

Megan Glover—Our Pastry Chef

by Shannon Purves

Sweet Potato Torte. Gingerbread Brownies. Chocolate Pecan Tart. M&M Cookies. Chocolate Bundt Cake. Apple Cider Cake. Carrot Cake. Lemon Cream Cake. Yum!

Have you been wondering who's responsible for these absolutely delicious desserts that have been included in our brown dinner bags every evening since midsummer? It is Megan Glover, hired in July by TFAD's Dining Service leaders just as it was becoming clear that reopening the dining room was a long way off and that we needed a special lift. She turns out to be exactly that.



How did we get so lucky? Chef Alex Brown ran an ad that Megan, who was working as a pastry specialist at The Carolina Inn's restaurant, Crossroads, but thinking, in the midst of crazy Covid 19 hours and layoffs, that a non-restaurant job would be nice, found the ad on line and answered it. Three interviews later—a one-on-one interview, a further conversation and kitchen tour, and an actual, on-site cooking session—Megan accepted the offer to become our Pastry Chef.

A 2009 graduate of Johnson Wales University in Charlotte, Megan has degrees in Bakery and Pastry Arts and Restaurant Management. But she'd been turning out pastries long before she went to college. She credits her father and her grandmother—her "Nana"—with introducing her to the pleasures of the kitchen and for encouraging her to keep at it. She got her first job making desserts in a country club the summer she was 16 and has never looked back.

Raised on the North Carolina coast, Megan was

hired for her first job after graduation by The Greenbriar resort in West Virginia. Later, she worked in country clubs in eastern North Carolina before landing a job at the famous Inn at Little Washington in its Michelin three-star restaurant. After a little over a year there, she decided she wanted to return to North Carolina to be nearer her family and took the job at The Carolina Inn in Chapel Hill. But, she says, "hotels work you to death." And the pandemic made things there all the more hectic. Hence TFAD's stroke of luck.

Megan works here five days a week (Tuesday through Saturday) from 6AM to 3("ish")PM. The menus are created three weeks in advance and the number of desserts she creates daily is around 300. What's it like to turn out 300 servings? She claims it's not too much more work than turning out five or six. Batters are done all at once in the kitchen's huge mixers. But she admits it does take longer to pan, bake, ice, slice, and serve 40 cakes than it does five or six.



As of mid-November, our weekly menus name each dinner's dessert rather than noting "Chef's Choice." How come? Megan explains, "People just kept asking; they wanted to know in advance." And she goes on to say, "And I love feedback like this. Let me know what you like! What you don't." And she follows that with, "I love it here. I'm given so much creative freedom here that I really enjoy." So do we, Megan! ♣

The Forester

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

Sharon Dexter, *Managing Editor*

Shannon Purves & George Williams,

Contributing Editors

Dean McCumber, *Layout Editor*

Jo Mooney, *Art & Collage Editor*

Maidi Hall, *Copy Editor*

Peg Woerner, *Development Editor*

Lois Oliver, Pete Stewart & Liz Clark

Resident Biographers

Debbie Chesnut & Harriet Williams,

Circulation Managers

Bennett Galef, *Photographer*

Katherine Shelburne, *Illustrator*

Bob Dix, *Digital Archivist*

Columnists

Lois Oliver

Carol Oettinger

Carol Reese

President's Podium



by Lois Oliver

I am sure we all are grateful that a COVID-19 vaccine is finally here, though the end of our pandemic is not in sight as yet. The Forest residents and staff have maintained the rules of masking and distancing, and we have all missed being together, especially in the holiday season. I hear and even make some grumbles about the limitations on our lives, but I know we all agree that life is precious and should be protected.

I know most of you must remember growing up that we couldn't go to swim or camp or get together in bunches, before the 1955 arrival of the first polio vaccine. As a student nurse, I gave the vaccine for hours to eager recipients in long lines. Then I rejoiced as an intern in 1965, at the arrival of the measles vaccine in the middle of a terrible epidemic of measles in Philadelphia. Seeing children die and suffer various long-term damage from measles every day made for many tears.

Over the years, many have become complacent over the need for, or even the safety of, vaccines. Unscrupulous reports of negative effects have created fears of them. If the generations who were saved from polio and measles never saw those diseases, they cannot know how awful they are. I am sure I will be willing to wait my turn to get protection from the COVID-19 virus. I know it may be months before we can be protected, but I also think Forest residents are still resilient enough to withstand the isolation and take advantage of the many efforts being made to keep them safe, active, and involved.

We will all face 2021 with optimism and slowly move back to being involved in eating together, exercising together, going to movies, readings, concerts, and all the things that make life at The Forest a happy one. ¶

In Memoriam

John Henry	November 21, 2020
Don Krizek	November 24, 2020
Ann Marie Langford	November 26, 2020
Joel Smith	December 17, 2020

In This Issue...

When the reality of COVID-19 became apparent, Phil Baer sent out a call for TFAD residents to write a brief description of projects they had taken on that they might not have otherwise. On pages 6–7 read how four resident writers took up the challenge. ¶

Library Science 101

‘Tis a New Year ... a New Beginning

by Carol Reese

WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR, BUT FIRST...

Let us finally finish with 2020 so we can (hopefully) look toward a brighter new year.

LIBRARY'S BOOK AND CD SALE

On Friday, December 11, the Library held a sale of books, CDs, and puzzles in the Living Room. As you all know, something like this library sale doesn't materialize out of thin air. Only because of the support from the Resident Life staff (Sandy Mouras, Meghan Rodriguez, and Glen Arrington) and resident volunteers (Carol DeCamp and Linda McBride) was the Library able to hold such a successful sale which brought in approximately \$70.00. Not bad when items were either 50 cents or \$1.00 apiece. Last, but definitely not least, thanks to all the residents who participated in the sale. We hope you have enjoyed the items you purchased. Some of this money will help purchase new books while the rest pays for office supplies such as pens, pencils, holders, etc.

DURHAM COUNTY LIBRARY

While our library has a nice size collection for our purpose, it isn't as varied as the County Library's collection. Therefore, you may wish to search the county's collection for something to read. As you may be aware, all branches of the Durham County Library are closed to the public due to the COVID-19 virus. However, you may still go on their web site and search their online catalog for items of interest. If you find something you want to read, you need to place it on hold. The library will notify you when your item is available. They will then give you a time for pickup. Our local branch is the Southwest Regional Branch located at 3605 Shannon Road. If you don't have a library card for the County system, you can use your mobile phone number to sign up for a temporary card. When you first sign up, your temporary card will only work for their ebooks and e-audiobooks through OverDrive/Libby. After it's been processed, you will be able to use it for other online resources and to place holds on items for pickup. Your access will work as long as the library is closed. Once the Library is open again, you will need to go in to make your card permanent. If you have questions, just call our local branch at 919-560-8590 for help. ☘

ADDITIONS TO THE COLLECTION

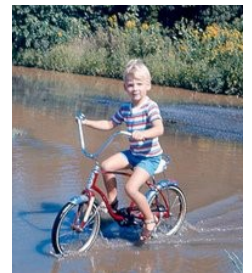
Here are some of the items added to The Forest's collection in December:

- *The Borgia Confessions* by Alyssa Palombo. (A tale of family infighting, jockeying for power, and exploiting the church to attain personal wealth and power that will keep readers enthralled long into the night.)
- *Force of Nature* by Jane Harper. (Lacks some of the scorching momentum of Harper's first book but is nonetheless a spooky, compelling read.)
- *Too Much and Never Enough* by Mary Trump. (Dripping with sarcasm, vibrating with rage, and gleaming with clarity—a deeply satisfying read.)
- *Book of the Little Axe* by Lauren Francis-Sharma. (Provides enchanting re-creations of Trinidad and Rosa's family in the early 1800s.)
- *A Promised Land* by Barack Obama. (More political than personal, it is nearly always pleasurable to read, sentence by sentence, the prose gorgeous in places, the detail granular and vivid.)

Meteorology

by Ursula Kappert

“Look at the miserable weather,” say the adults. “It has been pouring all day long. How depressing.” *The little boy sits on the milk box on the front steps with an umbrella and quietly watches the rain.* “We are going to have a flood,” say the adults. “Let's bring all our valuables up from the basement. What a disaster!” *The little boy rides his bicycle through the flooded street and gets soaked.*



“This is the worst snow storm of the season,” say the adults. “Traffic is going to be snarled up. We might not have enough to eat in the house. How can we ever shovel our way out of this?” *The little boy comes home from school without his hood, so he can feel the snow on his head. He goes out and builds an igloo and then puts a few snowballs in the freezer for the summer.* ☘

“
**O! be some other name:
 What's in a name? that which we call a rose
 By any other name would smell as sweet;
 ... doff thy name. ”**

—*Romeo and Juliet* II.ii

Identity Confusion

by Christel Machemer

At birth my parents named me after my two grandmothers, Christine and Anna, but decided to call me by the very common German abbreviation Christel. During my teenage years when I became more of a purist, I started to dislike being called Christel because it reminded me of a schmaltzy Austrian operetta whose main character had this name. I asked my parents to please call me by my official name and explained my reasons. But they had a



different opinion and thought I was silly. The only hope that remained was that maybe a future husband would understand me and call me Christine. When that time arrived I was confronted with another disappointment. After he

listened to my reasons, he started to laugh and said: “Oh you poor little Christinchen (a German diminutive.)” All my hopes were dashed and I learned reluctantly to live with “Christel.”

Fast forward into the late 1960s. When I opened my first private practice in Miami, I put “Christel Machemer, M.D.” on my office stationery as well as on the sign on my waiting room door without any further thought because that's who I was.

After two months the Florida Medical Board called me and informed me that I was using an illegal name. Either I had to pay \$300 to have Christine Anna officially changed to Christel, or trash the stationery and my nice shingle on the door and replace both. Annoyed and reluctantly I chose the latter option. But that wasn't all. Now the local bank came after me to change my signature from Ch. Machemer—which I

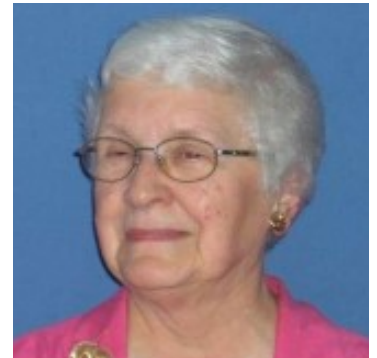
(Continued on Page 5)

The Magic Form

by Maidi Hall

My transatlantic name change story is not as dire as Christel's because I dealt with it at an earlier age. I was christened Gerda (for the heroine in a book my mother read before I was born!) Felizitas (for my mother's sister) Mia (for the same aunt, because in Austria it was apparently customary to append the godparent's name to the infant's). My parents, too, considered that cumbersome moniker unsuitable for a toddler, so I was called by a variety of nonspecific pet

names such as Maidi, Tjunti, Gucki, Puppe (analogous to Honey, Sweetie, etc.) but Maidi was the one that stuck. (Years later my older cousin confided that when she was little she had also been called Maidi—it is literally a



diminutive of the German word for girl— and resented that it had been usurped for me.)

I hated the name Gerda; that's not who I was, I was Maidi! My parents indulged me. I started school in Vienna as Maidi, crossed the ocean to America as Maidi, and remained Maidi until I got to high school, when it occurred to my parents that high school transcripts would follow me to college and beyond, so it might be a good thing to start using my legal name, much as I despised it. Reluctantly I became Gerda in school (causing some confusion among my classmates who had known me as Maidi) but nowhere else.

After my parents became naturalized U.S. citizens, I became eligible for derivative citizenship through them. I met with an official who handed me a form to fill out. There was a line on the form: “By what name have you been called until now?” which I

(Continued on Page 5)

Thoughts for a New Year

by Usha Gulati

Fellow Residents of The Forest at Duke:

May you all remain well in body, mind, and spirit. That is my prayer.

The COVID-19 crisis is a challenge to the ingenuity and strength inherent in human beings. We are at our best when we are challenged. We can face this challenge with wisdom, wit, and farsightedness.

There are things we can do to help ourselves and others cope with this crisis. When we choose to put our minds on our blessings we all become great ones and that is what the world needs right now. It does not need more fear and panic. We should practice kindness and compassion towards others in whatever way we can. Take every chance to help and show kindness by just being friendly or smiling at another person. Just do the next right thing, the next right thing and the next right thing without projecting your thoughts into the future, ending up on the Fear Path. Think positive thoughts. What we think goes into the universe.

We need to have faith in ourselves and faith in everyone around us. What will not happen will not happen, what will happen will happen. This knowledge destroys the poison of anxiety and removes all delusion.

After doing our best to respond appropriately to any situation, we must recognize that when all is said and done, it is worth repeating: what will be will be, what is not to be will not be. There is nothing any of us can do more than our best at any given time. Having done that, we must step aside and stop worrying. This approach helps us to focus our time, skill, and energy fully on the task at hand. Wasting our energy on feeling anxious can only weaken us.

What we had before the pandemic is a dream now and very soon the present situation will become a dream. If we deal with the present situation with courage and do it well, we also make ourselves stronger to face greater challenges we will encounter. The greatest challenge will be how to readjust the life we left behind to serve us better in the future.

I wish you a very blessed New Year. ‡

Born in India, Usha worked as an Air Hostess with Indian Airlines and in New Delhi with the US Information Service. She has advanced degrees in education and library science. Usha has taught Yoga, Meditation, and Indian Vegetarian Cuisine in OLLI at Duke. She is currently program director of the Spiritual Study Center of the Vendanta Society of North Carolina.

Christel...

(Continued from Page 4)

had always used—to C. A. Machemer, and all checks needed to be reprinted. It seemed that I finally had gotten what I wanted so many years earlier. But people continued to call me Christel as well as Christine or even Chris—an entirely new name for me. How confusing! Who was I? The answer of course is: all of the above.

Guess what finally made me love to be called “Christel”?—the spelling that some people used in this country: “Crystal.” Now that unhappy association with the schmaltzy operetta was forever gone and what could be nicer than a crystal? ‡

Maidi...

(Continued from Page 4)

filled in with all those three names plus surname. The next line read: “By what name do you want to be called from now on?” My jaw dropped, I looked at the man and asked, “You mean I can change my name, just like that?” He smiled and said, “Yes, as long as you're not committing fraud, and I don't suppose at age 14 you're committing fraud.”

With jubilation, on that once-in-a-century date of 1/23/45, I legally became Maidi Gerda Ebel. ‡

These two pieces, by Christel and Maidi, were first published in the January 2012 *Forester*.

Resident Writers' Projects During COVID-19 Shutdown

A series stimulated by Phil Baer's observation that the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic provided newly-found "free time" for doing things long-delayed or crowded out by the busyness of life.



Neuroscience for Kids

by Dale Purves

To help pass the days more usefully during the COVID-19 lockdown, I decided to write a children's book titled *You and Your Brain: a Neuroscientist Explains the Brain to his 10-year-old Grandson*. My idea was to use BookBaby Publishing, a self-publishing subsidiary of Amazon. Little did I know what I was getting into. After several months of back-and-forth with a variety of "advisors" and false starts that cost me quite a bit of money, I finally got the project done! ... The book has since been published and is available for purchase. A copy is in the TFAD Library.

Though I'd had a number of books published previously, I didn't appreciate all the work that real publishing companies do for you, including getting the layout right (not easy!), dealing with the US copyright office, and making sure that everything is shipshape before printing the first batch.

In the end, however, the project did pass an inordinate amount of time that might otherwise have been spent watching TV and taking naps. Happy to provide advice for anybody who wants to go down the rocky self-publishing road; it is not as easy as you might imagine! ♣



Dale and his 10-year-old grandson, Will



A Short Poem Every Day

by Sue Howell

I planned to write a short poem every day for 90 days, in a form originated by Allen Ginsberg, called "American Sentence," a seventeen-syllable poem similar to a haiku, in that it captures a passing moment. I'm trying something new and seeing where it takes me. I was vaguely familiar with this form, but recently ran across an interview with Paul Nelson, who has written one of these poems every day for twenty years, and published a book called *American Sentences*. I thought, hmmm.

Here are a few poems that may be relevant in these times, in the order in which they were written—

Circles painted on the clinic floor
screaming STAND HERE or STOP
Otherwise no signs of life

Once you decide the planet is doomed
it's hard to make that dental appointment

Practice walking on uneven ground,
my therapist says.
Will that pine straw do?

Empty chairs in the hairdressing salon;
fear of the virus in the air

My twelve-year-old grandson
has his own Twitter account.
Something is wrong here.

Cold air seeps quietly
Under the closed bedroom door
Winter is coming

The burst of red camellias in November
might take away the chill in my bones

Smell of goats across the fence—
maybe I don't have the virus

Pessimistic about the country's fate
Phil just keeps translating Kafka

Nine poems in an accumulating collection, "Corona Blues." ♣

Resident Writers' Projects During COVID-19 Shutdown

Bei Momenti

by Judy Jo Small



At the beginning of the pandemic, I read several books about politics and plagues, with predictably depressing results. So I reversed course and began composing a memoir of my own happy memories. I gave it a fancy title, *Bei Momenti*, and opened a fountain of recollections, starting with early childhood. I decided to write in longhand and in ink, knowing that the chronology wouldn't be perfect and that crossed-out words would be inevitable, but enjoying the smooth flow of memories from mind to hand to page.

All unpleasant memories were excluded. No problems. Just vivid, delightful episodes, sweet to recall. Scenes from my childhood, such as sitting in the back seat during long car trips singing old songs with my family and thrilling to my father's deep bass, my mother's sweet soprano, and my own favorite refrain, "Fee-fi-fiddly-i-o!"

Lying with my mother on a quilt in the backyard one summer afternoon, basking in the sun and watching fluffy white clouds shape and reshape peculiar faces and bizarre creatures in the clear sky, watching too a dark cloud approaching—nearer and nearer—until it obscured the sun, and we lying unmoving as darkness came and heavy drops fell cool and pleasant on our warm skin, and still we stayed as drops came faster and faster, as the rain became torrents, and until we were thoroughly drenched.

In Alaska, standing with Tom outside on our porch on sub-zero midnights, gazing with awe at the silent swirl of bright Northern Lights.

With our children, later, rescuing two featherless baby robins after a storm blew down their nest. The children, delighted, named them Sylvia and Ralph, and we fed them from dawn to dark with a mixture of canned dog food, chopped worms, egg yolk, and liquid baby vitamins until they grew big enough to swallow whole worms and then, at last, to fly.

Other scenes too of people, places, animals, experiences with books, music, art, instants of discovery when confusion fell away and harmonious clarity emerged. Each memory awakened another. Past became present. Each little story of joy, wonder, and love brought me a smiling sense of gratitude. All of the good times—so many! Even if nobody, even I, ever reads this collection of beautiful moments, the ongoing fun of writing it has been, and is, ample. 🌱



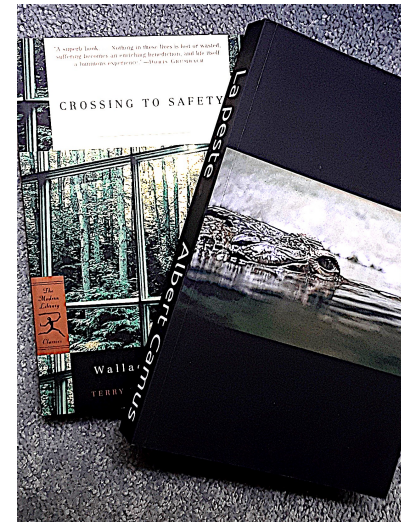
Preparing For Adventure

by Ellen Baer

My women's book club reads books by women, only by women, so, for many years, I've neglected books by male authors. I've bought some good ones that sit on my bookshelf waiting for the right time to be read. Now may be the time.

I have a lot of pandemic projects, but most of them are pretty boring, having to do with cleaning and clearing. My reading project, on the other hand, is daring and reckless and a little hush-hush. In this summer of our discontent, I'm reading books by (gasp) men. And I'm reading longer books than usual, like *Horizon* by Barry Lopez which, at 500 pages, is the perfect book for a time of staying at home. Lopez took me to places that I'd never visit on my own (like Tasmania and the South Pole), and they are places that are mysterious, fascinating, and mind-expanding. Then I let Amor Towles take me to Russia in *A Gentleman in Moscow* where I spent years in the Metropol Hotel with a Count who was under house arrest, just like me in lockdown but with more elegance and more suspense.

Now I'm preparing for a trip to Oran, a French port on the Algerian coast with a plague on the way. *La Peste* by Albert Camus is the one book I had to purchase since I wanted it in French, just to see if I



can still read French. But Wallace Stegner is trying to break in line with *Crossing to Safety*. Given Camus' subject matter and Stegner's reassuring title, I think the French will have to wait. But, not to worry, this pandemic may be with us for quite a while, and I've got all the time in the world. 🌱



Beyond Goats

by Phil Baer

The Goat Squad goats have come and gone, and gone with them are the visible parts of many invasive, non-native vines and bushes that filled the understory in the forested drainage area along Pickett Road above our pond. English ivy, privet, wisteria, and honeysuckle no longer block our view; we can now see how beautiful the area is. But goats provide only a temporary solution. The invasive plants are deeply rooted in the soil of the forest floor and goats eat only the above-ground parts. So, soon the plants will resprout from the roots and reclaim the space.

But we can do better. We can permanently remove the invasive plants and replace them with native plants that will restore a vibrant, healthy, balanced understory ecosystem that provides shelter, food, and breeding sites for birds and beneficial pollinator insects. We can create an attractive area for residents to enjoy, and perhaps some will enjoy helping to care for the native plants. The area cleared by the Goat Squad has the potential to become a defining feature of our campus: a healthy urban forest. With that vision in mind, the Building and Grounds Committee has approved the formation of an Understory Reforestation Planning Committee, charged with establishing an information base, using academic and governmental resources, and organizations with experience in similar projects.

A story in the December 2020 issue of the *NorCCRA Hotline* features Carolina Meadows, where five years ago residents began work on The Park, an area of neglected meadow which has been converted to a place of beauty, featuring a meadow of native grasses. Might the 2025 issue of the *Hotline* have a similar story, about the restoration of an urban forest? The Meadows has a meadow; The Forest should have a forest.

At this point everything, even the Planning Committee, is just a vision. We hope to encourage volunteers to join us. Those who have experience in landscape architecture, forestry, or gardening with native plants, or who have contacts with relevant departments at local universities, or with organizations that might contribute will be especially helpful. But a desire to participate in the creation of a healthy urban forest is all you need. If you would like to be a member of the Understory Reforestation Planning Committee, or just want more information, please contact Phil Baer at philbaer.nc@gmail.com, or 919-323-3664. We are a small group, just beginning, and we really need help. ☿

TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE FORESTER

Politics

You may think that this political year has been the one most screwed up since the 1800s.¹

Another election was far more painful for me. Or to say the least, the most unforgettable election.

The year? 1948.²

I lived in a very small town in the eastern part of the state. I worked on a very small newspaper. I sold advertising on Monday and Tuesday. I wrote stuff on Wednesday. Delivered the papers on Thursday and collected bills on Friday. (Ate barbecue everyday...)

Politics was next to weather as a subject for conversation, or maybe equal. Truman was running against Dewey. Dewey was so far ahead that it was hardly an election, more a coronation. We only had radio, but it was irritating, dull and repetitive.

I was sick of the whole thing. As I walked to the community building, I assumed I was going to vote for Truman. (I didn't like Dewey's mustache.)

I stepped into the voting booth and suddenly I heard a voice! I voted for Henry Wallace. He was a good Episcopalian, former Secretary of Agriculture, and so liberal the people there knew he was a communist.

I gave it no thought. Truman won at the last minute.

However, the next day from his corner office I heard the owner-editor talking to someone on the phone in Roanoke Rapids, the other corner of this rural county. Mr. Rodgers was frustrated, his face was turning red, and I heard him say, "I don't know what bastard voted for him here; there has been a communist-looking fellow hanging around the depot. BUT you had someone vote for him up there."

There had been two votes in the county for Henry Wallace!

—Peter Robinson ☿

Footnotes added by year-2020 Editors—

¹ "This political year" is 2000, twenty years ago, the year of the Bush-Gore election with Florida's hanging chads.

² The candidates were Truman (Democrat), Dewey (Republican), Thurmond (Dixiecrat), and Wallace (New Progressive).

Impact of COVID-19 On Durham Habitat for Humanity

by Robyn Sloan

If you read the first article about Durham Habitat for Humanity (DHFH) in the October issue of *The Forester*, you may be interested in how the pandemic has affected this important charitable organization, and those who serve and are served by it.

Not surprisingly, there has been a major financial effect. Although much of the revenue from mortgage payments continues to come into DHFH coffers, crucial fundraising activities have been much affected. Large in-person gatherings had to be postponed or shifted to a virtual format. The traditional Foundation Breakfast, the biggest fundraiser of the year, became an online "day of giving" to support Habitat homeowners through the Stronger Together Fund. The Bull Moon Ride and Run, an annual summer event and community fundraiser, had to be organized virtually this August. The Playhouse Program has been suspended because it requires close interpersonal working conditions. The good news is that the Habitat ReStore, an important revenue source, has been accepting donations of furniture and household goods for resale and has reopened to the public with mask requirements and social distancing.

Support for Habitat homeowner families has been a vital part of DHFH. In the initial phase of the shutdown during March and April, DHFH's Family Services and Development teams were able to continue working remotely to help homeowners with property tax appeals and mortgage payment deferrals. The Stronger Together Fund was created to provide mortgage assistance to families affected by the pandemic-induced economic crisis. About one-third of Durham Habitat's homeowners lost their jobs or had their hours reduced due to the pandemic, leaving them unable to make their monthly mortgage payments. The fund helped provide mortgage payment deferment to 86 families during the months of May, June, and July. Durham Habitat is committed to supporting their homeowner families and helping them to stay in the homes they have worked so hard to purchase.

The need for safe, stable, affordable housing in Durham remains critical and the economic crisis

resulting from the pandemic has amplified this need. Responding to this need, after a period of suspended construction compelled by Durham's COVID-19 emergency orders, the paid repair and construction workers resumed building in May, though the pace of work is slower without the volunteers. The construction staff is able to work safely in small groups and follow strict health guidelines. The repairs team stopped doing indoor repairs during the shutdown, giving them time to work with the construction team, keeping the work moving on building new homes. In addition, DHFH has increased their number of AmeriCorps members to six. AmeriCorps members receive a small living stipend and commit to a year of service. They work alongside regular staff to build and repair homes.

The effects of the pandemic on Durham Habitat are not limited to the increased challenge of maintaining funding, or the added burden imposed by the loss of volunteer labor on the work sites. COVID-19 is also affecting the homeowners, who maintain a relationship with DHFH long after they have moved into their new homes. The camaraderie developed between the future homeowners and the many staff and volunteer workers during the construction of a Habitat house endures. Over the course of several months, we all become family. We share the joys of children thriving in their new, safe homes as well as the concerns that arise when a job change might result in struggles for a Habitat family. The connections to the people we get to know are deep and meaningful.

Although current conditions preclude sharing worksites with the families, the Geezers were allowed back starting in late October in limited groups. We miss building connections with the families right now but hope to be building with them again soon on their journey to home ownership. 🌱

With a background in home repair and remodeling, Robyn Sloan was already experienced in home construction when she began working with Durham Habitat in 2006. She was also a founding member of the Playhouse team, which has become a big fundraiser for Habitat since its inception in 2012.

Edison is Watching

by Banks Anderson

W4OFZ

When our power goes out, the TFAD Illuminating Company goes to work. Many cottage and main building lights stay lit because we generate electricity on the property. In the back yards of TFAD cottages are generators, and there is a mammoth one for the main building.

We don't call them dynamos like those of the Edison Illuminating Company because they generate alternating current.

Edison was convinced that direct current was best. In Manhattan he built the world's first power station where steam dynamos supplied direct current to financial district lights. He didn't see the need for long distance power transmission. You just brought your dynamo to where you needed the power like we do our generators at TFAD.

The immigrant, Nikola Tesla, once an Edison employee (as was Henry Ford), maintained that alternating current was a needed and efficient way to deliver power over long distances. Its voltage could easily be raised up and down with simple induction gadgets called transformers. At high voltages the same watts could be transported at many less amperes. That meant no large copper busses were necessary. At the other end of thin wires the high voltage could easily be transformed back down to light up Edison's bulbs.

George Westinghouse saw Tesla's ideas and patents as compelling. He hired a young lawyer, Paul Cravath, to defend Tesla and his company's alternating current systems from the legal assaults of Edison. A long, bitter, and public struggle between Westinghouse's AC and Edison's DC ensued with fortunes as prizes. The result is that we all plug into 60-Hz AC.

But as a freshman occupying a low-rent 1892 dorm in New Jersey I had to convert its DC power to AC to run my ham radio station W4OFZ. And that direct current so zealously championed by Edison is oozing back. Our computers, phones, and electronics

are all DC devices. The DC environment most familiar to us is that inside our vehicles. Direct current runs everything there except the wheels. But now a son-in-law of mine is waiting to get a Tesla. In spite of its name, it is totally DC even to the motors turning its wheels. That oddity, as well as a granddaughter employed by the Cravath firm, has stimulated this contribution.

Edison is restless in his coffin because his great invention, the incandescent bulb, is vanishing. Sale of hundred watters is illegal. But it must be comforting to him that LEDs, light-emitting diodes, are ubiquitous. Unlike incandescent bulbs, these are obligatory direct current devices. They convert AC to DC with built-in rectifiers that can generate radio static. Some radio amateurs have converted their "shacks" to direct current environments. Almost all modern ham transmitters operate on 13.5 volts DC.

The 12-volt systems of vehicles are actually running at 13.5 volts when the alternators are on line. Since automotive and marine LEDs don't require rectifiers and therefore don't produce static, they are welcome in these DC shacks. Emergency shack power systems use batteries that are charged by solar panels that produce only direct current. Portable solar panels can be seen every June at the ham radio "field day" sites where no plug ins to the AC grid are permitted.

And direct current is now to be found where you would least expect it. Tesla's *raison d'être*, that efficient long distance power delivery requires AC, is obsolete. Solid state methods that bring DC voltages up and down are multiplying. Connecting the power grids of New Zealand's North Island and hydroelectric-rich South Island is now done via high-voltage DC cable. Edison may yet prevail. ‡

Banks Anderson is Professor Emeritus of Ophthalmology at Duke, licensed Ham Radio operator, amateur astronomer, and frequent contributor to The Forester.

Heritage

by James Stanley Barlow

A hundred years
and we'll all be sodded over
Yet centuries past are as now
Their long memory is ours
We cannot shake it can we
Not while we have museums and churches
synagogues mosques and holy books

- 1 -

Moses' flaming bush sings
of being
although his God is a jealous one
all the way to Jerusalem

- 2 -

The Greeks weave in and out
along the growing tapestry

Olympian of Athens
a big sister type
tall and clever
bright-eyed and
not so jealous
Who tamed the furies

Plato's Socrates still has us
all believing
we are more soul
than body

- 3 -

Allah
expands
beyond
the sands

- 4 -

Memories flow
from every
continent

Sometimes we feel
poor
with our
frayed hand-me-downs

Yet royal
in Wonder at leaf and flower

*From Appalachia and Beyond—Selected and Revised
Poems from Swimming Laps in August
Copyright © 2006 by James Stanley Barlow*

CAROL'S CORNER

Lena' Kithcart

Move-in Coordinator, Marketing

by Carol Oettinger

Lena' was born in Reidsville, NC, where her family lived before moving to Durham when she was five. Lena' lives with her older brother and her niece.



She says that she is “a child at heart.” She likes to eat “burgers, fries, and milkshakes.” Lena' also enjoys going to the park and playing on the swings, slides, and monkey bars. She is very talented with the jump rope, which must be hard for someone as tall as she is. She plays hide and seek with her niece and

friends. During the remainder of her free time she likes reading mystery stories and watching basketball games.

In addition to her brother Leroy, Lena' has a younger sister, Krystal. Lena' attended Northern High School in Durham and graduated from Winston Salem State University with a major in Mass Communication. During her college years she worked at Kmart. Her brother was working in Housekeeping at The Forest, liked his job, and encouraged her to apply, too. Lena' was hired and initially worked in Housekeeping herself for five years. Then it was time for a change: there was an opening in Marketing for which she was qualified. She applied and was accepted. She enjoys her work; we at The Forest enjoy her energy and ready smile. Lena' is another valued member of our Forest family. 🌿



*Measuring a residence
for a new resident.*

Photos by Bennett



At Home for the Holidays!



Diane Goff's granddaughter began sending her these upbeat sayings in March. The Whitakers' penguin approves!

