

## Allison Rouse, Marketing Counselor

by Joanne Ferguson

**Allison Rouse**, who has been at The Forest since May 9, 2011, was born and brought up in Roxboro. She was an only child and hers was a country upbringing. She and her cousins and the neighborhood children worked in the tobacco fields. "It was good, hard-earned money," she says. The days could be twelve hours long, sunup to sundown. She describes the whole process: you pick the leaves from the bottom of the plant—"you can tell when they are ready"—carry them under your arm until you have enough to place the bundle on a wooden sled with wooden runners pulled by a tractor riding up and down between the rows taking the tobacco to the barn. Each bundle was hand tied to a stick that was hung in the stick barn for curing. That was before the day of electric stringers and before the sleds had wheels. "The tobacco barns were just like the ones we have here at The Forest." It was hard, hot work, but she says she loved those days. "I've worked all my life."

When she was twelve years old she began to work with her father, who delivered processed meat for a company out of Greensboro to grocery stores, mom and pop stores included. They had a refrigerated truck, and Allison remembers vividly her cold fingers. The deliverer had to price it ("that was before barcodes"), shelve it, and pull any that was too old to be sold.

When she was fourteen, both her parents wanted her to experience something beyond the world of Person County, where there were not even any movie theaters, so they sent her to Sacramento to spend the summer with her aunt and uncle and cousins. She was enchanted. They could ride bikes on the side-



walk, explore the town on a monorail, swim in a pool around the corner. She didn't want to leave, and her mother said, "Now, don't you make me come out there and get you!"

When she was sixteen she worked for the summer in Myrtle Beach washing dishes at a Christian campground. People were shocked that her parents trusted her to go off alone. She didn't want to leave Myrtle Beach either.

She went to Louisburg Junior College and then to

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### The Forester

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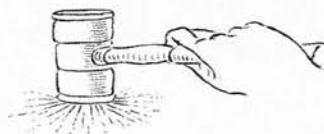
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### In Memoriam

Frances Thompson Lacy      October 15, 2011

## President's Podium



by Jack Hughes

Thank you for the challenge and the opportunity to serve as President of the Residents Association. Special thanks to Past Presidents **Tom Frothingham** and **Tynette Hills** for a job well done despite some physical setbacks; to **Cathy Stickel** and **Ned Arnett**, retiring board members, our thanks also. And a tip of the hat to the other members of the Board and their committees for their labors in the field.

Last month in this column we were reminded that one of the purposes of the Residents Association is to assist in the development and implementation of programs, activities, services and facilities which address and support the needs of the residents of The Forest and the larger community. This purpose is accomplished largely through the many committee members who volunteer their time and expertise. At the beginning of a new year many of the members rotate off with some becoming "emeritus and consulting," making room for new members with new ideas. When the opportunity to join a committee knocks I hope you will answer.

Remember that the way to keep up to date on what the Residents Association Board is up to is to read the minutes of its monthly meetings and those of the committees placed monthly in the burgundy note book located in the mailroom; back copies are kept in notebooks in the library.

The list of officers, board members and their committees and the date and time of the committee meetings are posted on the bulletin board. All Board and committee meetings are open and residents are welcome. Please join us.

## Library Science 101

by Carol Scott

Will you have small children visiting you during the holidays?

Do you like to read to them?

If they have not brought favorite books with them, there is now a special Children's Section in the Library Classroom, where you can find something they will enjoy hearing--and looking at. Thanks to the generosity of READ SEED we have forty-some new books for young grand- or great-grandchildren--especially at bed-time after a strenuous day!

Also in the Classroom is a new arrangement of music CDs. The Library has many, divided into categories, but formerly arranged on the shelves like books, and the title has been hard to read. Circulation of these has been poor and we have now placed them in boxes, facing forward so you can easily see the title. We hope this will make them more accessible. Christmas music CDs will be in a box together.

Resident historian Al Young has another new book in the Library, titled "Whose American Revolution Was It?" The Revolutionary War period is Al's special interest and we have other books he has written about it. Look in the In House Authors section in the Classroom

There have been several requests recently for Robert's Rules of Order. We are pleased to report that the new 11<sup>th</sup> edition is now available for circulation. The call number is 060.42, and if it is checked out, it can be reserved at the desk for when it is returned.

We are pleased that Herman Grossman has kindly loaned us for our holiday decorations one of the Hannukah menorahs he has made in Joan Cohen's clay class.

Last but not least, we are happy to report that the gifts to the Library in memory of Jane Jones amounted to \$410, of which \$250 was designated for mysteries, Jane's favorite genre. Thank you to all who remembered her in this way.

And now to all, Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year to come.

## Brunswick Stew

by Bill Harrington

Brunswick stew was on the lunch menu for November 25, the day after our Thanksgiving Buffet. The recipes vary greatly. Usually the stew is a tomato-based concoction containing lima beans/butter beans, corn, okra and other vegetables plus one or more types of meat. Chicken, pork or beef can be used, but *real* Brunswick stew must contain squirrel or rabbit meat.

There are several "true" stories about where Brunswick stew originated, with Virginia and Georgia claiming to be the first. On St. Simons Island in Georgia a plaque is etched with the following words: "First Brunswick stew cooked on July 2, 1898." Southern Virginians claim the chef of a Virginia legislator invented the stew on a hunting trip in 1828. Yet a third claim is made in Majorie Kinnan Rawlings' cookbook *Cross Creek Cookery*: Brunswick stew was first made in Braunschweig, Germany. I am sure some of my ancestors in eastern North Carolina would have a fourth version and it would most assuredly claim to be the first.

(Please keep the following a secret from my wife, Maija.) Granville County is famous for its Brunswick stew. (If you travel north on I-85 for about 20 miles, you will be in Granville County when you arrive at the first Butner exit.) It is tomato-based with "everything but the kitchen sink" thrown into a large black pot and cooked outside with wood. In addition to tomatoes, potatoes, okra, butter beans, corn (and I'm sure a few others I cannot remember), beef, pork, and chicken are used. The old-fashioned recipe called for squirrel, but I'm sure not as many people include the little creature anymore. How do I know about this? On a first date, I arrived to pick up the young lady as the farm family was finishing an all-day Brunswick stew cookout. The stew was to be

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**Allison Rouse** continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

UNC Chapel Hill, studying business and working all the time until she burned out. Many years later she got married and had children, working part-time from home for the five years she stayed home with Bo and Nella; Bo (James Bristol Rouse III) is fifteen and Nella (Rebecca Purnell Rouse) is thirteen. Allison's parents live close by and have helped with the children from the day her first child was born, she says.

When I go in to see her on a Monday morning, Allison says, "Guess what I did on the weekend!" She had remodeled the children's bathroom, and they were thrilled. "I was bored, and when I get bored I work."

Before coming to The Forest, she worked for Morgan Keegan, a broker/dealer with the New York Stock Exchange. In the economic downturn the local branch closed and she was laid off. She then got a job at Cardinal State Bank and came from there to her job here.

Now Allison is volunteering with Transforming Hope Ministries, an organization that rescues young children who have been sold into slavery by their families. The organization began in the home of the founder, and has now attracted so many volunteers that meetings are held in the Durham Public Library.

The organization has an undisclosed home in The Triangle that accommodates four young women, where they are given room and board and counseling. She tells me that Greece is number one among trafficking countries and that North Carolina is number eight in the United States, a shocking statistic. She can do her volunteer work on Sundays, manning an information table and helping raise funds.

At The Forest Allison assists on the coordination of activities and events for clients, making sure everything is operational and functional. As we have seen, she's all over the place and working hard.



Allison with chocolate lab, Claire

**Brunswick Stew** continued

*(Continued from page 3)*

frozen in plastic containers for the winter. The big question, how to cool gallons and gallons of Brunswick stew. When I walked in the back door, I realized there was Brunswick stew in every conceivable metal container being cooled in every conceivable place where the pots and pans could be surrounded by ice water. Stew was everywhere. After my long trip, I needed to use the bathroom. The bathtub was full of huge pots containing the finished product. Needless to say, I stayed for supper.



Photo by Dick Aroner

Tony Ellis, Allison, and David Wolfe at the Newcomers' Breakfast

## Welcome, New Residents



**Helen Stahl**

Apartment 4024

489-2086

Helen was born in Buende, Germany, and emigrated to the US with her family when she was six. She grew up in Manhattan and Brooklyn. She attended New York University, majoring in Early Childhood Education as well as thoroughly enjoying being part of the Greenwich Village scene. In 1953 she married Gerald Stahl, a graduate student of Hospital Pharmacy at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. They lived a short time in Alexandria, VA, before settling in Durham in 1955, where Gerald became Chief Pharmacist at Watts Hospital and later Durham Regional Hospital. Helen has a daughter and two grandchildren in Gaithersburg, MD, and two more grandsons in Pomfret, CT, children of her deceased son. Helen's work has been in the early childhood field, directing centers and serving on related advisory boards. She has been an active volunteer in the community and received Volunteer of the Year awards from the Carolina Theater and Durham Regional Auxiliary. She also volunteers for Jewish Family Services and is active at Judea Reform Congregation. She enjoys reading, crafts, OLLI, bridge and mah jongg. Her greatest joy is learning about two generations of Durham children becoming well educated, successful adults.



**John Tindall**

Apartment 3024

402-1464

John was born and raised in Kissimmee, Florida. In the past he lived in Durham for 21 years as undergraduate, medical student, resident in dermatology and faculty member at Duke. After spending a decade as a dermatologist in the Medical Center, he fulfilled a long-felt ambition to participate in the aerospace program and to practice aerospace medicine. He served for 25 years in the U.S. Air Force, mostly in England but also at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO; Comiso in Sicily; and Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm. He joined the Rotary Club in Durham but also enjoyed belonging to other clubs where he served. He is Catholic, belonged to numerous medical organizations and contributed many publications. He practiced in Kinston, NC, before moving to The Forest. His interests include travel, history, ancient coinage, and Duke sports.

## John Henry's *Conversations*



- I'll pretend I don't know he is here.
- "Time to go." "I'm not ready." "Ready or not?"
- "Let's go! I'm tired of waiting!"
- My birthday was yesterday and you know I don't like things from that store.
- Why does the man in my life look and act so different from my dream man?
- My beloved, I remember you.
- The light in this window is perfect for my orchids, don't you think?
- "Now if you did it this way, it would be better." "I wish I could!"
- It might be better if you didn't come so often—I'm quite tired tonight.
- What did you bring me?



- Father, forgive me.
- What you said was unforgiveable. Kneeling beside me doesn't change that.
- A gift will not suffice this time.
- See that statue down there! It's right across from that!
- Son, how about being an acolyte in our church? During the organ prelude you can begin the worship service by lighting the candles.
- If you're a very good girl, I'll let you go to the mall to get some new clothes.
- There is something you should know.
- Have you heard?
- You're ill. Take my arm—I'll walk with you to your quarters.

## Little Bo Peep

Little Bo Peep  
Has lost her sheep  
And can't tell  
Where to find them

by Christel Machemer

In the fall of 1942 when the Allied bombing of German cities had become more dangerous, my father sent my mother with her two young children, age 6 and 9, away to the countryside where he thought we would be safer. He had found a small house in a remote area where the next village was 40 minutes away across a mountain. It had the bare necessities: an outhouse and running water over the kitchen sink. When we arrived at this forlorn place I thought we had come to the end of the world and was heartbroken. Little did my mother or I know then that the three years of living there would transform me into an avid nature and animal lover. After we acquired chickens, geese, rabbits, and a sheep (for wool) I also brought home a little dog and two kittens. I cannot say my mother was delighted, but she tolerated it to keep me happy.

One day a shepherd came through the valley with his flock. I immediately fell in love with the little lambs and decided to follow him with my dog, without telling my mother. I had only one goal: to talk him into giving me a lamb. Of course he refused, but I was determined and followed him for about 40 minutes, constantly pestering him. When he realized he could not get rid of me, he mellowed and told me I could have a certain female sheep for 110 Marks—not much money at the time. I didn't like the sheep because it had a round palm-size area on its back where the wool was missing and the skin was not totally healed. When I refused he told me a sad story, that the sheep had been hit by shell splinters and that it would heal in time. I was eleven years old by then and this sheep seemed the best I could get. I spotted two farmers I knew, working in a field close by, who

would certainly lend me the money. And sure enough, I triumphantly handed the shepherd the money, wrapped my dog's leash around the sheep's neck, and tried to pry the animal away from the flock. It was quite an ordeal to drag it my way. When I came down the hill behind our house my mother was hanging up laundry. I will never forget the look on her face when she saw me with the sheep. "WHAT DID YOU DO?" After I had explained the facts, her verdict was: "It's YOUR sheep. YOU take care of it." I didn't think it was so bad since I had to take care of the other sheep already and my secret hope was that they would mate. The new sheep's name was Mecky.

Of course the shepherd had lied to me, and the animal was sick. After one year the poor thing died. What to do now? My firm mother's response was: "It's your animal. YOU have to get it in the ground." My brother and I started to dig but the hole had to be so big that it seemed hopeless. Luckily a nice farmer happened to pass by and took pity on us. With his help we finally buried the sheep, and that was the end of it—or so I thought.

But many years later, to my embarrassment, the story resurfaced at my wedding, in the form of a skit titled "Christel's Sheep."

## A Christmas Story

reprinted from *The Forester*, December 2000

by Libby Getz

If you look on a map you will see that the part of England closest to Germany is East Anglia and near its outer edge is the city of Norwich. This is where I found myself in the latter part of WWII—and in a madhouse at that. No, I wasn't bereft of my senses, I was only there because the British Government had lent the property housing the local insane asylum to the American Red Cross for an officers' club. The former inmates had been evacuated to Scotland for the duration as Norwich was a target for German bombs. The building was spacious and honeycombed with small cubicle bedrooms. The public rooms were large, as was the walled garden. Two traces of the former residents remained—the iron bars on the windows and the toilets that flushed automatically every five minutes. The age of the building was arguable. Mrs. Simmet, who brought my "wake up" tea, scoffed when I looked at the sagging ceiling and remarked on the great age of Bethel House. "Not very old, Ma'am, only Elizabethan." I had forgotten Norwich was a Norman town.

Clustered around Norwich were the airfields for our B24 bombers. These bases were drab affairs. Color them gray ... treeless stretches peppered with hangars and Quonset huts and deep in mud when it rained, and it rains often in East Anglia. The men would fly for one day and be free for two. What to do with their free time? They came to town on their jeeps, on their bicycles, on the bus. Our club's cubicle bedrooms offered a clean bed and a hot shower. Our large public rooms offered lounge chairs in front of a crackling fire, bridge, a library of sorts, a dining room (British rations, lots of rabbit and Spam) and dances twice a week with carefully screened local girls. For many the club became their home away from home. We four Red Cross girls listened to their problems, held their hands, and when we heard the drone of their planes assembling over Norwich sent up little prayers for their safe return.

These bombing missions over Germany were an



exquisite form of Russian Roulette. So many planes would go out in the morning and not so many would limp home in the afternoon. Some days' losses were staggering. Each plane carried a crew of seven, so it wasn't just the plane that went down; it was those fresh-faced boys who had come into the club.

When the Normandy landings and the romp through France were successful everyone felt the war in Europe would soon end. In December '44 the Allies ran into trouble in Belgium. The snow was deep, the Germans determined, and the momentum we had gathered came to a screeching halt at the Battle of the Bulge. Our armies desperately needed air cover. Unfortunately the weather had closed in; pea-soup fog, sleet and snow blanketed the area, making flying impossible. The fliers felt they were not doing their bit when most needed. A heavy depression invaded the club. The men's faces were as long as their legs. We tried to cheer them, had them baking cookies, helping with the Christmas decorations. The club was flooded with Christmas music. ("White Christmas" always takes me back to Norwich.) The children's choir from the Cathedral would be coming Christmas Eve to sing and the Army had given us turkeys for Christmas dinner.

After days of fog the sun burst through on December 24. The club emptied. The men returned to base to fly. The children's choir came that Christmas Eve and sang for their audience of only four Red Cross girls. Christmas was postponed.

## "God Bless Us Every One!"

by Peggy Quinn

The words of Tiny Tim drown out the "Bah! Humbug!" of Ebenezer Scrooge as another Christmas season is upon us. Published for the first time in 1843, Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* has survived the test of time and proves again that great literature is ageless.

*A Christmas Carol*, like *The Nutcracker*, is a harbinger of a special time for celebration, a time to bring out all the old family traditions and bask in the warmth of sharing happy times with friends and kinfolk. In our family, Christmas was always the time to bring out the old dog-eared copy of a very sweet story by O. Henry. "Read the Magi, Mommy," the children would ask and once again we would listen to *The Gift of the Magi*, O. Henry's Christmas classic.

A young newly married couple, Della and Jim, were about to celebrate their first Christmas together. Money was scarce and each schemed and worried for days about buying a gift for each other. Della had one dollar and eighty-seven cents and that was all. Sixty cents of it was in pennies, pennies that she salvaged from her grocery budget. It was already Christmas Eve, and Della was frantic to find something that she could sell to buy Jim the platinum and gold watch fob which he could use to display his cherished gold watch that had belonged to his grandfather. There were only two possessions in which the young couple took great pride: Della's beautiful hair that reached far below her knees, and Jim's gold watch. Della made her decision. She decided to sell her hair and hesitated for only a fraction when she thought how Jim loved her long hair. Off she went and sold her hair for \$20. The watch fob cost \$21. She had eighty-seven cents left.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of a quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not an-

ger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, not horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

It was then that he reached into his pocket and pulled out a small package. "Open it, Della, it's your Christmas present." With trembling fingers she opened the present and cried out in delight as she saw the exquisite tortoiseshell combs that she had admired so long in a jewelry store window. She hugged them to her and with tears running down her cheeks assured him that her hair grew very fast. It was then that she gave him her gift, the gleaming platinum watch fob. But there was no watch, because Jim had sold it to buy her combs.

Della and Jim had sacrificed the greatest treasures of their house to give each other a Christmas gift. The Magi were wise men who brought gifts to the babe in the manger. They invented the idea of gift giving at Christmas. Perhaps the young couple sacrificed unwisely, but again perhaps they were very wise in their love for each other.

Merry Christmas to one and all!

## Vanishing Point

by Blaine Nashold

That horizon point where all lines converge  
What lies beyond  
A new universe, a new consciousness  
We may never know  
Vanishing point

## Benefits of Growing Older

by Carol Scott

"So far this is the OLDEST I've ever been" reads the logo on my special tee-shirt.

My children seem to think that makes me ancient --- and in need of great care. My new daughter-in-law solicitously took me by the arm to help me up every no-matter-how-short stretch of steps. My daughter ordered me a cane (which I do use on a very few occasions). She also wants to drive ALL the way when we go on a car trip, instead of letting me share the driving.

But I still prefer to be as independent as possible! And I usually am.

However, there is one place where I welcome assistance. The airport. I have said many times that I am good for the sprint, but not for the marathon. That is why I moved so close to the Library at The Forest, and do many sprints to that place each day (how many sprints equal a marathon?).

It is always a marathon at an airport. Invariably my gate is the farthest one from any starting point. That is why I always have a wheelchair ordered, to get me from and to. Although I have no visible disability and so am self-conscious about appearing "needy" as I ride in comfort to my destination, I have tried the airport marathon and know I am no longer capable of it. In addition, the wheelchair "pushers" always know short cuts, and get their riders to the head of the line for security checks, great benefits on a busy traveling day.

Recently I flew to Chicago and to Nashville. A daughter was with me on the Chicago trip, and took good care of me, but I was on my own to Nashville, where my other daughter met me. She had arranged for wheelchairs to be waiting for me before and after each flight. All I had to do was get in, get out, and tip the "pusher."

For the Nashville flights I was booked on Southwest Airlines. Their big advantage was that

there was no fee for checked bags (we had to pay \$20 for each checked bag on United's flights to and from Chicago).

A surprising "extra added bonus," as we used to say, occurred on my return trip from Nashville, traveling alone. As I stepped out of the plane at RDU I saw a line of wheelchairs, and a young man in uniform standing by them.

"Is there a wheelchair for Scott?" I asked.

"Yes ma'am, right here," he answered, and helped me into the chair.

As we neared the top of the ramp, I said, "I need to go to Baggage Claim."

I was quite surprised when he unexpectedly replied, "I will have to get someone else to take you from here. I have to get back, because I am the Captain on the next leg of the plane's flight."

Embarrassed, I then noted that his uniform had Captain's epaulets on the shoulders and his tie was of a special red, white and blue design. Definitely NOT a "pusher's" outfit!

Though I didn't tip the Captain, after that special kind of service, you can bet I will fly Southwest whenever I can!

## Clay

by Blaine Nashold

Gift of earth  
Fist full of mud  
Shaped by hands  
Fired in the volcano's heat  
Glazed by the rainbow  
Clay, magic

## Odds and Ends

by Joanne Ferguson

**Greg Mack**, whose profile appeared in last month's *Forester*, has become the father of twin boys. I held off taking copy to the printer as long as the schedule would allow, hoping to include this news. Finias and Roman were born the next day!

**Bob Ward** has been to Washington, D.C., where he was given one of the Lifetime Achievement awards for opera. John Mancini, chancellor of the North Carolina School of the Arts presented the award. It was Bob who served as president and later chancellor of the school from 1961 to 1974.

The event kicked off National Opera Week and included performances by tenor Lawrence Brownlee and mezzo-soprana Heather Johnson.

Bob worked with street opera in the eighties and

helped bring *Carmen* to Brightleaf Square. He received the New York Music Critics Citation in 1960 and the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 for his opera *The Crucible*.

If you go to the National Endowment for the Arts home page and click on Lifetime Awards you can watch a wonderful video about Bob.

### John Henry's Paintings and The Forest Conversations

John Henry's paintings that were displayed in the foyer are now mounted in the corridor between elevators 6 and 7. We will be publishing them, a few at a time, in *The Forester* along with the conversations he asked residents to imagine for them.

## Mystery People — Do You Know Who They Are?



St. Petersburg, 1934, small boy holding baseball (Yes, that's Babe Ruth)



Duke University in the sixties

## People-watching: any airport, any holiday

by Ned Arnett

You've run the gauntlet of inconvenience,  
imposed through the years by anonymous  
enemies:  
up at the crack of dawn to allow time for  
X-raying everything because of Cuban hijackers,  
taking your shoes off thanks to the "shoe  
bomber,"  
and next the search of body cavities?  
after that, searching your thoughts?

You've cleared security and you're  
getting bored out of your skull,  
searching for an abandoned newspaper,  
or getting your fourth cup of coffee  
just for something to do.  
You could be busy in your technospace:  
talking loudly in public on your cell phone,  
or text-messaging, twittering, Friending, e-mailing.

Meanwhile, one of the greatest shows on earth  
is streaming past and you have a ringside seat  
to see the shifting Acts and Scenes  
of so many dramas and even melodramas  
with their fond farewells and "welcome homes,"  
private lives being played out in public.

For males and females of every age, weight,  
and class  
the universally accepted leisure-wear for travel  
is tennis shoes and denim pants; can you believe  
it, denim?

Levi cowboy pants, much too tight for fortyish  
office workers,  
or hip-hop pants worn prison style half-way  
down the butt,  
flopping around the untied shoe laces of expensive  
sneakers.

From the waist up it's everyman's choice of state  
ments on  
T-shirts, sweatshirts, or jackets advertising almost  
anything;  
telling the world what they'd like to be identified  
with.

And then there's the matter of hair, on the head  
or face.

For men the awful decisions of the seventies  
are gone:  
to let it grow? shave it off? grow a beard or  
mustache?

Now a simple, obligatory five-day stubble  
marks you as a manly lover of sports, girls, beer.  
For women, the choice of what to do with hair,  
nails and personal adornment never ceases.  
But now there's the big matter of tattooing  
or body piercing as part of claiming "who I am,"  
and whom I'd like to attract.

They keep coming, making me think of throngs  
wandering the halls of Dante's *Purgatorio*.  
Is this fifty-some-year-old woman  
clutching her stuffed bear or her long-lost childhood?  
Are these four young Marines in desert combat  
uniform

with their Paris Island haircuts and air of assurance,  
coming from or going to one of our various wars,  
seeking a quiet corner to stretch out on the floor  
and sleep?

How about all the foreigners in saris, burkas, turbans,  
jabbering away with their excited greeters  
in "God's own language": Urdu, Turkish, Tai,  
Telugu?

And don't forget the little kids, running around in  
circles screaming.

They'll be ready to explode after three hours in the  
plane.

The speaker says it's time to stand in line for  
boarding.

Back to the reality of taking my place with the  
actors.

"Abandon hope all ye who enter here"  
would fit the entrance to our ergonomically cramped  
places

as we speculate on our most likely neighbors.  
I'll bet I get the screamer on one side  
and the 400-pound linebacker on the other.