

Flying the Concorde: A Dream Fulfilled

by Jack K. Gartner

I've always wanted to fly on the Concorde since I first saw it at Kennedy Airport in 1977. Even amidst the protests against the aircraft due to its potential noise impact, seeing it from the control tower taking off and landing, it was a thing of beauty, truly a magnificent raptor in flight, and not like any other airplane. And for many years I tried to figure out how I could make this dream come true.

I first became involved in aviation in 1961, as part of the Port Authority of NY and NJ management training program, with a short assignment at Idlewild Airport. My first permanent job in aviation was in 1963 at the soon to be named John F. Kennedy International Airport. And I stayed in aviation until my retirement in 1997, with assignments at JFK, LaGuardia, and Newark.

Over the years I participated in various aspects of the start-up of a number of new aircraft, from the 727 to the Airbus to the 747 and the Concorde. And I have flown in many, many different aircraft beyond the current fleets, including the Ford Tri-motor, DC-367, Constellation, glider, sea plane, and ski plane. Even a hot air balloon in Africa, but never the Concorde. Nothing came along to provide the chance to take a flight.

I retired from the Port Authority in 1997, went into airport consulting, and moved to Durham NC. A few months later, the announcement was made that both Air France and British Airways were terminating Concorde service. I thought about it for a few weeks, then said to my wife, "I have to do this. Are you going to join me?" She said yes. We worked out a four day trip, one way over on the Concorde with an American Airlines non-stop back. It wasn't easy; the demand for seats had increased substantially since the announcement, so we only had a few dates to choose from, but everything fell into place and we were a "go."



Much has been written about the Concorde since the British and French got together in 1962 to build the supersonic transport. While they were partners, it took years during the design/build process for the British to finally agree to the spelling with an "e," the British minister at the time putting a wonderful spin on the "e" for "excellence," "Europe," and "England." A total of fourteen Concorde were built, for the two airlines. On January 26, 1976, the first British Concorde flew commercially from London to Bahrain. Service to NY (JFK) from London, and from Paris on Air France, began in November, 1977.

Some facts about the aircraft: it has a seating capacity of one hundred passengers, and its flight range is 4,143 miles. The aircraft is 203 ft 9 in long, 37 ft 1 in tall, and has an 83 ft 8 in wingspan. Its cruising speed is Mach 2 (1,350 mph) up to 60,000 feet. The Concorde's fastest transatlantic crossing was on February 7, 1996, completing NY to London in two hours, 52 minutes, and 59 seconds.

The day finally arrived. We shuttled from the JFK Holiday Inn at 7:00 am to check in for the 9:00 am departure. British Airways maintained a completely separate check-in, security, and lounge facility for this flight, which in those days made the process infinitely easier than anywhere else.

Even with the ease of check-in, the first news was disappointing: the flight would be one and one-half hours late. The crew had arrived

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The Forester

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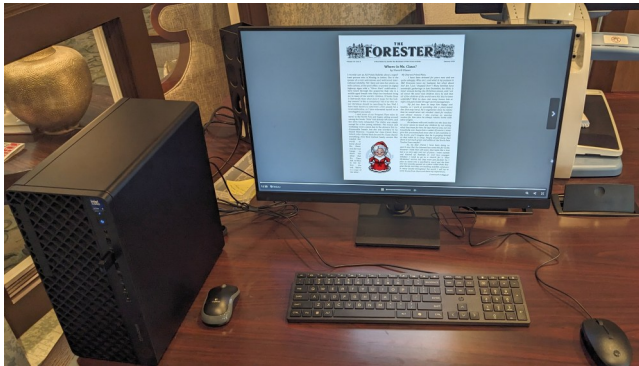
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"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." - Maya Angelou

A new computer has been located in the library, set up for residents to read *The Forester* online. You can also use it to access Cubigo and the RA website if you have your passwords for those sites. *The Forester*, Cubigo, and RA website are labeled on the main screen for you to click on.

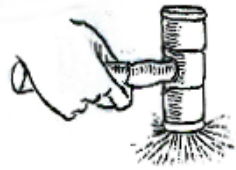


Want to have *The Forester* stories read to you?
Click [HERE](#).

In Memoriam

John LeBar

October 17, 2025



RA Podium

By Sondra Stein

It all began over lunch, a little over a year ago. **Elizabeth Gillis** invited David Graham, staff writer for *The Atlantic* and adjunct professor in journalism at the Sanford School, to join us for lunch and to see if he'd be interested in giving a talk here. He told us about the book he was writing, *The Project: How Project 2025 Is Reshaping America*, which would be released early in 2025. We had read brief accounts of Project 2025 during the 2024 election, but none of us had delved into its nearly one thousand pages of detailed planning for reshaping and controlling every aspect of our government. We all agreed it was something that we needed to understand, so we made plans for David to come and speak to all of us once the book was out.



The response from TFAD residents was overwhelming. Even before David spoke on June 2, Community Life staff had to close the doors to the Auditorium because we had exceeded Fire Department restrictions. And after the talk, each of us who had helped to organize the event were deluged, in person and email, by thank you messages from residents and requests for more intellectually stimulating talks that a resident described as "talks that provoked serious discussion of issues that we care about."

Thus was born *Triangle Thinkers and Doers*—a speaker series that complements our existing Forest Speaks series by bringing in experts living in the Triangle area "to address a wide variety of topics that are intellectually stimulating and that foster non-partisan engagement with issues affecting our community and the world." We formed a subcommittee of the RA Activities Com-

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RA Podium

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mittee to plan the series, and we began talking to fellow residents about topics of interest as well as to folks they knew in the area who might be able to come speak on that topic.

Over the following months we learned that actually lining up speakers was a bit harder than we anticipated, especially on "hot topics" like AI. We wanted knowledgeable speakers who were capable of addressing a smart, informed, but general audience. It turns out, not surprisingly, they are in demand, and many have an asking price beyond our budget.

Still, by drawing on our personal contacts, we were able to line up stellar speakers for the winter and spring, starting with Bruce Jentleson, Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke, who helped us launch the series in November. And we are looking forward to a special Martin Luther King Day talk on January 19 by Deondra Rose, Kevin D. Gorter Associate Professor of Public Policy at Duke who will talk with us about "Expanding Democracy." We'll also have copies of her new book for sale, *The Power of Black Excellence: HBCUs and the Fight for American Democracy*, courtesy of The Regulator Bookshop.



We hope that everyone will plan to keep the third Monday of the month at 4:00 PM reserved for future Triangle Thinkers and Doers talks, including Gina Upchurch, Founding Executive Director of PharmAssist, on "The Future of Medicare" on March 16; Linda Birnbaum, Former Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Science, on "Forever Chemicals," on April 20; and Matthew Strobl, Senior Principal of Digital and AI Transformation, on "How AI is Changing our Lives" on May 18.

We need *your* help to create a similarly engaging lineup for Fall 2026. Please share your ideas with us of issues you want to know more about and experts in the area who you think would be great to hear from. Send an email to **Ellen Miller**, a member of our committee at ep-miller100@gmail.com. Or reach out to any of the rest of us; our series can only meet your concerns and interests if you share them with us. **Sondra Stein** is the Chair of the Triangle Thinkers and Doers Committee. Members include **Al-ice Alexander**, **Lynda Carlson**, **Jack Gartner**, **Elizabeth Gillis**, **Ellen Miller**, and **Diane Sasson**.



Our TFAD Library: An Open Book (and More!)

by Diane Strauss

Making' It Big

Large Print, that is. Few, if any, large print books were added to our library's collections in 2025, but almost twenty that were ordered in December have arrived. They have now been processed and will be shelved for a bit in the "New Large Print" bookcase on your left as you enter the library. It's an interesting assortment, including works by Tom Brokaw, Anne Tyler, Jodi Picoult, and Salman Rushdie, as well as a memoir, a slew of mysteries, and other fiction and nonfiction.

Large print books frequently are published as much as a year or two later than their regular sized counterparts, and they also cost more. Since our budget doesn't permit second copies, if we already have the standard print version of some work in our collection, we are not able to duplicate it with large print or vice versa. Following their stint on the New Large Print bookshelves, the books are removed and relocated to the regular large print section. Come and browse.

Become Suggestive

Nothing bawdy, mind you. Just don't be shy about suggesting books to be added to the library or ways in which you think the library might be improved. If you include your name, we'll respond directly to you about the outcome. 🌿

Kicking Tires

By Carolyn Cone Weaver

The last four cars my Sweetheart bought were, in his words, “The last car I’ll ever buy.” I rolled my eyes because there was *always* another car too good to pass up. Although he denied it, my Sweetheart was a Car Guy. Buying cars was his hobby.

Even when he didn’t “need” one he looked through newspaper ads and online listings “just for fun.” If he found one that was too good to pass up, he’d search the Kelly Blue Book values for his current car and for the one that caught his fancy. Only then did he visit dealers’ lots, kick tires and test-drive his selection.

He hated negotiating and walked out of meetings with sales managers when they wouldn’t meet what he thought was a fair price. He never bought a new car. He bought what I considered to be luxury cars, no more than a couple of years old, and kept them spotless, inside and out. He’d drive them for about two years until he got the itch again.

Me, I’ve only had a few cars over the 70-plus years I’ve been driving. I fall in love with each of my cars. I can tell you about the few I’ve had, what they were, where, when and how I got them, what happened to them, and why I cried when it was time to get rid of them. I always took good care of my cars and had them serviced when the manual said to; they lasted for years. Even now, at my advanced age and stage, whenever I buy gas I write down the date, the current mileage, the number of gallons and the total cost, just like my father taught me.

I think there’s no good reason to get rid of a car if it gets me where I want to go and back home again safely and comfortably and doesn’t cost an arm and a leg to drive (in my first year at The Forest, I bought gas three times). My very favorite car was a silver 2004 Lexus. It was the only new car I’ve ever owned, bought with funds from my mother’s will and the proceeds from selling my beloved Avalon. I drove my Lexus for eleven years. It had 51,468 miles on it, most of them driven in town.

One year, when I was ready to take the Lexus in for its annual checkup, my Car Guy thought it was too good an opportunity pass up. Without telling me, he got on the dealer’s website and found the *perfect* car...for *me*! A gray 2014

Avalon sedan with 364 miles on it! One owner! I hadn’t even thought about getting a new car. I didn’t want a new car. I was perfectly happy with my Lexus. I’d rather buy the new mattress I’d been looking at.

My Car Guy was a lawyer, so I asked him



to make his case. Why should I buy this almost new Avalon when my Lexus was the perfect car for me? He explained that the Lexus was getting some age on it and was beginning to have more frequent problems that took more money to fix. The longer we waited to trade, the less we’d get for it. (Note his use of “we.”) Besides, when would we ever find another year-old car with 364 miles on it? He convinced me and, you know, since we were already at the dealership...

So, I told my Car Guy I’d look at it if he’d be my agent. We talked to a salesman and as it turned out, it really was too good a deal to pass up. I was interested enough to take it for a test drive, and I liked it. The salesman came up with figures, my Agent came up with figures, the salesman took our figures to his manager who came out and talked with us and took figures back to *his* manager. And we walked out. We went home, talked about the Avalon, and...

... and here it is, 2026. My Car Guy died in 2019. I live in another town, and I’m still driving that 2014 Avalon. The guys at the Toyota dealership can’t believe my 11-year-old car is in

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TFAD Gift Shop Re-Opens in 2026 “Under New Management” Deb Johnson and Paul Phillips

Many of you know that The Forest Gift Shop (GS) has been managed by **Lynn Langmeyer**, with scheduling assistance provided by **Diana Spock**, in conjunction with a dedicated group of volunteers. You may also have noticed a sign posted outside the Gift Shop in early December announcing the days it would be closed during the holidays, but you may have missed the additional note that it might not re-open, since Lynn and Diana have decided to step aside at the end of the 2025 year. We owe all of them a huge amount of gratitude for the hours they have spent ensuring that we have a Gift Shop that serves the needs of our residents, team members, and visitors. Proceeds from sales go to the Benevo-

events calendar (calendar.duke.edu), its maps site (maps.duke.edu), and its student portal (my.duke.edu/students).

So, Deb and Paul met with Lynn, **Daniel**, and **Alice Alexander** (in her role as Chair of Resident Services) in mid-December to discuss how best to proceed with the transition. Deb and Paul plan to keep the current operation and hours in place while they collect information about what changes might be beneficial for the Gift Shop and its customers. There is a Suggestion Box in the Gift Shop where you can drop off suggestions and browse the shop at the same time.

Here is some basic information about the Gift Shop:

- Current Hours of Operation:
11:00 am – 1:00 pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Payment Options:
Residents: charge to account or credit card
Team members and visitors: credit card
- Items for Sale:
Greeting cards, small gifts, seasonal items



lent Care Fund.

Two of our new residents, **Deb Johnson** and **Paul Phillips** (# 2118), noticed the sign and discussed the possibility of volunteering to take their places. Paul's career as a math and computer science instructor, coupled with his financial experience acquired handling ticket and food concessions sales, would provide the necessary financial knowledge needed to run the Shop. Deb's superpower is program/project management. When she moved from her administrative role in the Duke School of Medicine to the Provost's Office in 2003, her first assignment was to design and launch a one-stop student service center in the Allen Building. She then leveraged her skills as a project manager to deliver Duke's

such great shape, with only 22,000 miles on it! They practically salivate as they rub their hands, thinking about how much profit they'd make if I'd just trade it in on a spotless, slightly-used, reliable 2023 SUV. What they really want is to sell it to another Car Guy who never buys a new car.

I might have been interested, but when my Banker Guy and my Insurance Guy each asks what kind of car I'm driving, they say, "Perfect! It's the perfect car for you. Safe! Reliable! Just what you need for your lifestyle!" What they're really saying is "just what you need at your age." But I know my ever-loving, ever-caring Car Guy is looking down, nodding his head in agreement: *See? I'm still taking care of you!* 🍀

Kicking Tires

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Concorde

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late last night on the inbound flight and exceeded their maximum flight time, so they had to sleep later. Not a good omen, but if that was the worst news (it was), we still had a great lounge to wait in, have breakfast, and relax.

So who was flying on the Concorde on its last flights? The range of passengers was pretty diverse. I would say most of passengers were over fifty years old, many couples like my wife and myself....no surprise there. But there was also a father and teenage daughter; a number of businessmen, English, German, and American; three women travelling together; and an English family with three boys all under eight or nine years old. If there were any "celebrities," I didn't recognize them. And the dress was diverse to an extreme. I saw sandals, shorts, jeans, and tee-shirts in various combinations, a surprise to me. But I guess the feeling was, if you can pay the money you can travel as you like.

We were getting close to flight time, and you could feel the anticipation. We began boarding at 10:00. We'd been in the lounge almost as long as the flight itself would take! I heard my name called, and a British Airways duty manager introduced himself. I had made a request several weeks prior through my contacts at JFK to ride in the "jump seat" either on take-off or landing. In the old days, if there was room there would be no problem, but now with security concerns the chances were slim.

He just wanted to assure me that they had made an effort to accommodate my request. Sorry. But he did agree to ask the crew to sign an old Concorde picture I had saved, and he gave me the captain's card, who would possibly be able to speak with me after landing in London.

Captain Mike Bannister had been flying the Concorde since 1977. Mike had been the "test pilot" on the Concorde who would take the plane to high altitudes and do all kinds of aerobatics to put it through its paces. He was also a key player in design and repair changes made to the aircraft in order to get it re-certified and back in service after the Air France Concorde crash in Paris. It was certainly comforting to know he was flying this flight.

We were now seated in the airplane. The "pitch" between seats is 9 ft, 6 in, but it truly is a very narrow airplane. Throughout the cabin I see

the cameras come out, and the picture taking begins. There is a real party atmosphere in the air, a kind of buzz, as we taxi out to runway 311, which is the longest runway at JFK at over 14,000 feet.

Captain Bannister came on the air just prior to take-off to explain a bit about the acceleration we would experience, the sharp left turn,



Rita & Jack on Concorde

and the cut back of the re-heaters (afterburners) in order to fly over Jamaica Bay and reduce the noise level. After climbing he would then kick in the re-heaters in order to get to Mach 1 and 2.

At 10:46AM we were finally off! I felt the speed and power of the sudden acceleration, and then "whoosh," we're out and turning left. I felt that this is what it must be like in a fighter jet. No matter how many times I had seen the take-off of this aircraft from the outside, there is nothing to compare to the feeling inside. At the front of each cabin is an information board which provides altitude, Mach 1 or 2 indicator, outside temperature, and speed in miles per hour. We reach Mach 1 (720 mph) at about 36,000 feet, and Mach 2 (1,360 mph) at 50,000 feet. The final statistics for this flight were maximum speed 1,367 mph; maximum altitude 56,450 feet; total flight time 3 hours, 23 minutes (including 10 minutes circling Heathrow Airport).

And then it was over almost before it began. A three-hour party in the air. We landed at 19:10 London time. What's really nice is that we flew in daytime and arrived in daytime, which is one beauty of supersonic travel: hardly any jet lag. A number of passengers, including me, stayed on to get pictures of the crew and cockpit and enhance the memories of a memorable flight. I believe there is a place for supersonic travel now that I have experienced it firsthand. If it ever returns. I'm ready to try it again. 🌿



Campus Critter Contest

By Sharron Parker

Arty creatures can be found all around TFAD. Here are nine found both indoors—public rooms and halls—and outdoors, visible from sidewalks. A search will not require checking offices or backyards. How many can you spot? Whoever, or whichever group, spots the most will win a prize!

Copies of the Critter Page will be available in the Connections Room to fill out, or just jot down the numbers for the critters you find and their location, add your name (or names) and date, and put the answers in mail slot #49 in the Community Center by February 14. Happy Hunting! 🍀



1: _____



2: _____



3: _____



4: _____



5: _____



6: _____



7: _____



8: _____



9: _____

My Journey from the Segregated South to Durham

By Sherrill Blazer

I was born in Atlanta in 1945 and spent my childhood years in Smyrna (just outside the beltline in Atlanta). I am still "coming of age" and trying to come to grips with how I have come to view life and have the ideas that I hold. February is now celebrated as "Black History Month," and I consider again my experiences during the Civil Rights Movement and my own role and responsibilities as we continue to struggle to celebrate our nation's diversity and to evolve into a more integrated and peaceful nation. I grew up in the segregated South, and I knew few Black people until I reached adolescence.

My Dad drove to Atlanta for errands, and we occasionally accompanied him, but never at night. Since he worked the graveyard shift at the L&N Railroad, I remember driving through Black neighborhoods, car windows rolled up and eyes wide open, even in the heat of summer. I witnessed children roller-skating in their neighborhoods or on city streets, joyfully playing and laughing with the brightest smiles that I ever saw. One beaming girl caught my attention due to her bright yellow dress, and I longed to own a similar one.

That sheltered and segregated life began to change with my first job as a department store salesperson at W T Grant and Company. My closest friend and I bravely applied for a job which paid a whopping eighty-five cents an hour! Other than a few rather controlling employers, she and I enjoyed working there—not only with each other but with a young Black janitor named Otis who was so much fun. I believe my dad was quite concerned about that friendship.

In 1963 I attended a totally segregated private Christian college in Nashville TN, which remained segregated long after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I attended church from infancy and every congregation was segregated. I just did not understand the prejudice toward Black people. Martin Luther King Jr. was often in the news, and as I listened thoughtfully, carefully, and critically, I could not understand why so many people hated him. Certain events were rarely publicized, but when I heard about the killings of Emmett Till and Medgar Evers during my young years, and of multiple lynchings later, I could not understand such violence

against them.

After two years of college, I began dating Dan whose family employed domestic help: a Black "maid" who was cook, babysitter, chaperone, and housecleaner. She loved Dan and his sister as if they were her own, and they loved her as a second mother. Katie Bell had a not-so-private bathroom in the basement although she cleaned the upstairs one. Often, I ate lunch with Dan at his house along with Katie, and we had good conversations. I insisted that she join us yet she continued eating at a sidebar in the kitchen while we sat at the nearby table. I did not know the protocol of those separate but equal rules, the reason she politely refused to join us. She was so dear to us that we invited her to our wedding in 1966 at a large, segregated church in Nashville, and she sat with the family, the first Black person ever to attend an event in that church.

Things were about to change. I graduated from college and we moved to Memphis, where I began to teach in a downtown Memphis elementary school. As were many first-year teachers at that time, we were assigned to majority Black schools. Forty-three students were enrolled in my class. It was a challenging year. Yet Ruby, a fifth grader with a courageously animated personality was a firecracker I will never forget. At a time before the ban on prayer and Bible reading in public schools, she asked if she could read a verse of scripture each morning and say The Lord's Prayer. She taught me about the courage to speak up.

While in Memphis, Dan taught the high school class at our still-segregated church. We decided to involve his students and my students who needed special help to our church in a tutoring program on Saturday mornings. I transported students to our church who needed that extra help. The leaders of the church frowned upon this program yet tolerated the racially mixed sessions.

After medical school and Dan's internship, we went to Cameroun in West Africa for two years as Christian medical and educational missionaries. This mission was a culture shock for

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Segregated South

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us, but we soon learned about the generosity and hospitality of our African neighbors. Upon arrival, we were welcomed by the town's citizens with soft drinks and ground nuts (peanuts). They knew that we loved our sodas, and they sacrificed to purchase them since they could barely afford to feed themselves. We made some foolish mistakes when trying to return hospitality, American style, which put them in stressful situations regarding our eating customs. Learning about cross-cultural relations rarely ceases. Since returning to the States in the early 1970s, we made it a practice to attend integrated churches which included African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanics.

So, as I remember Black History month, I am paying homage to two of my favorite African-American public figures. The first is Martin Luther King Jr. who said, "darkness cannot overcome darkness, only light can do that." I chose him because of our common Atlanta roots, but especially because of the peaceful and courageous resistance that he exemplified



during some of the most violent years in our country regarding diversity, equality, and inclusion. Another person I admire is Maya Angelou, an American writer who spent her later years in North Carolina. My favorite quote of hers is, "I have come to learn that no one may remember what you said or what you did, but they will remember how you made them feel."

Of course, Frederick Douglass said, "If there is no struggle then there is no progress. Shirley Chisholm said, "If they don't offer you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." As I reflect on my life in the South and in Africa, David Brooks, in his recent book *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others and Being Deeply Seen* gives me some insight into our relationships with other cultures. He suggests that the way to see someone deeply and to make them feel seen—to actually *know* a person—is to let them feel valued, heard, and understood. We can hear that message in so many forms if we simply look and listen. 🌱

Videos and Memories

By Kaidy Lewis and Bill Harrington

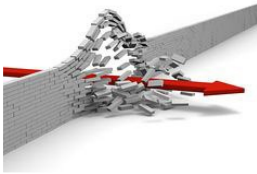
Art Instructor **Kaidy Lewis** and resident **Bill Harrington** are working on an idea for making oral history videos with residents living in the Health Center. As Kaidy says, "We don't yet know exactly where the project will go," but they have decided to capitalize on Bill's long-time friendship with teacher and filmographer Stuart Albright of Durham.



Stuart and Bill came up with the idea of a joint project between residents in the Health Center and Stuart's students in a Film Studies class at Jordan High School. They involved Kaidy as coordinator for project oversight, and especially for her knowledge of the residents in the HC.

The project has been beta-tested on Bill himself—"It was fun to do," he said—and he has shared the resulting video with his family. But both Kaidy and Bill note that the project "is still in its infancy," and needs more work to turn it into a firm project with participants and dates.

Still, they are both excited about the possibilities of the project over time; they see it as "helping both generations" connect and communicate in a creative way, plus giving residents something vital about themselves to share with loved ones. Kaidy says at this point that they are just "throwing out the net" to see what feedback they might get from residents, and she invites residents in Independent Living as well who might be interested in working with the project to contact her (kLewis@forestduke.org). 🌱



Star Power on Earth: Why Fusion Matters Now

By Howard Goldsweig

Artificial intelligence (AI) is showing up everywhere—from search engines to medical research. But AI has a huge hidden appetite for electricity. Modern AI systems are trained and run in large data centers that consume enormous—and rapidly growing—amounts of power. Add in electric vehicles and home electrification, and a practical question emerges: where will dependable, clean electricity come from over the next few decades?

One promising long-term answer is nuclear fusion—the same process that powers the Sun. *Fusion*, in plain terms, is “light atoms joining.” Instead of splitting heavy uranium atoms (as in today’s nuclear fission plants), fusion combines very light forms of hydrogen and turns them into helium, releasing a great deal of energy. Fusion would produce no carbon dioxide while it runs, and its basic fuel sources are widely available.

So why don’t we already have fusion power plants? Because the physics is unforgiving. Hydrogen atoms naturally repel each other, so to make them fuse you must heat the fuel to extraordinary temperatures—so hot it becomes a plasma, a charged gas that cannot touch ordinary walls. Researchers have learned to “hold” this plasma using extremely strong magnetic fields inside a donut-shaped chamber called a *tokamak*. These devices are engineering marvels—and they are finally improving faster than they used to.

The fuels are not exotic. One ingredient, deuterium, is found in water; another, tritium, can be produced from lithium. The harder part is building a system that can maintain the correct

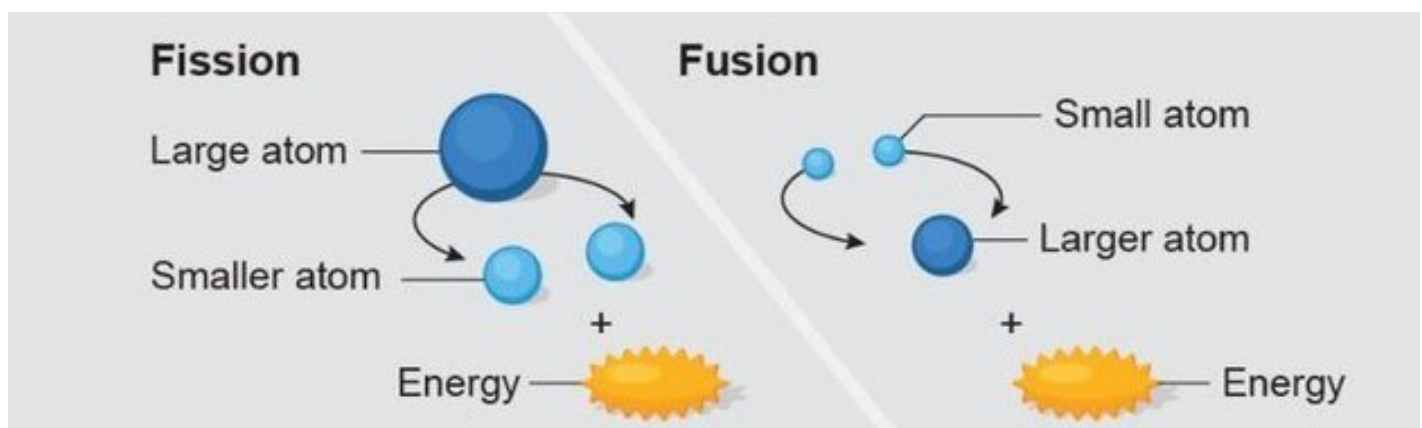
conditions needed, steadily, safely, and cheaply enough to generate electricity for the grid.

Fusion’s appeal is safety as well as abundance. A fission reactor depends on a self-sustaining chain reaction; fusion does not. If the temperature, magnetic field, or fuel supply is interrupted, the reaction stops. That “off switch” is built into the actual physics. Fusion would also avoid the long-lived, high-level radioactive waste associated with fission, although reactor components can become mildly radioactive over time from neutron exposure.

Commercial fusion is not here yet, but it has at least moved from science fiction to serious engineering. In the United States, many private companies are trying different approaches, and large international projects are testing the science at scale. We should not expect fusion to solve next year’s energy bills. But if progress continues, fusion could become an important part of the clean-energy mix in the 2030s and 2040s and beyond.

Why should residents of The Forest at Duke care? Because energy affects nearly everything we value: the cost and reliability of electricity, climate and air quality, and society’s ability to support new technologies without burning more fossil fuel. Fusion is a moonshot—but it is aimed at a very down-to-earth goal: plentiful, clean power.

Fission (today) splits heavy atoms; fusion (in development) joins light hydrogen to make helium, releasing energy with no carbon emissions at the plant. ☿



Surprise Visitors

By Phil Baer

Our eyes are better at noticing movement than stillness, a good thing because as a rule things that move are more dangerous than things that don't. Think of cars vs. lampposts, grizzly bears vs. cabins in the woods, and falling boulders vs. boulders that aren't falling. And so it was on that recent early morning, as I prepared to put coffee on to perk, blithely not noticing the many, many non-moving things in the kitchen, that I noticed a flicker of movement in the sink, below the partly filled (and non-moving) dishrack.

Expecting to find a roach—our cottage is woods-adjacent, and we get the occasional roach—I lifted out the dishrack and found the critter in the photo below. It was a juvenile Mediterranean house gecko, its tail about half its total five-inch length. (I don't know whether it was male or female, but we sort of bonded, so I don't want to keep referring to it as *it* and *he* comes more naturally to me than *she* so *he* it will be.)

He was skittering about, unable to climb the stainless steel sink walls. I knew he couldn't hurt me, but I thought I would be less likely to hurt him if I herded him into a plastic container rather than trying to pick him up. And so I did, but not before he did what they sometimes do when they feel threatened—he detached the last half-inch of his tail. And while he skittered around in the container, unable to climb its plastic walls any better than the sink's stainless steel ones, his half-inch piece of detached tail wriggled and twitched and jumped for several minutes. Tail-end detaching, or caudal autotomy, is considered a defense mechanism, based on the assumption that the wriggling bit will distract a predator. It certainly distracted me.

In Ellen's photo below you can see that his tail ends abruptly, or stumpily as anatomists might say, rather than in a long taper. It will regrow, but may never quite be the same. The Mediterranean house gecko is a non-



native invasive species, first seen in North Carolina about 20 years ago, but regarded as a harmless one, feeding on insects that we consider nuisances, such as roaches, ants, and flies. After the photo session, we released him into the mulchiest part of our garden and spent the rest of the morning trying to figure out how a juvenile Eastern fence lizard got into our kitchen sink.

An equally puzzling encounter from a couple of years ago is illustrated in the second photo. It was taken in our guest bathroom, where I found a female praying mantis on the countertop, next to a decorative bit of driftwood, transfixed in rapt contemplation of a rainy-day photo of our son and daughter-in-law.

She didn't object at all to being picked up and seemed happy to be placed on a spider plant branch in the garden. We have no idea how she got to the bathroom.

It's thirty feet from the front door, windows and patio door are screened, and she's not a great flyer—one of life's little mysteries. (And to give full credit where it's due, our daughter-in-law in the photo is the person who identified the Mediterranean house gecko for me, saving me from the embarrassment of mislabeling it a fence lizard.)

In between those two encounters, I found a juvenile anole (a horrible name) on the entryway floor, after I had left the door propped open while carrying some stuff in and out. I tried to herd him out the door, but he ran into the dining room, then toward the light of the patio windows and into the sliding glass door track. Seizing both the opportunity and the anole, I held him for



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Surprise Visitors

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Ellen to photograph while he valiantly chewed on my finger. They're quite the apex predator in the small-insect world and do have sharp tiny teeth, but I felt only mild pain from his bite.

And although anoles do exhibit caudal autotomy—we've seen several with stumpy tails—this one apparently thought he could



take care of himself without committing self-mutilation. After giving him a stern lecture about the dangers of invading cottages where other residents might be less welcoming, I released him onto a window ledge where we had seen anoles sunning and inflating their bright red throat pouch.

I know that not all women, or men for that matter (remember Woody Allen in *Annie Hall*, when he panicked trying to remove a spider from the bathroom?) are as welcoming toward multi-legged uninvited visitors as Ellen and I, and I'm glad that she finds them as interesting and beautiful as I do. Someday, I'll tell the story of the pair of scorpions she let me keep in our honeymoon-summer ranger's cabin in Yosemite. That one has an interesting twist to it, and she demonstrated a degree of aplomb that . . . well, let's just say, I knew she was a keeper. ¶

“ WHILE IT IS FEBRUARY, ONE CAN TASTE THE FULL JOYS OF ANTICIPATION. SPRING STANDS AT THE GATE WITH HER FINGER ON THE LATCH. ”

— PATIENCE STRONG

Sean Rogers

By Robyn Sloan

Sean Rogers has worked for TFAD for ten years, starting in the kitchen and working under a series of head chefs. He moved to the Houseman position in 2017, where he works 6:30 AM to 3:00 PM, plus one weekend each month. He is also on call for emergencies such as the September 2024 flood caused by a water main break in the Health Center.

Houseman duties include recycling and trash removal from the twenty-nine Community Center trash rooms. This is a task for which he suggests that residents set bagged items beside already-full containers rather than piling them on top; items on the floor *will* be picked up. Housemen also take up carpets and move furniture. They are also regular help to **Kathleen Allen** as they assist her with myriad Encore Store chores.

An unexpected event occurred to Sean one icy night when he was performing an outside trash removal job. Upon hearing a faint voice in the dark, Sean searched, only to find



Sean Rogers often assists Kathleen Allen with Encore Store moves

a Health Center worker who had fallen beside a car and couldn't get up. She had been there for thirty minutes with a sprained ankle when Sean came to the rescue; she claims he saved her life.

One of Sean's pursuits outside TFAD is bowling, an activity which he enjoys with his brother. After first playing when he was in the military, Sean has honed his bowling skills over the past six years and will compete in a tournament in March. ¶

Dreaming of a Good Night's Sleep

By Ellen Baer

Do you remember writing a school paper that impressed your parents or teachers? Do you remember what it was about? I wrote one a long time ago that surprised me by showing up in my mailbox last week. This one must have impressed my mother because she sent it to her older brother; and his granddaughter, my cousin in Texas, just found it and sent it to me. She enclosed the original manila envelope showing that it had required eleven cents' worth of postage stamps to mail it from Mississippi to Virginia.

It was the first real term paper I ever wrote, and I know this because it's dated December 16 of my freshman year in college. I'm assuming it was an English assignment for freshman students asking them to choose a topic of interest and write a paper, following the rules for footnotes formatted on the bottom of the page. Obviously, I was not intimidated by footnotes since there are plenty in this paper from publications ranging from *Reader's Digest* to *Business Week* and *Harper's Weekly*, with the most scientific one being *Today's Health*. It's a forty-one page paper with 178 footnotes. (I must have had help with the typing.)

Now, if you've read this far, you're probably eager to know what the paper is about. I admit that I had completely forgotten it, and, if you had asked me what topic I had chosen, I would have guessed it was something about horses or cats or William Faulkner or Edith Piaf or foreign languages or tropical islands, but no—it was INSOMNIA. I thought I was a good teenage sleeper, but maybe not...it's particularly interesting because just the other night at TFAD the dinner table conversation was about insomnia and what a problem it is.

I guess I shouldn't be surprised since right there in my term paper the warning is clear for older sleepers. Sleep gets harder as we age, even though an 80-year-old woman in Hungary claimed in 1936 that she had not slept since 1911. However, the *TIME* magazine reporter who wrote the story speculated that she was lying—or simply mistaken, given her age.

Even though I was a liberal arts student, I demonstrated a high regard for science by reporting on brain waves, body temperatures, body

types, and mental causes of insomnia like anxiety, grief, and "obsession with sin." It seems, however, that I was more interested in "social science," like the *Good Housekeeping* story of the New Zealand tribesmen who slept squatting on their heels with a mat tied around their necks to keep out the rain.

Other notable sleep facts are included as well. John Wesley could sleep on horseback, and Napoleon could put himself to sleep with self-hypnosis. Charles Dickens insisted on having the head of his bed due north, and he would carry a compass when he traveled so he could move any bed around if necessary. Orson Welles would go to sleep if he pretended it was a cold wintry morning and he had to get up. Benjamin Franklin had two beds so he could move from one to the other if he woke in the night. He also liked to step out the door for a "two-minute air bath" in the cool night air. And Gracie Allen had to give up counting sleep because she said their *baa*-ing kept her awake. She switched to counting oranges on an imaginary orange tree instead.



In spite of the passage of time, much of the advice from a half century ago is the same that we get today: a dark room, regular bedtime, loose-fitting nightwear, proper bedding, comfortable mattress, warm bath, and nothing exciting for at least twenty minutes before bed. Nevertheless, a few suggestions seem quite dated, such as sprinkling mustard powder into woolen socks at bedtime in winter to promote relaxation and putting moth balls on a pillow to encourage deep breathing. Did any of those things work? Well, unfortunately, I'm pretty sure I didn't try them when I was seventeen—and it's too late now. 🌿

Trolls

By Jay Williams



On January 9, a group of nine TFAD residents visited the whimsical wooden troll sculptures of Danish artist Thomas Dambo. The sculptures are made from recycled wood, and are as much as twenty-five feet tall. The exhibit is set in wooded sections of Dorothea Dix Park in Raleigh where the sculptures will remain for years to come. Dambo assembled a crew of volunteers to help construct the sculptures. He has now departed for other locations to construct similar installations.

Each sculpture has a name, (*Mother Strong Tail*, *Dix*, *Dax*, *Dux*, and *Daddy Bird Eye*), and each has its own story. Most remarkable is *Mother Strong Tail*, a recumbent figure whose tail is made from barrels. The tail winds through the woods for one hundred yards to her child *Dix* who lovingly holds the end of the tail.

We residents got to the park in the capable hands of Glenn Arrington who drove the van. Walking distance from one sculpture to another within the park was considerable but well worth a trip to Raleigh. 🌲



Recent Events on Campus

Resident and Team Member Party, Dec 19



Last Saturday (Holiday) Singalong, Dec 27

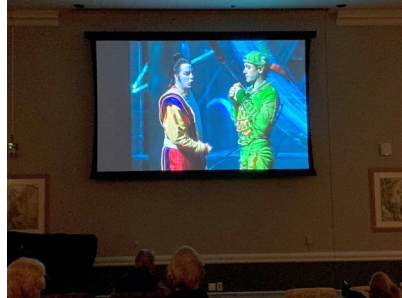


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Recent Events

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Magic Flute, Dec 29



Card Games, Dec 29



Judith Siegel Leading Health Center Singalong, Dec 31



Vic and Anne Moore enjoying a HC Breakfast, Dec 31



Recent Events

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New Year's Eve Party, Dec 31



Playing Cards in Taproot, Jan 6



Ballourdet Quartet, Jan 8



Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle — Schubert and Beethoven, Jan 11



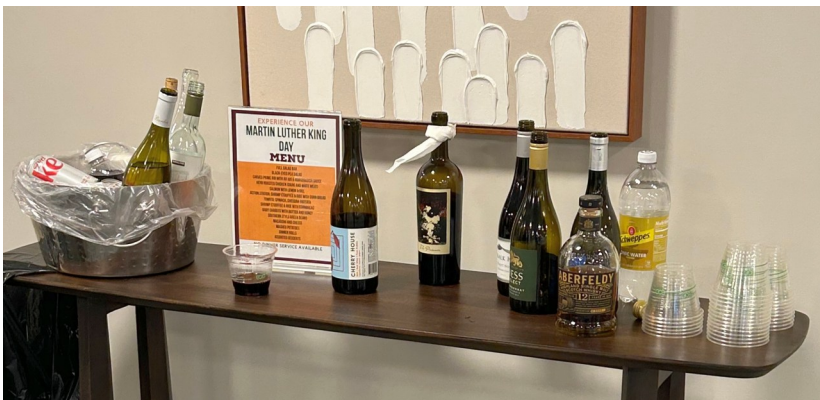
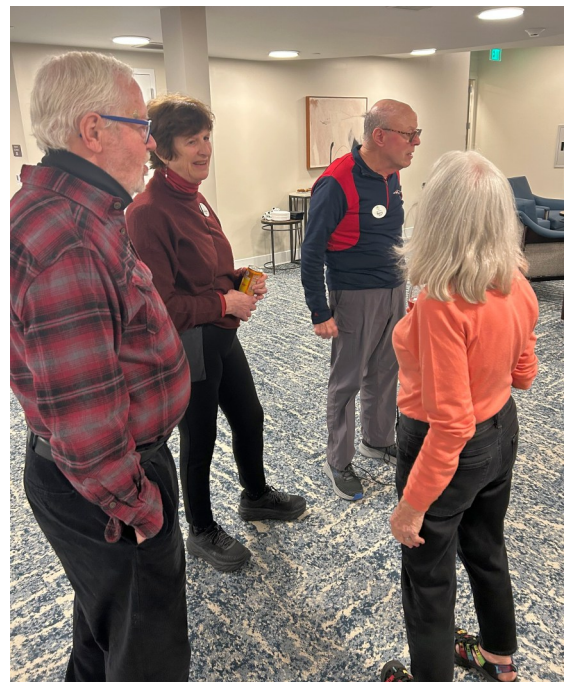
Jack Sasson at Resident Readers, Jan 14



Recent Events

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T-3 Caucus Meeting & Social, Jan 16



Recent Events

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Winter Blues Social Hour, Jan 16



Recent Events

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Parlez-vous Francais Conversation Group, Jan 17



Resident Readers with Bunny Koff, Jan 21



David Litt Presents “Portugal, Europe’s First Global Seaborne Empire”, Jan 21



Ice Storm, Jan 25

