

## Turkmenistan ... A Very Different Stan Indeed

by Bennett Galef

A year ago, I published in *The Forester* an article describing massive changes occurring in the Sultanate of Oman under Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said, who in 1970 assumed absolute control and used vast oil and gas revenues to propel his people at jet speed from the 15th into the 21st Century, providing a semi-nomadic population with electricity, running water, air conditioning, paved roads, modern education, healthcare, and access to the outside world. This September, Mertice and I vacationed in Turkmenistan, a former province of the USSR which, together with four other “Stans,” became independent upon the collapse of the Soviet regime in 1991.

The decades since 1991 witnessed discovery in Turkmenistan of the world’s 6th largest reserves of natural gas along with abundant oil. Turkmenistan’s government, like that of Oman, subsequently provided its citizens with free electricity, water, natural gas, education, health care, etc. Still, all did not go well in this potential paradise.

Saparmurat Niyazov (SN), the first leader of an independent Turkmenistan, and his successor, Gurbandury Berdimuchadow have used much of Turkmenistan’s vast wealth to build a modern capital city, Ashgabat, adjacent to the Soviet city constructed in the wake of a devastating 1948 earthquake that levelled the former Ashgabat, killing more than 100,000 people. However, the housing and public buildings the Soviets provided were hastily built leaving what is now a rundown “old city” whose streets, viewed from our vehicle, were lively and inviting, but we were not allowed to visit.

The modern Ashgabat, a sea of vast, white-marble faced buildings flanking nearly empty multilane boulevards and elaborate, gold and white-marble public buildings surrounded by perfectly manicured, but totally deserted, parks is disquieting. The city’s scale is simply inhuman. Even if its streets were thronged with pedestrians, they would be lost in the



*A view of the new Ashgabat. The old city in the distance has a heavy air-polution haze.*

vast spaces and glistening white neo-classic facades.

At street level, there are no stores, no cafes, no restaurants, no people and few cars (all of which are, by law, white and freshly washed). Our guide/minder suggested that the absence of pedestrians reflected ubiquitous underground parking that permitted locals to travel without appearing on the streets. Maybe, but we still wonder if anyone actually lives in the sparkling new apartment buildings, unblemished by any sign of human activity.

In 1999, SN had himself elected President for Life and remained absolute ruler until his death in 2006. SN’s governance was, at best, idiosyncratic. He banned men from wearing long hair or beards, banned opera and ballet, and outlawed smoking everywhere in the country. He banished dogs from the capital and renamed the months of the year after himself and members of his family.

Among the many monuments SN commissioned were both a huge statue of himself that rotated throughout the day so as to face the sun continually and the largest mosque in central Asia. Unwisely, instead of decorating the interior of the mosque with

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## The Forester

The newsletter of the Residents' Association of the Forest at Duke, Inc., 2701 Pickett Rd., Durham, NC 27705-5610. Published monthly except July, August, and September by and for the residents:

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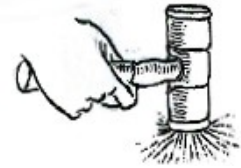
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## President's Podium



by Banks Anderson

Our new fiscal year has begun. Treasurer Ken Barrett presented the Residents' Association budget for the 2019–2020 year at the RA Directors Meeting. Residents will be pleased to know that there is no increase in dues as your Association is not only solvent but has a significant reserve. This is largely attributable to the popularity of our *Pictorial Directory*. Be sure to check that your photo and the information beneath it is correct before the 2020 *Pictorial Directory* goes to press. In doing so you make it more reliable and more attractive to purchase.

Printing at TFAD is a large and continuing industry. Every month The Forest prints an *Activities Book* and associated weekly *Forest Forward* bulletins. Dining menus, marketing notebooks, and programs for in-house events spew from our printers daily. But our world is going digital. Information on TV 1390 is a palsied first step. A fast interactive portal to serve resident transportation, dining, and clinic reservations is actively being pursued. In future years every apartment and cottage will have an Alexa or Siri box that listens, senses movement, answers questions, presents choices, makes reservations, checks cardiac function, and issues stentorian reminders to take pills from a dispenser that recognizes faces, records doses, and then refills automatically. But I am analog. I enjoy reading paper papers. Digital is fingers creating music. I don't crave binary precision. I can wait.

## In Memoriam

Lillis Altshuller November 5, 2019

Jean Wolpert November 10, 2019

## Library Science 101

by Carol Reese

### NEW EXHIBIT – DEBUT NOVELS

The current exhibit highlights the debut novels of authors ranging from Charles Dickens to Abraham Verghese. Dickens' debut novel was *The Pickwick Papers*, which was published in monthly installments from March 1836 until November 1837. This first novel catapulted Dickens to immediate fame. His witty, episodic accounts of Samuel Pickwick and his friends in the Pickwick Club kept readers coming back month after month. If you haven't read it yet, try an oldie but goodie.

*Bastard out of Carolina*, by Dorothy Allison, was published in March 1992. It is semi-autobiographical and explores the expectations of gender and mother-child relationships. Reviewers pointed out her perfect ear for speech and its natural rhythm. If you liked *To Kill a Mockingbird*, give this novel a try.

*Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese, published in 2009, is a saga of twin brothers who were virtually orphaned by their mother's death and the disappearance of their father. Reviewers found the book "absorbing, exhilarating, and exhausting." While this might not be an easy read, you should find the characters and their world compelling.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are still needed to help out on the weekends. Would you be willing to give an hour or two either Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning to help keep the Library functioning? This would involve things such as re-shelving books, filing book cards of books taken out, locating cards for returned books, keeping things in order, etc. This is also a good way to meet and chat with other residents.

If you think you might be interested in helping out, please contact me at 919-401-8742 or via email at <reese.carol911@yahoo.com>.

### LIBRARY BOOK SALE

The next **Residents Book Sale** will be on **Friday, December 13th from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**. Each item will be \$1.00 (cash only). The sale will be held in the Library's workroom in the back just past the Conference Room. Remember Christmas is right around the corner! ☿

### In this issue...

...are profiles of our four Pioneer Team Members, all of whom responded to The Forest at Duke's search for employees when it opened in 1992 and who are still on board, still making all our lives better.

Here they are—as they looked about the time they joined TFAD's team. For their stories, turn to pages 6 and 7.



Laurie Lach

Hired: July 30, 1992

Laurie & resident Evelyn Doyle

Title then: Dining Services Coordinator

Title today: Clinic Administrative Manager



Glenn Arrington

Hired: August 21, 1992

Glenn & His Parents

Title then: Activities Driver

Title today: Resident Life Program Assistant



Carol Adams

Hired: November 11, 1992

High School

Title then: Housekeeper

Title today: Assistant Laundry Supervisor



Eric Reid

Hired: November 20, 1992

Bootcamp

Title then: Security Officer

Title today: Reception—H&W/Community Center



## BOOK REVIEW

## ***Lands of Lost Borders*** ***A Journey on the Silk Road***

by Kate Harris  
 (Harper Collins, 2018, 305 pp.)

by Caroline Raby

In reading a *UNC Carolina Alumni Review* (January 2019), I was immediately mesmerized by an article on Kate Harris '05 entitled, "In the Footsteps of Marco Polo: Mars Isn't Ready for Kate Harris." An *Alumni* article with such a title doesn't, however, seem unusual for this Canadian farm girl: she won the prestigious Morehead-Cain Scholarship and a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford, and attended MIT as well.

As a 10-year-old, Harris was captivated by her mother's book about Marco Polo's exotic travels on the Silk Road. She traced the road on an Atlas and wanted to be like the Venetian, later writing of "roaming far-flung lands, gazing at horizons that melted into fantastic mirages—turquoise-tiled domes and shifting deserts, labyrinthine bazaars and ice-mazed mountains."

As a teen, she decided that she wanted to be an extra-terrestrial astronaut adventurer, heading for Mars and the stars. However, during her university studies to do just that, she realized she wanted to explore her own planet.

After graduation, she traveled with a friend, Mel Yule, to central Asia. She wrote of their arduous trek from Istanbul to Kashmir, covering over 6,200 miles. The young women's sometimes dangerous travel took them on some of the Earth's highest and most difficult roads...on bicycles! (They *did* travel by plane or train when biking was impossible.)



Photo by MelYule

Carolina Alumni Review

After landing in Turkey in 2011, they followed the shores of the Black Sea and crossed the Caucasus Mountains in Georgia, going down to Ustyurt Plateau, across Tajikistan's Pamir Mountains, over the Tibetan Plateau, and along the Kashmir Siachen Glacier to China.

I was struck by Harris' exceptional quality of writing, despite her young age. She is like Annie Dillard, except seemingly powered by nuclear energy. Yet, her style is beautifully evocative, sometimes pensive, and also exhilarating, like taking a whiff of fresh, high-altitude mountain air. There is a meditative thread to her words also, with a mature understanding of people and their cultures.

Harris published this first book in 2018 and is quoted in both the *Alumni Review* and her book: "I would've gladly gone where none had before, with no promise of return, for even a whiff of insight into the basic perplexities of existence. Where did we come from and are we alone in the cosmos and what exactly—or even generally—does it all mean? Places like the Tibetan Plateau or the Taklamakan Desert seemed to promise not answers, exactly, but a way of life equal to the wildness of existing at all." She goes on to say, "We're only here by fluke, and only for a little while, so why not run with life as far and wide as you can?"

Harris has been cited as one of Canada's best travel writers and won the Ellen Meloy Desert Writers Award. She lives off grid in the Yukon Territory, with "silence, the hush of snow rewriting all the roads," remembering "living on instant coffee and laughter and scraps of light." ¶

*Caroline Raby, a retired science writer, is a history buff, a tireless reader, and a frequent reviewer for The Forester.*



Photo by MelYule

Carolina Alumni Review



## Turkmenistan ...

(Continued from Page 1)

passages from the Quran (as Moslem tradition required), SN used quotations from quasi-religious texts he had authored. Subsequently, Moslem authorities refused to recognize the building as a mosque. Mertice and I happened to visit this immense structure, designed for more than 10,000 worshippers, during a call to Friday prayer. We were the only people present.

More seriously, SN insisted that every broadcast on the state-controlled news media commence with a pledge that the broadcaster's tongue should shrivel should he slander the ruler, the country, or its flag. Independent political activity was criminalized, considered treason and punishable by life in prison without parole. Religious freedom was not much greater than that in politics. Women's role in society was (and is) limited not by law, but by socio-religious norms in this 89 percent Sunni Muslim country.

Gurbandury Berdimuchadow has largely followed in SN's footsteps. According to Human Rights Watch, Turkmenistan remains one of the world's most repressive countries. The economy is ranked by Forbes as the sixth most corrupt in the world. Reporters Without Borders ranks Turkmenistan as having the world's third least-free press (after North Korea and Eritrea). Ninety percent of the population works for either the government or government controlled entities.

There are extravagant monuments: the world's largest enclosed Ferris wheel, the world's largest sculpture of a star (I kid you not), immense statues and memorials celebrating Turkmenistan's rulers and history, and lavish white marble gold-accented public buildings brilliantly illuminated in technicolor at night, a misplaced Las Vegas.

Costumes intrigued. Although men wear standard western garb, women, especially young women, dress in a traditional (?) costume of velvet (often red or

purple) covering them from neck to ankle, each outfit custom tailored and very form fitting. Brides are draped with veils and shawls completely obscuring them from view. Their grooms sport gold-embroidered red-velvet jackets, black pants, and knee-high black riding boots. All locals, at least those with whom our minder (a very bright, clearly military young man with impeccable English) allowed us to interact, were extremely welcoming, insisting on taking selfies with us.

For those with hard currency, food was excellent and inexpensive (dinner for four in a fine restaurant with drinks cost US\$24). The Ashgabat



Photo by Bennett

*Mertice Finds a Hat*

bazaar had the most wonderful, fun-fur hats in all the world (if only we still lived in Canada!), some excellent embroidery, and traditional hand-woven rugs, though export of the latter more than 50 years old is forbidden.

And the horses! The most elegant, long-necked, light-bodied Akhel-Teke—famed for endurance, strength, intelligence, and beautiful coats—are a source of justifiable pride. A huge statue honoring the beasts stands at the center of the new Ashgabat.

As to tourists, there are few (rumor had it less than 10,000 in 2018). We stayed three nights in the 5-star Oguzkent Hotel, an ultramodern 300-room extravaganza with a multi-storied atrium. At the free breakfast, Mertice and I, our two travelling companions, and one other couple were the only diners.

Before visiting Turkmenistan, I had mistakenly thought the five thirty-year-old "Stans" were homogeneous. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Since independence, each has followed a different path, some to Socialism, others to Capitalism (unfortunately, all to overwhelming corruption), some toward freedom, this one to crushing dictatorship. ‡

*Bennett Galef taught in the Department of Psychology at McMaster University for 35 years.*



Photo by Bennett

*Bride & Groom*

## Our Forest Team Pioneers Talk...

### Carol Adams

Carol Adams, who grew up in Vanceboro, NC, moved to Durham to join her older sister soon after she graduated from high school. Her first job was at Wendy's which was followed by one or two others that weren't fulfilling. A few years after her move, she heard about a residence for seniors opening on Pickett Road, found this place called The Forest at Duke, and came over to apply for a job. She remembers being interviewed by Kathy Crapo and her happiness when she was offered the position of housekeeping staff member.



And so, in 1992, just as the first residents were settling into their apartments and cottages, Carol joined the crew of domestic workers who cleaned those residences weekly. She liked the work and kept at it for a decade.

For several years following she was assistant to the housekeeping supervisor, Judy Turner, and then took over the laundry room where she's remained for the last ten years and where she plans to stay. There her job is laundering the clothes and bedding of the residents of Health and Wellness. She sets her own hours—6AM-2:30PM!

Asked to tell of one TFAD experience she'll never forget, Carol described a very recent scene in an apartment where she was to cover for the regular cleaner who was out that day. When the doorbell went unanswered, Carol let herself in and headed for the bedroom. There she found a body still in the bed with the covers over its head and no visible motion. She called Tom Bivens who rushed over with Richard Dix to investigate. Their noisy arrival stirred the resident who rose up to announce, "I'm not dead! I'm asleep!"

Carol is the mother of three sons—35 year old twins, Joshua and Omaree, and 26 year old Isaac who shares her home. She is a twin herself, an older sister is also the mother of twins, and her uncle is father to twins. She has four grandkids, but no grand twins...so far.

Thinking back to what TFAD was like when it first opened makes Carol smile. "Not many trees!" But she remembers those first years of The Forest at Duke with great fondness. She also remembers so many renovations, additions, changes to the campus, to the administration, to the staff, to the size in every aspect. It is, she says, very different from the place she chose to work back in the day! But she still loves it and looks forward to more years. ♣

### Glenn Arrington

Glenn Arrington, Activities Assistant, spends a lot of his TFAD hours driving. When he's not driving, he's setting up rooms inside for all kinds of functions, like the recent Halloween Carnival at Health and Wellness. Which reminds him of his longest lasting memory of his years here—the New Year's festivities in 2000. To celebrate the turn of the century, Glenn was persuaded to join seven other guys—three staffers and four residents—in performing a costumed dance to the tune of "New York, New York." A choreographer was brought in to teach them the dance. And the costumes—tutus!—were created by Resident Pioneer Molly Simes.

This was probably not what Glenn envisioned when he applied for a job at TFAD in August 1992. Born, raised and schooled in Durham, he graduated from Cresset Christian Academy in 1984 believing that he wanted to work in the restaurant business. His first job was with Americana Catering & Games where he helped set up for banquets and festivals. His next two—with McCuller's Maintenance and then UNC hospitals—mostly involved cleaning. When he heard about the soon-to-open TFAD from Howard DeWitt, the CEO of Croasdaile and a friend from church who offered to recommend him to someone he knew here, he applied for a job in what is now called the Resident Life Department.



Glenn's first TFAD interview took place in the Community Center where tables were set up to accommodate multiple and on-going hiring interviews. His first was with Lucy Grant, who then took him over to meet Karen McGomery, the first CEO. In the discussions he had with them, he recognized his own admiration of older adults. His grandmother, who died when he was only 14, had taught him how much can be learned from the elderly—and how hard it is to lose those beloved teachers. So, when offered the job of full-time TFAD driver, he accepted it gladly, realizing it promised a lot of contact with the residents.

There was, in 1992, only one car—a Classic Caprice station wagon just like Security's first car—for errands, grocery runs, medical trips, whatever. A bit later, two more drivers were hired and a little second-hand bus, known as "Shake Rattle and Roll," was bought. More and more vehicles have been added over the years, creating our current TFAD fleet.

Glenn and his wife, Tammie, have just celebrated their 19th anniversary. Only a year to go to reach the big 20th! ♣



## ...with Editor Shannon Purves

### Laurie Lach

Laurie Lach's parents were, she says, "Yankees." And so was she, back in her school days growing up in Elma, New York, 30 miles south of Buffalo, NY, and attending Alfred State University, also near Buffalo, where she earned an associate's degree in restaurant and hotel management. While she was still in college, her parents moved to Port Charlotte, on the west coast of Florida. She joined them there after graduation but found she wasn't cut out to live in Florida.



Happily, Laurie had a college friend who lived in Raleigh and welcomed her pal to our slightly cooler southern state where Laurie got a job in dining management at the Raleigh Sheraton Hotel. After several years there, she happened to see an interesting ad in the local newspaper—a new CCRC called The Forest at Duke was looking to hire clerical dining administrators.

Laurie remembers her TFAD interview as nerve-racking because she was seated facing a wall of mirrors. The facial expressions she could not avoid seeing included one that accompanied her little white lie that she was familiar with Lotus 1-2-3 (the spreadsheet program that predated Excel). Evidently her face didn't give her away! She got a call that very afternoon offering her the job of Dining Coordinator. She accepted it, learned Lotus, and worked at it for 15 years along with favorite colleagues, Mark Maxwell and Barrie Lobo. She remembers with special fondness the TFAD Christmas performance in which she (in a tuxedo) and Barrie (in a long black evening gown) lip-synched "Baby, It's Cold Outside." "No wonder I love it here," she laughs.

In 2007, Laurie moved to a new job in Health & Wellness assisting then Director Leslie Jarema in the use of four newly certified Medicare beds. And then, in 2017, she came upstairs to the Clinic where she is now our Clinic Administrative Manager and working hard to implement the upcoming electronic medical records for the residents.

Laurie is also a busy mom to Gillian—12 years old and an avid basketball player at her middle school in Efland—whom Laurie and her husband, Bryan, adopted from South Korea when Gillian was six months old.

One last thing that sets Pioneer Laurie apart: she is the only TFAD staff member whose e-mail address uses only her full first name, the way e-mail names were composed back in July 1992. She cherishes her Staff Pioneer ID: <Laurie@forestduke.org>. ¶

### Eric Reid

Eric Reid was born to make people feel happy, safe and welcome. And, for 28 years, he has been doing exactly that on weekends at the Forest at Duke. For his first 19 years here, it was with a watchful eye from the driver's seat of the single Security car—a Cadillac Caprice Classic station wagon. Then, since 2013, when TFAD contracted Security out for five years, it's been from the reception desks in both the Community Center and the Health and Wellness...on weekends.

Weekends because Eric has always had two jobs—a full-time one at The Duke Store and the part-time one at TFAD. On November 23, 2019, he celebrated being here for 28 years. On February 2, 2020, he will have been at Duke for 27. And he has no plans to change this schedule or anything else having to do with his long, happy career.

From a big family that goes way back in Durham history and to which he has added his two kids, Eric and Cora, Eric has always lived here, except for five years serving his country. Just after graduating from Hillside High School in 1987, he joined the Navy and was assigned to the USS Enterprise, an aircraft carrier. Imagining that he would eventually own a restaurant, he signed on as a Mess Specialist. And so, when he left the Navy in 1992, he took a job in dining services at C.C. Spaulding Elementary School. There, he became friends with the receptionist, "Miss Jay," who told him about the new retirement community opening on Pickett Road and looking for food service workers.

Eric wasted no time calling to ask for an interview and was seen first by "Miss Crapo." She sent him in to see Keith Franklin in Security who offered him the weekend job. Eric took it on the spot, and, luckily for us, has been here every weekend since.

The job at The Duke Store was offered to Eric a few months later and he took it, giving up his potential career in dining for one in sales—in his case, the sale of internet devices in The Computer Store. Asked if he is, by now, a computer whiz, he laughs and answers that his grasp of IT is "a work in progress."

His favorite memory from his 28 years at TFAD? "That's easy! The time Coach K came to celebrate some resident's birthday in the Dining Room. I had to beat back all the old guys who crowded round him with their cameras. 'Leave him alone!' I told them. 'No photos allowed!' After I shooed them all away, he let me take a selfie with him. I framed it." ¶



## Welcome New Residents

### Louise Scribner

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Louise was born in Iowa City, IA, and moved to New York City when she was 14. She received her bachelor of music in music literature from the University of Michigan in 1961. Her career as a professional oboist was extensive. She was an artist member of the Bronx Arts Ensemble (BAE) and is featured on its recordings. She was a member of the American Symphony Orchestra as second oboist for 29 years. She also performed as principal with the New Jersey Opera Orchestra, the Long Island Philharmonic, the Dance Theater of Harlem Orchestra, and in freelance ensembles and Broadway shows in New York, including *A Little Night Music*, *Pippin*, *Candide*, *Les Miserables*, and *Cats*. She was on the faculties of Westchester Conservatory, Third Street Music School, Rutgers University at Newark, Iverdale Music School, and Horace Mann School.

Publicist and office manager of the BAE from 1972, Louise managed all concerts, serving as music librarian and liaison with performance venues. She was responsible for all press, marketing, outreach, and production for concerts and in-school programs.

In retirement, Louise served as BAE board secretary and assisted the office as a volunteer. She is the widow of the late BAE founder and Executive Artistic Director William Scribner. Her son Andy is an organic chemist who worked at Research Triangle Park, mostly at Scynexis, on the design and synthesis of potential drugs. He now teaches chemistry at Durham Tech and writes for *The Princeton Review*.

Louise's interests are yoga, speed walking, reading, and trying to follow politics. ☸

### Ketki Shah

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Ketki grew up in Mumbai, India, where she went to school until she went to Maharaja Sayajirao University in Vadodara. She was a home management major. Her future husband, Bubabhai, earned a doctorate in statistics in India, and did post-doctoral work for three years at Iowa State University in Ames. When he finished and returned to Mumbai, the Shahs were married. They emigrated to Durham in 1966, where Bubabhai took a position in the Research Triangle Institute where he remained for his whole career.



Ketki spent some time getting acclimated to living in the southern US, then found a program at UNC-Greensboro where she could study further. She commuted twice a week and got her master's degree in home management in 1969. Jobs were limited for home economics positions, so Ketki went to the School of Public Health at UNC-Chapel Hill for an MPH in health education in 1971.

She finally took a part-time position at Research Triangle Institute where she held an administrative post as well as doing data editing for 19 years. She was also caring for her family. She practices her Hindu faith, and attends temple religious discourses.

The Shahs have two children, Parag and Mona. Parag lives in Cary and works as an accountant at the Durham VA Hospital. He and his wife have a daughter. Mona and her husband live in Wake Forest, where she is a special education teacher.

When her husband passed away, Ketki's son helped her to move to The Forest. She plays bridge, exercises, and knits and crochets. The afghan squares, baby blankets and caps that she makes are donated to the Unitarian Universalist Church in Durham and to the Hindu Society of NC in Morrisville. The latter society makes donations to WakeMed Hospital. ☸



## Welcome New Residents

### Robert & Celia Ann Saterbak

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C'Ann and Bob grew up in Birmingham, AL. They met in high school, and married after five years of dating. Bob is a graduate of Georgia Tech with bachelor's and master's degrees in Mechanical Engineering. C'Ann graduated from Birmingham Southern College with her degree in Elementary Education.

Bob spent his working career with Exxon Mobil in operating refineries and gas plants around the world, providing project management, refinery technical management, and process guidance. He and Celia maintained a home in Baytown, TX, while having periods in Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Thailand, and Baton Rouge, LA. Bob has been recognized for his contribution of leadership in the corporation. C'Ann raised their three daughters and taught students from pre-school to junior high in their various places of residence. She was a Girl Scout troop leader for 10 years. She has written and administered grants to serve disadvantaged children.

C'Ann and Bob have been active members of the Methodist Church, C'Ann concentrating her efforts on education, youth, and outreach programs. Bob's work

for the church was principally focused on finance, facility planning, and outreach. They helped plan a new church in League City, TX.

Their daughters seem to have inherited their mother's teaching gene. Ann is on the faculty of the Pratt School at Duke in Bioengineering. Becky is on the faculty of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, TX, teaching Communication Sciences and Disorders. Jill teaches children with special needs at the Junior High School in League City, TX. Among them there are five grandchildren, but only two in this area.

Both Saterbaks enjoy time with grandchildren, travel, photography, and reading. C'Ann enjoys writing her annual Christmas letter to family and friends. ☸



Illustration by horseloversmath.com

## Merry Mice for Christmas

by George Chandler and George Williams

### George Williams

Some twenty years ago, I wrote a book for my children, *Of Mice and Bells* (copy in The Forest Library), about the Church Mice at St. Michael's Church in Charleston and their response to the bells installed in the church tower in 1764. For some reason it caught the fancy of our friend and fellow resident, George Chandler, who wrote a poem based on it for *The Forester* in 2000, and used that poem as his and Marjorie's Christmas card in 2001. He secured from Bob Blake, friend and fellow resident, the two pictures included here to illustrate the action of his poem.

### George Chandler

#### Something Mice for Christmas

On the night before Christmas we went to bed early;  
If I don't get my rest, I'm inclined to be surly.  
In spite of that fact, I am not a good sleeper.  
I awoke about midnight—had I heard a beeper?  
As I lay there in bed I was sure I heard squeaking.  
Most likely the plumbing was once again creaking.  
But the squeaks now seemed louder—they were not abating;  
I decided I must begin investigating.  
I rolled over in bed, from my good eye looked out—  
There were lights in the living room, nary a doubt.  
I climbed out of bed and I looked through the door.  
I saw dozens of mice there, all over the floor,  
And upon the tables, and in every chair;  
Wherever I looked, a mouse seemed to be there.  
I almost cried out at this fantastic sight,  
But I knew if I did, I'd give my wife a fright.  
So I took a good look, and I saw with surprise  
That these mice were behaving like real party guys.  
They'd lit Christmas candles and turned on the tree;  
A whole army of mice was enjoying a spree.  
They had opened the fridge and had got out the cheese,  
And they'd thawed out some dip that was in the deep freeze.  
They'd taken advantage of our early snooze  
And already consumed a good deal of our booze.  
An old gray-headed mouse, when he saw me appear,  
He lifted his glass and showed no sign of fear.  
The rest went on eating and drinking with glee.  
The next move, it seemed, had been left up to me.  
"You're making quite free with my victuals," I said.  
"Who told you to make this your family homestead?"





The gray-headed mouse said, "We hope you don't mind,  
But your cheese is the best we've been able to find.  
We're friends of George Williams; we went to their house,  
But they've moved—no one lives there, not even a mouse.  
We traced them 'cross town with our keen sense of smell,  
But they're not home tonight, I am sorry to tell.  
So we sniffed through the hallways in search of good cheese,  
And we found that your place had the odors that please.  
And a factor of major importance was that  
We could tell right away that you don't have a cat."  
I said, "Friends of the Williamses? Are you Matthew Mouse?  
And would this Belle from Charleston perhaps be your spouse?"  
"That's just who we are," he said, "don't be afraid.  
As you probably know, we are church mice by trade,  
And for most of the year we stick close to our steeple,  
But on Christmas Eve night we can talk to real people.  
We knew that our friends have a great urge to roam,  
But we came on the chance that we'd find them at home.  
We're glad we've been able to meet you instead,  
But we're sorry we routed you out of your bed."  
"That's all right," I replied, "I can sleep any time,  
But it's rare to meet mice who can discourse in rhyme."  
I went to the kitchen and poured out a beer,  
Then sat down with the mice and joined in the good cheer.  
A few hours later we drank our last toast.  
Matthew thanked me for being a generous host.  
"To all of you mice, Merry Christmas," I said,  
"And Happy New Year," then I went back to bed.  
When on the next morning I surveyed the scene  
Our apartment appeared quite unusually clean.  
Not a trace of the feast anywhere could I find;  
Not the tiniest crumb had the mice left behind.



## Mouse Alert

The housekeeper tells me she's seen signs of mice....  
Now mice in a drawing composed by Bob Blake  
Can be winsome and humorous—cuddly—quite nice,  
But the Management feels they're a bit hard to take.  
I suspect that the family that's moved in with me  
May be kin of our old Charleston friend, Matthew Mouse.  
If they're friends of yours, too, I should warn them to flee  
Before Extermination's the Rule of the House. ¶

## Between Thanksgiving and Christmas

by Pete Stewart

For mountain streams that gouge their banks  
And trundle pebbles to the sea  
I give my thanks.

In stands of pines that line the banks  
And drop their needles to the ground  
To make a place where I may sit  
And watch the water swirling by:  
In stands like these  
I find my peace.

For sporty cars that dodge through ranks  
Of greater cars  
I give my thanks.

In trains that glide on wheels of air  
From caves of steel and pick up speed  
Through seedy streets and unkempt yards  
And laundry lines and factories  
Until they reach the countryside  
Where all that rushes by is fair:  
In trains like these  
I find my peace.

For thunderheads that move in banks  
Of gusty wind and slashing rain  
I give my thanks.

In clouds I see above from planes  
Sunlit, shadow-blue, and great  
Diminished then by greater height  
To rows of soldiers on parade  
And yet again from higher keeps  
A vast irregular dimpled plain:  
In clouds like these  
I find my peace.

For fitful unwilling squalls of pique  
That spark my creativity  
I give my thanks.

In rows of books that hold the reins,  
Stolid, picture-less, and plain,  
And give me wherewithal to think:  
In books like these  
I find my peace.

For leaping laughing lilted things  
For things that crawl, for things beneath  
For things that take my breath away  
And pull me back for yet some more,  
For June, October, March, and May  
For anxious days and restless nights  
For daily strolls along a shore  
For conversations free and wide:  
For all these things I give my thanks,  
And in my thanks I find my peace.

*Pete's academic area is the science of computation. He has been a professor at the University of Texas, the Carnegie-Mellon University, and the University of Maryland, and he is a member of the National Academy of Engineering. He enjoys teaching, research, and writing, not to mention hiking and reading. He became interested in writing poems when, as an undergraduate, he took a course in German lyric poetry and wondered how the effects in German poetry might be reproduced in English.*

