



A Cookie Break for Wellesley Neighbors

On the last Friday in June, a small group of WN members surprised the rest of us with a gift bag that included candies, home-baked cookies and a message, "Thinking of You." Inspired by ways that other villages have stayed connected during the epidemic, Joyce Wadlington worked with Maureen Donlon and Margot Lansing to plan and produce the gift bags. Maureen baked at least 100 cookies and enlisted several of her neighborhood mothers and their children to bake hundreds more.

On the big day, June 26, the gift bags were brought to the office parking lot and picked up by a delivery crew representing our seven WN clusters. At right, Joyce (holding a gift bag) is shown with (L to R) Lucy Phillips, Ellen Hosbjor and Ilse Sangree. Others in the crew were Nancy Amstutz, Janet Giele, Jane Solomon, Ann Swanson, and Marlies Stueart.



It was a hot day, and a few chocolate chips might have melted, but everybody enjoyed the surprise gift. As one member wrote later to Joyce, "Thanks for the care package...This is a strange time, and all kind moments are appreciated, so the effort of Wellesley Neighbors to stay in touch seemed like a special event." One of the delivery team said, "The people who came to the door were so appreciative and so happy just to have a short little chat." Clearly it was a great idea—thanks to all who made it happen.

Telling Stories Around the Virtual Campfire

On Tuesday, August 18, at 7:00 pm, Rachel Gans-Boriskin and a group of storytelling friends will share some of their favorite stories with us via Zoom. "They are a great group, and each one brings a unique voice, set of experiences, and storytelling style," she says. So far, the roster includes Julie Baker, Terry Wolfisch Cole, Harold Cox, Cheryl Hamilton, and David Sylvester, who may be joined by one or two more.



Rachel spoke to Wellesley Neighbors in spring 2017 on the ethics of photojournalism. She is an Assistant Professor of Practice in Communications at The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities at Simmons University. Rachel teaches the senior seminar on storytelling as well as classes on journalism, media theory, and health communications. An active member of Boston's storytelling community, she is a regular teller for Fugitive Story Productions and has been featured at WGBH storytelling events.

Park Street: A Mirror of Boston for Centuries

Rose Doherty, Thursday, August 27, 2020, 7:30pm on Zoom

After a well-received talk on *The Forgotten History of Boston*, Rose Doherty returns to offer a talk about the history of Park Street. The street has overlooked Boston Common, the country's oldest public park, for almost four centuries. This illustrated talk will show how Park Street changed to echo the Boston people and architecture of each era. The Granary, Almshouse, Workhouse, and Bridewell (jail) of the colonial period gave way to homes and Park Street Church in the 19th century. Residents of Park Street included leaders of Boston society, politics and

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From the President: Self-Reflections



When I was little, there were still corner stores in every neighborhood. They were not necessarily on the corner but were easy to walk to and managed to stock close to everything our mothers needed. They also provided a place for us kids to meet sometimes. I expect

you remember. Across the street from “our” corner store lived Miss Allee. She seemed ancient to me, and particularly for those days, she was. I know that she was in her 80s, because my parents often marveled at the fact that she mowed her own lawn, mentioning her age each time. Of course, there were no power mowers in those days.

Miss Allee has been much in my mind lately, partly because I have mowed the lawn and discovered that, even with the electric mower, this is NOT an easy task. I encounter, as she did, many comments on my age with respect to my activities. Recently a neighbor brought me a pair of good tie shoes, fearing that I’d slip out of the shoes I was wearing while weeding and cutting

bramble bushes on a steep slope. Surely she would not have done that if I were 50? 40? Another neighbor insisted on putting a gate in the low fence around the asparagus patch I’d just planted. I pointed out that we could simply step over such a low fence, but her look of panic as I did so (and her “I would prefer to have a gate”) told me that she was making the gate out of concern for me. Sometimes one wants to shrug off such well-meant concern, but maybe it was the memory of Miss Allee-- who fell on her basement stairs when she was 88 and, living alone, had no one to help--that persuaded me to overcome my aggressive frugality and spring for an Applewatch: the one that knows if I fall down and calls not only the emergency people but also three of my children, simultaneously.

Perhaps these reflections tell me what I actually know already...that, as much as I pretend to be younger than I am, those around me see how tired I become, dragging up the hill after completing my landscaping chores. It seems I have become my neighborhood’s Miss Allee. And maybe I will need to take account of this, one of these days, and curtail some of what I do. But not yet.

Catherine

From the Executive Director: Discounted Membership Fees

Members are reminded that Wellesley Neighbors offers discounted membership fees to people who meet federal guidelines. For an individual whose annual income is \$38,280 or less, the \$440 annual fee is reduced to \$110; if the individual’s income is \$51,040 or less, the fee is \$220.

For a household with an annual income of \$51,720 or less, the \$580 annual fee is reduced to \$145; if the household’s income is \$68,960 or less, the fee is \$290.

In addition, individuals whose income is \$38,280 or less will be reimbursed up to \$150 for activities that have

fees (e.g., plays, WN meals). A household with an income of \$51,720 or less will be reimbursed for activities up to \$200.

Please contact me if you qualify for a discounted membership. Further, I hope that you will share this information with people you know who may wish to join Wellesley Neighbors as discounted members. Information about discounted memberships is held in confidence.



Joyce

July Service and Support



Service Requests: 3 (asbestos removal, gutter repair, movers)
Support Requests: 4 (2 technical, 2 rides)

To request service or support, call Joyce at 781-283-0417, ext. 1.



Meet Lauri Slawsby

A local girl, Lauri was brought up in Brookline, MA. Her family connected to and stayed a part of the area, and Lauri continued the trend. After earning a B. A. in English at Boston University, she worked as a book designer for MIT Press. She spent several years as a designer for the *Harvard Business Review*. She then assisted a professor at Boston University, where she was involved with Judaic studies. She helped him with a book on the Boston area Jewish communities of Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan, as well as another book about Holocaust survivors.

Lauri and her husband Alan moved to Wellesley more than 40 years ago, and she was involved with him in his Wellesley-based property management firm, which focused on condominium associations. The couple traveled extensively, enjoying the art and societies of many countries and areas of the world.

After her own retirement and her husband's death, she returned to the art world, notably as an artist. Her medium is representational drawing and pastels, although she has branched out to more abstract works. She reads voraciously, both on her own and together with her book club. She has kept a running list of things she has read since 1991.

Throughout her life there have been many changes. The loss of her husband and the current world-wide health crisis brought about by Covid-19 have reinforced those changes and more. Lauri has always liked people but feels she "has become more empathetic, more understanding." Since joining Wellesley Neighbors in 2016, she has made many connections and currently sits on the Board of Directors. Recently she joined WN's new short story group (see page 4).

Lauri has a son Alex, in Needham, and she loves spending time with him and his wife Eli (short for Elizabeth). They have three girls, with another on the way. Ava and Bree are shown with Lauri below. **A.S.**



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medicine. Currently, a TV news studio, restaurants, the Union Club, small businesses, religious organizations, and offices for Houghton Mifflin show the growth and diversity of Boston through the centuries. (*Below: Looking up Park Street from the church to the State House, courtesy of Revolutionary Spaces.*)



Rose A. Doherty is President Emerita, Partnership of Historic Bostons, a nonprofit dedicated to the relationship between Boston, Massachusetts, and Boston, England. She is a Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society, a member of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, a founding Board Member of The Pursuit of History, and Vice-Chair, Needham Historical Commission

She taught writing and literature at Boston College, Boston Conservatory of Music, and Katharine Gibbs School of Boston. She was Assistant Dean and Director of Liberal Arts and Criminal Justice programs at University College, Northeastern University; Academic Dean of Katharine Gibbs School, and later Chair of the Board of Trustees of Gibbs College, Boston. She is the author of *Katharine Gibbs: Beyond White Gloves*, which tells the 100-year history of this world-renowned American institution.

Happenings: Zoom activities don't lend themselves to photos, but a lot is happening...

Are You Interested?

WN has a new interest group that will be exploring short stories via Zoom. It first met in July and will next meet August 24 at 11 am. The July story was "A & P" by John Updike, which takes you back to the well-known market in the 1950s. "Everybody enjoyed it, especially as it stirred our own memories of the time," says Margot

Lansing who informally heads the group. "Each time we meet, we'll discuss a story that a member has chosen—something accessible on online," she adds. "Two more are needed to bring the group to ten, which we hear is the best size for a Zoom discussion." For details, contact Margot at margotlansing@gmail.com or 781 237-1754 .

Something New on the Homepage

Very soon, look for a brief video posted on our homepage about WN and the epidemic. Now nearing completion, it's a collection of interviews with members who share their impressions and experiences with WN during these difficult times. The ad hoc committee that tackled the project is chaired by Teri Lilly and includes Polly Conlon, Dan Kemp and Margot Lansing. They defined the topics to be addressed, identified speakers on each topic, recruited and interviewed participants, reviewed the results and identified needed edits.

"We hope it shows that WN is still here, serving its members and meeting the challenges of the pandemic," Teri says, adding, "None of this would have happened without Dan's expertise." Dan not only knows cameras

and computers but has specific experience with videos, having helped an earlier ad hoc committee produce the one that anchors our website.



All segments of the new video were recorded over Zoom, like the one above, showing Renate Olsen. "Audio and video quality would have been better with a 'real movie camera,'" Dan admits. "But this was the only way we could do it—and it seemed fitting, since Zoom has been crucial to maintaining our cohesion and community." One theme emerging in the interviews is that various WN groups have actually drawn closer during this period. **L.P.**

Louise Penny's Armand Gamache Series

Fond of Maigret, Poirot, and even Clouseau, but you'd like your francophone detective a little closer to home? You might find Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of La Sûreté du Québec just the ticket—a ticket right across the border to Canada. Most, but not all, of the action in Louise Penny's mystery series takes place in Montreal or the tiny village (not on any map) of Three Pines near the Vermont border.

The main characters are delightful and fully three-dimensional. Gamache himself is a complex character, a brilliant strategic thinker but haunted by self-doubt and weighed down by tragic events in his past. Along with his close associates Isabel Lacoste and Jean-Guy Beauvoir—and supported always by his beloved (and more emotionally grounded) wife, Reine-Marie—

Gamache solves baffling and sometimes bizarre crimes, even at the highest levels of provincial government. An eccentric and implausible cast of neighbors in Three Pines, including a foul-mouthed old crone with a pet duck, provides many an entertaining side-show and some mysteries of their own.

Despite the unspeakable evil he sometimes confronts, Gamache manages to hold onto his core conviction that "light would banish the shadow. That kindness was more powerful than cruelty, and that goodness existed, even in the most desperate places." There's many a twist and nail-biting moment in this thoroughly enjoyable series by a much-celebrated author. Take a trip to Three Pines! Begin with the first of Penny's fifteen Gamache mysteries, *Still Life*. **C.M.**



August Zoom Events

Wed. August 5, 5:30 pm—Women's Night Out (In)
Thu. August 6, 12:30 pm—Men's Lunch
Fri. August 7, 5 pm—Cocktail Hour ((bring three facts about yourself, two true and one false)
Tue. August 11, 10:30 am—Spanish Impressionist Joaquín Sorolla, National Gallery of Art (UK)
Fri. August 14, 3 pm—Afternoon Tea
Tue. August 18, 7:00 pm—A Program of Storytellers (see p. 1)
Thu. August 20, 6 pm—Boston Ballet's *Carmen* on Zoom*
Fri. August 21, 5 pm—Cocktail Hour (hors d'oeuvres demo by Sally LaRhetta-Bradford)
Mon. August 24, 11 am—Short Story Group (see p. 4, top)
Thu. August 27, 7:30 pm—Returning Speaker on Boston (see p. 1)
Fri. August 28, 3 pm—Afternoon Tea

***No longer available to general membership. Invitation only to members who previously purchased tickets (per Boston Ballet).**

Early September Zoom Events

Wed. Sept. 2, 5:30 pm—Women's Night Out (In)
Thu. Sept. 3, 12:30 pm—Men's Lunch
Fri. Sept. 4, 5 pm—Cocktail Hour

Very Easy Chocolate Cake (from Lucy Phillips)

Heat oven to 325 degrees. In a large bowl, whisk together:
1 and 1/4 C flour, 1/3 C unsweetened cocoa powder, 1 C sugar or less,* 3/4 tsp baking soda, and 1/2 tsp salt.
Add 1/3 C canola oil, 1 C cold water, 1 tsp vanilla extract, 1 tsp cider or white vinegar. Mix well and spread in an 8 x 8 pan.
(Optionally, sprinkle with 2 T chocolate chips.)

Bake 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out just barely clean (i.e., don't overbake). Cool and serve in squares. You can dust with confectioner's sugar but it's OK plain, especially with strawberries and/or ice cream.

*I'd use 1/2 C, since I halve the sugar in most recipes. It seems to me that sweets are getting TOO sweet...!

August 2020

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The Germ

A mighty creature is the germ,
Though smaller than the pachyderm.
His customary dwelling place
Is deep within the human race.
His childish pride he often pleases
By giving people strange diseases.
Do you, my poppet, feel infirm?
You probably contain a germ.

Ogden Nash

(contributed by Rosalie Gimeno)

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August Newsletter

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