over his drums as if they were on fire. Although he had not changed his style as swing music evolved into "cool jazz" and "bebop," he was still the drummer I revered—and I thanked him for all that his playing had meant to me. †

John Howell was Professor of American Literature and Chair of the English Department at Southern Illinois University.

Ramp Renovation Report

by Phil Baer

Last May, in response to a ForestSpeak presentation about Sandy Creek Park, donations from 19 TFAD households totaling \$1,345 were delivered to the Durham Parks Foundation, for renovation of the ramps leading onto the bridge over Sandy Creek. The project was proposed by John Goebel, who for many years as a volunteer has been responsible for the development and maintenance of Sandy Creek Park amenities such as boardwalks, the wildlife viewing platform, and, most recently, the Larry Stogner memorial garden. Although the bridge ramp renovation project was of a smaller scale than other projects, it was an essential one, since the old wooden ramp was rotting away, and without a ramp some visitors would find access onto the bridge difficult or impossible.

After Durham Parks and Recreation engineers gave final approval to John's ramp design proposal, he purchased the necessary materials, and a small band of volunteers gathered at the bridge on Saturday morning, October 8. The work involved many wheelbarrow loads of sand, gravel, and large pavers. The gravel and sand were first dumped into the area that John had already framed with concrete, to create a base, which was leveled, tamped down, re-leveled and re-tamped, until it was ready for the pavers. The pavers were laid down, checked for stability when stepped on, picked up so that the bed could have sand added or removed where needed, then replaced and re-

checked until each was firm and stable. The project was completed by late Saturday afternoon, and the following Monday, Ellen photographed me striding triumphantly, easily, and safely off the bridge and down the ramp.

About one-third of the money donated by TFAD residents still remains, and John is planning to use it for two purposes. The ramp on the other side of the bridge needs minor repairs, and the fence around the memorial garden is also in need of repair. Next time you're at Sandy Creek Park, please enjoy the fine new ramp that was made possible by, as the sign said, "generous donations from a group of residents from The Forest at Duke." John asked me to express again his appreciation to all who contributed to the ramp renovation project. ♣

Ellen Baer Photos



THE FRIENDS OF SANDY CREEK PARK,
 WITH GENEROUSE DONATIONS FROM
 A GROUP OF RESIDENTS FROM
 THE FOREST AT DUKE,
 ARE RENOVATING THE BRIDGE RAMPS

