

## Message from the President

Those who have known me for many years might find it ironic for me to speak in favor of decorum. Having discovered as an adolescent that I had a gift for provocation, I exploited it gleefully for years. But perhaps inevitably, my once-cultivated impudence has aged into a desire for peace and quiet.



So that now, in late January of 2021, I want to argue in favor of the public virtue of decorum. Social media have fostered a flood of snark and sniping, and our world seems more bilious than ever. I think most of us would agree that we sorely need a little calm and rational discourse – or more than a little.

It seems that most political/societal arguments today proceed from an assumption that one’s adversaries are lost souls who should be pushed in front of an Acela at the earliest possible opportunity. Partisan TV networks have accelerated polarization. Wouldn’t most of us rather read month-old grocery lists than take in the offerings from “the other” cable channels? The level of our public debate has come to resemble choir practice among donkeys. Whether this arises from the conviction that good-faith efforts to resolve disagreement constitute surrender, or from some other trend in our society eludes me. But I doubt that anybody much liked what happened on January 6, when pure, inarticulate rage became a grisly spectacle.

By now, most of us have noticed something destructive in political figures’ disregard for qualities we had come to expect from our leaders. Some hailed this blatant disdain for the forms and niceties of polite society as a desirable course correction toward a more down-to-earth muscularity and bluntness, qualities they claim helped make America great. If the last few years have taught me anything, it is gratitude that my profession instilled in me respect for decorum, for

politeness, for candor toward the tribunal and other worthy attributes of a legal education.

Our national political leaders ought to represent our legal system to us, the citizens, as well as to the wider world. We should and do expect our leaders to embody our values, both internally and across the globe, to exemplify that which we are and that which we aspire to be. The people we place in charge of our national institutions must stand as a bulwark against mob rule, not as cheerleaders for insurrection. The tactic of disavowing responsibility for their failure and blaming our problems on a hidden cabal of unidentified enemies, is now obvious to many. Even

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those who applauded rugged individualism and lack of pretense now realize that leadership requires more than a cell phone and a snotty attitude.

It is said that Justice Holmes evaluated Franklin D. Roosevelt as possessing “a second-class intellect, but a first-class temperament.” In my profession, one comes to recognize that a judge’s intellectual acuity counts for less than “judicial temperament,” meaning an innate grasp of the importance of the human issues debated before her, and an egalitarian regard for the lofty and the humble who appear in her court.

One of the ways that figures of authority manifest that human quality is by displaying and extending empathy and fairness in the discharge of their duties. It seems not too much to ask of our public leaders that they understand the concepts of service, humility, and fairness. Only when we have that can we demand good behavior from the less favored ranks of our society. Otherwise, we are lost.

Fred O'Brien

## HomeHaven’s Mission Statement

*We help our members remain active, independent, and productive as they grow older in the comfort of their homes and communities. We provide social and educational activities, companionship, volunteer opportunities and services, and referrals to qualified professionals.*

### PLEASE JOIN US!

For information, call the HomeHaven office at 203.776.7378  
or email us at  
[info@homehavenvillages.org](mailto:info@homehavenvillages.org)

*“The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others.”*

- Mohandas Gandhi

## Welcome, New Member!

Susan Marie York  
*East Rock Village*



## HomeHaven News

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*Thanks to Ellen Ryerson for her help in proofreading this edition.*

## ... AT YOUR SERVICE!

In the past three months, HomeHaven provided members with:

- 0 rides by volunteer drivers (suspended for the time being)
- Unknown number of phone or socially distanced visits by volunteer visitors and Village Leaders
- 5 computer assists and numerous Zoom assists by volunteer computer helpers
- 2 referrals for home health care
- 11 referrals for household maintenance
- 1 volunteer garden help

Note: Members often use a service provider more than once, or share names of providers with other members. You can help us keep accurate records by always letting the office know each time you use a provider originally recommended by HomeHaven. **Thanks so much!**

*Look for monthly reports giving rolling three-month totals.*

## IN MEMORIAM

*May their memories be a blessing.*

### MIRIAM “MIKKI” RATNER (1922 - 2020)



Former Westvillian, Miriam “Mikki” Ratner, died peacefully at Montefiore nursing home in Beachwood, Ohio, on Friday, December 25, 2020. Mikki left Westville and HomeHaven in 2018 to move closer to her daughter.

Miriam was born in West Hartford on October 29, 1922 to the late Charles and Etta Miller. She was the older sister of J. David Miller (Susan) of Gaithersburg, MD, and was predeceased by

her sister Louise Miller Egalka (Carl). She was the beloved mother of the late Arthur Ratner of New Haven.

She is survived by two children, Gary Ratner (Barbara) of Atlanta, GA, and Leah Ratner (Paul Sobel) of Beachwood, OH and by her daughter-in-law, Betsy Ratner of Milford, CT. She was the cherished grandmother of three and great-grandmother to four. Mikki will be remembered as well by numerous nieces, nephews, neighbors, and friends.



### JOHN MELVIN HAY (1941 - 2020)



The Reverend John Melvin Hay of New Haven, CT, and Mount Washington, MA, died on December 19, 2020 of complications following heart surgery. John is survived by his

wife Carol, children Kate, Molly (and Philip), and Matt (and Michelle), as well as grandchildren Cece, Damian, Ronan, Ethan, Isaac, and Nicholas.

John attended Amherst College, receiving his B.A. in 1963. His strong Amherst friendships lasted all his life, especially with his very dear friend Hans Bergmann. Two of John’s passions were religion and drama. He pursued both at Yale, earning a MA in Divinity in 1968 and a MFA in Drama in 1972. In Divinity School, he met Carol Squire; they married in 1966. John served as minister in

many churches over several decades, including as senior minister of the United Church on the Green from 1980-1991. After his retirement from full-time ministry, he served several Connecticut churches as interim minister. He also practiced Jungian counseling in New Haven. John believed passionately in the power of the spirit to transcend and ameliorate human pain and frailty. He helped countless students, parishioners, and friends with their lives, always listening to all with loving patience.

John and Carol were among the founders of HomeHaven, hosting in their living room many of the earliest conversations leading to the creation of East Rock Village. John was enthusiastic about living an active, bold life, taking up, with serious purpose: travel, sailing, hiking, canoeing, bicycling, housebuilding (two houses), astronomy, and sculpture.

John lived a full life. Those who lived it with him shared in its fullness and joy. He is greatly missed.

## IN MEMORIAM

*May his memory be a blessing.*

### RICHARD K. SNYDER (1935 - 2021)

Richard K. Snyder, a founder and first president of HomeHaven, died peacefully in his home on Saturday, January 23 at age 85, having achieved his final wish: to live long enough to witness Joe Biden's inauguration.



Courtesy of Yale Institute of Sacred Music

Dick, as he was known to his family and friends, grew up in central New York and attended college at the University of Michigan, majoring in English. During his senior year he served as editor-in-chief of the *Michigan Daily*, and his editorials caught the eye of a local pastor who nominated him for a Rockefeller Brothers fellowship to consider the parish ministry. Although Dick had intended to go to law school, he accepted this fellowship and spent two years at Harvard Divinity School and one year working for the Philadelphia Council of Churches before deciding that he could better serve as a lawyer than as a parish minister.

Upon graduation from the University of Michigan Law School, Dick came to New Haven in 1964 "to keep the Yalies honest," as he often said. He worked as an Associate and then a Partner at Gumbart, Corbin, Tyler, and Cooper (later Tyler, Cooper, and Alcorn). He left the firm in 1981 to open a solo practice in trusts and estates. In later years he worked closely with his Associate, Ingi-Mai Loorand, moving with her to help establish the New Haven office of Reid and Riege. He was a member of the Connecticut Bar, a Fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC), and admitted as an Attorney and Counselor of the United States Supreme Court in 2002. In 2019 he proudly announced that 55 years

after passing his bar exam, he had just passed his online bartender's exam.

Among his many activities in the community, one might single out his founding and first presidency of East Rock Village, which grew to become HomeHaven, and his incorporation of Christian Community Action, an association of Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy and lay people to provide emergency shelter. He also served on the Board of Stewards of United Church on the Green and as President of the Quinnipiack Club. He was an Associate Fellow of Jonathan Edwards College.

Dick was a passionate traveler; beginning in 1968 he made many trips to Europe with his wife Kerala, whose work as a music historian frequently took her to Germany, Sweden, and Italy. They visited Egypt, India, and South America, and celebrated 50 years of marriage in 2008 by driving their camper van to Alaska and back. He loved to tell stories, all drawn from his life experiences, filled with intricate detail and bits of dialogue. He had a great sense of humor and particularly enjoyed political satire.

Dick is survived by his sister Mary Lynn, his sister-in-law Michele, his wife Kerala, his daughters Nancy Lee and Sara, his son Christopher, his nephews Derek and Matthew, nieces Krista, Kim, and Jessica, seven grand-nieces and nephews, and two goddaughters, Caroline and Samantha. His brother Bob predeceased him. A celebration of Dick's life will be held at United Church on the Green when it once again becomes possible to travel, to sing together, and to enjoy a good party afterwards. Contributions in his memory may be made to Christian Community Action, HomeHaven, United Church on the Green, or to the Richard and Kerala Snyder Fund at The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

# IT: The AGONY of Passwords

by John Sawyer

While writing my last article, it occurred to me that writing something about passwords would probably be a good idea. The second thing that prompted this column was the current issue of *PC Magazine*, which featured an article entitled “2020’s Most Common Passwords Are Laughably Insecure.”

According to the article, based on research conducted by software provider NordPass<sup>1</sup>, the 20 most common passwords for 2020 are:

|           |            |          |           |
|-----------|------------|----------|-----------|
| 123456    | 111111     | 1234567  | 1234      |
| 123456789 | 123123     | qwerty   | iloveyou  |
| picture1  | 12345      | abc123   | aaron431  |
| password  | 1234567890 | Million2 | Password1 |
| 12345678  | senha      | 000000   | qqww1122  |

We can get help managing our passwords from a variety of password management software. But for most normal users, they are probably overkill. I will explain more about them in a bit.

In deciding what kind of help you might want, first ask yourself: “Which online services that I use do I want protected from access by anyone, anywhere in the world?” For me, that would be a limited list, mostly dealing with finances or medical concerns. I do not really care if someone else can read my *New York Times* or my *Washington Post*, so those sites can continue with their current password whether or not it’s available “in the wild.” That sorting should

greatly reduce the list of websites needing a truly secure password.

Next, let’s revisit what I said in my last column dealing with Payment Services. To quote myself: “... to use any of these services, you need a very “strong” password, meaning:

1. 10-15 characters
2. Mixture of upper and lower case letters, numbers 0-9, and a special character or two (!,@,#,\$,%,&,etc).

This does not mean that you need to create a password that you can’t remember. Let’s use my last name, Sawyer, as an example: \$@wy3R42 (that is, \$ for S, @ for a, 3 for e, and 42 for my birth year. See, not hard at all.

For those of you who want software to generate and manage your passwords, I suggest these password managers: Keeper, LastPass, and Dashlane, all endorsed by *PC Magazine*.

One last note: for those financial and medical sites that you *really* want to keep private, be sure you turn on **two-factor authentication** where it is available. For a nice article on that, see: /https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/two-factor-authentication-who-has-it-and-how-to-set-it-up.

<sup>1</sup>[www.nordpass.com](http://www.nordpass.com).

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*John Sawyer serves on the IT Committee and is a member of the Amity and Westville Villages.*

## CONTRIBUTIONS IN RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Anonymous *in memory of* Anna Audette

Elizabeth Dreyer Bennett *in memory of*  
John Beecher Bennett

Nancy Carrington *in memory of* Edyth Carrington

Peggy & Al Atherton *in memory of* John Hay

Susan & Harvey Feinberg *in memory of* Margot Kohorn

George Miller *in memory of* Arlette Miller

Genny Palmieri *in memory of* Ida Ortega

Joan Wexler *in memory of* Harry Wexler

Chip Long *in recognition of* HomeHaven’s contributions to the community

Bob & Karlee Gifford *in honor of* Pat Jackson Allen

Herb & Elin Brockman *in honor of* Judith Colton

Anonymous *in honor of* Lauri Jan Lowell

Ruth Jacobson *in honor of*  
Vivian Lowell’s 95<sup>th</sup> birthday

Alan Appelbaum *in honor of* Wayne Meeks

Andy & Paige Weinstein *in honor of* Fred O’Brien

Joyce Milne *in honor of* Mike Storz

# HEALTH MATTERS:

## Guidelines for Preventive Health Services in Older Adults

by Pat Jackson Allen

In 2011, as part of the Affordable Care Act, Medicare began offering a variety of preventive health services if they were ordered during the Annual Wellness Visit. Preventive health services and screenings do not identify a condition already present, but rather serve to prevent or control conditions that will adversely affect a person's health, functional ability, and quality of life if not addressed. For preventive services and selected screenings to earn recommendation, they should have demonstrated the capacity to improve health outcomes and to do so safely.

As we age, many preventive services become optional because they have been shown effective in preventing health conditions and improving quality of life only in people likely to live 5-15 more years. For example, the dreaded colonoscopy with its bowel-cleaning preparation is not recommended in adults 75 or older who have had prior normal findings through a colonoscopy and no family history or other risk factors for colon or rectal cancer. The likelihood of a bowel malignancy causing illness in these older people during their remaining life is small.

When you have your annual health check, discuss with your healthcare provider which routine screenings are appropriate for you based on your age, health, and family risk profile. The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends the following screening procedures, which are covered by Medicare:

### Cardiovascular Risk Factors

*Blood Pressure Screening:* at all visits, with management of elevated blood pressure at all ages.

*High Cholesterol Screening:* until age 75. Elevated cholesterol levels are routinely managed with medication.

*Obesity Screening:* for all adults by measuring body-mass index.

*Fasting Blood Glucose Screening:* yearly for anyone with a risk factor, or every three years for all ages.

### Cancer

*Colorectal Cancer Screening—colonoscopy:* recommended for all people 45 to 75 years old every 5-10 years. For people 76-85, it is an individual decision based on risk factors. Not recommended in adults 86 or older. A simpler screening by checking stool for microscopic blood is often done yearly.

*Breast Cancer Screening—mammogram:* recommended yearly in women age 50-74. The USPSTF has not recommended *for* or *against* breast cancer screening by mammogram in women age 75 or older, but Medicare covers screening mammograms every 12 months.

*Cervical Cancer Screening:* not recommended in women aged 65 and older if they have had three prior screenings that were negative.

*Lung Cancer Screening:* recommended yearly in adults ages 50-80 with a 20-year history of smoking one pack per day.

*Prostate Cancer Screening – prostate-specific antigen (PSA):* recommendations changed in 2018 to recommend an individualized screening decision for men 55-69 and no screening for men 70 and older.

**Vaccinations** for older adults are recommended by the Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP):

*Influenza:* Yearly vaccination with seasonal influenza vaccine is recommended for all adults.

*Pneumococcal:* All adults 65 and older should receive Pneumovax (PPSV23). In high-risk people who received Pneumovax prior to age 65, the vaccine can be repeated after five years. An earlier version of the pneumococcal vaccine protected against 13 strains of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria. The newer version (PPSV23) protects against 23 strains of the bacteria, so it is recommended for all older adults who have not previously received it.

*Shingles (herpes zoster):* The CDC recommends that all adults 50 and older should receive the Shingrix vaccine which requires two injections 2-6 months apart (see article in the HomeHaven Newsletter, December 2020).

*Tetanus-diphtheria (Td) and tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap):* It is recommended that all adults receive either a Td or Tdap vaccination every ten years to prevent tetanus. In 2010, it was recommended that all adults receive one injection of Tdap when a tetanus booster is needed to prevent against pertussis (whooping cough).

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Pat Jackson Allen is chair of the Health and Wellness Committee and a member of Amity Village.



# PANDEMIC PASTIMES AND PURSUITS

## Members share how they've kept busy these days . . .

### BOBBI MILLER

At one time, my desk was buried under work-related papers concerning issues to deal with and dilemmas to solve: troubled companies, work gone wrong, shipments misplaced, and people with problems. In a word: headaches.

This same desk now houses pages of music for me to decipher and fingering exercises to practice. These include arrangements and notations for folk songs from the 1960's, 70's and 80's from Joan Baez and Bob Dylan to Simon & Garfunkel and Tom Paxton. They fill all available space. In a word: bliss.

Back when, I could lose myself in the music by playing my guitar and singing to myself and to anyone else who would listen and sing along, mostly my children. But life's activities intruded: a husband, three children, and all the necessary connected activities: orthodontics, various lessons, religious school, carpools. A job in genetics research at Yale and assisting my husband with his business on nights and weekends placed the guitar at the bottom of the list.

Fast forward: my husband of 56 years passed away; I retired from Yale; the pandemic year arrived.

In other words, I had too much free time and I recognized my need for some useful activities. I had long since given my unused guitar to my oldest son. It never crossed my mind that I had the option of returning to it. It would have required way too much effort!

On my birthday this past May, when my youngest son, his wife, and their nine-year-old were living with me to escape pandemic-ridden New York City, they gave me a new guitar. Although I first thought "OH NO, this will require a lot of hard work!" I now treasure the renewed effort and time this work demands.

By way of Zoom, I study with a wonderful instructor, a professional musician, once a week. The more I practice and learn, the happier I become with my new friend, my Yamaha Trans Acoustic Guitar.

So, pull out that piano bench and sit down; find the violin stashed in your closet; dig out those knitting needles or paint brushes! Taking up a rusty old source of enjoyment and fulfillment may provide its own reward. Too much time may sometimes pose a problem, but now this problem may open your life to joy.

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*Bobbi Miller serves on the Health and Wellness Committee and is a member of Amity Village.*

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## What Are You Reading?

For several months, we have been asking that question of our members. Sequestering seems to have added greatly to our time to read! Here are a few random responses.

**Victor Bers, from Hamden Village**, reading on his Nook, enjoyed a short novella by Tomasi di Lampedusa entitled *The Professor and the Siren*.

**Aboud Bashy, of the Downtown Village**, recommends reading Doris Kearns Goodwin's *No Ordinary Time*, a well-researched and excellent description of FDR and his wife Eleanor.

**Diane Ariker of Amity Village** is finishing *Truman*, by David McCullough, and finding it refreshing, given the current political climate. She has also read *Say Nothing - A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*, by Patrick Radden Keefe, which reads like a novel. Descriptions of how many separate threads weave together make this a page turner. *Autumn*, by Ali Smith, is a novel about stories and storytelling, featuring an unusual friendship between

an older and much younger person, each of whom considers the other the best person they know. This book is part of a quartet and Diane is looking forward to reading *Spring*. The Arikers eschew Amazon and are devoted customers of R.J. Julia in Madison.

**Helen Robinson of ERV** shares her recent reads as Christmas gifts with her sisters. *Radium Girls*, by Kate Moore, tells the true story of girls who painted watch faces with radium at the Waterbury Clock Co. and soon came down with a mysterious illness which the company ignored. *Code Girls*, by Liza Mundy, recounts that after Pearl Harbor, the U.S. was hindered in fighting Japan because it could not decipher the Japanese military codes. With men in short supply, college-educated girls were employed to crack the codes. *Tears of Salt*, by Dr. Pietro Bartolo, tells the story of rescues of African and Middle Eastern refugees arriving in makeshift boats and rafts to the island of Lampedusa.

## A December Walk in the Woods



In December, seven Amity Villagers hiked around Racebrook Tract in Woodbridge/Orange, joined by ERV'ers Al and Peggy Atherton.

The hike continued on with Fred O'Brien, Judy Moore, Elaine Lawson, Pat Allen, Jack Lawson, Kerry Triffin with Rick Allen running around behind the camera.



Skirting Racebrook... Ancient stone walls and great conversations... Winding down an hour and a half trek, resolving to do it again, weather permitting.



# “Seven Steps Towards Safer Mobility” presented by Mary Tinetti, MD

Summarized by Nancy H. Ruddle

On December 10, 2020 Dr. Mary Tinetti spoke by Zoom to HomeHaven members and their invited guests on the topic of “Seven Steps Towards Safer Mobility.” Dr. Tinetti is the Gladys Phillips Crofoot Professor of Medicine and Public Health and Chief of Geriatrics at Yale School of Medicine. She leads a national effort (Patient Priorities Care) to develop and test an approach to health care that aligns clinical care and decision-making with the specific health priorities of older adults with multiple conditions.

In her interesting, accessible, and well-attended presentation, Dr. Tinetti emphasized that her topic was not “falls,” but rather “mobility.” We should aim to move safely as often and as far as possible. She emphasized the mantra MOVE: “Mobility Optimizes Virtually Everything.” Falls are failures of safe mobility and they become common as we age. Many issues can increase the chances of falling. Even fear of falling or lack of confidence can lead to problems due to avoidance of exercise. She outlined seven steps to safer walking with practical suggestions.

Step 1: *Vision* – Make sure you do not wear progressive or reading glasses on stairs, as they fail to provide proper depth perception; have cataracts removed; take care when wearing a new glasses prescription.

Step 2: *Safe Feet and Footwear* – No walking in socks or backless shoes; shoes should have thin soles and low heels.

Step 3: *Balance and Walking* – Dr. Tinetti described several simple balance exercises and the benefits of Tai Chi, dancing, and frequent walking with appropriate aids such as canes or walkers.

Step 4: *Medications* – Find out if any of yours can lead to dizziness.

Step 5: *Postural hypotension* – It too can lead to dizziness. Evaluate this by checking your blood pressure lying down and then standing. The condition can be alleviated by drinking more water and getting up slowly while flexing your hands and ankles.

Step 6: *Create A Safe Environment* – It is key to avoiding falls. Avoid clutter, ensure adequate lighting, don't carry heavy or bulky objects, particularly on stairs. Make sure that sidewalks are level and stairs outside your home are safe.

Step 7: *Keep moving* – Activity and movement do not have to entail strenuous exercise; brisk and enjoyable walking will do.

A lively discussion followed, and participants were grateful for the enlightening talk. Dr. Tinetti provided three brochures that are available on the HomeHaven website that include chair-rise exercises, a check list for safety, and what you can do to prevent falls. A reminder: every HomeHaven member is entitled to a free home safety check. Make sure you take advantage of this helpful service when the pandemic is behind us.

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*Nancy Ruddle is a member of the Health and Wellness Committee and East Rock Village.*

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## Undaunted



*Jeannie Drury, Patty Langdon, and Sharon Matthews at Mikro Depot by the Farmington Canal*

### PLEASE TAKE A MINUTE!

If you've been helped by HomeHaven's referrals to service providers, please call the office or drop us a note and tell us about the experience.

We'd like to know how things turned out.

**203-776-7378**

# VILLAGE POETS' CORNER

## Seasonal Verse

by Liz Wolf

To the lingering pile of snow left by the snow ploughs

Old snow, please go!

Hard, unwanted, dirty snow,

Spring is coming, as you know.

Release the daffodils below.

Until you melt away and flow

Not even little weeds can grow.

Old snow, please go.

Don't stay to argue, just GO!

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*Liz Wolf is a member of Amity Village.*

She writes poetry, parody, and nonsense rhymes.

## Camille Claudel's Waltz in Bronze

by Laura Altshul

Camille: chosen by Rodin to learn and earn  
the title of sculptor, became also  
muse and model and mistress  
when young, so young: Auguste  
verged to fall when she was spring.

He taught, she grew, some thought her talent  
beyond him. They tangled and fought,  
parted and returned, enmeshed in art and love.  
She cast their lives in bronze –  
lovers embrace in passionate dance.

He bends to her, one arm at her bare back  
gripping as she swoons in almost fall –  
his head on her shoulder, her head on his,  
sinuously they lean, hands clasping, dangled  
bodies captured in the musculature of the waltz.

He was her hold, yet he stayed true  
to his wife and other young women,  
spurned Camille as she blossomed  
and swelled with life that she doomed,  
her family estranged, her talent strangled.

They said she needed to be locked up.  
Imprisoned, unable  
to move and sculpt, she floundered for years  
a modern Niobe, all lamentation and tears  
and anger until she died.

No body, no marker, no grave,  
only the measure of bronze saved –  
lovers embrace in passionate dance.

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*Laura Altshul is a member of the Downtown Village. "Camille Claudel's Waltz in Bronze" is from Laura's book *Bodies Passing*. Her other books are *Searching for the Northern Lights* and *Looking Out*. All are available on Amazon.*

## Blue Heron in the Early Evening

by Victor Altshul

I glide downward toward the pond  
my right eye takes her in  
she stands on her deck in a yellow jumper  
with a gin and tonic and a slice of lime  
watching me  
trying to understand  
how to understand a mind  
that cannot think  
about why its body glides downward  
or about whether that mind is able  
to imagine that it is unable to imagine  
I imagine she thinks I cannot imagine  
that she is asking if a heron has a mind  
or is a mere gliding salivating body  
unable to know it is preparing  
for an excellent dinner of toads and frogs  
having no words for toads and frogs  
she sees me watching her out of one eye  
and wonders if I can make sense  
of this woman in a yellow jumper  
with a gin and tonic and lime  
who is trying to think about  
what it would be like to be a heron  
that is unable to think about  
why a woman in a yellow jumper  
might be standing on her deck  
watching him and  
holding a gin and tonic with lime

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*Victor Altshul is a member of the Downtown Village. "Blue Heron in the Early Evening" is from his book *Ode to My Autumn*. His other books are *Stumblings*, *Singing with Starlings*, and *Strange Birds*. They are available on Amazon.*

## Zoom Gatherings in Your Village

*Please check your email or the HH calendar for details and updates.*

### AMITY

Thursday, Feb. 4 & 18, 5pm

**Virtual Happy Hour!**

The 18<sup>th</sup> is our joint happy hour with Westville!

Join us every other Thursday!

### DOWNTOWN

Saturday, Feb. 6 & 20, 5:30pm

**Virtual Happy Hour!**

Join us every other Saturday!

### EAST ROCK

Saturday, Feb. 6, 13, 20 & 27, 5pm

**Virtual Happy Hour!**

Join us every Saturday!

### HAMDEN/NORTH HAVEN

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 10:30am

**Virtual Coffee!**

See you then!

### WESTVILLE

Thursday, Feb. 11, 18 & 25, 5:00pm

**Virtual Happy Hour!**

The 18<sup>th</sup> is our joint happy hour with Amity!

Join us every other Thursday!



## *Happy Birthday to HomeHaven members with a birthday in February*

Pat Allen Rick Allen

Joan Binder Judith Calvert

Shula Chernoff Joseph Crowley

Eric Denardo Lynda Hammond

Kate Hay Francie Irvine

Jeanne Kerr Ruth Koizim

Peggy Lawler Jane Lederer

Susanne Roberts Ellen Ryerson

Joseph Sabbatino John Schneider

Nira Silverman Kerry Snyder

Richard Yanowitz



## *The Case of the Piglet's Paternity*

**Conversation with author Jon Blue, Hamden Village member** *(summarized by Francie Irvine)*

A “library rat,” some years ago retired Superior Court Judge Jon Blue came upon legal records of New Haven Colony, printed much after the fact in the 1850s. These versions had also been edited to remove any salacious parts, but he finally found the originals, hand-written on parchment in archaic English, with hard-to-decipher abbreviations and contractions. In vivid language, these records contained accounts of trials that occurred in the Colony during the years of its existence, between 1638 and 1664. At that point it merged with Connecticut Colony.

As an independent colony, New Haven Colony comprised the towns of New Haven, Guilford, Branford, Milford, Stamford and Southold, on Long Island. Politically independent and “extremely repressive,” according to Jon, it was in fact a theocracy. The Bible, especially the Old Testament, shaped all laws. English Common Law had no place in New Haven Colony. There were no juries; in order to render a decision, judges consulted with the clergy. Decisions on criminal cases often resulted in harsh punishments, but those

trials nonetheless presented many of the questions modern-day judges face: “What is the purpose of the law?” “If the statute is poorly drafted and ambiguous, do you hew to it?” “If the community as a whole is likely to suffer by a certain decision, what is the greater good?” Though some of the cases and decisions in the book may appear quaint and amusing, Jon cautioned that we should remember that our “modern” ideas and culture may well seem peculiar to future generations.

The 33 cases analyzed in the book run the gamut of bad human behavior: murder, bestiality, family issues, commercial rivalries. And though many decisions demonstrate the Puritans’ judgmental attitudes, several reveal their solicitude for the less fortunate – children, apprentices, abandoned wives – and generosity towards those in trouble.

Perhaps most heartening about the presentation was Jon’s description of how he came to write his first book “late in the game.” As he said: “If you have a book in you, you’re never too old to write it.”



# Events: February



Wednesday, Feb. 10, 11:00am.

**Lunch & Learn: Arts & Crafts in America with Elaine Lawson. Via Zoom\*.**

Elaine Lawson (Amity) will discuss the impact of the Arts and Crafts movement. Q&A to follow.

**Members only.**

Friday, Feb. 12, 2:00pm.

**HH Poets & Writers presents: Poetry by Shula Chernoff. Via Zoom\*.**

Shula Chernoff (Westville) will read a selection of her poetry with a Q&A to follow.

**Members only.**

Thursday, Feb. 18, 2:00pm.

**The Health Effects of Isolation, presented by Jack Gesino, DSW. Via Zoom\*.** We've heard that loneliness is as bad as smoking 15 cigarettes per day. Dr. Gesino will discuss the impact of social isolation on your brain, immune system, and emotional health. Slide presentation with Q&A to follow. **Members & friends.**

*\*A Zoom invite will be sent prior to the program.*

## HH ONGOING EVENTS

### MEMOIR WRITING GROUPS

The groups meet every second and fourth Monday of the month for an hour and a half. We're Zooming these days, and it's working beautifully. For more information or if you would like to attend a meeting to see how it works, please email Harriet Bergmann at [hfb183@gmail.com](mailto:hfb183@gmail.com).

### PINS AND NEEDLES

**Monday, February 1, at 3:00pm. Via Zoom.** Bring a project and enjoy good company and lively discussion. New members are always welcome at these monthly gatherings. If you would like to join the group and be included in the group Zoom invitation please email Kathy Denardo at [vivian.denardo@att.net](mailto:vivian.denardo@att.net).

### PLAY READING GROUP

**Tuesdays, Feb. 16 & 23, 7pm.**  
**The Impostures of Scapin, by Moliere**  
Via Zoom. Limited to 12. The play will be available on the HH website calendar. You must be logged in to register. **Members only.**

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