

HAIL AND FAREWELL, BEN

“Pennswood is in a good place, and I have accomplished what I wanted to do. The Strategic Plan for Pennswood’s future has been approved by the Board, and if I stayed longer, I might have to leave in the middle of a major rebuilding.” These are some of the reasons Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ben Hoyle gives to explain the timing of his retirement.

Some history: Ben was the budget director for academics at the University of Pennsylvania. Turning 40 encouraged him to take stock of his life. One of the hopes he had was to work for a Quaker organization. He just happened to belong to the same Quaker Meeting as Ruth and Charley Peterson, enthusiastic Pennswood residents. When Pennswood advertised for a new Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the Petersons encouraged Ben to apply. This fit in with Ben’s desire to follow the Quaker ethic of “giving back to the community.” And in October 1995,



CEO Ben Hoyle received his “Fireside Chat” chair as a farewell gift from Pennswood residents at a Community Meeting on November 14, 2017.

Ben came here as CFO, a position he held until June 2013, when the Board asked him to become interim CEO.

Pennswood had just been through a difficult two years under a CEO appointed after the retirement of the widely admired Nancy Spears. This new CEO had left the place in disarray, and there was a general unhappiness among residents and staff. It was a difficult time to take the job of interim CEO because Ben, essentially, had to restore the spirit of the community. By the end of that year, it was clear that he was succeeding, and the Board asked Ben to stay on as permanent CEO.

Ben was very deliberate in how he made the transition from CFO to CEO. He knew he had to separate himself from the CFO job and to reintroduce himself to the community as CEO. So he instituted his weekly “Fireside Chats,” an opportunity for small groups to meet with him to ask questions and to see him in his new role.

Ben based his carefully considered actions on Quaker guiding principles: the importance of communication between CEO and residents and staff, a process that leads to a shared responsibility; the respect for all, even those with divergent opinions; and the belief that talking openly about what is going on will “get us to a good place and a good community.”

He demonstrated these principles by holding meetings with residents to discuss such proposals as the long range Strategic Plan, the renovation of



This is affixed to the back of Ben's chair.

the hallways, the reconfiguration and redecorating of areas in the Community Building, the integration of fundraising, and the many other changes that have made Pennswood a dynamic community.

Through it all, Ben has shown his ability to present subjects with the clarity and straightforwardness he shows in his opening statement at the monthly Community Meetings: “I am Ben Hoyle, the CEO here at Pennswood Village.”

The Editors

MOMMY GETS A JOB

by Leslie Wendel

It started when my college roommate, Julie, and I both had five-year-old sons. Julie called one day to report what her son, Douglas, had told his kindergarten class in Bernardsville, NJ.

His teacher had asked the children to tell the class what their parents did. "Mommy feeds the dog and is a pink lady at the hospital," Douglas had said. "And my father works in a salt mine on Wall Street."

I remember laughing and saying, "I can just hear Phil announcing: 'Well, I'm home from another day in the salt mines.'"

A couple of weeks later, the teacher in my son John's kindergarten class in Swarthmore asked the same question. "What did you say?" I asked.

"I said Daddy teaches marketing things at Penn and sometimes he teaches military things at Pennsylvania Military College and Mommy cleans the house and runs the bath water."

"Cleans the house? Runs the bath water?" That's my identity? I thought. That's not the Mommy image I want my kids to grow up with.

I soon got a job, a part time one at first, doing market research interviews. A few years later, in

Connecticut, when our two sons were both in school, I was a reporter for *The Hartford Courant*.

A colleague said he didn't know how I managed having a husband and two children, plus a full-time job. "It's easy," I said. "I neglect my family." And I did sometimes; and I felt guilty about it.

So, my husband and I had a long talk with the boys. I said I knew they didn't like it when I wasn't there when they came home from school or when I had to rush off to a meeting in the middle of dinner. I said I didn't have to work. I could quit my job and stay home and spend more time with them.

"No, it's OK. Don't quit. We like having a mommy who's a reporter," they said.

I continued to work full-time for the next 25 years. My jobs were all challenging and fun and a lot more interesting than running the bath water.

The boys, now men in their 50s, turned out just fine. And they both learned, when they were very young, that the mommies of this world can choose to do all kinds of things.

They can even work in a salt mine on Wall Street if they want to.

EUSTACE TILLEY AND ME

by Henry Martin

My father was an executive of a company in Louisville, KY, which manufactured household furniture, kitchen cabinets, wall coverings such as Flex-Glass and Flex-Wood, and fiber shipping boxes. He was with the box division, which had plants located in Winston-Salem, NC; New Brunswick, NJ; Fulton, NY; and Louisville. My father had to make frequent trips to the other three cities, all long train trips in the days before commercial air travel. To break up the tedium of these journeys, he would buy a copy of *The New Yorker*, and I would look forward to his return so I could devour its contents.

I loved the covers that introduced me to the delights of New York, the golden city of my dreams. I loved reading about theater; art museums; Rockefeller Center with its famed ice skating rink in winter and restaurants with their iconic umbrellas in the summer; Madison Square Garden, host to varied sporting events, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, the dog show, the flower show, the boxing show, and the horse show; the Cloisters; Central Park; the East and West Sides; Harlem, with its Cotton Club and Apollo Theater; the Theater District; and the subway. It was heady stuff for a lad from the



hills of Kentucky, and it was all in *The New Yorker*, fodder for my dreams.

When my father would return with a copy of the magazine, I first studied the cover, then turned to the “Goings On About Town” section. This was

followed by snippets about Manhattan, often illustrated with small spot drawings of upcoming events, such as those at Madison Square Garden. Next came reviews and profiles of interesting people, museums, and events of a more substantial nature. Pages of solid text were broken up with more spot drawings. Then came the

departments: theater, racetrack, tennis, fashion, movies, and books—and more spots.

Sprinkled throughout the text of the magazine were fabulous cartoons by the best of the day: Peter Arno, Charles Addams, Helen Hokinson, William Steig, George Price, Mary Petty, George Booth, Richard Taylor, Whitney Darrow, Jr., Saul Steinberg, and many others. There were also funny pieces of writing by Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley, James Thurber, and Woody Allen, and poems by Ogden Nash, all adding up to a unique feast of great writing. This was edited in the beginning by the magazine's founder, Harold Ross, and later by his successor, William Shawn.

I attended public school in Louisville until college age. After college, I attended an art school, which, unlike college, had no homework, so I often spent my evenings creating spot drawings to submit to *The New Yorker*. I usually submitted 20 drawings a week in hopes of getting my foot in the door. Within a year, they bought one, and I was off and running. Later I followed the same procedure when I started submitting cartoons, 20 a week for four years before they bought one.

Written work was paid for by the word; cartoons were paid for by the

square inch as reduced or enlarged for publication. Hence, the larger the

cartoon readied for publication, the more the pay. A full-page cartoon fetched a very nice sum of money, and I was fortunate to have a number of full-page cartoons published. Spot drawings fetched only \$20 apiece, but I felt each drawing or cartoon (whatever its size) was an ad for my work and helped me sell to other magazines and book publishers.

The drawings led to a happy association with the Peter Pauper Press, where many of my illustrations decorated their small books. I also had covers on England's *PUNCH* magazine, Canada's *Montrealer*, and *Flower Grower*, among others. *Gourmet* used my illustrations and spot drawings for many years. These were fabulous years for me that paid for the rent and my children's education.

The New Yorker helped its contributors by publishing a quarterly survey of upcoming events, so we could submit articles or artwork appropriate to them. I found it fun as well as useful. I knew in advance when the circus or boxing matches or flower show or boat show would be at Madison Square Garden.

An added perk for the staff was the availability of free press passes to events. On occasion, I took advantage of this offer. Once I asked for two

passes to the circus. My wife, Edie, and I attended a matinee of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. We were given free access to behind-the-scenes at Madison Square Garden where we observed entertainers readying themselves for the show. The aerialists were checking their gear, and the clowns were making sure their props were in place. We even observed one clown in full makeup and costume giving her baby a bottle.

At one point, Edie and I were standing next to a line of elephants when they were given a signal to back up. We narrowly escaped being pushed to the wall by them. We had been warned that the circus was not responsible for any mishaps, a condition of the free pass.

This fund of information helped me plan for “look day” at *The New Yorker*, the day artists and cartoonists from the city, the suburbs, surrounding states, and even the world, turned up at the art editor’s office to submit their cartoons, covers, or illustrations for approval.

From time to time, J. J. Sempé from France would show up, or Ken Mahood from England’s *PUNCH*. These cartoonists would crowd into the editor’s office waiting his or her turn to be seen. It was a convivial group, a fraternity of like, yet very

unlike, minds bent on having their work bought for the magazine.

“Look day” was actually two days, since the artists were divided into the A list and the B list. The A listers—the old-timers and more famous cartoonists—made Tuesday their “look day,” while the B listers—the newer cartoonists, including me—made Wednesday their day. The B listers usually ate lunch together at the Blue Ribbon. This was a German restaurant with a hint of opera. Photos of opera stars covered the walls upstairs and down. The waiters were wonderfully old-style. They knew the menu well and were always helpful in suggesting the best that day from the kitchen.

After lunch, we would return as a group to the magazine to pick up our cartoons or artwork and other paraphernalia before heading home. I usually stopped on the way to visit A. I. Friedman Co. for art supplies, which always included another batch of scratchboard (cardboard with a thin layer of white chalk on which you could paint areas with black India ink, and then with a small pointed tool scratch thin lines to achieve an effect of pen and ink in reverse). The scratchboard at Friedman’s was made in Austria and was the finest I could obtain. I remember well the sad day someone from the store called me in Princeton to say that they would no longer be carrying scratchboard, as

the manufacturer was going out of business. Because I owed my success at *The New Yorker* to scratchboard I bought all Friedman's had, and I used it until it ran out, which ended my career with spot drawings.

In 1975, the magazine celebrated its 50th birthday with a grand evening of cocktails, dinner, and dancing in the grand ballroom of (what else?) the Plaza Hotel, just 10 blocks from the magazine's offices on 44th Street, an easy walk on a mild February day. By this time, I was happily a staff member, having a contract which gave the magazine first look at my cartoons, as well as a title for me: staff artist.

Shortly after this, my mentor, Mr. Geraghty, the art and cartoon editor, took mandatory retirement at age 65. For his years of wonderful guidance and help, I gave him a silver julep cup, an old Kentucky tradition, with his name engraved on it. I had much to thank him for—his guidance, his patience, and his friendship.

My mother, like many in her family, was a graduate of Centre College in Danville, KY. And like her father, she was a trustee of the school. One year, she was to be given an award for her service. I was invited to be present, and knowing that *The New Yorker* was printed in Danville, I asked if I could visit the Reuben H. Donnelley Company to see the plant.

The venue was huge, with many bays. At the beginning of each was an enormous roll of paper that ended up as copies of *The New Yorker*, printed, shrink-wrapped, postage-paid, and ready for shipment to subscribers. Similar bays were set up for printing other magazines: *Time*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, etc. The plant was very near the railroad station, so that the bundles of magazines were easily shipped out to the United States and the world.

The New Yorker had an office in the plant where all editorial material was kept against the day of publication. Here was where my cartoons and spots rested until assigned to an edition of the magazine. After publication, my artwork was shipped back to New York, where it was returned to me.

It was an amazing visit, and I was most impressed when seeing the little advertising and subscription notices being blown into each copy of the magazine. I had a great tale to tell my fellow cartoonists on my return to the New York offices.

The New Yorker is now 92 years old. It's seen many changes and has become a platform for politics with a strong leaning to the Democratic side. It has had a wonderful life, and I'm happy to have been associated with it for so many years.

CHRISTMAS AT THE NEW YORKER

by Henry Martin

When James Geraghty, the longtime editor of *The New Yorker* cartoons retired, cartoonist Lee Lorenz took over the job of selecting cartoons for the magazine. He introduced coffee to the “look day” ritual, a welcome feature on cold winter days when we cartoonists trudged from magazine to magazine in midtown Manhattan, peddling our wares.

At Christmastime, Lee would add a slug of hooch to the coffee, and I began bringing in a tin of bourbon balls to round out the festivities. I transported them in a container, the lid of which read “*The New Yorker?* Yes, *The New Yorker?*”—the magazine’s then current advertising slogan. This ritual continued until Lee and I retired.

Bourbon balls are tasty and easy to make. The recipe I used was from *The Farmington* Cookbook*, and makes 50-60 balls.

INGREDIENTS

3 cups crushed vanilla wafer cookies

1 cup ground pecans

1 cup powdered sugar, plus extra to roll balls in

3 tablespoons corn syrup

1/2 cup bourbon

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all ingredients—except the extra powdered sugar—and form into balls about an inch in diameter.

2. Roll/coat balls in the leftover powdered sugar.

3. Store in a tin.

** Farmington, an historic home in Louisville, KY, was built in 1810 from plans drawn by Thomas Jefferson for his friend John Speed. Farmington is open to the public.*

DÉJÀ VU

by Kay Silberfeld

Several years ago, at my 50th Sarah Lawrence College reunion, I was saddened to see Harold Taylor seated in a chair looking old and frail and suffering from the effects of Parkinson’s Disease. He had been the college’s President when I was there in the Fifties, and now I was glad to have an opportunity to tell him how much I admired him.

Senator McCarthy and his supporters had made the Fifties a terrible time in U.S. history. The House Un-American Activities Committee was investigating people and accusing them of Communist sympathies.

Because Sarah Lawrence was known for its liberalism, its faculty was particularly vulnerable. What Taylor did was to hold all-college meetings to keep us informed. He had told the faculty that if they were truthful to him about Communist Party membership, he would keep them on the staff. Many people, including some on the faculty, had belonged to the Communist Party when they were younger. Even though they had subsequently dropped their membership, they could still be called before the Committee.

Unfortunately, one teacher who had remained an active member of the Party did not tell Taylor, and once his history was exposed, Taylor had to let him go. It was a frightening time, and Taylor's openness to us about the threat and the problems he and his faculty faced was an important part of our education.

When we learned that the Bronxville chapter of the American Legion had come out publicly against the college, a small group of us decided to go to one of their meetings. We sat there, uneasy but proud, as they referred to the "liberal" (maybe even a "Commie"?) college president up there on the hill who was too cowardly and snooty to come to the meeting himself!

In other ways, protected as we were, we felt connected to what was happening in the outside world. The

father of a Sarah Lawrence student was the lawyer for the Hollywood Ten: writers who were blacklisted, tried and convicted, and some sent to jail by the Committee. And, what must have been very difficult for her, we all knew the identity of the Sarah Lawrence student who was a cousin of one of McCarthy's henchmen, Roy Cohn.

In my senior year, I took a course with a faculty member who had been interrogated, and I saw some of the effect that brutal experience had had on him. Previously, he had been known as an unusually dynamic teacher. Now his vitality was diminished, and he seemed to hug the walls as he moved round the classroom and spoke in a monotone.

Later, I heard about a related incident that had taken place at the private, progressive grade school I had attended. A representative of the local government came to the school to complain about one of the teachers, insisting he be fired. His crime was that he was active in liberal politics—at the time that meant socialism and Henry Wallace. In response, the formidable woman who was head of the school, told him that the accused was one of her best teachers and ordered the visitor off her campus!

THE WRITING LIFE

by Anne Baber

I'm reading about an author who "After an auction got her a two-book deal, bought a sofa and devoted herself to writing." Note the sofa first. I understand perfectly.

How long had she been standing there between sentences looking at that rumpsprung (my mother's word) sofa? It would have been beige, with stains, a palimpsest, recording layers of her life. (How she'd adore my application of that word to the ratty divan that complained every time someone sat down on it— a screech of springs, a clank, a warning of impending collapse.)

She'd have dug for treasures hidden underneath the concave cushions— pennies and earring backs, certainly, the lost button from a favorite sweater, and a few Legos left by the son who's now graduated from college.

No mere book contract could have compared to the delight of watching the thing depart— off for a twenty on the sly to the dumpster.

And moments later, the arrival, swathed in protective plastic, of her dream—all seven feet of its lemon yellow, chenille glory—from which, after admiring it from all angles,

sitting primly, flopping, and plumping the pillows, she, leaving the symbol of her success, without a doubt, danced all the way to her desk to begin.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Village Voices will not be published in December.

Please send your submissions to us for publication in 2018.

The Editors

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