



## Exerpts from Our First Issues, April 1994 ...

### *The Forester*

The newsletter of the Residents' Association of The Forest at Duke. Published monthly except July and August by and for the residents:

Publisher:

Bob Dunham

Managing Editor:

John Tebbel

Council Representative:

Mary Ruth Miller

Editorial Assistants:

Charlotte Cassels

Ellen Dozier

Evabell Dunham

Libby Getz

Dagmar Miller

Edna Wilson

Art and Word Puzzle:

Bob Blake

Photographer:

Ed Albrecht

Publishing Assistants:

Bess Bowditch

Madeline Hawkins

Edwin Lee

Carolyn Vail

April 1994

### To Our Readers

With this issue, we hope to launch the Forest At Duke residents' own newsletter on what we hope will be a long career. Since we have no precedent to guide us, we can shape the paper as time goes on to whatever form that you, our readers, desire. This issue is the work of a dedicated staff whose names you will find [on the Masthead at left.]

Our intention is to produce a newsletter that will, first of all, report news of interest to residents. In addition, we hope readers will submit short pieces of their own. Obviously, our space is limited, at least for now, so we must reserve the right to shorten if necessary. We also invite "Letters To The Editor" for our next and subsequent issues. Again, we ask for brevity, and reserve the right to reject scandalous, libelous, or otherwise inappropriate mail.

Our purpose is to be newsy and entertaining, not controversial. To achieve this goal, we will need the help of all our readers. In the end, it will be their paper, reflecting the life of this truly extraordinary community.

THE EDITORS

Volume 1, Issue 1

April 1994

The statement of purpose reproduced here is as it appeared on the first page of the first issue of *The Forester* in April 1994. The Editorial (below) is from the May-1994 issue. The present June-2024 issue completes the 30th annual volume (labeled v29 because of two successive v17s). Over the years the contributors and editors have changed, but these original statements of purpose still obtain.

The Masthead at left identifies the fifteen residents instrumental in establishing *The Forester*. The Banner by **Bob Blake** at the top of this page has been used in almost every issue since the beginning; Bob also drew many of the cartoons which enliven our pages. ¶

## Editorial

by John Tebbel

On large newspapers, editorials represent the opinions of the management, or more properly, the opinions of an editorial board responsible to the management. On small papers, like ours, editorials are more likely to be comments on the life of the community. Sometimes these small-town essays are designed to point fingers of

approval or disapproval. Otherwise, they fall into the category of what are known in the trade as Arbor Day editorials, meaning that they heartily approve something about which there is no argument.

Here at *The Forester*, we cling basically to a statement of principle enunciated in 1851 by Henry J. Raymond when he founded *The New York Times*: "We do not mean to write as if we

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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:

Sharon Dexter, *Managing Editor*

Judy Knight & Beth Timson,  
*Contributing Editors*

Dean McCumber, *Layout Editor*

Jo Mooney, *Text & Graphics Editor*

Linda Cushman & Louise Scribner,  
*New-Resident Biographers*

Carol Reese, *Columnist*

Richard Ellman, *Photographer*

Katherine Shelburne, *Illustrator*

Catherine & Sanford Berg, *Couriers*

Irwin Abrams, *Digital Archivist*

Authors, please send submissions to  
[forestersjd@gmail.com](mailto:forestersjd@gmail.com)

### ***In Memoriam***

Bill Louv

April 21, 2024

### **Editorial...**

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were in a passion—unless that shall really be the case, and we shall make it a point to get into a passion as rarely as possible.” Coming as it did at a time when the press was reflecting a country being torn apart by passion, that was a truly remarkable statement, and a policy adhered to by *The Times* from that day to this.

There are a few (but not many) passions at The Forest. We do not mean to promote them. Instead, we hope to mirror the life of this remarkable community, made so by its remarkable residents, as thoroughly and ably as we can. That can only happen if the community opens its minds and hearts to us with what the residents contribute. Together we can make *The Forester* [become] *The New York Times of Greater Durham*.

May 1994

## **President's Podium**



by Jim Freedman

Although some of you reading this will consider it “old news,” I’m directing this article to the many new faces that have appeared on campus over the past year. I’m sure you are all aware of the purpose of the Residents’ Association: (1) to assist in the development of programs and facilities to support the residents, (2) to represent and protect the interests of the residents, and (3) to serve as liaison between the residents and the Board of TFAD.

Although all residents are automatically members of the association, the keystone of the organization is the multitude of volunteers who support the work of the RA Board (who also are volunteers). By definition, a volunteer is someone who willingly chooses to dedicate their time and energy to make a difference and contribute to the success of the cause or organization they support, without expecting any monetary compensation in return. The RA organization is composed completely of resident volunteers.

You may think that work is defined only by the RA Board of Directors, which consists of 14 people, of which 10 are directors, but that is incorrect. Each director works with a committee of volunteers, ranging from 10–12 people, that meets monthly with a corresponding director from the TFAD administration to express our interests and issues, but the layers of involvement go on even beyond that.

Consider the library, entirely run by volunteers. The Encore Store and the Gift Shop, the same. The resident Community Gardens and the Greenhouse are both run by volunteers. The Rose Garden, especially beautiful now, is kept beautiful because of volunteers who deadhead the roses and call in the pros when they spot something amiss. If you go to the RA website and pull up the home page, then select RA Volunteers in the menu, you will

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## Podium ...

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see the breadth of involvement and coverage, including the names of the residents involved.

The Activities Committee has 5 subgroups, Caucus has 18 caucus leaders, General Services has 5 subcommittees, and Resident Services has 11 subgroups. Each of the subgroups has additional people involved doing the implementation. If that were not enough, there are 27 separate listings of resident-led groups and initiatives that all residents can enjoy. My estimate is that approximately one quarter to one third of the current independent living residents are actively involved in the day-to-day association activities. If you were to ask many residents living here 10 years and longer, you would find they have served in some capacity in the past and have just passed the baton. There's something for everyone, from mentorship or advocacy to direct committee/subgroup involvement.

I urge you to get involved, whether you have specific skills to offer or want to develop new skills. A direct benefit of active involvement in the RA is that it helps to foster a sense of solidarity and community within the campus, in addition to allowing an individual to expand their personal social network here at the Forest. The Forest has always been known as a close-knit friendly community that warmly welcomes these new residents, a key selling point to many new applicants. The Residents' Association is dedicated to protecting and expanding this significant feature. Volunteering is the life force that makes it all work: join the team. †



Retiring Layout Editor **Dean McCumber** credits fellow writers and editors for a stimulating decade with *The Forester*, and especially **Sharon Dexter** and **Jo Mooney** for layout support and ideas.

## Library Science 101

by Carol Reese

### HIGHLIGHTING AMAZING WOMEN

For the months of May and June, the Library is highlighting the biographies of amazing women throughout the ages. For instance, if you haven't read *Educated* by Tara Westwood yet, I recommend that you do. *Educated* is a coming-of-age memoir that chronicles a young woman's efforts to study her way out of a tough childhood in Idaho and find herself through books and, against all odds, succeeds.

Another biography discussing two amazing women is *The Firebrand and the First Lady* by Patricia Bell-Scott, a book about the relationship between Pauli Murray and Eleanor Roosevelt. Nothing was ever easy for Murray, a black woman born in 1910, a woman attracted to women, and also a poet, memoirist, lawyer, activist, and Episcopal priest. But her tender friendship with Roosevelt, sustained over nearly a quarter-century and by more than 300 cards and letters, helped her succeed. It is the rich earth Patricia Bell-Scott tills for this tremendous book. While the two women were different in age, race and class, they also had things in common. They were both orphaned as children and raised by elderly relatives. They were inquisitive, they were readers, and they were idealists. They didn't mind a fight, but they channeled institutional power for good if they could. Bell-Scott allows these women to speak for themselves, a light touch that works with these two heavyweights.

If you were a fan of Julia Child, read *My Life in France* by Julia Child with Alex Prud'homme. After the death of her husband in 2003, Julia Child decided it was time to write her France book and the result is a delight. On one level, it's the story of how a "6-foot-2-inch, 36-year-old, rather loud and unserious Californian"—her words—discovered the fullness of life in France. On another, it recounts the making of "Julia Child," America's *grande dame* of French cooking. Inevitably, the stories overlap.

These biographies, and many others are easily accessible through the month of June on the book exhibit cart at the front of the Library. Enjoy reading about these fascinating lives. †



## Welcome New Residents

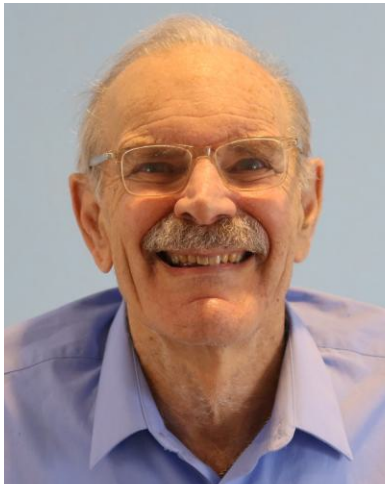
### Michael C. Reed

Apt. 2040 919-599-8449  
[reed@math.duke.edu](mailto:reed@math.duke.edu)

### Rosalyn (Rose) M. Walsh

Apt. 4018 717-813-1723  
[Rwalsh1007@gmail.com](mailto:Rwalsh1007@gmail.com)

Give a cordial welcome to Mike Reed, who moved to The Forest on March 1, loves it here and considers the residents extremely friendly and interesting. A native of Kalamazoo MI and the son of European immigrants who came to this country in 1938, Mike grew up in Chicago, Philadelphia,



and Milwaukee and lived in New Haven, Palo Alto, Princeton, and Durham as an adult. He received a BS in mathematics from Yale in 1963 and PhD from Stanford in 1969. After teaching at Princeton for six years, he became a Professor of Mathematics at

Duke, and is still teaching, conducting research, and training graduate students full time. He uses mathematics to understand mechanisms in biochemical networks important for human physiology in health and disease.

Mike was married to Evelyn Reed, a Forest resident, for 20 years. His children include David Reed, a health administrator in Seattle; Isaac Reed, a Professor of Sociology at University of Virginia in Charlottesville; Jacob Reed, a musician in Columbus OH; and Hannah Barco, an artist and art administrator in Reston VA. Each of his children has produced one grandchild: Phoebe, Hannah, Caroline, and Mercy.

Mike was honored as Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of Mathematics at Duke and has written six books on mathematics. He attends Beth El Synagogue and is interested in musical performances, lectures, and special events at The Forest. †

Welcome to Rose Walsh, who joined us at The Forest in May. Rose hails from Pittsburgh and also lived as a child in Shadyside PA. A lifelong registered nurse, Rose attended St. Francis School of Nursing in Pittsburgh, where she graduated in a three-year diploma program in 1962. She later



moved to Cleveland where she worked at Mt. Sinai Hospital in labor delivery and NICU (neo-natal intensive care unit, where newborns get round the clock care from a team of experts). Rose did some graduate work at Case Western Reserve University

in Cleveland, then moved back to Pittsburgh, where she married Paul Walsh, grade school love and a neighbor. Paul was a manager for Alcoa and was transferred to Lafayette IN. He passed away in 2010.

Rose's three sons were all born in Indiana. Michael is a resident of Tucson AZ and Madison NJ and is a Sales Executive for Solifi. Matthew lives in Chapel Hill and is a Vice President for Transource Truck Sales, and Mark lives in Garden City NY and is Territory Manager of NY/NJ Laborie Medical Technologies. All three sons attended Penn State University.

In 1979 Rose moved back to Pittsburgh and worked at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center until her retirement in 2005. Through her career, she has served as a hospice nurse volunteer and as a volunteer for school libraries, soup kitchens and the Salvation Army. She was a member of the Catholic Women's Association at Hershey Medical Center, and as a member of the Pennsylvania Nurses Association, was a strong advocate for

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## Welcome New Residents

### Sondra Stein

Apt. 4047 202-271-7163

[sondrastein@gmail.com](mailto:sondrastein@gmail.com)

Sondra Stein comes to us from Durham. She grew up in Cleveland OH. Sondra received a BA in English from the University of Michigan, followed by a master's degree and PhD in English literature from Washington University in St. Louis MO. With two other graduate students, she taught the first women's studies courses at WashU and later helped to found the New England affiliate of the Women's Studies Association.



Sondra taught at Tufts University, then shifted her career to focus on teaching, research, and policy in adult literacy and workforce development at both the state and national level.

In 1987 she joined the leadership team for Governor Michael Dukakis' statewide literacy program. When Dukakis left the governorship, Sondra moved to Washington DC to work with the National Governors Association and help establish the National Literacy Institute. As Senior

Research Associate at the Institute she established and directed the Institute's standards-based initiative, Equipped for the Future.

In 1993 Sondra met and later married Joe Klaits, Fellowship Director at the United States Institute of Peace. Sondra and Joe left federal government employment in 2005 when they moved to Durham where their older son, Fred Klaits, lived with his wife, Laura Rusche, and their two sons, Adam and Nathan. From 2007 to 2010 they were joined in Durham by Alex, Joe's younger son, and his wife and children, while they were in graduate school at UNC-Chapel Hill. Joe died in January, 2022.

Currently, Fred Klaits is an anthropologist teaching at SUNY Buffalo, where Laura, a biologist, also teaches. Alexander "Alex" Klaits, his wife Gulchin and their two children—Adrian and Sophia—live in Tanzania where Alex is Deputy Country Director for USAID. His wife works for the State Department. In the fall Adrian will return to the States to begin college at UVA.

The Jewish concept Tikkun Olam—action intended to repair and improve the world—continues to guide Sondra's life at work and in the community. †

## Rosalyn Walsh...

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nurses' rights. She is a co-author of a published article in a nursing journal on after-care of patients post heart catheterization.

Rose is enjoying the new friends she is making at The Forest, and enjoys walking 45 minutes daily, water aerobics and balance classes. She is eager to serve as a volunteer in The Forest's Wellness Center and looks forward to attending performances of Playmakers in Chapel Hill and DPAC in Durham. †



*Sylvia Kerckhoff ready for her cue on April 24th*



## New Pollinator Garden Plants

by Ellen Baer

Thanks to donations from residents, the pollinator garden has new year-round treats to attract pollinators and human visitors. Donations provided new plants and much-needed mulch.

The garden expansion that began last Fall was completed with three white snowberries and three black chokeberries. These native shrubs will be tall enough to add a sense of structure to the garden in the season when most plants lie down for their long winter's nap.

The snowberries will provide small white bell-shaped flowers in early summer and snow-white berries in the fall. The chokeberries will delight passersby with white flowers in the spring and showy colors in the fall, as well as dark purple fruits favored by both birds and picture takers.

The new plants arrived at the Baers' cottage one sunny late-April day. **Robyn and Dave Sloan** were busy packing for a vacation but responded to a call to action, and the new plants were promptly planted by the Sloans and **Phil Baer**.

Other residents will pitch in with weeding and watering. The pollinator garden is the joint effort of a committee of volunteers supported by the good will and gratitude of the whole community, including an ever-increasing contingent of visiting birds, bees, and butterflies. 🌱



Ellen Baer Photo

*Phil Baer planting with Robyn and Dave Sloan*

## TFAD Flower Pot Culture

by Joel Huber

In April we experience the changing signs of spring. Early surprises come from shrubby azaleas, camellias, flowering maples, dogwood, cherry, and apple trees. At the same time, smaller plants in pots grace balconies, terraces, and entrances. By the middle of April, the fading blooms from pansies, hellebores, primroses, tulips, and daffodils yield to the fresh blue, yellow, and red displays of petunias, peonies, irises, heuchera, dianthus and roses. There is an active flower pot culture at The Forest that can be found as one walks among the cottages and courtyards.



Joel Huber Photo

That flower culture is exemplified by the above display of pots outside of **Craig and Janet Daniels's** ground-level apartment. Large pots crowd the top and the sides of their terrace wall. An array of growing seedlings and indoor plants gather light from their westward facing windows. In all, there are almost 60 plants visible, particularly when the afternoon sun highlights the plants inside the windows. Such success is remarkable despite the fact that the apartment faces West and is surrounded by trees.

Craig manages The Forest's Community Gardens. Before coming to The Forest, he served in the Navy and then was trained as an engineer, an experimental psychologist, and an accountant.

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## Dawn Redwood: A Living Legacy

by Judy Jo Small

*"He plants trees for the benefit of later generations."*

—John Quincy Adams, adapted from the Roman poet, Statius

Forest residents know **Larry Inderbitzin** mostly as a retired psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and a leader of TFAD's Meditation Group. But did you know that for a long time before that, Larry was a registered tree farmer? On their large farm in Pennsylvania, he managed the woodland and planted several thousand Austrian pines and Douglas firs. Larry became interested in a particular genus of trees, supposedly extinct and until the mid-twentieth century known only by fossils, when a grove was discovered alive in central China. The seeds were distributed to two U.S. universities, and a local farm nursery owner acquired some seeds in the 1950s. Larry obtained a seedling from him and planted it in front of their Pennsylvania farmhouse in the early 60s. It is now about 50 feet tall.

*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, the Latin species name, means "like a sequoia." Though the giant sequoia, the coastal redwood, and the swamp cypress are related species, the Dawn Redwood is the only living tree in its genus. All these species are among the few conifers that are deciduous, shedding their leaves once a year. Dawn Redwoods are fast-growing and deer and disease resistant, so it's no surprise they have become popular.

About five years ago, Greg Hinson of Directional Landscape got two small Dawn Redwood plants for Larry, who intended to develop one of them into a bonsai and allow the other to grow to its full height by starting it in a plot in the TFAD Community Gardens. It grew there for several



*On the hill overlooking the pond*

years until it was ready to put roots down in a permanent location.

Larry and Nathan Summers selected a spot where the tree could establish itself and provide beauty and shade for everyone at The Forest. Larry dug a big hole when spring arrived, set in the little tree, mulched it, and surrounded it with yellow flags and a wire fence. In the cruel summer heat, Larry cared for the tree, hauling five-gallon buckets of water up the hill from his cottage. A surprise attack by a Japanese beetle infestation required a multifaceted remedy, including handpicking them off. An icky labor of love!

Seasons passed. Now Larry's tree is *ours*, and it's thriving atop the hill overlooking the pond. Its companion bench is a lovely place to sit. A fence is no longer needed, for the tree is strong and healthy. It's not yet a tall shade tree; it will take decades to reach its full height. But already it has beautiful, soft feathery lace-like green foliage, and it promises to be a majestic tree: fresh green in spring and summer, fiery red in autumn, bare in winter. It should outlive us all. 🌲



*The feathery foliage of our Dawn Redwood*

## Holding Hands

by Bill Harrington

When my granddaughter was married in October of last year, as “Granddaddy Bill” I was invited to the rehearsal dinner and the wedding the next day. At the rehearsal dinner I shared a table with a friend of mine—a friend who I’ve known for over 55 years. Sally and I are the only ones still remaining from the time that the family “I married into” used to sit down to a Sunday dinner of fried chicken with all of the trimmings, surrounded by six others. It is virtually impossible for me to believe that this was in the late 1960s. I know what my elders meant now when they told me how fast time goes by. My maternal grandfather used to tell us young ones: “I’ve got neckties older than you are.” Now, I know what he meant.

When Sally and I got up from the table, she reached out with her left arm to hold my hand while steadying herself with her cane on her right side. I said to her that I am sometimes a little unsteady on my feet because of an inner ear balance problem. This happened almost simultaneously and seemed automatic: two 80-year olds helping each other walk across a floor, much like the floor we used to dance on.

Afterwards, I was struck with just how many ways we hold each other’s hands.

Recently, I attended the 83th birthday of a friend of mine in Chapel Hill. A good friend of mine asked me if I wanted to ride with her. Beth is someone whom I had never held hands with until that day. She parked across from our friend’s driveway. We took one look at the steep driveway leading up to the front door and both exclaimed, “I’m not sure about this.” Beth has a gimpy knee, and I have a painful back, and climbing the mountain to eat some goodies and sing happy birthday suddenly seemed far away: was it worth the risk of ascending the steep driveway?

I said to Beth: “Here, hold my hand and maybe we can make it.” We did, with each other’s help. Beth is a good friend and the need to hold hands never came up before the birthday party or when we have gone to lunch together, and it has not happened since. Yet another way of holding hands to assist each other in our old age.

When I was a small boy, my mom used to hold my hand as we walked across Snow Hill Street in my eastern North Carolina hometown of Ayden to visit with my aunt and uncle. I am sure that she did this many times that I have long forgotten—always with my safety in mind: “William, when you cross the street, always look both ways first.” Then, seemingly in an instant, I was holding her hand in a nursing home a short time before she died.

My maternal grandparents and I used to take trips to Harker’s Island, one in the string of Outer Banks islands off our NC coast. I remember these days as a young boy with great fondness, because I grew to enjoy the trips on the small fishing boats with just enough room for four people as we trolled for bluefish, bonito mackerel, and king mackerel. Most of all, however, I loved being with my grandparents, two of the finest people who ever lived.

But my grandmother was “scared to death” of the water. She would not even walk out on a pier, while granddaddy’s favorite pastime was fishing in fresh water or salt water, river or ocean. I am sure that Granddaddy held my hand as we walked out on the dock to board the fishing boat, and I imagine Benny Brooks, one of the captains who took people out on the charter boats, took my hand as they both carefully helped me onto the deck. At first, I cared more about hearing Cap’s yarns about his most interesting experiences on the high seas than I was in the fishing, and I remember seeing porpoises and an occasional shark gliding through the beautiful blue water of the Atlantic.

When our half-day or full-day fishing trip was over the process of getting me off the boat safely was reversed. Granddaddy and Capt. Benny would hold my hand as they helped me onto the pier, and I doubt that Granddaddy ever dropped his grip on my hand as we reversed course and re-entered the world of Harker’s Island.

That granddaughter’s October wedding was outside. As we walked back to have the after-

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## Holding Hands ...

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wedding feast, my grandson's girlfriend, Connor, walked next to me. She said, "I am not sure that I can walk in the grass with these high heels on." I told her, "Well, I am not sure with my balance problem and bad back that I can walk on this grass either." You guessed it: Connor and I held onto each other as we shuffled through the green grass and returned to the site of our dinner. There was not even a stumble as the 20-something-year-old and the 80-year-old walked back to the wedding banquet that awaited us. How many times have I done something like this in my life—hold someone's hand?

When my daughter Julieanne was a baby, I would place her warm little body against my chest, and we would take a nap together on a weekend afternoon. It seemed like only a few minutes later that I was holding her hand just like my mother and grandfather had done for me decades before. As Julieanne's four children grew up, holding their hands was a regular occurrence. Mother, father, granddaddy, grandmamma, uncle, aunt—it is all the same. Safety and love go hand-in-hand.

When I take my developmentally disabled cousin Frankie to get ice cream, I hold her hand to steady her as we walk together into the ice cream parlor. This is both a show of fondness for her and a safety issue. Frankie is 75 years old and has become a little wobbly when she walks. When she attended my wife's funeral, Frankie was afraid because of the tangled undergrowth around the gravesite. Two volunteers were immediately by her side to help her.

Of course, I cannot leave out the holding of hands by lovers—by two individuals who are sharing their lives with each other. The clasping of hands in public or private is a show of love, of devotion to one another and to the intimacy that they share. One might see two pre-teens holding hands on a playground or in their neighborhood as they play various games and share the outdoors with each other. All these examples of holding hands are different, but in the end *holding hands* is a tiny piece of life that can mean so much in so many ways. †

## What About Our TFAD Friends in the Health Center

by Don Chesnut

(submitted by Judy Vick)

TFAD's program "Staying Connected" helps us Independent Living (IL) residents know when folks move to the Health Center (HC). But with this move, many experience loneliness. And simply "staying connected" doesn't mean we are involved. So, how can we be involved?

- Go to the Health Center to visit someone, give them a brief tour of their neighborhood (the HC resident may not know as much about the building as you do), and get to know this person a bit better. There is a list in the *Staying Connected* notebook of HC folks who would like visitors and a list of HC Activities.
- Go to the Social Hours in the HC on Fridays at 3:30 in the 5th floor Community Room. Wear your Name Tag, and let folks know who you are. Mix and Mingle. All TFAD residents can be involved in all HC activities.
- When you visit, bring along an IL resident who has never visited the HC, to introduce them to the HC and to visiting routines.
- Invite and escort HC residents to activities in the main building.
- Whatever involvement you have with TFAD friends now, keep it when they move to the Health Center. And visit there to make new friends. Join the Volunteer Friends and Visitors.

**Judy Vick**, Chair of the RA Health Committee, says "Don was a very active member of TFAD for 17 years. He and his wife, **Debbie**, lived in the former Health and Wellness Center for several years and moved to the new HC when it was completed. Don passed away shortly after writing this plea for inclusion. Debbie continues to live in the Health Center. The Staying Connected program began March 22, 2023, and 43 resident moves have been posted as of this writing." †

## Snakes Alive!

by Diane Strauss

When my husband and I moved from Madison WI to Chapel Hill for his first faculty appointment, his concerns centered on academia. Mine, on snakes. Since childhood I'd feared those slimy, slithery, sneaky devils. I'd bought into the stereotypes early that snakes were evil, dangerous. Think about it: the wily serpent in the Garden of Eden, the asp whose bite killed Cleopatra, Medusa with her coiffure of writhing reptiles. Snakes were the devil!

This opinion did not lessen with age. Before the move to North Carolina, I'd read about its flora and fauna. To my dismay I learned that the state housed more than its fair share of reptiles. When at last in Chapel Hill, friends and neighbors seemed to delight in telling me about six-foot-long blacksnakes that crawled up the sides of screened porches, venomous baby copperheads whose bites could hospitalize folks for days, an aggressive Durham cottonmouth who favored a local golf course water hazard, and others who slithered in via gaps in a kitchen sink cupboard. No place, it seemed, was safe.

One day, I read an ad in *The Daily Tar Heel*, placed by psychology graduate students for a project to help people cope with deep-seated fears. I was skeptical but intrigued. I called, learning that through a process of gradual desensitization involving several weekly visits, subjects would encounter and in some way overcome or at least minimize their fear. I enlisted. The first week was tolerable. I took a standardized test that measured anxiety levels raised by common fears and phobias, glanced at a portfolio of reptile photos, and heard about my partners-to-be. They were two snakes, one a yellow corn snake and one a blacksnake. The next week, I'd be introduced to one of them and would be working with it for part of the project, after which I'd switch to the other.

The following week, I "met" my partner. It was a meet from a distance. The grad student led me towards a room, opened its door, and invited me to stand on the threshold while looking across the

room towards a covered aquarium, empty of all but the blacksnake coiled at the bottom. If it had moved, I'd have turned and run, but I realized that it was either unaware of or indifferent to my presence. Hallelujah!

Progress was slow. As the weeks passed, I gradually moved further into the room and spent more time in it. Blackie (I decided naming it might be a good coping mechanism) was indolent, not menacing. Sweaty palms, shallow breathing, and pounding heartbeats no longer afflicted me when we shared the room. During the last three weeks I spent with him I progressed to laying my hands on the glass sides of the aquarium, removing its cover, and, finally, reaching into the aquarium and lifting my reptilian buddy, first placing him on the floor and then picking him up again and holding him while I sat. As he crawled over me, I was euphoric. I'd held Blackie! He wasn't slimy, was nicely muscled, his scales felt good, and I'd survived.

I faced my "graduation," the last session featuring the corn snake, with pride and even anticipation. I would lift that yellow rascal out of his aquarium and let him crawl where he would. I was cured! Graduation day dawned sunny and bright, a good omen. About an hour before I was scheduled to meet and defeat the corn snake, I received a call from the grad student. My appointment and all the rest for that day had been canceled. After some hemming and hawing, the caller admitted that in the previous appointment the corn snake had bitten the participant. "But don't worry," I was told. "You can always reschedule."

I never rescheduled. I never met the corn snake. Was the project a failure? Not at all. Although I will never again voluntarily hold a snake, I've become more selective about those that I fear. Blacksnakes, garter snakes, and corn snakes no longer make my blood run cold. Copperheads, rattlers, cottonmouths, and coral snakes still do. I no longer consider myself ophidiophobic. Thank you, Blackie, wherever you may be. †

## Two Peas in a Pod?

by Joan Seiffert

Determination, stick-to-itiveness, may be 99 percent learned behavior. Or could there be a genetic, intergenerational factor? Consider a case example from my family: Erin climbed up on his bed with a large book of Greek mythology. She was small for seven; the bed was high, the book awkward. It was her idea to come to see her great-grandfather. She had been raised in a tradition that celebrated family each August for over 150 years by gathering in the mountains for swapping stories, catching up on the mischief of the teenagers (and adults), tracking any newcomers, grieving the lost ones, and generally getting into everyone's business. Not to be missed! She had heard that there was a great-grandfather nearby and she wanted to see him. A family thing.

Just the week before, I had pushed my father's wheel chair up the long hall from Independent Living to Health Care. He and I both knew that he would not return from this uphill walk. I was wiping tears away quietly. "What's the matter?" he had said to me. He reached into his pajama pocket and pulled out a five-dollar bill. "Will this help?"

Erin's mother, Susan, was also there this day. as the chauffeur. Dad, beaming, as usual, was happily ensconced in the bed by the window. "I have a

window. I can see everything," he had told us. Now, with a roommate, he had made a decision: "I asked him to call me Bill instead of Bishop." This was a giant step for a man brought up in the coal fields of eastern Pennsylvania where as a child he had driven the hauling mule up long hills. Through a series of choices and helpers, Dad had turned himself into a bishop in the Episcopal Church. He had long been referred to as "The Bishop." From mule driver to prelate ... and now "Bill."

Erin and her table-sized book nestled in and began, page by page, to read the tales and show the drawings of Zeus and Hera, Aphrodite and Persephone, Achilles and Troy, on and on ... and on. Susan would often say something like, "Erin, that is a very big book, maybe Grandpa is tired." At which, Dad would say brightly. "Oh no," and Erin would continue. The sun through the window was shifting, still Erin and Dad continued.

I don't recall exactly how it ended. Perhaps Dad's neighbor in the other bed was grumbling at the long disturbance in his area, or, more likely,, Erin had no more pages to turn. It was time to go. Soon Erin and Susan and Greek mythology had said their good-byes. Dad turned to me and said "Who was that little person?" †

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## Flower Pot Culture ...

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With those varied skills, he somehow learned what it takes for plants to flourish in an apartment. He says he likes container gardening because it is easy to move pots into the areas where they do best.

Craig describes how he helps plants thrive in containers. For soil he uses a combination of cocoa fiber, composted cow manure and perlite. For the outdoor containers he drills extra drainage holes in containers with flat bottoms and affixes four 3/4" self-adhesive bumpers. These facilitate air flow and drainage and eliminate bugs between the flat bottom and the

soil. Squirrels who dig in containers are the major problem. As 3rd and 4th floor apartment dwellers know, they can easily climb up the side of the building to resident balconies. Craig has found the most effective prevention is covering the area around the plants with flat river rocks that have the added advantage of serving as mulch. For large shrubs such as camellias, he recommends covering the soil with pieces of wire cloth held in place by a couple of stones.

People arrive at The Forest at Duke with many skills, and it is not surprising that they refocus on different questions here. Craig's success with plants encourages most of us struggling with new challenges, including how to deal with potted plants, and provides a valuable example. †



**Bob Blake's**

**PUZZLE**

Each word below can be found by either reading up, down, forward, back-ward or diagonally.

Puzzles like this were on the back page of most issues for ten years.  
This was from the issue of January 1995.

M E L A N O M A E G A H R R O M E H  
 E H R A K B S T O L C D O O L B V S  
 R Z E U E S S A I N O M U E N P T R  
 O D C V T S I T Z W U B S D F J E E  
 S N L R E C U D R T J N I A P N N M  
 Z I U C A R A A D E G K T L H O D I  
 E L S R H M T R N E S H I M I I O E  
 M B I O Z Y P I F K R S T T V S N H  
 A K T U R B P C G U P U A Z E N I Z  
 L Q I P D E Z E S O A P T S S E T L  
 A C H E J S L H R U I Q S P M T I A  
 T X C B A Y E C C T C F O R U Q S N  
 H U N H R T J L S H E K R A M R A O  
 G E O Z T S C N G O I N P I P K M I  
 N A R G H Y O W A N I L S N S F O T  
 I Z B N R C O U G H I R L I O B C C  
 G C O L I C D I A R R H E A O J U E  
 A A M O T A M E H U R T S T B N A F  
 S S E N I Z Z I D O F E V E R V L N  
 A B R A S I O N N R U B N U S A G I

**OUR AILMENTS**

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|------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Abrasion         | Boil         | Fever        | Infection     | Shingles   |
| Abscess          | Chill        | Fracture     | Lame          | Sore       |
| Ache             | Colic        | Glaucoma     | Melanoma      | Stress     |
| Aging            | Constipation | Gout         | Mumps         | Sunburn    |
| Alzheimers       | Cough        | Hematoma     | Nausea        | Tendonitis |
| Arteriosclerosis | Cramp        | Hemorrhage   | Pain          | Tension    |
| Arthritis        | Croup        | Hernia       | Pneumonia     | Tumor      |
| Blind            | Cyst         | Hives        | Prostatitis   | Ulcer      |
| Bronchitis       | Diarrhea     | Hurt         | Ruptured Disk | Vertigo    |
| Blood Clots      | Dizziness    | Hypertension | Sprain        |            |