



A Tribute to My Mother

by Mary Lou Croucher

In 2002 my mother moved into an apartment at a retirement facility. On this day she walked with me to the parking lot as I was leaving after a visit. As she turned and retraced her steps to the entry, I sat there, watching her, and thought.....

Who is that tiny, frail woman walking with the hesitant grace and resolute gait of an octogenarian—her blue veined hands clutching the keys to her “waiting room?” I was overcome with gratitude and a sense of our connectedness. I wanted to run to her and hold her closely. Does she know the depth of my love for her? Do I really know her? If only I could roll back the years, get inside her mind, her memories, her perceptions (the motherless three-year-old, the five-year-old stepdaughter). Can I intuit her childhood with its laughter and tears, joys and fears? Or sense that beautiful young woman who experienced the onset of adulthood with its dreams and responsibilities? She faced it all with her own unique and stoic spirit, her reticence and resolve, her silent generosity. Could I be a better person with these insights?

Sometimes I feel that I know her well. Her blood flows through my veins, and her genes permeate my cells. Yet, there are times when I feel as if I know her not—seeing only another human entity, walking her enigmatic, personal journey. As I contemplate, the voice of my heart cries out to her “Don’t let go, because when you do, you will take a large part of me with you, and I need the wholeness of you in my life.” Seeing the trepidation and deterioration of one so dear to me is painful and frightening, because we share a providential path. There is a profoundly comfortable space we share which allows our peaceful coexistence and provides assurance of our infinite, immutable bond.

She maintains her privacy with ease and purposeful intent; I respect that. I need to know that her spirit is strengthening for this transitional period in her life. I want to feel that serenity surrounds her in this particular place and time. In this last chapter of her life I pray that she will be blessed with comfortable newness and precious memories. I must be content to hold her in my heart and mind as that special being who gave me life, molded me, disciplined and loved me.

“Walk proudly, mama, and leave footprints for me to follow!”

The Forester

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Sharon Dexter,

Managing Editor

Shannon Purves & George Williams,

Contributing Editors

Dean McCumber & Jo Mooney,

Layout Editors

Maidi Hall, *Copy Editor*

Lois Oliver, Myrna Adams, Paul McBride,
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Circulation Managers

Bennett Galef, *Photographer*

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Columnists

Banks Anderson

Carol Oettinger

Carol Reese

Publishing Assistants

Barbara Anderson

Judith Bentley

Mary Leonard

Nancy McCumber

Nancy Michal

Mary Ann Ruegg

Cathrine Stickel

Carolyn Thomas

Beverly Wheeler

Fran Whitfield

Doug Whitfield

In Memoriam

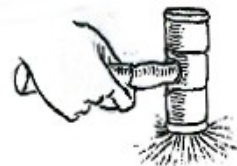
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Karen Raleigh April 4, 2020

Mansukhial Wani April 11, 2020

Judith Shannon April 13, 2020

President's Podium



by Banks Anderson

Community Spread

For a Forest community resident it is discomfiting to hear epidemiologists labeling human-to-human virus transmission as “community spread.” They are differentiating zoonotic animal-to-human spread from human-to-human. Human diseases transmitted from animals are common. The townspeople of Lyme CT don’t infect their neighbors. Lyme disease is transmitted to them by deer ticks. Westerners get Hantavirus from deer mice. Tularemia follows rabbit contact, and cat-scratch disease, you guessed it, comes from close contact with cats carrying *Bartonella* bacteria. These are instances of animals infecting humans and are not community-spread diseases.

Although influenza viruses that easily mutate circulate in pigs and birds, and may sporadically infect humans in close contact, it is not until they evolve to live in humans that now infect other humans that they become community spread. In 2009 a North American H1N1 pig flu virus made the jump to humans and caused the swine flu pandemic through community spread. It spared those our age probably because of immunity acquired years before.

Not so with the SARS viruses CoV-1 and CoV-2. These coronaviruses circulating in Asian bats have infected humans through intermediates with close human contact, and then adapted to community spread. Many coronaviruses are benign, as are the several that cause common colds. But the SARS CoV-2 is not. The disease it causes, Covid-19, is currently killing worldwide. Wuhan, China, at the confluence of the Yangtze and Han rivers, is reported to be the site of the animal-to-man contact spawning Covid-19.

In China, man’s position as apex predator is widely celebrated on the dining tables of the well-to-do. To some, a taste of an exotic animal makes a meal memorable. In a dozen-course dinner, snake and

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Community Spread, Cont'd

pangolin and bat may be served. Skilled chefs preserve the identity of the animal dish. Fish are presented with heads on and eyes and mouths open. Where do chefs get their bush meat? At the wet market. Wuhan, ninth largest city in China, population 11 million, boasts the huge Huanan wet market. Called “wet” because its principal offerings are seafood, it also markets exotic animals like snakes.

In Texas, after rattlesnake round-ups, the snakes are eaten by macho types, and for much the same reasons venomous colorful Asian kraits are on banquet tables in China. Loose and alive they might damage market patronage. Accordingly, they are sold stuffed into glass jars. Although bats are suspected as the SARS viruses’ primary reservoir, the animal–human contact seems to have been with infected intermediary hosts. The civet was the SARS CoV-1 intermediate. The pangolin, an anteater with scales, is alleged to be the intermediate animal infecting humans with our pandemic CoV-2 deadly virus. Picturing someone snuggling up close enough to a pangolin to breathe in a cloud of coronavirus is difficult.

Beginning at the end of December a cluster of Wuhan coronavirus cases was attributed to animal–human spread occurring in the Huanan wet market. Since more than half of this first group had histories of market exposure, and the virus was found in samples from the market, it was publicly announced that these cases were the result of animal–human contact and not the result of community spread. This assertion rapidly proved false, as one Wuhan physician had proclaimed at the very start.

Not only is this virus community spread but also community destroying. Ground zero in the US was a Life Care facility in Kirkland, Washington, with around 120 residents and 180 staff. Misled at first into believing it was influenza, the staff recognized the disaster too late. Of the first 46 deaths in Washington, 30 were associated with this facility, one being a visitor. It is no more.

There are around 15,000 residential care facilities in the US, of which at present about ten percent have reported cases. At this writing, we at TFAD are not one of them, but in the Triangle there are at least five that are. The odds are high that we will join them. It is called community spread. Wash your hands, wear your masks, and keep your distance. ☘

Library Science 416 Service During a Pandemic

Course Prerequisites: Library Science 101

Faculty: Sandy Mouras, Carol Reese, team members from Resident Life, and Library volunteers.

Course Description: Library Operations under Covid-19 Restrictions:

Governor Roy Cooper signed an executive order imposing stricter protections in senior living communities, including The Forest at Duke, effective April 16, 2020. This order requires closing common areas, requires staff to wear masks and undergo daily health screenings, and mandates reporting of all suspected cases to the state health department. We are proud to have been an early adopter of all practices but one: Our Library remained open!

In response to the Governor's order we closed the Library April 16th, but recognizing that the Library is an important resource for entertainment and intellectual stimulation, we have created a way for you to access two of our collections: books and jigsaw puzzles. Requested items will be delivered to, and picked up from, your residence by staff and volunteers. Here are the **instructions for books**:

1. Access the Library catalog from the Residents' Association website www.ForestRes.org; login with the username (without quotes) “resident” and password “RAweb2701”.
2. On the “Quick Links” menu, click on “Library Resources.” This will bring up links to TFAD and Durham County catalogs.
3. Choose The Forest's catalog.
4. Click on the “Search Catalog” square button. A search page will appear.
5. In the rectangular box at the top of the search page, enter the title, author, **or** subject you are seeking, and click on the corresponding *type* button below your entry.
6. Once you find an available book, email ResidentLife@forestduke.org with title and author. (If you are not comfortable on a computer, contact Resident Life, and we'll try to help.)
7. As early as same day but certainly within 48 hours, you will be notified and the book will be delivered to your door.
8. Once finished with the book, please return it to the book drop outside the library, or email us, and we'll arrange for a safe pick up.

You can also **request a random puzzle**. At this time we cannot guarantee specific puzzles, so we hope you're up for a serendipitous opportunity!

Course Credit: Lifelong learning & mental acuity. ☘

Viral Fun

by Carol Oettinger

Here we are, isolated, but the sun is shining and there are new leaves of soft green on the trees against the blue sky to entertain me. Of course, there are also books, yoga, exercises, and meditation on TV.

What are the rest of my fellow prisoners doing for fun? It was by chance that I decided to make a game of asking—fun for me.

A neighbor and I got on the elevator together. I asked him what he was doing to entertain himself. He said, “My wife and I have been taking slides since 1943 and putting them in a box to sort some day. The day has come and we are really enjoying it.” What a good start. After that, several people said that it was a great time to go deeper into genealogy and to enjoy finding out more about their ancestors.

One friend was cleaning out her filing cabinets and found an old issue of the newspaper that had the write up of *my* daughter Liz’s wedding, 44 years ago. I read it with delight and sent it on to Liz immediately.

A lady told me that she had renewed her old battle with her computer and that, so far, the computer was winning. And there is always a comedian, such as the man who said, “I am contemplating my navel; never had time to really do it justice before.” One frustrated looking lady said, “I’ve been working on my To Do List. I don’t seem to be making much progress.”

Another friend said that she had enjoyed playing her recorder years ago, but had put it away. Now she had it out and was practicing every day. Others had renewed playing the piano or violin. What a joyful way to live these days. Many people have gotten out music they haven’t heard in years and are listening to opera, symphonies, jazz. One lady has focused on how people play the violin in our country and other countries.

A man told me that he was working on his Rip Van Winkle pill so that we could all take one and wake up when the virus was conquered. I told my son about that and he countered, “I am working on a no-side-effects pill that kills the virus.” A lady whose birthday is April 4th tells me that her friends have told her to put her birthday off until July 4th so she and our country can celebrate together

A lot of cleaning is also being done in closets, changing winter for summer clothing and finding many things that will be given to Nearly New...when it opens again. A unique contribution was from a lady who said that she hadn’t polished all her silver for years and was having a good time doing it so she could give it away.

One man said that an old friend he hadn’t heard from in years called him and they had a wonderful talk for half an hour. He liked it so much that he began calling other old friends. We are all either emailing, calling, face-timing or ZOOMing our family and friends. Technology is, at this point, a friend indeed.

One man, who was carrying several packages, said, “I’m packing up to move next door to you.” Nice to know. Welcome Friend.

Almost all are walking, if they can, or sitting outside in this beautiful weather. A number of people have chosen to walk the perimeter of our grounds--almost a mile. The tennis players have been able to play on the Orange County courts; no go on Durham County courts. People in the cottages and those with garden plots are having a wonderful time digging in the dirt and planting things. A neighbor caught in the recycling room said, “I have just returned from my daily 15-mile bicycle ride.” I think he gets the prize for keeping physically fit.

The Activities Department has done a number of helpful things. One was handing out little petunia plants to those who wanted them. They are thriving. Activities also gave painting kits to those who wanted to try. One lady said, “For fun, I’m painting; no, not my apartment, but finding out how much fun painting pictures with my kit from Activities can be.” Not to forget, many people mentioned how helpful the Activities table had been. They enjoyed all the good possibilities.

Now is a good time also to thank all the wonderful residents who have done shopping for those who aren’t able to get out and do it themselves. *Hooray for them!*

It has indeed been fun to ask our Forest family how they have been dealing with this enforced isolation. It’s obvious that there are many creative people here. ¶

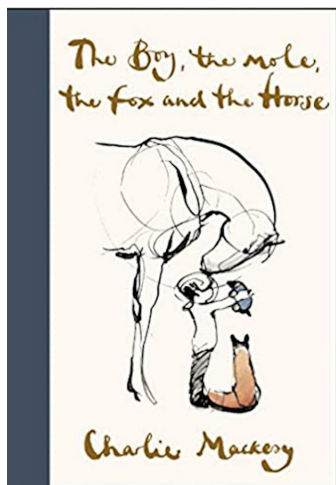
BOOK REVIEW

The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse

by Charlie Mackesy
(Harper One, 2019, 120 pp.)

by Shannon Purves

I admit I had no knowledge of this book until a high school classmate with whom I was grieving over the death of a mutual friend (COVID-19) mentioned it. “Read it,” she said. “It will make you feel better.” She mangled the title, but I finally found it online and learned that it has been on *The New York Times Book Review*’s bestseller list off and on for over a year. As



of April 5, it was number one in the Advice, How-To, Miscellaneous category. “Miscellaneous,” I guess, because this is a book that also belongs in a category I never believed in until now—the “for all ages” one.

It is Charlie Mackesy’s first book. The text is rendered in his handwriting which looks as if he used a brush and watercolor, not a pen. And on every one of the pages is a watercolor illustration, most in black and white and a few in beautiful color.

The story is simple: a little boy is lost and looking for home. On his way over the empty countryside, he meets a talkative mole. He and the mole continue to walk until they come upon a fox caught in a trap. The fox tells the mole, “If I wasn’t caught in this snare, I’d kill you.” The mole replies, “If you stay in that snare you will die,” and proceeds to chew through the wires to free the fox. The three of them continue on until they come upon a lake into which the mole falls. The fox, who can swim, saves him from drowning. The horse then appears and joins their journey.

Each of the animals has a distinct and immediately obvious personality. In the author’s words, “The boy is full of questions, the mole is greedy for cake, the fox is mainly silent and wary because he’s been hurt by life.... The horse is the biggest thing they have ever encountered, and also the gentlest.” The mole is also very wise, the fox very loyal, and the horse very caring. The boy is searching.



Though the words in this book are remarkably few, the messages that the beautiful sketches and paintings carry come across with remarkable strength. I’m not going to ruin your experience by stating those messages here, but I do offer the book’s final sentence: “Sometimes all you hear about is the hate, but there is more love in this world than you could possibly imagine.”

The author, who was born and grew up in England, has been a cartoonist for *The Spectator* and a book illustrator for Oxford University Press. He also



“So much beauty we need
to look after.”

collaborated with Nelson Mandela on a lithograph project, “The Unity Series.”

In his introduction to this book, Mackesy quotes the horse, “The truth is everyone is winging it.” And goes on, “So I say spread your wings and follow your dreams—this book is one of mine. I hope you enjoy it and much love to you. Thank you. Charlie.”

I say, “Thank YOU, Charlie. I am about to give your book not only to my grandkids, but also to their parents.” ♪

Mother-Daughter Lockdown

by Jo Mooney

On Monday, March 9th, I was at the Forest entrance, waiting for my younger daughter, Ellen, to arrive for a visit. She is a Buddhist nun and for 23 years has lived in Myanmar (Burma). That day she was flying in from Belgium where she had been teaching meditation at a Buddhist center. As I waited, Anita Holt and Robin Rogers were leaving for the day, and we exchanged pleasantries—"Belgian chocolate!"

Soon VJ arrived, weary from the trip, and was installed in a guest room. Ellen's Buddhist name is Vajira Ñani, meaning "One who has diamond wisdom," and we call her VJ for short.

The next day at 9 AM I received a phone call from Lee Ann Bailey-Clayton telling me that, because there were 200 cases of the coronavirus in Belgium, I needed to bring VJ and her things to my apartment where we would be appropriately quarantined until she could resume her travels.

Recently I asked VJ some questions for you, *Forester* readers. Here they are with her answers.

Jo Mooney (JM): What would you be doing if you were back in Myanmar?

Vajira Ñani (VJ): During the school year (June-March) I would be at the Panditarama Meditation Center in Yangon (Rangoon). I would be checking the center's e-mail, registering meditators, teaching classes, and translating for meditators who don't speak

Burmese.

JM: Have you any idea how the pandemic is affecting your community?

VJ: Yes. At present the virus has only recently arrived in the country, with 108 cases as of mid-April. Parts of Yangon, including our township, are under lockdown. As far as I know, no one in our community has gotten sick.

JM: What is it like where you live?

VJ: Well, I live in a monastery in which monks, nuns, and lay people live and to which lay people come to work and to meditate. I have a room of my own. The square footage is probably about the same as your bathroom. It has enough room for my bed, for two big bookcases, my desk, a small bureau, and a trunk for my other books. I have a veranda from which I can see the Shwe Dagon pagoda. The roof of the building (approximately 13 × 50 sq yards) is covered and tiled, so we can walk and study up there, rain or shine. There are desks and chairs there for reading, and even a cross-trainer for exercising. The monastery pretty well covers its one acre of land, but we have that space on the rooftop.



*Shwe Dagon Pagoda
Distant Night View*

JM: How far is it to the Shwe Dagon pagoda?

VJ: Not far, walking distance, probably a mile and a half. We're on a hill, so we can see the pagoda from our rooftop.

JM: Tell me about your classes.

VJ: At Panditarama we have a scriptural study program for roughly 25 nuns, mostly Burmese but some foreigners also. We teach a standard curriculum that prepares the nuns for the national Pali exams leading to the Dhammacariya degree. It takes a minimum of five years. All classes are in Burmese. I also sometimes teach children who come to the center at the end of their school year.



*Entrance to the Panditarama Meditation Center
Yangon, Myanmar*

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Lockdown...

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JM: People often ask me why you became a Buddhist nun and why you went to Myanmar. What should I say?

VJ: I didn't become a Buddhist right away. What I did was learn how to meditate. One time when I went on retreat, I had the chance to ordain. That means I had my head shaved, put on a nun's robes, and observed the moral precepts of a nun.

In Myanmar when people meditate, it is common to ordain as a monk, a nun, or a novice for the period of the meditation retreat but not necessarily for life. It is a means for accomplishing spiritual goals.

I went to the Insight Meditation Society (IMS), in Barre MA, which invited meditation teachers, many of them lay people, from various Asian and Western countries. On one of the retreats led by a senior monk from Burma, Sayadaw U Pandita [founder of



*Sayadaw U Pandita
(ca. 2016)*

Panditarama (1921-2016)] I decided to ordain for the period of the retreat. It was beneficial, but I didn't decide to become a permanent nun at that point. I was in the middle of graduate school.

The second time that I ordained, I had finished graduate school, gotten my degree, and passed the CPA exam, but I didn't have the type of job I was seeking. I decided to take a meditation retreat at IMS that was again going to be led by Sayadaw U Pandita, and again I ordained. At the end of that retreat I decided I wanted to devote myself to spiritual work, at least until I was satisfied. For that reason, I did not disrobe at the end of the retreat.

JM: Oh. What does it mean to be a Buddhist?

VJ: Well, a Buddhist is someone who takes refuge in the Buddha: the Dharma (his teachings), and the Sangha (the community of monks who have practiced his teachings and realized enlightenment, or are



Jo Mooney with her daughter Ellen (left), a Buddhist nun with Buddhist name Vajira Nani, photographed during her recent visit to The Forest.

striving to do so).

JM: What *did* the Buddha teach?

VJ: The Buddhist teachings are made up of morality, concentration, and wisdom.

JM: Good. I think it's good to put it in a nutshell. Those three words have very definite meanings.

JM: Why did you go to Myanmar?

VJ: Once I stopped living as a lay person, I couldn't go back to living in my apartment. There aren't too many Buddhist monasteries in America, at least there weren't in 1991, when I ordained. I went to Myanmar because that is where my preceptor's monastery was.

JM: Was it hard, to go to such a different culture?

VJ: Yes and no. When you are wearing nun's robes, you fit in much more easily. I was in a uniform people recognized, plus I was at a meditation center practicing silent meditation, not socializing. Of course there were things that were not easy about being in Yangon. People would stare at me and sometimes interrupt my meditation to ask me to help them get visas to the US. But it was good to be there, and I didn't feel I should go anywhere else.

JM: I should ask you, "What do you like best about being at The Forest?"

VJ: There are lots of good things about being at The Forest. My bed is very comfortable; my back is not hurting me. In Yangon—in the hot, tropical climate of

(Continued on Page 8)

Lockdown...

(Continued from Page 7)

Yangon—if you have a bed in your room, you are likely to have ants following the smell of sweat. They crawl up on the bed. I don't want to have ants, so I use a Thermarest. I put it on the floor to sleep, and when I get up, I stand it on its end. That way I don't have such a problem with ants. But sleeping on a Thermarest is not the most comfortable thing in the world. It's OK, but my back is much more comfortable on your sofa bed.

Another thing is the wonderful quiet! Panditarama is in an old well-to-do residential neighborhood, and dogs often bark at night to warn of thieves. Also our floor of the dormitory is a series of small rooms, each with one or two nuns, and most are studying, often by reciting out loud. It can be noisy. This is very quiet!

The food is certainly a plus. I have never had the chance to experience such an array of desserts. I think the pastry chef and everyone working here must be thinking every day about what would make people happy.

I also like being able to walk on the grounds. There is so much space. I hardly go out of the monastery, but your area is much bigger, so it is quite nice.

JM: And then what do you like best about being at The Forest with your mother?

VJ: To know that she's OK!

Jo Mooney has a BA in English from the University of Michigan and an MA in American History from Loyola University of Chicago.

Her daughter Ellen Mooney (Vajira Nani, or VJ) teaches Pali at Panditarama Shwe Taung Gon Meditation Center in Yangon. She holds a degree in Pali (Sasanadhaja Dhammacariya) awarded by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, Myanmar, 2007), a BA in Classical Studies and English (Boston College, 1977) and an MS in Accounting (UMass-Amherst, 1991). She has also passed the Unified CPA examination.

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You, S/He, and I

It'll never be done if you're not involved,
But you alone can't do it.

It'll never be done if she's/he's not involved,
But she/ he alone can't do it.

It'll never be done if I'm not involved,
But I alone can't do it.

Only when you, s/he and I are all united
Can all be done: organize & get things done.

Sayadaw U Pandita, the founder of the Paditarama Meditation Center in Yangon, emphasized the need for fairness, co-operation, and unity when working together. His message in the Burmese language at the left was posted in the center's office. The English translation may help you decipher the Burmese.

A Thought In Spite Of Mothers' Day

by George Williams

Last month, thinking about Mothers' Day, and mothers in general, a friend asked me what Shakespeare thought of mothers. A good question. Certainly a large proportion of the population are mothers, and many of them go to the theater, and did in his day. To answer the question: Not much.

Though there was a female monarch on the throne in Shakespeare's time, the dramatist is primarily interested in the relationship of parents to children, more specifically, in fathers, not in mothers.

The history plays, of course, are concerned with kings and the succession of kings. One ruler is challenged by another hero, a would-be ruler—both males. One thinks immediately of *Henry IV*, of Hotspur and his father, the Earl of Northumberland. Hotspur's mother, the Countess of Northumberland, is not mentioned.

In the comedies, where one might expect mother-daughter relationship to be of prime interest, the relationship of fathers to daughters is more important. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, the father Egeus opposes the wishes of his daughter Hermia and her beloved Lysander. Hermia's mother is not mentioned. (Shakespeare always sides with the daughter in these differences; the play overrules Egeus.)

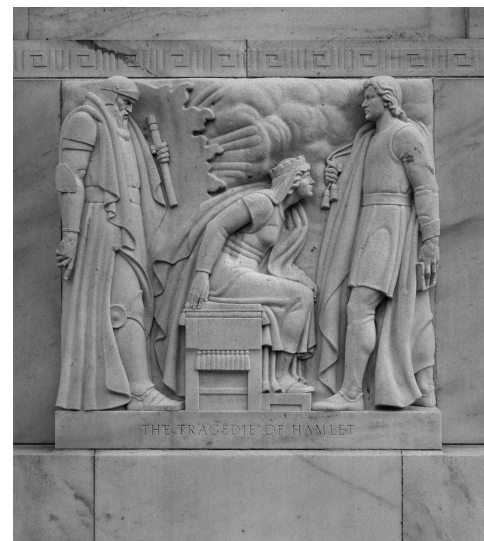
In the tragedies, the narratives of high political figures, chiefly male, there is the exception of *King Lear*, where the king is confronted with his three daughters (their mother is never mentioned). But there are on the other side the exceptions of *Hamlet* and *Coriolanus*, where the relationship of mother and son is paramount.

Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, is thought by Hamlet to have been unfaithful to his father during their marriage (the play is not decisive on that point), and is in part responsible for his murder. Hamlet thinks also

that his mother has been over-hasty in marrying her brother-in-law after the king's death. Hamlet even thinks that for these sins she is worthy of death herself, but he rejects at once any thought that he should be the one to punish her in that way: he will speak daggers, but use none (III.ii.381).

Coriolanus' mother, Volumnia, is, throughout the play, authoritative and given to command. Her son does whatever she commands, or even recommends. A Citizen says in Act I that he takes actions "to please his mother and to be partly proud" (I.i.26) and in Act V, after one of Volumnia's long and impressive speeches, Coriolanus demonstrates the wisdom of this opinion. At her persuasion to spare the city of Rome from his attack, he enrages his followers. His mother is responsible for the death of her son at their hands, as he says: "most mortal to him" (V. iii.189).

These two examples, both highly dramatic, disclose that Shakespeare is not entirely sympathetic to the mother-son relationship. Nor does he seek out opportunities to present mother-daughter relationships. ¶



Bas relief on the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, of the appearance to Hamlet during his confrontation with his mother (III.iv) of his father's ghost (invisible to her).

TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE FORESTER

CAROL'S CORNER

Good Old Days Dept.

by John Tebbel

Through courtesy of the Internet, we learn some facts about how it was before we were overtaken by technology and another century.

We're talking 1900, and here are just a few examples of how, as we always say, things have changed. At the turn of the last century, life expectancy in America was 47, only 14 percent of homes had bathtubs, only 8 percent had telephones, there were 8,000 cars and 144 miles of paved roads to drive on, with a maximum speed limit in most cities of 10 miles per hour. Average wages were 22 cents an hour, and the average worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year. Dentists did better at \$2,500 per year, and a mechanical engineer made as much as \$5,000. All but 5 percent of births took place at home, and 90 percent of all American doctors had no college education, instead attended medical schools widely condemned by both press and government as substandard.

There's more, but that's enough non-nostalgia for one day. ☘

[This piece was first published in *The Forester*, Volume 6, issue 8, May 2000, page 7]

**Javier Parker**

by Carol Oettinger

Javier was born in Durham and has three sisters and a brother. His family moved a lot. So before he moved back to Durham at age twelve he had lived in Atlanta for a year, Orlando FL, for three years, and the Virgin Islands with his father for a few months. When he was eight, his family moved to Manhattan where he finished elementary school.

He attended Louisburg College. While in school, he began to work in security at the Life Nation Company in Raleigh. After two years there, he worked at Duke as a parking supervisor for three years. During that time, he was also a volunteer fire fighter in Durham.



Javier came to The Forest to work in Security about three years ago. In his spare time, he works as a wrestling coach at the Durham School of the Arts.

He has always enjoyed sports and has played baseball, basketball, ultimate Frisbee, soccer, and run track. The only sports he is still involved in now are football and wrestling. He enjoys fishing at Jordan Lake.

He learned to play the drums in the fourth grade and has played in a band. Javier still has his drums. He lives with a beloved nephew and his dog, Mila.

Javier likes his work and the people at The Forest. We are glad to have him as a member of our Forest Family. ☘

New Experiences Under Social Isolation



Empty Cafe
but
Home Delivery
with a Smile



Daily Staff
Health Checks

Visitor
Restrictions



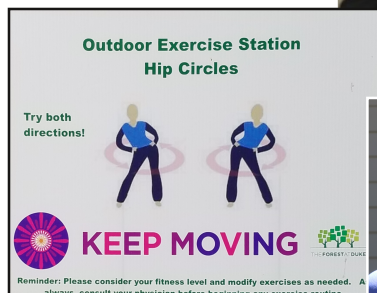
Greeting
Neighbors
at a
Distance



Raising
a Glass
on Friday



Sheri
Keeps Us
Fit



METASEQUOIA GLYPTOSTROBOIDES:

THE LIVING 'FOSSIL' TREE

by Larry Inderbitzin

Now commonly known as the Dawn Redwood, this tree has many nicknames such as the dinosaur tree, water-fir tree, fire tree, and water-pine tree. About a year ago I purchased one of these small trees from a nursery to plant in our garden. The purpose was to enlarge the trunk to make it look older as a necessary first step to create a bonsai.

I first learned about this magnificent and highly unusual tree in the mid-60s when my wife Ann's parents retired to a small village of 500 inhabitants in central Pennsylvania. While visiting them, I got to know the owner of a tiny country nursery who showed me a Dawn Redwood and explained his version of its fascinating history. He told me that it had long been believed to be extinct until some seeds were found in the Gobi Desert. A colleague and friend had given him some of these to propagate. As I learned much later, this history was incorrect. The actual story is much more complicated and controversial.

The Dawn Redwood is one of the few conifers that is deciduous, like the bald cypress. It is in the subfamily Sequoioideae which it shares with its closest relatives: the giant sequoias and the coastal redwoods. The Dawn is roughly conical in shape with a muscular appearing trunk and beautiful soft, feathery, lace-like green foliage. The oldest known living specimen is in the Szechuan province in China. It is 130 feet tall with a trunk 11 feet in diameter! It is fast growing and disease and deer resistant. A beautiful specimen planted in 2005 that I judge to be about 60 feet tall exists on our campus just west of the south entrance to Health and Wellness. Another is in a large pot on our cottage patio; it will become a bonsai eventually, if I live long enough.

As already intimated, there are still many important questions regarding this ancient species: when, where, and how it was found and how the seeds were distributed in the US and elsewhere. It is generally agreed that it was one of the greatest discoveries in paleobotany of the 20th century. It thrived at least 50 million years ago, perhaps even 100 million years ago, and was widely distributed throughout the northern



*Dawn Redwood
Outside H&W*

hemisphere. Hence the saying, "It was known to the dinosaurs."

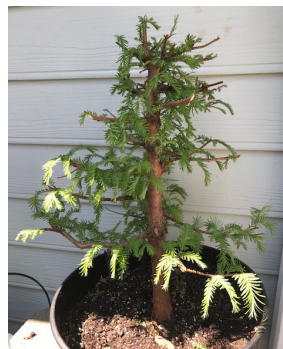
Based on his collection and review of more than 1,000 documents, Jinshuang Ma of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden published an extensive article in 2002 in *Aliso: A Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Botany* regarding the historical controversies. No attempt will be made here to name the many Chinese and American investigators associated with the conflicting claims as to the Dawn Redwood's discovery and dissemination. Some of the confusion about all this can probably be attributed to the second world war as well

as to competition for credit for this momentous discovery.

It is, however, generally agreed that Shigeru Miki, a Japanese paleobotanist, discovered fossils of this tree in about 1938, most likely in the Gobi Desert (thus the Gobi connection?). The botanical name, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, was bestowed by him upon those fossil specimens. A subsequent serendipitous discovery of a group of living Dawn Redwoods in Szechuan province in China occurred in 1942. Clearly, collaboration among several Chinese scientists led to the discovery of these living specimens.

The later dissemination of the seeds from these trees outside of China can be mainly attributed to Chinese scientists. Seeds arrived in the US in about 1948, primarily at the University of California-Berkeley and the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University. I do not know how the seeds reached my friend in Pennsylvania, now long-since deceased. ¶

Larry is Professor Emeritus, Emory University School of Medicine and for decades was a registered tree farmer in Snyder County, Pennsylvania, where he and his family planted thousands of trees just to watch them grow.



Bonsai to Be