

Village Voices

In Our Own Words

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WELCOME TO PENNSWOOD, DAN MURRAY

“I feel honored to work here,” said our new CEO as he began his second week on the job.

Dan has long been familiar with Pennswood’s reputation as a good and special place and, through his work with Friends Services for the Aging, has come to know our previous CEOs Ben Hoyle and Nancy Spears.

Dan credits his close relationship with his 79-year-old mother for much of his awareness of the needs of the elderly. At present, she is looking for a CCRC for herself, but Dan suggested that she not seriously consider Pennswood until he has (he hopes successfully) completed his trial period here!

Pennswood is such an active community that Dan knows he has a lot to learn and has many big

questions to address. He recognizes the value of balancing the needs of present and future residents and of giving equal importance to people wherever they are in the continuum. He attended, and was impressed with, the recent program about Alzheimer’s disease.

Part of his immersion into Pennswood will include a meeting with staff to discuss specific problems that have surfaced during the past year, some at recent Community meetings. Dan hopes that, as we show respect for one another, “we will keep our community spirit and everyone will feel included.”

On the question of future building projects, Dan pointed out that change is always with us. He thinks that a new residential building is needed, but stressed that such hot-button issues as a new Health Center (he is aware that there is a shortage of beds in Barclay and Woolman) and the elimination of A & B buildings are still to be decided. Details, such as the

concept of a household model and other possible models, are still open for discussion. In the end, he thinks that Pennswood's own high standard for care will be the determining factor.

For now, Dan's priority is getting to know the Pennswood community, its residents and its staff as "we all continue on our journey together."

The Editors

MY UPS AND DOWNS

by Henry Martin

In my 92 years, I have had many ups and downs. My first up-and-down experience occurred when I was five years old. My brother had contracted pneumonia, a dangerous disease in those days, and I was sent to live temporarily with my paternal grandparents in their high-rise apartment in downtown Louisville, KY. Their apartment was on the seventh floor, and I reveled in the elevator rides because I could watch the weights rise and fall on the trips up and down.

When I was 13, I went on one of my father's business trips, this one to Winston Salem, NC, where we stayed in the Robert E. Lee Hotel, now demolished. In the center of the lobby was a circular pool with a fountain and goldfish. I was allowed

to feed the fish and also became friends with the elevator operator, who took me up to the second floor and instructed me on how to operate the elevator, which I then did with great enjoyment.

A few years later, I had my first escalator ride, in a department store in Indianapolis. It was fun, but not the thrill of an elevator ride.

My next elevator experience took place after college, when I attended the American Academy of Art in Chicago, located on Jackson Boulevard in the Loop. The Kimball Building was the home of my art school, as well as Kimball Pianos, many music schools, and various music-related businesses. Because it was a "cage" elevator, the passengers could hear singing, instruments playing, and various other sounds as the elevator rose or fell. It was always an amusing ride up or down.

Also in Chicago, I recall a dinner with my father in the high-rise apartment of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Paepcke. He was the founder and head of Container Corporation of America and a patron of the arts. When the elevator in his building rose to his floor, the door opened directly into his apartment where, to my amazement, I found the walls covered with modern art by painters such as Picasso, Dali, Braque, Monet, Manet, Matisse,

and Cezanne. I had never seen original art like this in a private home.

We had a memorable dinner with the Paepckes, listening to them talk about Aspen, CO, of which Mr. Paepcke was the developer. They spoke of two friends by pet names, who my father later told me were Mr. and Mrs. Gary Cooper. The Paepckes' private collection made me appreciate my art history education at Princeton even more.

Most of my other memorable elevator rides were in New York City, including one in the Plaza Hotel. I had finished college and art school and was trying to earn a living selling cartoons and illustrations. *Gourmet* magazine was one of my prospective customers, and its offices were located in the Plaza. My elevator rose to the penthouse, and I waited for the door to open. After a minute or two, someone kindly pointed out to me that the elevator had a door on either side—one to accept passengers, the other to deposit them. The sophistication of New York City was too much for the lad from Kentucky who knew only of one-door elevators. And my surprise increased when I saw the offices of *Gourmet*. Each had stunning views of Central Park, and the editors were allowed to bring their pets to work!

I believe the most beautiful elevators I've ever ridden were in the

Helmsley Building, at the south end of Park Avenue next to the Met Life Building over Grand Central Station, where the offices of *McCall's* magazine were located. These elevators were fire engine red with gold trim, and the inside roofs were painted with small white puffy clouds. Several fellow cartoonists told me I hadn't lived until I had ridden in one of these elevators.

Then there was the elevator in the Chrysler Building. I had been invited by a friend for lunch in the Cloud Club in the steeple of the Chrysler Building. Because the Cloud Club was private, few people got to visit it. It was located on the 66th, 67th, and 68th floors, and the ride, in what was the highest building in the world until it was eclipsed by the Empire State Building, was thrilling.

One of the most amazing rides I had was in The Arch in St. Louis. The elevator rose to the apex for a breathtaking view of the city and the Mississippi River. There was also a view of the parking lot below, and a man and his son in the elevator with me witnessed a thief breaking into their car. There was nothing they could do but pray and wait for the ride down. I never found out how that story ended, but I suspect it was sad.

I've ridden up the Eiffel Tower, the Space Needle in Seattle, and in an

elevator on the *outside* of a hotel in Denver. I also went up in an elevator in one of the Twin Towers in New York City, prior to September 11th, to see breathtaking views of the city and New York Harbor. I've had many rides in the RCA Building in Rockefeller Center when daughter Jane worked at *Saturday Night Live*, and I've ridden to the Top of the Mark restaurant in San Francisco to watch the fog roll in—all wonderful elevator rides I'll never forget.

POSSIBLE PETS

by David Cuff

My alligator cried
And sang the blues
I told him he could be
In my shoes

My llama sings
She's a soprano
The high range reminds her
Of home, Altiplano

OUR MISSION TRIP TO INDIA

by Betty Eisenberg

In 1999, Chuck and I became involved with a Methodist group in Mohnton, PA. This group had been visiting India with a dentist who had made it his mission to improve the lives of the poor who had no access to

dental care. Each year, his group set up dental camps in small towns in southern India. On one particular visit, they were invited to tour a government hospital in Puttur, a small town about 50 miles north of Madras. They were so horrified by the filth and primitive condition of this hospital that they returned home and proceeded to find a way to build a hospital that would be free to all. The dentist had become connected with a mission called Good Shepherd in Puttur.

This mission cared for about 130 orphans, some elderly folks and a few lepers. It was Christian but accepted all religions into its care. The mission was run by Brother Henry, a man committed to saving lives of those who might be on the street if it were not for him. He was one of the kindest and most caring men we have ever met.

Chuck and I decided we would like to work on the building of this hospital. Thus began a wonderful, exciting and rewarding period of our lives. We got our own church in Southampton involved and began to raise money. We found that it would take only \$100,000 to build a small hospital in Puttur! Fast forward a few years and with the help of Calvary Memorial Methodist Church in Mohnton, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Southampton and many individuals, there was enough money raised to start building.

In 2000, the hospital was nearly finished, and we made plans with a group from Calvary to go have a look. We were to go in January 2002 (January is the coolest time of the year to visit India) and hold dental camps. Then tragedy struck. The World Trade Center was destroyed, and all travel plans were off. We finally set off for Madras in January 2004.

This trip was educational, emotional, inspirational and joyful! To begin our trip to the Good Shepherd Mission in Puttur, we were expecting Brother Henry to meet us at the hotel by early afternoon, but it was after 4 p.m. before he arrived. We would come to realize this was very common in India. Exact time meant nothing. It was hard not to get impatient when told to be ready at a certain time and three hours later you are still waiting! But as our dentist said, "It's the India way."

It was dark by the time we arrived, and the hospital was beautifully illuminated. The children were waiting with leis and handshakes. The girls looked especially beautiful in their colorful, red native costumes. We were then shown to our living quarters on the second floor. I expected sparse, but was totally unprepared for the total lack of furniture in the room. We each had a bed. That was it. It was a slab of wood with a two-inch mattress. No springs. My hips were unhappy

every night. There was not a table or even a hook to hang clothing. We had to live out of our suitcases but had to keep them closed at all times to keep out the rat population. The rats were plentiful and often entertained us at night climbing up and down the walls.

Eight of us shared one room and five shared the other room. A trip to the bathroom at night was a major expedition. There was a flush toilet that sometimes worked, a sink, a cold water shower with no shower curtain. Needless to say, this was the biggest adjustment we had to make the whole trip. But the 13 of us had so much fun together it was like being at summer camp.

We were told that traveling the bumpy roads would be the hardest part of the trip, but I loved it. I will never forget the sights that I saw. I loved seeing village India. I loved seeing children herding goats. I loved seeing people on the side of the road carrying things on their heads. I thought many times that I was living in the pages of *National Geographic* magazine as we passed water buffalo, oxen, cows, pigs, monkeys, goats, chickens and ducks all swarming the roads.

We passed villages that must have looked the same 100 years ago. Most people lived in mud huts with thatched roofs. We visited several of these. The people had a place to cook outside and had a few chairs and some mats to sleep on in the hut.

It was interesting to visit the village churches. The mission supported tiny mostly Lutheran churches, but these services were unlike any we ever attended. Indian music prevailed. It was very hard on the ears. We would sit on the platform, and the congregation made us feel so welcome. We were always presented with leis (dripping wet). The minister from our group would preach and Brother Henry would interpret, soloists would sing and prayers would be said. Every service ended with wild dancing—all very colorful.

We attended many medical camps in the villages and were surprised that the treatment given did not seem very modern. The camps were mostly run in different schools. We who had no medical background would play or talk to the kids while the camps were in session. They loved talking to us and getting their pictures taken. Many times, 200 or more people were treated in several hours. I wondered when was the last time that they had ever seen a doctor or a dentist.

The day of the hospital dedication was memorable. There were parades. Many government officials were there and many speeches were made. We of the 2004 India Team cut the ribbons throughout the hospital.

Throughout the trip, we loved talking to the children. Most of them had sponsors in the US, which helped with their support at the mission. At one

point, photos were taken of the children. Among them were two adorable brothers, about 4 and 7. Chuck and I opted to sponsor them. We sponsored them through 2017.

This was a life-changing trip. I never imagined I would ride an oxcart, lay hands on a leper, wear a sari, take cold showers and appreciate them, but most of all, see God's love in India and meet people who were warm and loving and genuinely sorry when we left. India got under our skin and we'll never forget it.

COINCIDENCES

by Yoma Ullman

On Sunday, September 8, 2008, in Washington DC, my friend Scott saved my life.

I'd been having increasing chest pain and difficulty breathing that evening and realized I needed to go to the hospital. I called Scott. He came in minutes and took me to the hospital.

I remember nothing more until I woke the next morning after a long, morphine-induced sleep to see my daughter Claire (who lived in New York City) standing at the end of the bed. I later learned Scott had stayed at the hospital until 2 a.m., then called my daughter and gone home to sleep. After the doctors had begun to dissolve the blood clot on my lung, they sent me to a (dreadful) rehab place, and Scott became a visitor and

eventually took me home when I'd had enough and left.

I had to give him something and something special at that. Years earlier, probably in 1975, Bobby Gregory, the wife of the grandson of Lady Augusta Gregory of Irish independence fame and friend of Yeats, had given me two Chinese embroideries, which I had professionally framed. Scott was a China specialist, so I gave him the one I loved most, the golden pheasant on a pine tree. I had no idea of the value, but I was sure they had come from the Gregory estate because Bobby and Richard Gregory had many lovely things from Coole Park, Lady Augusta's home.

On August 25, 2017, I had an email from a man in Ireland who said he had the embroidery of the pheasant. I at once asked him who he was and how he had come to own the piece. He told me he was a collector and that his house in Ireland was only one of his three residences. He said he had bought the embroidery on eBay from someone who had bought it in a consignment shop in northern New Jersey. He found me because I had attached a short history of the embroidery and my name on the back when I gave it to Scott. The person selling the embroidery had written a pretty rough message to the Irishman during the sales process, but he had all the right documentation and copied it to me. This was how I learned that

the pheasant was a 19th century Qing Dynasty Su Suzhou embroidery on silk.

I was angry because I had loved that pheasant, given it to Scott only because he was a China specialist and it was the most special thing I owned related to China, and imagined he would value it as I had. I thought he had sold it, and I could not forgive that. The Irishman had only reluctantly told me how he got it in order not to endanger my friendship with Scott, which was clear from the history. Eventually Scott and I sorted it out. But I asked him how he thought the piece could have ended up on eBay. He said he'd probably given it to his mother, who had been in a nursing home in northern New Jersey and who loved such things. Given that a number of items had been stolen from her room, he felt it had been taken by someone and left in the consignment shop in northern Jersey until someone bought it and put it on eBay, and it ended up in Ireland in the hands of a man who coincidentally lived not far from Coole.

As I corresponded with the Irishman, I let him know that my daughter in England had the second embroidery. He said he'd love to see a picture of it. My daughter, of her own volition, offered to give it to him since it was gathering dust in a closet with other unhung pictures. The Irishman was ecstatic to have both embroideries. He promised to cherish my beloved

pheasant as I had and eventually to leave both embroideries to the Kiltartan Gregory Museum, which displays items related to the Gregory estate during the summer months. The two embroideries will be displayed in the museum this coming summer. I may go over to see them and to have the cup of tea the Irishman promised me.



LISTEN FOR THE CHORD CHANGES

by Lynne Waymon

“Just listen for the chord changes,” my teacher said.

“The *what?*” I said.

“This song has a lot of space,” she said.

“It does?” I said.

“No starting over,” she said.

“Why not?” I said, wishing I could begin again and sing the tune more slowly.

That was when I was new to jazz singing. Then, slowly but surely, singing music from *The Great American Songbook* became not only one of the most fun things I’ve ever done, it also taught me many lessons about life.

In 1998, I became a student at the Elliston Jazz Studio in Wheaton, MD. Ronnie Wells (an extraordinary musician and performer who ran the East Coast Jazz Festival every February for years) and her husband, Ron Elliston (one of the best pianists around) kept jazz alive with their classes for “wanna be” divas like me—men welcome, too!

Here’s what singing has taught me about life.

1. Listen for the chord changes. In this “do-it-now, have-your-say, make-your-mark” world, noise is often valued over listening. Singing, which I used to think was about making a

pretty sound, is really about listening. I learned that listening to the chord changes the pianist gives me is what it's all about. When the chord changes, the mood changes, and the song moves. Singing has taught me that I never want to be so busy making noise that I forget to listen and respond to the changes in me and the people I love.

2. Enjoy the space. Before I started studying jazz, I thought singing was about filling up the 32-bar space. Now I see it's about leaving space. The open spaces make the notes I sing all the sweeter. The expectation created when I slow down and "lay back," as musicians call it, is sometimes the best part of the song. And space gives room for other musicians to contribute to the song in their unique ways. Isn't that true about life too? The space lets me see and hear the beautiful contrasts in life. It's not about doing it all by myself. It's not about filling up all the space. It's about hearing what's happening in between all the notes.

3. Go with what you've got. When I count off a tune for the band, it's not always the tempo I *think* I wanted. Even in rehearsals, Ronnie always said, "It's yours now. Make it work." "But I wanted to sing this faster," I say. "Very interesting," she says. "Go with what you've got. You might like it."

Now I can see that's the only way it can be. If I have the option of starting over all the time, then when the performance comes, I won't know how to deal with a song that I counted off "too fast" or "too slow." So, I learn to make it work. Either it turns out to be great in some unexpected way that I never would have found if I counted it off "right," or I listen deeper inside of me for the tempo I want the next time I begin that song. Singing has taught me that sometimes I just have to throw my heart into life, make things work, and quit moping about how things "should have been."

I presented "Staying in Tune," a workshop for couples at a national convention of educators. In the workshop, I told about the five kinds of dates couples need to keep their love alive. I got to sing some of the world's greatest love songs. When I arrived at the conference, I found that because of a mistake in the program, my workshop was scheduled for 7 a.m., not 4 p.m.! Coffee! Not wine and cheese, as I had planned. "The show must go on," I told myself. "Let's make it work." So, at 7 a.m., in my long black dress and super sparkly earrings, I turned the lights down low in the ballroom and sang, "Come fly with me. Let's fly, let's fly away" with all my heart. The participants got in the mood and came with me all the way to Acapulco Bay.

A POSTURE FOR THE NEW YEAR

by John Wood

First nurture self then neighbor,
Then community of friends.
Then, beyond the gates, expend
 goodwill
That in concentric circles spreads
Until the coastal beach is breached;
Then set the mainsail and the jib to
 billow
In the beams of natural light
To overwhelm the highwayman, The
Prince of Darkness,
Who in iterated forms awaits
In shadowed spaces, unmarked, along
 the way.
He hides there unannounced, all set to
 pounce
When virtue, seeking a less demanding
 course,
Flags or fails to keep the Beast at bay.
Oh, flood with light the earthbound
 road,
Let it reach to the horizon.
Then double down as it turns around
To reach where it began
And strengthen the resolve.

WE ARE MISSING. . .

Our eagle-eyed co-editor, prolific writer, and dear friend Leslie Wendel, who died January 1. She has been called “the best storyteller at Pennswood.” Whatever the topic, she had something interesting to recount. She especially relished talking about her visits to France and her career at Brown University. Her contributions to leadership and stewardship here are well-known; she also put her stamp on Village Voices.

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