

# THE FORESTER

Volume 28 Issue 3

A Newsletter by and for the Residents of The Forest at Duke

December 2022

## Home for the Holidays

by Ellen Baer

**W**hen did you start to feel at home after you moved to TFAD?

This question was not asked at an October program sponsored by the Diversity and Inclusion Cooperative called “Becoming an American” as the program’s emphasis was on adjusting to a new country. A panel of residents born in England or France or Canada or India or Hungary answered questions like: “What surprised you most about America?” and “How did you feel about holidays, especially Thanksgiving?” A month later, the question might have been about Christmas, which affects everyone in America, regardless of religious belief, and the answers would have provided insights into the rich traditions of celebrating the season in other religions and cultures.

A final question was: “When did you first feel like an American?” Several of the panelists said it was when citizenship was granted; others said it was a gradual process. For the audience, it was an interesting program and a good chance to meet neighbors whose family stories are different from our own. I think the question about feeling “at home” popped into my head because it’s equally appropriate for native-born Americans who leave their hometowns and finish their lives somewhere else. And that’s true of almost everyone in a retirement community like ours.

Feeling at home here is no doubt easiest for people like our neighbors who were born and bred in Durham, or for people with long-term ties to Duke or other local institutions. Some, like me and my husband, lived in Durham while we worked in Research Triangle Park, but many others came straight here from faraway states with little if any exposure to Southern specialties



“Little and good is a happy lot.”

*Needlework by Saga Minogue, a GI war bride born on the island of Gotland, later a citizen of the United States.*

like grits and collard greens. Yet feeling at home is more than getting used to food and becoming involved in local organizations such as museums, churches, and political parties. A sense of home is not easy to pin down, and sometimes it seems that it’s an inevitable casualty of our mobile society. Sometimes Phil and I wonder what different lives we might have led if we had stayed in our hometowns with neighbors who knew our parents. But we made choices that led us to the middle of North Carolina, where our neighbors are from down the road, across the country, or another part of the world altogether.

**S**ome people leave home through necessity rather than choice, and while I’m not going to step into the thorny issues of immigration, I can’t help thinking of Zen master and Buddhist poet Thich Nhat Hanh who was exiled from his home in Vietnam because of his anti-war activities in the 1960s. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967 by Martin Luther King, Jr., who called him “an apostle of peace and nonviolence.” Forced to seek refuge in France, he later founded a retreat center there called Plum Village, which

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### *The Forester*

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## President's Podium



by Carol Carson

### Employee Appreciation Fund (EAF)

Put a string around your finger? Add “write check for EAF” on your to-do list? Flag the deadline for contributions to the EAF on your device’s reminders app? Perhaps none of these prompts would work for you, but please do remember to make a contribution to the EAF.

The Employee Appreciation Fund, as a tangible expression of appreciation to TFAD team members, begs for community-wide participation—from all of us residents to all of those who have helped keep us comfortable, safe and healthy, and active. Further, a high level of participation by residents helps boost the dollar total of contributions. Importantly, the larger the total of contributions the larger the checks that can be written to individual Team Members. A good-sized check will mean that we residents can help Team members face the challenges of today’s economy and help us continue to make The Forest the place of choice to work.

The follow-through to make a contribution is easy: checks should be...

- made payable to The Forest at Duke or simply TFAD,
- identified with *Appreciation Fund* in the memo line, and
- placed in the Residents’ Association box in the Connection Room by December 11.

If you have questions about the EAF, please direct them to Ken Barrett, the Residents’ Association’s Treasurer.

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### **In Memoriam**

Mary Alice “Molly” Simes

November 20, 2022

Laura Weinberger

November 26, 2022

### **In this issue ...**

There are two pieces—“Our Bengal Housemate” and “Pick Your Tree”—sharing life experiences of residents in our truly extraordinary community. The editors invite you to share your experiences, your poems and essays, your artwork and photos, and your celebrations of life. As Ellen Baer’s cover story “Home for the Holidays” reminds us, heart-warming stories can arise from simple-seeming circumstances. Share some of yours with us—homey, or exciting, or both!

## Library Science 101

by Carol Reese

### War Stories Exhibit

#### —To honor our veterans

The current book exhibit, put together by resident Carol Goldsmith, celebrates those who have served. The selections highlight not only the traditional soldier, but also those who have served in other ways. Therefore, while the classic story of a young man's meditation on courage, *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, is included, so are John Le Carré's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* and Margot Lee Shetterly's *Hidden Figures*—two books that reveal other forms of service.

Other classics you might enjoy are Hemingway's World War I story, *Farewell to Arms*, and Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*. More recent publications—such as *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien and *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers—evoke the lives of soldiers in more recent conflicts and stories such as *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *Suite Française* by Irène Némirovsky explore the effect of war on civilians.

This collection, displayed on the book truck as you enter the Library, will be available through the end of the year. Please take advantage of this curated collection of war stories.

### Library Fall Sale

I wish to thank everyone who helped out with the sale—Linda McBride, Carol DeCamp, and Sue Howell. I would also like to thank those who attended and purchased items. The Library made over \$50.00 from these sales. These monies will buy a lot of pens and pencils for the Library. Thanks to all who helped out!

### The Owls Have Flown Home

The owl collection that used to be on display in the Library next to the Circulation Desk was Carol Scott's private collection. Carol Scott was our librarian at The Forest for many years. She guided the growth of the collection and its move from its original location on the third floor to its current location. With her recent passing, her prized owl collection has been reclaimed by her family.

While the Library lost an interesting collection, it gained much needed space, permitting us to move the Library's DVD and Audio CD collection near the Circulation Desk. This move makes the collection more visible to readers, and light from the large windows makes it easier to read the titles. Feel free to browse. †

**Have a happy holiday season!**

### Podium ...

(Continued from Page 2)

### The Legacy of a Former RA President

On a different note, I would like to acknowledge the legacy left to me and to the Residents' Association (RA) as an organization by Dale Harris, who served as RA President from October 2013 to October 2017. Among the more concrete elements of the legacy is the notebook entitled "Board Basics," which is provided to each new RA Board member. Dale is generally credited with being a force behind the first set of notebooks, and it was Dale who introduced me to the contents—the RA bylaws, committee chair responsibilities,

etc. The notebook has been updated several times and continues as the centerpiece in orienting new Board members. Another element of the legacy is Dale's focus on recognizing resident volunteers. Dale's agenda for RA membership meetings often included a Volunteer Spotlight, during which the spotlighted residents received a token of appreciation for the time and talent they had contributed to our community. Finally, Dale introduced a welcoming slideshow on the auditorium's big screen at membership meetings. Often these slideshows encouraged our appreciation of residents' gardens, flowering plants (especially camellias), and TFAD's tobacco-country roots. †



## Welcome New Residents

### Brenda & Gerald (Lynn) Featherstone

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Greetings and a big welcome to Brenda and Lynn, who have been part of our community since September.

Brenda, born in Carrollton GA, has also lived in Atlanta and Carrboro and Pittsboro NC. She received a Diploma in Nursing in 1967 from Grady Nursing School in Atlanta and a Bachelors of Science in Nursing at UNC Chapel Hill in 1984. Her 43 years in nursing included such areas as Cardiology, Labor and Delivery, Alcohol Detoxification/Counseling, Infectious Disease, and lastly, at Hospital Epidemiology with UNC Health.

Brenda received the Plus People Award from UNC Health in 2008, and the Old North State Award in 2012. She was Board-Certified in Infection Prevention and Control. Brenda's volunteer activities included CORA Foodbank in Pittsboro, Haw River Assembly River Festival, Haw River Cleanup, and Redbud Landowners Island Planting.

Lynn, a Gastonia NC native, attended Gardner-Webb Jr. College, where he played football and golf and was on the debate team. He transferred to UNC Chapel Hill, where he received his chemistry degree and a Masters in Biochemistry. He was drafted in 1965 for the Vietnam War, after which he and Brenda were married, in 1968. Lynn worked 35 years in immunology and protein chemistry at UNC Chapel Hill Dental Institute, winning numerous awards in his vocation and avocations.

Lynn and Brenda met in Atlanta while he was in army lab tech/medic training. Looking for a date on a Friday night, he used a technique he'd



learned at UNC—"telephone roulette"—calling a women's dorm asking for an acquaintance who would not be there, then trying to get the person who answered to go out with him for a bite to eat. Lynn says, "Any woman that brave, confident, and adventurous was a person worth knowing!" The rest is history!

They both enjoy traveling, hiking, skiing, reading, gardening, bird-watching, working out in the gym, and attending UNC basketball and sports events, and also live theater and Carolina Hurricanes hockey.

Lynn is a lifelong environmentalist, likes all fine arts, and is involved in human rights and sports justice issues.

At The Forest, Brenda is interested in volunteering at Health and Wellness and being a mentor/greeter for new residents. Lynn is interested in joining The Forest's chorus, current events discussion groups, and exercise classes. 🌿

## Welcome New Residents

### Michael McLeod

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Mike McLeod grew up in Clewiston FL and went to the University of Florida for three years before entering Duke University School of Medicine. After graduating in 1960, he did two years as a resident in Internal Medicine before a two year stint (courtesy of the Berry Plan) in the US Navy in Pensacola FL in a research lab working with squirrel monkeys and the effects of gravity.



He returned to Duke as Chief Resident in Medicine which he followed with a two-year fellowship in Gastroenterology, after which he joined the faculty for the rest of his career. Principally in the Private Diagnostic Clinic doing patient care and teaching, he took a single sabbatical year (unpaid) in San Francisco CA.

While a medical student, Mike met and married Anita Swenson, a nursing student. They graduated together in 1960 and went on to raise four wonderful children: Chris, well known as the Executive Director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Duke; Scott, who works in software; Greg, a lawyer who has worked for Governor Cooper for many years; and Laura (MBA), on the faculty of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln teaching undergrads. He and Anita, who died in 2017, also celebrated the arrival of five grandkids.

After retirement in 2000, Mike spent 15 years teaching in a special program to prepare students for patient care. He found this small group teaching gratifying and has followed it by teaching a course at OLLI on Conscious Aging. He has also joined the Eno River Unitarian Church for community and facilitates programs on racism.

We, and his Forest Resident sister, **Melissa** (who beat him here by three years), are so happy he has joined us. ☸

## Home for the Holidays ...

(Continued from Page 1)

still attracts people from all over the world who go there to practice mindfulness and peaceful living.

I always wanted to meet Thich Nhat Hanh, who traveled widely in the name of peace, but I never did. Still, I knew him from his books and was grateful for his wisdom. When he died in January 2022 at age 95, I was glad to know that he had been allowed to return to Vietnam to live the last years of his life in the temple where he had studied as a boy. I was also glad that he had died at home, even though I knew that home, for him, never depended on physical space. Visitors to Plum Village report that one of the things they experience there is a gentle bell that rings every hour, signaling guests and monks alike, to pause, to return awareness to the body, to slow the breath and repeat: *Breathing in, I have arrived. Breathing out, I am home.* It's a reminder that there's a place within each of us that is protected and centered, and we are able to return to it whenever we need it.



Thich Nhat Hanh

North Carolina author Thomas Wolfe was right when he said you can't go home again, and Thich Nhat Hanh was just as right when he taught that, wherever you are, you can be home. With that in mind, no matter where we've come from, how long we've been here, or where the rest of our family is, let's take a slow deep breath right now and make ourselves at home. As the song says, "There's No Place Like Home for the Holidays," and we're going to be there, all of us. ☸

## Our Bengal Housemate

by Ken Parker

For a few weeks in 1980, our spare bedroom was occupied by a Bengal tiger. This is how it happened:

I had organized an outing club canoe trip in the Okefenokee Swamp during which I got to know Michael Bleyman, the founding director of the Carnivore Preservation Trust, an organization in Pittsboro developed to breed endangered species. He was taking a rare vacation from his responsibilities and once back out of the swamp, he was eager to locate a telephone to find out how two tiger pregnancies were proceeding. He learned that the mothers had given birth to nine baby tigers. As he had expected, though, the mama tigers, new at the game, were not doing well in their motherly responsibilities. Fortunately, he had planned for the eventuality and had located volunteers to provide shelter and sustenance for each baby until they were independent enough to return to the Trust's grounds.

When I got home, I was in the middle of telling Sharron about this amazing person I had met when she jumped up, went straight to the phone and called Michael to ask him to put her name down on any list in case more volunteers were needed. Very soon one of the original volunteers discovered that the responsibility was more than expected and we were invited to pick up our new charge.

Our baby tiger had been given the name "Constance" (just "Connie" to her friends), named for the female character in Dumas' novel, *The Three Musketeers*. Her three litter mates were named Athos, Porthos and Aramis, after the male characters in the novel.

Of course, the first thing we had to learn was how to feed her. Initially, it was just condensed goat's milk, easily found in grocery stores. The second early duty was that, because Connie was



*Sharron with Connie*

sick and needed a course of antibiotics, we had to take her to a vet each time shots were needed (a surprise for the vets!).

At the time, we had our own pet cat, Little Orphan Annie, a blind rescue. Annie couldn't make sense of the noise she was hearing from this new moving menace, and kept her distance. Another challenge was the staircase. Connie's vision hadn't developed very well yet—or maybe it was just her locomotion. She lurched more than she walked. A third was she was not a kitten and thus had no intention of becoming housebroken. So, whenever we couldn't keep an eye on her, she was confined to a very large cardboard box in our spare bedroom. Needing bottle feeding every two hours, however, she got lots of attention. And she did let us sleep through the night.

To keep Connie company while confined, Sharron gave her a big fake-fur mouse which became an important companion. Just how important became clear later on. As Connie got older, say five weeks, Sharron worried that she might figure out how to escape, so she watched one day after she put Connie back in the box. Connie was just barely able to get over the edge, even though greatly hindered by the mouse she held firmly in her mouth!

Connie helped us get better known in the neighborhood. Once, a bunch of kids rang the

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*Nursery guest Connie*



## Bengal Housemate ...

*(Continued from Page 6)*

doorbell, cup in hand: “We were wondering if we could borrow a cup of sugar. Oh, and can we see the tiger?” This led Sharron to wonder if we were breaking any city laws, so she called the Raleigh Department of Animal Control: “Um, I was wondering if there are any laws against having a tiger inside the city limits?” There was a pause, and then, “Well, I can look it up.” Another pause. “Let’s see, here is an ordinance against raising pigs, another against chickens. Nope, nothing mentioning tigers.” Whew!

As Connie got older, she was expected to learn to eat solid food. We would put chopped chicken in a dish. This revealed that she seemed to be teething. At least she seemed to try to chew everything in her immediate vicinity. She didn’t recognize anything in the dish to be food, but the dish itself was a delightful thing to chew on.



*Connie teething*

After about seven weeks, she had grown from four pounds to twelve. At that point, Michael decided it was time to repatriate the brood. By then, most of the volunteers were finding that some of the novelty had worn off, and that they might want to devote their lives to other pursuits. So Michael set a date for a family reunion. We were all invited, along with our precious charges, to the CPT for a party. In the months ahead, most of the growing babies would be sent to other locations to spread the gene pool, but Michael had another juvenile tiger, “Arthur,” still living on the grounds. At six months, Arthur was only the size of an adult German Shepherd, but he had taken on the unmistakable visual features of a fully grown tiger. Still not dangerous, Arthur had the run of Michael’s house, so he was roaming the grounds at the party.

At one point, I found Arthur by himself and



*Sharron with Arthur*

tried to get a photo of this animal that already looked like the dangerous creature he would become. As I crouched down to get an eye-level composition, Arthur saw an opportunity. He also crouched down, but his stalking position seemed like an oncoming fatal attack and I completely lost my composition—and my composure. This ended with Arthur lightly bouncing off my shoulder like it was a fun game, and me feeling pretty humiliated. Later I was able to get the above picture of Sharron and Arthur together, her favorite portrait.

### Post script:

A few years later, Michael developed a fatal cancer. No one else could take on the breeding program, but his community was able to convert his facility into one that would take care of animals rescued from unacceptable situations. Located at 1940 Hanks Chapel Road, Pittsboro NC 27312, it is now called the Carolina Tiger Rescue. Besides tigers, it protects lions, jaguars, leopards, servals, sunbears, ocelots, caracals, and more. It is a great place to see these animals living in spacious enclosures. For reservations to visit, check the website:

<https://carolinatigerrescue.org>



*Ken Parker's interest in the history of an old mill near Wake Forest NC led to River Mill, a published history of the mill building and the community where he and Sharron lived before moving to The Forest in Spring 2019.*

## Pick Your Tree

by Richard Miller

Susan Smith, Scribe

In 1898 my great aunt, Celia Goodman, eloped from Baltimore with Max Zacks, a young Englishman. They settled in Johannesburg, South Africa. Over the years, Aunt Celia returned to visit the family, but in 1952 I was the first member of our American family to visit them there. This is the story of my experience on a safari with my African cousins.

I flew from Rome on a KLM DC6 to Kano, Nigeria, and then to Elizabethville, Belgian Congo, where I was introduced to the African version of industrial organization. An engine had lost a cylinder, which fortunately was in the outboard engine. A Dutch mechanic surrounded by 12 natives, each holding a specific numbered tool, climbed a tall ladder to the engine. The mechanic would call out a number, and the tool would be handed up to him. This system worked, because in two hours the mechanic had made the repair.

I received a warm welcome in Johannesburg from my cousins upon my arrival. My cousin Sidney, an auctioneer of livestock, then in his early 40s, had married an heiress, Bruna. Their daughter, Maxine, was 12. They informed me that we would be going on a “real African safari,” which meant we would be roughing it. We would pitch tents, dig latrine ditches, and sleep together in tents. Water would be at a premium. We would be looking for white rhinos.

Our rhino safari group consisted of a guide, a porter-chef-security-guard, and my family. The guide was a British ex-military man. We were scheduled to be at the rhino reserve at about 4:30 p.m., when the rhinos would be looking for their evening meal. At the reserve, we all donned cricket shin guards as the grasses were knee high and we might encounter snakes on the ground. The shin guards were awkward but functional.

We had walked for about ten minutes through

the savanna when the guide stopped us short. He said, “Look to your left; there are rhinos.” About 200 yards away were a pair of rhinos, one mounted on another. Within a minute or two, the male rhino dismounted and looked toward us, the only moving fauna in the area. Then the male started toward us. The guide pointed to a clump of modest sized acacia trees some 30–50 yards away and yelled, “He is coming; pick your tree!”

The acacias were only 15–30 feet tall. The closest were a clump of seven trees. The guide helped Bruna into the first tree. Maxine climbed gracefully into the second tree. I picked my tree, but first I had to urinate, managing to douse my right pant cuff and right boot. Then, in my haste to climb, my camera, a Leica 35mm, slipped off my shoulder and fell to the ground. It was too late; I had to climb. The shiny tree branches were strong but slippery. I was able to get up the first three branches. My crouching position did not give me confidence, so I positioned myself close to the trunk. I was about six feet above the ground.

The rhino stopped at the first tree. He sniffed around and then moved on to the second tree where Maxine was shouting, “Why did we do this?” Again, the rhino sniffed and pawed around at the tree. Then, like a sergeant at a Saturday morning inspection, he moved to my tree—it was my turn.

Rhinos have good vision, but their sense of smell is acute. I did not know that at the time, but apparently

this one—sniffing, pawing, and snorting—was tracking the path of my urine. I tried to get to a safer position, but I was stuck in a crouching position with one hand grabbing branches and the other holding on to the trunk to spread my weight.

The rhino head is set normally below his broad shoulders. This one’s forehead was about four feet

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White rhino in southern Africa  
NY Times International/Stock photo



## Pick Your Tree ...

*(Continued from Page 8)*



*White rhino and acacia trees on a southern Africa savannah.  
Photo taken by Richard Miller while on the 1952 safari.*

off the ground. My tree limb was five feet above the ground. When he raised his head, the horn was about six feet above the ground, and I was positioned about six feet above the ground. My acacia tree did not seem very sturdy. It seemed to me the unhappy rhino could easily push it over.

The rhino duly inspected the area around my tree, sniffing and pawing the ground. He stayed at my tree. (As he pawed the ground, I thought of my camera that had fallen off my shoulder.) With his horn shining in the sun, the rhino raised his head. His pointed horn was about even with my right boot. The horn was marbled ivory, light gray in color. It was beautiful. The horn was now to the right of my calf. He moved left in my direction, grazing my boot. He continued to snort and paw the ground. This lasted an eternity—an eternity of several minutes.

Our guide was by then in his tree, and the native porter was ready to climb his. The guide didn't like the animal staying with me and said he was going to fire one rifle shot. The noise usually gets the animals moving. At the sharp rifle shot it felt as if the whole forest was moving. The rhino

backed out, looked around at our clump of trees, and trundled off in the direction of his mate. We were told to stay in our trees until the rhino was at least 300 feet away.

We all breathed easier and began talking to each other. Then, with the guide's approval, we scrambled down from the trees. He confided to us that in all his years he rarely had as close an encounter. Now each of us had an exciting story to tell that lasted for hours. Nothing else in the safari compared with that visit from the white rhino!

**T**his account is written seventy years after the event and is as accurate as I can remember it. It was even more exciting than I have ever been able to describe. †

*Dick Miller was trained as an engineer and has had an avocation of fine arts for 60 years.*

*Susan Smith, the Scribe, is a TFAD neighbor of the Millers.*

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**TWENTY YEARS AGO**
**“Auld Lang Syne”**

For a while, back there in the rapidly dimming past, we thought that if Guy Lombardo died, he would take “Auld Lang Syne” with him. But he died and he didn’t. So we will be singing it again this New Year’s Eve, at least those of us who still remember the custom and the words.

Oddly enough, Robert Burns, who composed it, didn’t have New Year’s Eve in mind at all. He simply thought of it as a song of friendship, of remembering the carefree days of youth, those days when “we taw hae run about the braes.” Translation from the Scottish: “We ran together on the hillsides.” The song’s title, of course, translates “For good times long ago.”

From these lowland beginnings in Scotland, “Auld Lang Syne” has managed to make itself heard around the world. No one knows where it started—it was part of Scottish folklore long before Burns appropriated it in the 1780s. Burns never directly claimed to be the author of the verses, but on the other hand, he was quite unclear about how he happened upon them. When he first sent it to Mrs. Frances Dunlop, a rich widow friend, he passed it off as “an old song and tune which has often thrilled thru’ my soul.” But five years later, he sent it to George Thompson, one of his publishers, claiming it as an “old song which has never been in print.” which he “took down from an old man’s singing.”

“Auld Lang Syne” was first published in late 1796 in “Scots Musical Museum,” a magazine devoted to Scottish songs. It proved to be so popular that it has since circulated around the world, translated even into Asiatic tongues—Chinese and Japanese—although scholars say even the title defies translation.

But it was never associated with New Year’s Eve until good old Guy began signing off with it at New Year’s Eve appearances in the 1930s. He came by it honestly. As a teenager, he played in a band in London, Ontario [Canada], where a great many Scots lived. There it was traditional to end a social evening with that old song. Appropriately enough, Lombardo first used it when he was on a weekly network radio show—for guess who,

Robert Burns Panatella Cigars. He first played it on New Year’s Eve on a prom date at the University of Virginia, where the dancers cheered it because it happened to be a school song.

Now it’s the national anthem on New Year’s Eve, here and around the world.

For Auld Lang Syne, that’s the story.

—John Tebbel

[*The Forester*, December 2002, p. 2]

**Auld Lang Syne**

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
and never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
and auld lang syne?

*Chorus*

For auld lang syne, my jo,  
for auld lang syne,  
we’ll tak’ a cup o’ kindness yet,  
for auld lang syne.

And surely ye’ll be your pint-stoup!  
and surely I’ll be mine!

And we’ll tak’ a cup o’ kindness yet,  
for auld lang syne.

*Chorus*

We twa hae run about the braes,  
and pou’d the gowans fine;  
But we’ve wander’d mony a weary fit,  
sin’ auld lang syne.

*Chorus*

We twa hae paidl’d in the burn,  
frae morning sun till dine;  
But seas between us braid hae roar’d  
sin’ auld lang syne.

*Chorus*

And there’s a hand, my trusty fiere!  
and gie’s a hand o’ thine!

And we’ll tak’ a right gude-willie  
waught,  
for auld lang syne.

*Chorus*

## Winter Visitors

by Judy Jo Small

In the dim, waning days of a late October afternoon, from the maple trees overhead I heard a bright, clear note that I'd been missing all summer long. My heart lifted. It was only one note, but the silver tone was so familiar that I instantly recognized the voice of a friend—a white-throated sparrow. Was it announcing its return from its breeding grounds up north? Was it calling other white-throated sparrows to settle together in this warmer forested area as their winter home? The only thing I knew for certain was that the white-throated sparrows would be singing their songs throughout our coming winter.

"The white-throats are back!" I eagerly told my husband, knowing he too would be delighted. When the merry chorus of spring birdsong is barely a memory, when temperatures drop and frogs in the pond have fallen silent, when few birds sing and only the occasional "caw" of a crow reminds us of their presence, the lovely song of white-throated sparrows continues all winter long, until spring breaks through.

White-throated sparrows are rather plain in appearance, brown and grey with striped heads. So they are perfectly camouflaged amid the dull colors of winter vegetation. A small white patch on their throats distinguishes them from other sparrows. These birds are abundant on TFAD's campus. In the coming months, the purity of their short, simple song will fill our air with music.

Their song is simple, no rival for the mockingbird's elaborate repertoire. Usually, the first note is followed by three rhythmic repetitions of a note a third higher, as if it were saying "Oh, Canada, Canada, Canada." There's some variation here. Some groups of birds, instead of going a third higher after the first note, go a third lower. You can listen to this on ebird, a web platform created by the Cornell Lab of ornithology for citizen science:

<https://ebird.org/species/whtspa>

I hope that white-throated-sparrow song will brighten your winter days as they do mine. †

## Catching the Light

by Sue Howell

Away from home for the first time, I'd slip past sleeping bunkmates with my Brownie box camera and squish through the wet grass. Snap after snap of the white birch bent over the lake, its gummy trunk diagonal across the lens. Where the tree roots grabbed the bank, clear water slid over flat stones. Leaf-ripples lifted and fell as the sun pulled steam from the lake's cold center and the wind stirred, pale green shapes floating toward wet pebbles at the dark edge of the sun's reach.

And the loon's white cry.

On my tenth birthday, the new camera unfolded like a black accordion. I took pictures of water: sunblind ponds choked with lilies, crooked streams flush with rain.

Pictures of waves on the big lake, hungry under dark clouds, telling stories of drowned girls.

Black-and-white spots of time stuck on black paper, spelled out in white ink, *Lake Wheeler at Sunset, The Old Oshkosh Pier.*

I thought I'd caught it all,

tree and leaf and silent lake.

The pictures lie in their album now, postcards from a foreign country. *Did I visit that cathedral? admire that statue in the city square?* The birch tree makes a white shape against the grain, cut loose to float across my line of sight.

When did I know the ripples would move without my eye,

moon suck the stones into the heaving drift?

Deceived by the sun, we reach for the tree in the water,

while the lake spills over the little dam and the stream runs cloudy with mud.

Caught in the shallows, we remember the depths—warm as blood, still blazing with light.

*Sue took her PhD at Southern Illinois University. She has spent her career in teaching and writing.*



## Our Growing Garden

by Robyn Sloan

In 2021 a small group of residents at The Forest at Duke conceived a plan with Nathan Summers's support to spruce up the vacant corner where Willow Oak Court turns off Forest at Duke Drive, a corner with full sun, no easy access to water, and dry soil of rocks and clay. Hoping to provide vegetation and to support pollinators, the group reached out to Annabel Renwick, PhD, Curator of the Blomquist Garden of Native Plants at Sarah P. Duke Gardens. She delivered a slide presentation at The Forest that engendered enough interest to motivate resident support of a project.

With Dr. Renwick's guidance following her initial site visit, the residents were able to select appropriate native plants for the harsh conditions and organize to purchase and plant a pocket prairie; consideration was given to selecting plants appealing to bees and butterflies. The group followed instructions carefully to ensure a healthy start, expecting early attention to pay off by ultimately creating a low-maintenance environmental asset.

As the first year's growth slowly emerged, Dr. Renwick continued to encourage the group and provide advice. The Forest's newfound destina-

tion inspired the addition of a viewing bench and colorful sculpture, but the main appeal continues to be native plants surviving on a formerly desolate corner—one that attracts hummingbirds and bees.

The success of discovering and enabling beneficial plants to thrive in such poor soil motivated an expansion of the original plot a year later. Dr. Renwick came through in mid-October with a donation of plants to help fill the extended bed and residents **Phil Baer**, **Diane Blair**, **Ellen Durrett**, and **Robyn Sloan** brought out their shovels once more. It has been a fun learning experience. When this pollinator plot matures in a few more years, residents can feel proud of contributions to the betterment of our environment.

The valuable relationship between Sarah P. Duke Gardens and The Forest at Duke is a treasure that reaps benefit for both entities. For years residents of The Forest have volunteered at Duke Gardens; indeed, Molly's Trolley is named for our **Molly Simes**. So too have residents found Duke Gardens a resource as well as a beautiful destination. We look forward to continuing our relationship. 🌱

