

Le’Nisha Parker-Williams—The Forest’s Director of Nursing

by Judy Jo Small

Prominent on the desk of the Forest’s Director of Nursing sits a sign: GOAL DIGGER. It’s a joke, but it also indicates a lot about who Le’Nisha Parker-Williams is. She has a sense of humor; she knows herself; and she’s always striving to be better, to do better, and to make things better for those in her care.

Her career has followed an arrow-straight path. Even in childhood, Le’Nisha knew that nursing was her calling. She grew up in a home that was nurturing and loving, and her mother, her grandmother, and other women in her family were nurses. She earned certification as a nursing assistant at Durham’s Southern High School and started work as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Rose Manor at age 18. A few years later, at Durham Tech, she earned both a Licensed Practical Nursing diploma and a degree as a Registered Nurse. She then worked four years at Pruitt Health. During that time, Le’Nisha became acquainted with LeeAnn Bailey-Clayton, who at length persuaded her to come to The Forest at Duke. She’s been here doing her best, for somewhat over three years.

Le’Nisha, the mother of four children ages sixteen to four, has a sunny disposition and laughs easily. But she is totally serious about her work, and she shoulders heavy job responsibilities with confidence and compassion. As Director of Nursing, she hires the entire nursing staff in Health and Wellness, trains them, assigns their duties, oversees their work, and manages their schedules. Her job is to meet the needs of residents in Assisted Living, in Short-term and Long-term Care, and also in Memory Care. She coordinates patients’ nutritional needs with TFAD’s nutritionist, Elizabeth McNamara, and with the Health and Wellness Dining Supervisor, Shaneen Barnette. Similarly, Le’Nisha coordinates patients’ care with TFAD’s physical, speech, and behavioral therapists and also with outside hospice nurses. In addition, she confers with concerned families of Health and

Wellness residents, responding to their concerns and complaints, seeking to rectify problems while offering families attention, support, and comfort. Balancing the needs of *all* these people, she understands, is an important goal.

The pandemic has confronted Le’Nisha with formidable challenges, including the need to set up an



isolation unit to care for residents with COVID-19. Fortunately, during the first onslaught, only four residents contracted the illness; all of them were asymptomatic, and they all recovered. Nevertheless, understaffing was an urgent problem for months on end, and despite Le’Nisha’s strenuous efforts to hire more qualified

nurses, she was not able to find people willing to take the risks attached to working with sick people while case numbers were skyrocketing and vaccines were not yet available. Of the regular staff, though, not one single person quit. Le’Nisha and her team deserve immense appreciation for valiantly staying, doing their jobs in unnerving circumstances.

During the recent Omicron surge, however, some patients and multiple fully-vaccinated staff from various departments have tested positive. The virus is highly transmissible, and the number of cases continues to fluctuate. Le’Nisha’s team has been able to cover the H&W vacancies by hiring part-time nurses, and regular staff are returning as they recover. Weekly testing continues until there are no additional

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The Forester

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In Memoriam

Joanne Ferguson

January 15, 2022

An Appreciation **Joanne Ferguson**

Editor-in-Chief 2006–2016

by Maidi Hall (for all of us)

THANK YOU for ten years of editing *The Forester*.

THANK YOU for ten years of diplomacy in dealing with staffers, interviewers, and contributors!

THANK YOU for ten years of faithfully writing the lead interview.

THANK YOU for ten years of being open to suggestions re punctuation, grammar, spelling, capitalization, format, etc., etc.!

THANK YOU for ten years of getting the copy in on time for the printer's deadline!

THANK YOU for ten years of remaining calm when disaster loomed! And even when it happened!

THANK YOU for ten years of your life devoted to this publication. Maybe you'd like to have those ten years back, but your loyal staff and loyal readers are very glad indeed that you gave them to *The Forester*.

[Reprinted from *The Forester*, October 2016]

President's Podium



by Carol Carson

Now seems a good time to present some basic information about the “membership meetings” held by the Residents' Association (RA). For TFAD's new residents, it would be an introduction, for others, a reminder after several years of COVID-related adaptations and other changes.

First let's deal with the dry stuff. About membership, the RA bylaws state that every person who is a legal resident of TFAD is a member of the RA. Since the recent launch of the Early Acceptance Program, residents include persons living both off-campus and on-campus. About membership meeting dates, the bylaws, after a change last year, state that they are to be held in February, June, and October.

Accordingly, a meeting of the RA membership is scheduled for February—specifically February 21 at 2 pm. It's a business meeting, with the usual features such as approving minutes, but it's designed to showcase useful information. As a centerpiece, RA committee chairpersons highlight goings-on in their committees. For example, the chair of the General Services Committee may report about progress toward an objective, such as improved outside lighting, and the chair of the Resident Services Committee often notes volunteer opportunities. In addition, TFAD's CEO provides operational updates, and she takes questions from the audience. Reaching wider, our representative to the North Carolina Continuing Care Residents Association usually reports, sometimes about legislative issues affecting residents of communities such as ours.

As *The Forester* goes to press it's not clear whether the Omicron wave will have subsided enough to permit a large gathering in the auditorium, the usual venue for membership meetings. If not, the RA organizers will try to learn from the virtual meetings earlier in the pandemic to make attendance as easy and worthwhile as possible.

Why not mark your calendar now for the RA membership meeting on February 21? ☿

Library Science 101

by Carol Reese

HEROES AND HEROINES – THE FOCUS FOR THE CURRENT EXHIBIT

The library's current exhibit, which runs through the first week in March, highlights works that emphasize the heroes/heroines of the stories. According to the website Masterclass.com, heroes and heroines give the reader a character to root for and a pair of eyes through which to follow the story. For instance, since the narrator in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*—Christopher John Francis Boone—is described as a mathematician with behavioral difficulties, the reader understands that the narrative perspective is that of an outsider who sees the world and events in unconventional, sometimes surprising ways.

On the other hand, the *Diary of Anne Frank* presents a claustrophobic world from the viewpoint of a young girl who is the heroine of her own story. While her story ends in tragedy, she is an ordinary person placed in extraordinary circumstances. These circumstances encouraged her to present her world by turns thoughtful, moving, and amusing.

A totally different type of protagonist appears in Donna Leon's *Transient Desires*. Here the story is seen through the eyes of Commissario Guido Brunetti, who provides the reader with an intimate knowledge of Venice and the surrounding area. Leon manages to make this book not merely a detective story; in addition, she allows her character, and the reader, to enjoy the beauty of his surroundings and his rich family life. Because of this, the reader gets to know the Commissario's broader world.

Finally, not all heroes/heroines need to be lovable or even likable. An example would be the heroine Serena in the book with the same name by Ron Rash. Serena is described as a Lady Macbeth but with a greater thirst for blood and wealth. While probably not someone who is easy to love, the heroine of *Serena* makes for an interesting read. Enjoy this varied collection put together by resident Carol Goldsmith.

LIBRARY'S ONLINE CATALOG AND THE RESIDENT ASSOCIATION'S WEBSITE

In the January *Forester*, RA President **Carol Carson** described resources accessible through the Residents' Association website. These included the Library's online search engines. There are two: one for our Forest at Duke library and another for the Durham County Library.

You can get to these online search engines from the RA website by clicking first "Quick Links" and then "Library Resources." Alternatively, you can click one of the two "Services" buttons, then "Library," and then the "Go to Library Resources" bar below the introductory words and photos. When you have reached Library Resources, select either The Forest Library Catalog or The Durham County Library Catalog.

If you select "Search The Forest Library Catalog," the first screen you will see is a blue screen; click on the "Search Catalog" button in the middle of the screen. That will lead to a screen like that shown in the adjacent figure. To make a search, type a word or words in the "Search Text" box at the top of the screen. Then if you are searching for a book title, click on the "Title Browse" button at the bottom of the screen. If the Library has the book you want, click on the title and complete information on the book will come up: its catalog number (location on the shelves) and whether or not it is already charged out. By pressing the appropriate button at the bottom of the screen you can also search for items by the author or by subject matter. This search engine is easy to use; feel free to play around with it. Don't worry. You can't break it. ☘

Search Catalog: The Forest at Duke

Search Text: _____

Match ☒ ALL words ☐ ANY words

Title Author

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Le’Nisha Parker-Williams ...

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cases within 14 days, and Le’Nisha can still proudly state that the staff-patient ratio in Health and Wellness is an impressive five staff members to every seven residents. (The Board and Administration’s recent approval of a cost-of-living wage adjustment for all current and newly hired team members has improved hiring and retention.)

Le’Nisha was one of the first team members at TFAD to receive the Catalyst Scholarship. What did she do? She went back to school. A new goal! Right in the middle of the pandemic, without taking any time off from work, Le’Nisha began studies at UNC Wilmington and in May 2021 earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. “It’s so weird,” she says, “how stress-free and smooth the program was ...; I’m forever grateful to the residents here at TFAD for making it possible for me to continue my educational journey without the financial burden.”

As we all know, a new Health Center is under construction, and though precise details about the actual move remain indefinite, Le’Nisha is excited about what’s coming. “There’ll be a real ‘home feeling’ in the small-house model” she says. “Each household of ten residents will have its own kitchen, and each caregiver will be assigned to five residents, so in addition to caring for patients as usual, nursing staff will be able to interact with them in new ways such as cooking a meal, playing a game, or doing a project together. Above all, Le’Nisha says, her goal is to provide competent, loving care. She remarks that she’s thankful for being here in “a wonderful environment,” and she “looks forward to coming to work every day.”

I can only marvel at how ably, graciously, and cheerfully Le’Nisha accomplishes her goals. As I was told by one resident here, a nurse who has “seen it all” during her long career, “Le’Nisha is a gem!” ❧

Welcome New Resident

Joan Seiffert

Apt 3049

336-287-1412

joanseiffert@gmail.com

Joan was born in Pittsfield MA and lived in several towns in the western part of the state. Her father was an Episcopal priest, and the family moved with his assignments. Some of her school years were spent in Bergen County NJ, where she developed her love of the theater from many visits to New York City where her father was based. She went to school in Easton PA, Cincinnati OH and Erie PA.

She started college at Western College for Women but earned her bachelor’s degree at Allegheny College. She also attended SUNY Fredonia, Boise State University, and finally the University of South Carolina, where she earned her MSW.

Joan’s family spent summers at a family house in the Chautauqua Institution in New York. She worked at the bookstore and as a waitress there during her college years. That is where she met her husband, Jack, later a US Air Force pilot. Their peripatetic life together involved moves to California, Texas, New York, Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, South Carolina, and North Carolina.

Joan wrote a humor column for a local newspaper, edited a magazine, and taught English, speech, and drama. She continues her practice of psychotherapy virtually now, with a focus on group therapy. When you meet her, you’re likely to find yourself divulging any problems you might have.

Joan has three daughters: Susan is a Duke psychologist, Deborah is a professional actor and painter living in the DC area, and Jennifer is a school psychologist in Hillsborough. Joan has four granddaughters.

Joan’s interests are many. She loves to write, take walks, play cards. Moreover, she has been a member of a local theater group. She’s a great reader and enjoys classical and jazz music. She likes people, and there’s little doubt that she will make herself felt at The Forest as a contributor to community life. ❧

Photo by Richard Ellman



BOOK REVIEW

Hamnet

by Maggie O'Farrell
(Random House, © 2020)

by Shannon Purves

Here's how The New York Times Book Review (7/17/20) introduced Geraldine Brooks's review of this novel: "*Hamnet* is an exploration of marriage and grief written into the silent opacities of a life that is at once extremely famous and profoundly obscure."

The life is William Shakespeare's. But his name never appears on a single one of the novel's 305 pages. He is "her son," "her husband," "the tutor," "his father," "he." It doesn't matter; it's hardly noticed, at least not by this enthralled reader. The daring of the novel's concept, the author's extraordinary literary talents, and the story's message—in Brooks's words, "about grief; how we experience it, respond to it, what it costs and whom it damages"—make this subtle subterfuge work.

The plot, very briefly: A young (18) Latin tutor, the son of a glove maker with a failing business in Stratford-upon-Avon in 16th century England, meets and falls in love with his students' older (26) sister, Agnes. Agnes arranges things so that her intentional pregnancy ensures their marriage and a place to live in his father's house. The book opens in 1580, during The Plague, when their son, Hamnet, dies at age 11, having contracted the illness from his twin sister. By that time, Hamnet's father is living in London, sent there to drum up business for the glove company. Of much more interest to him is a "play house" and its troupe of actors with whom he joins in theatrical productions and ultimately begins to write new plays for the play house to produce. When Hamnet dies, Agnes waits the four days it takes for him to travel back to Stratford before burying their son. But she resents his almost immediate return to London. And over time, she becomes more and more bitter about being left to grieve alone. When she learns, some five years later, that he is producing a play he has written titled

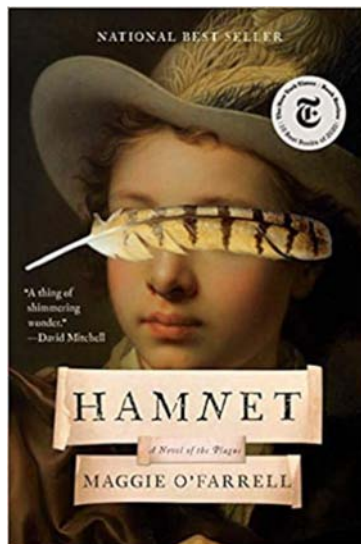
"Hamlet," she asks her brother to help her travel—by horseback—to London to see it.

The novel's denouement is the presentation of that performance and Agnes's evolving reactions to it. Ultimately, his performance in the role of "the ghost" convinces her that Hamnet's father grieves for their son perhaps even more than she does and that his creation of the play apparently named for their son is an expression of that grief.

A play named for their son? Hamnet became "Hamlet," due, according to the novel, to the fact that the two names were, in that era, interchangeable.

As soon as I had read—and re-read—*Hamnet*, I had questions. I turned, of course, to **George Williams**, the TFAD's resident Shakespeare scholar, who taught Shakespeare at Duke for 36 years and was kind enough to let me pick his brain—for more than an hour.

Our conversation in summary: Did he like the novel? *Very much*. Is there any continuing doubt about exactly who wrote Shakespeare's plays? *Not for serious people*. Is the connection O'Farrell makes with the son's death and the creation of "Hamlet" one that has been made previously? *Yes. Others have considered this*. Did you find the historical aspects of Shakespeare's life, marriage, fatherhood, theatrical activity as represented in *Hamnet* to be accurate? *All aspects but one—I do not believe O'Farrell is right about the interchangeability of the two names. I am aware of no other such changeability in British nomenclature*. Oh. Hmm. Well, *Hamnet* is fiction. And great fiction at that. Yes? *Agreed.* ‡



Forest Dance

by Bob Shaw

“What will you do when this is finished?” A Forest Friend spoke to us; she was passing as we stood to watch work on our new Health and Wellness Center. Good question.

Sure, we had felt a pang as those big bucket loaders tore through our cottages, ripped up our trees and plants, despoiled our landscape. But we were fascinated by the power of those machines, and they brought us a new experience. At first the TFAD project seemed chaotic—demolition and great piles of debris that only gradually disappeared. Then a period of leveling, preparing the site, and digging a mammoth hole. We had wondered what that could be and where would that great pile of dirt go?

Next came high drama—the erection of the Crane. As it rose stupendously high, a question that had perplexed us was answered. (What do you need to erect a crane? Answer: another crane.) We’ve learned some key terms from that source of all knowledge, the Internet. The tower is called the Mast. The long, long horizontal parts are the Jib and Counter Jib, and the very useful traveling section from which loads are hung is the Trolley. We have come to like the Crane; seeing it nearby or on the horizon from far away is comforting. At night we are reassured by the blinking lights atop the tower and at either end.

We like watching the Crane in motion: it moves smoothly, always in control. We muse that the operator must be highly skilled (and well paid, we hope; as we hope that surgeons and airline pilots are highly skilled and well paid). Also, like surgeons and pilots, the operator must be entirely focused on his job. We expected so large a machine to move ponderously, but no, the jib moves swiftly, and we marvel at the unseen mechanism that makes it turn so fast and smoothly.

Only once have we seen the Operator: he

emerged, walked a good way down the Jib, and lowered a small bucket.

Next the longest trucks we had ever seen snaked slowly down Forest at Duke Drive delivering bales of rebar (the steel sinews of our new Health Center), pallets of materials and concrete forms, and machines to run around the site for the months ahead. Soon the cement trucks began lining up. Of all the machines, our favorite is the truck bearing an implausibly long, articulated arm supporting a long pipe. Through that pipe the cement flows from truck, through the long pipe, to precisely where it is directed. (I thought of all the wheelbarrow loads of concrete I had pushed over the years.)

We watchers admired what we like to call “The Forest Dance”: the materials trucks and the cement trucks must (and do) arrive precisely on time and do not get in each other’s way. The workers move nimbly about on the rising floors as the trolley gently deposits what’s needed exactly where it’s needed. The weather too is part of the Dance. And that carefully coordinated Dance began way back with an architect bent over her desk planning how to get the Crane *into* the work site over the remains of Forsythia Court and, months later, to get it *out* along Pond View Court after the building is up.

When the building is up: our fun will mostly be over then. We won’t be able to see the work progress inside the new buildings. Already some walls are up. No more the pleasure of watching the floors ascend

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Truck with rebar



High-altitude assembly of the Tower Crane



Concrete being pumped through pipe



Checking concrete quality

Forest Dance...

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one by one, the workers perched on the columns, guiding the flow of cement down around the rebar cages. Over will be the drama as the forest of shiny supporting steel poles is removed and as, almost miraculously, the floors don't fall down.

All good things must come to an end. A maxim so apposite for us. Forest life will go back as before, but we're glad to have had these months to watch our buildings rise. After watching for a good while, Barbara said, "I should have been an engineer." ¶

Educated as physical chemists, Bob and Barbara Shaw appreciate the exquisite timing and coordination essential to the successful management of complex chemical processes: the dance as they are witnessing it in the construction of our new Health and Wellness Center.



View of the Forest Dance looking into the open "V" from Pond View Court. Building floors have been poured, including an attic floor, and a base layer of exterior sheathing is being installed to enclose the interior spaces. The South Building at the right of this photo will have five resident floors, the North Building at the left will have four. The Connector Building is visible behind the crane tower.

Persist

by Don Chesnut

Some words are more powerful than others, like ... persist.

If the doctor's not around and the nurse won't treat your cyst ... *persist!*

If you think you threw a strike but the umpire says you missed ... *persist!*

If your honey is much too shy about a good night's kiss ... *persist!*

If you want to go fight but they won't let folks your age enlist ... *persist!*

If you want to go shopping but you forgot to make a list ... *persist!*

If that gift is très expensive and you think you should resist ... *persist!*

If you want to compliment your neighbor's grandchild but he appears to be from "The Exorcist" ... *persist!*

But if you want to end this silly ditty and cause no more verses to exist, cease and ... *desist!*

Lâche Pas la Patate

by Sue Howell

My cousin Jim's favorite Cajun saying is "Lâche pas la patate." I first heard it after my father's funeral, as we traded awkward good-byes after a hastily bought ham-and-potato-salad spread. Translated, it says, "don't let go of the potato," or "hold on to the potato." Most of the time it's taken to mean "hold on to what's good," or possibly "hang in there." Even for a proverb, it doesn't make much sense. Why a potato? And if it's a hot potato, wouldn't it be better to drop it?

I didn't meet my Louisiana relatives until I was thirteen. My father, "Delta," (the family ran out of names after ten children) had left home to join the army, then signed up with the VA for a career that took him all over the country. I never questioned the absence of grandparents in my life. I only knew that my father's family was French. We were living in Milwaukee when my mother told me that dad would be gone "for a few days." His father, my grandfather Antoine, had just died. When he came back, my father had nothing to say to my sister Pat and me about the trip. But the following summer he announced that we were taking a family vacation, our first. To a place I'd known only in my imagination—Louisiana.

We drove down the old Highway 45 in our postwar Pontiac, the wind blasting through the open windows getting hotter by the hour. It was dusk when we reached Bunkie, one of the small Louisiana towns populated by my father's extended family. As soon as we pulled up in front of a small white bungalow, the car was ambushed by kinfolk of all ages, shapes, and sizes, all of them laughing and talking a mixture of French and English. For two girls used to a quiet life in a big house, it was a circus of sound and light. The charcoal-and-spice smell of chicken barbecuing floated across the back yard. So many people! The men in short-sleeved white shirts, the women in flowered print dresses with full skirts. The smallest children raced around the barbecue pit and hid under the picnic tables. A brown-and-white spotted dog watched from the back step. Matches flared in the dark. Beer cans popped. My father was drinking a beer out of a can! And he was telling jokes in French! I had never heard him speak a word of French before.

The "old aunts," Alice and Aline, spoke almost no English. We met them at the family farm, a crossroads called Boduc, too small to appear on any map. That was where we got to milk a cow, drink the raw milk,

and ride the calf. I even rode my cousin Rosemary's horse, which nearly ran away with me. The only thing I didn't like was the outhouse, especially the mysterious animal sounds at night. But always the clatter of plates and the smells of cooking, and people crowded around the kitchen table drinking chicory coffee or sitting on the front porch just talking. Children were expected to invent their own games. I met most of my 37 first cousins on that trip, including Jim, a shy skinny kid with cowlicky hair who taught us how to play bourée.

Pat and I went back the following summer, taking the train from Chicago. We were Delta's daughters, the city girls, and we got the royal treatment. The first night in Bunkie my cousin Hilda Ann, who was all of eighteen, took us to a baseball game, the lowest rung of the minor leagues, with half the town sitting on the grass under the lights, swatting voracious mosquitoes and shouting advice to the players. Hilda Ann managed to meet two of the ballplayers—she was quite a beauty—and they took us out to the Blue Moon, a local roadhouse. I was in heaven. Sitting in the dark interior of the Blue Moon (smelling of stale beer and quite seedy), listening to Erskine Hawkins' "After Hours" on the jukebox, drinking a Singapore Sling, which one of the boys said was "a safe drink for a kid"—I was embarked on a life of adventure.

I ate crawfish bisque and hush puppies, gumbo and shrimp étouffée and dirty rice and yam pie, food that woke up my Midwestern taste buds (And didn't Jim and I drive all over Avoyelles Parish

just last summer, looking for boudin sausage?) My cousins seemed to live on another, sunnier planet. Cousin Dolores and her friends would go down to the juke joint after high school and dance to the jukebox.



*A family grocery in 1982
St. Marvinsville LA*

"Crawfish, crabs, shrimp, catfish. And then we catch all these things. ... And it's some of the best stuff they got in the world. I can't imagine myself without it." —Roy Blanchard

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Lâche Pas ...

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At Cousin Vickie's, a maid in uniform brought us café au lait in the morning, and we drank it sitting on a canopy bed. (My mother wouldn't even let us drink Coke.) We learned how to dance Cajun style from Cousin Richard, who worked in a local bar, among his other pursuits. I can still sing the lyrics to "The Little Fat Man." *Il est pas si beau/ Il est pas si cute*. I drank a Salty Dog—gin, lemonade, and salt—which seemed to me perfectly wonderful.

I never found out why my father had stayed away from Louisiana for so long. He was the only one of the children to leave, the only one, really, to join the middle class. My mother disliked most of the Louisiana relatives. She didn't want to be around people who thought an outhouse was perfectly fine. The Cajuns were a little too loud, a little too earthy, a little too Catholic.

When I went to college in New Orleans ("near the family," my father said), my cousin Lee would often come over and take me out to lunch with one of my friends—to one of the fancy places like Arnaud's or Broussard's. That was when he had the crawfish by the tail, so to speak: he was a successful businessman serving in the Louisiana legislature. He was famous for his *boucheries*—cookouts—featuring sausage from the freshly slaughtered pigs at the big white house on Bayou Teche. My mother didn't like Lee much, called him an "operator." Maybe he was, but I believed him years later when he told me, "All that time in the legislature, and I never took a bribe, me. Never. And I had plenty chances, you can believe that."

After my father died, Jim, who'd become a professor at LSU and accumulated a library of Cajun lore, got me interested in the family history. My husband John and I met Jim and his wife in Baton Rouge and made a circuit of south Louisiana, visiting relatives living not far from where I'd met them forty years before. People recalled those earlier visits in uncanny detail. "Remember that baseball game?" somebody asked. "Well, would you believe Hilda Ann married one of those baseball boys." And, "Oh, child, I remember you and that horse," Rosemary said. "We were so scared he might run you into that barb wire fence." Sadie Mayeux, Vickie's sister, laughed when she thought of "the three of you out in that field—we didn't know what you'd get up to." Of course by then many of the cousins were dead, often victims of the food and drink they loved. But the spirit wasn't gone.

A friend of Jim's (also a print-and video-recorder of Louisiana lore) took John and me out to the cypress swamp in the Atchafalaya Basin, and we danced the one-step in Breaux Bridge to the accordion and the stomp of cowboy boots. Meanwhile Jim continued to send me his genealogical discoveries. One day when I



opened my email I found a picture of my grandparents, Rosa and Antoine. She has her hair pulled back in a bun and wears the look of stubborn

rectitude often seen on the faces of country women. He sports a dandified moustache and a stiff collar and casts a resolute look into the future. There they were, two people I would never meet.

My father started to speak French again in his last days, before he stopped speaking completely. Lee drove two hundred miles to see him and slept on our couch for days. I had been horrified when he got out of his car. He'd lost the use of one leg and could barely navigate with a cane. He was blind in one eye, and a skin disease had left his face hard to look at. "You shouldn't have come," I said. "Well, it was my duty," he said matter-of-factly. Later I tried to pry details about my father's childhood out of him. "Never did understand Delta," he shook his head. "Maybe because he was one of the smart ones, you know? Smart people don't talk so much." Lee's life had been hard, even beyond the financial difficulties that drove him out of the white house. His wife and one of their children had been killed in a railroad-crossing accident, leaving him with two little ones to raise. He'd remarried, to a woman who held herself apart from the family. By the time I talked to him about it, she too had died. "Velma, she was a good woman," he said. "But she didn't like to dance, you know? She never did like to dance." ¶

Sue grew up mostly in the Midwest. After high school in Milwaukee, she took her BA at Newcomb College in New Orleans; there she worked as a social worker; earned an MA in English at Tulane University, and met John. They came to The Forest from Southern Illinois University, where John was chair of the English Department. Sue took her PhD, taught high-school English, and published poetry and articles on the teaching of English.

Three Cheers

by Carolyn Cone Weaver

That day in February 1943 still shines bright for me, all these years later. I was a five-year-old kindergartener at P.S. 98, too young to go to a school-wide assembly. But because Captain Cone was my daddy, our principal, Major Connolly, made an exception for me. Mommy held my hand as we walked past the eighth-grade boys in the Color Guard who stood at attention along both sides of the hallway that led to the biggest room I'd ever been in.

Winter sun filtered through the tall windows revealed row after row of upper-grade students. Teachers, the ladies from the school office, and even some parents crowded the aisles and across the wall at the back of the room.

And then my daddy appeared up on the stage.

"Three cheers for Captain Cone!" Major Connolly announced.

"Hip-hip hooray! Hip-hip hooray! Hip-hip hooray!" came the response.

The children waved little American flags with forty-eight stars on them, and the sound of their high-pitched voices filled that big room. They cheered for my daddy, Capt. Howard M. Cone, Jr., thirty-four years old, Master of Ocean Flying.

I waved my own tiny flag and cheered for my hero, the handsomest man in the whole world. Standing up on the stage, Daddy looked like the

captain on a ship's deck. The PAA insignia on his cap, the buttons, and the wings on his chest sparkled gold against the navy-blue of his uniform. If Hollywood had made a movie about this event, Gregory Peck would have been the star.

My daddy had just returned from a top-secret mission, piloting President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the Casablanca Conference on Pan American World Airways' flying boat, the *Dixie Clipper*. The children's cheers celebrated the history-making flight. Newspapers, radio stations and newsreels carried Daddy's picture. He was the first to fly a sitting U.S. president, the first to fly a president outside the United States—and the first to fly a president during wartime. The *Dixie Clipper* was the first of the famous airplanes that later became known as *Air Force One*.

My picture had been in the papers, too. And I had flown in that gigantic silver flying boat. I wasn't on the plane at the same time as the President, but



The Cones fresh off the Clipper from Miami: Carolyn, Capt. Cone, Jennie Rae Cone, and brother Howard.

my mommy, my two-year-old brother, Howard, and I were passengers when Daddy flew the *Dixie Clipper* from New York to Miami, where his mysterious passenger, "Mr. Jones," boarded the plane. Then when the President returned to Miami after his historic flight, he took the train back to Washington DC, and we flew back to New York on the *Clipper*.

In those days, only celebrities and royalty flew over the Atlantic, and reporters met every incoming flight to see which notables were on board. By the time we landed at the LaGuardia Marine Air Terminal, the White House had announced the trip. It was no longer a secret. So a shouting mob of reporters, complete with their flash cameras, pushed and shoved to document the man who flew the President. The

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This famous photograph shows President Roosevelt with Fleet Admiral W. D. Leahy to his right, advisor Harry Hopkins directly across from him, and the Dixie Clipper's captain, Howard M. Cone, Jr., on the far right. The large rectangular windows were typical of Boeing 314 Clippers.

Three Cheers...

(Continued from Page 10)

pictures that ran in the papers the next day showed our little family, fresh off the plane from Miami, all dressed in our New York winter finery. Mommy wore her Sunday hat with its perky feather tilted at a rakish angle. She held my little brother in his snowsuit. Daddy, in his captain's uniform, held me in my brand new winter-coat outfit and my Mary Janes.

Reporters crowded up to us, shouting questions at Daddy about the President's flight. Flash bulbs exploded in our faces, and in one picture, little Howard looked like the proverbial deer-in-the-headlights, his eyes wide, wonder written all over his face.

Now, more than the scary reporters and their flashbulbs that dazzled me then, I still thrill to the echo of the children I went to school with cheering for my daddy, my hero. Nearly eight decades later I still feel the pride and love for that handsome man standing up there on that stage, the man my schoolmates cheered.

Three cheers for Daddy! Hip-hip Hooray!!! ♫

Carolyn Cone Weaver was born in Miami FL and grew up in Douglaston NY. She came to Durham in 1955 to attend Duke, where she majored in English. She remained in North Carolina, living in Durham, Greensboro, Charlotte, and Fayetteville. Her hobbies include writing, reading, working crossword puzzles, walking, birding, and pocket gardening.

Publish in *The Forester*

The editors welcome original contributions from TFAD residents: stories, memoir excerpts, insights, poetry, illustrations, cartoons, and photos—things that we can publish. Past pieces have ranged widely in theme and style.

Photos, graphics, and eye-catching illustrations can add interest and clarity to the written word—and sometimes tell their own story. The editors can provide advice and suggestions.

It is preferred that submissions be sent as digital files attached to email addressed to Managing Editor, Sharon Dexter <forestersjd@gmail.com> but hard copy is acceptable.

Due to space constraints, not every submission will see print, but we will do our best to bring as much to our readership as we possibly can. ♫

Doing What It Takes...



Photo by Sanford

On that bitter cold and sleeting very early Sunday morning, in a silent upper hallway of isolated Building C... a heavily bundled figure pushed a heavily loaded cart, flashed a modest smile and hurried to fulfill food deliveries.

Startled, we finally recognized our dedicated CEO.

Thanks for your service, Anita!

—Catherine & Sanford Berg
January 16, 2022

More about Mysteries

by Ellen Baer

“For me, as for many others, the reading of detective stories is an addiction like tobacco or alcohol.” This is poet W. H. Auden confessing a craving so intense that “I must be careful not to get hold of a detective story, for, once I begin one, I cannot work or sleep till I have finished it.”

I understand, because I’ve been wanting to write about Auden, the mystery addict, for a while now but couldn’t. It wasn’t COVID or Christmas that stopped me. It was that I had to finish a story about a murder in France that related to old wars and new truffles. Now that Bruno, Chief of Police, has solved that mystery, I can tell you what Auden taught me, even if it was second-hand teaching.

It began when Forest resident **Ella Jean Shore** responded to a *Forester* article in which I admitted that

I’d always rejected mysteries in my reading life until I read one during the pandemic and got, well, hooked. She graciously told me about her own relationship with mysteries, which included two memorable trips to Oxford, England, one in 1994 for a course on “British Detective Fiction” and another the following year for “Murder in Oxford.” She told me how the popularity of detec-



Ella Jean in Oxford

tive fiction grew in England after World War I, not only because of the excellence of such writers as Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers but also because of the state of the country after the war. It was, Ella Jean said, “in need of a restoration to normalcy,” exactly what a community needs after a murder has ripped it apart. Good mystery stories were a balm then as they are now for people in communities divided by politics and pandemic.

One lecturer in Ella Jean’s course was mystery writer P. D. James, who introduced the class to “The Guilty Vicarage,” a literary essay in which Auden

examines the “Whodunit.” He goes into detail about five required elements, starting with the *milieu*. It’s preferably a closed society, according to Auden, like a village or a college, or a dinner in a country house, which he describes as “an innocent society in a state of grace.” As for the *victim*, Auden challenges us with a paradox, saying that the victim should satisfy two contradictory requirements: “he has to involve everyone in suspicion, which requires that he be a bad character, and he has to make everyone feel guilty, which requires that he be a good character.” The poet makes similarly thought-provoking observations about the *murderer*, the *suspects*, and the *detective*, finally returning to the idea of grace. “The job of the detective is to restore the state of grace in which the aesthetic and the ethical are as one.”

At the end, Auden turns his attention to the *reader* and suggests that “the typical detective story addict is a doctor or clergyman or scientist or artist, i.e., a fairly successful professional man with intellectual interests and well-read in his own field.” Ella Jean confirmed that this observation was true for the people in both her Oxford courses, men and women alike.

Although I understood Auden’s sentiment when he said that he found it difficult to read a detective story that wasn’t set in rural England, I’d like to tell him how much I’ve enjoyed learning new things from stories about murders in such places as Quebec, Venice, and southwest France. But now Ella Jean recommends that I learn more about North Carolina through murders provided by award-winning author Margaret Maron, who died in 2021 at age 82. I knew of her because she was famous, but famous for writing mysteries, a genre in which I had no interest then even though she set her stories right here in her home state, North Carolina. I didn’t care. I didn’t read mysteries.

But now I do, and Ella Jean tells me I should get to know Deborah Knott, a district judge who solves mysteries in various North Carolina locations while navigating the social, political, and cultural trends and changes that have occurred since she appeared in Maron’s first mystery, *Bootlegger’s Daughter*, published in 1992. I have a lot on my to-do list right now, but first I have to read this book. W. H. Auden would understand the craving. ¶