



Mary Lefkowitz: The Plague in Ancient Athens

Thursday, March 25 at 7:30 pm on Zoom

In 430 B.C., when Athens was at the height of her prosperity and power, suddenly its inhabitants began to sicken and die from a previously unknown disease. In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides provides a first-hand description of what it was like to suffer from this disease. He also offers a vivid account of the effect of the plague on people's psyches and ethics. Now we have vaccines and medicines to help us, but what effect is the present pandemic having on the minds and ethics of those of us fortunate enough to survive it?



Long-time WN member Mary Lefkowitz earned a B.A. from Wellesley College and advanced degrees from Radcliffe College. She began teaching at Wellesley in 1959 and in 1979 was named the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities, a position she held until her retirement in 2005. In 2004 she received a Radcliffe Graduate Society Medal; in 2006 a National Humanities Medal "for outstanding excellence in scholarship and teaching,," and in 2008 a Wellesley College Alumnae Achievement Award. She has authored many articles and books including *Women in Greek Myth*, *The Lives of the Greek Poets*, and *Heroines and Hysterics*. Mary is Professor Emerita of Classical Studies at Wellesley College, a past member of the WN Board, and Co-Chair of the Health Support Committee.

Report On the Annual Retreat: Where Do We Go Next?

On February 1, our Board of Directors attended a "retreat" in place of the BOD meeting that falls on the first Monday of each month. A WN retreat traditionally occurs early in each new year, but this time it was on Zoom, and its theme was how—or how much--WN may need to change as it moves into "the new normal."

According to President Catherine Connor, the big question is, "Can we go forward as we are—or do we need to pivot in some ways?" Late in 2020, she asked Troy Murray to form and chair a "Pivot Committee" to prepare for the retreat. The committee included Nancy Gans, Rosalie Gimeno, Linda Griffiths and Hank Solomon, who met seven times, with Catherine as kibitzer. They surveyed WN members and non-members, looked at other villages, read many articles, and issued their observations the last week of January.



Their remarks addressed social changes due to the pandemic and pre-existing trends. They considered survey results, noting that WN members value their caring and supportive community as much or more than

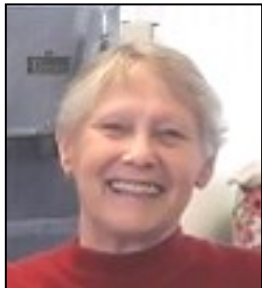
all the programs and activities. Therefore, fostering that sense of community may be "the best chance of retaining current members and attracting new ones."

We want to share the benefits of WN with more people. To this end, the mission statement would be simplified to emphasize the basics of caring, community, and mutual support. Current and new members would be given more encouragement to volunteer, and each new member would be assigned a "buddy" to help them become quickly engaged in a committee, special interest group, or member-to-member support.

President Connor opened the retreat with thanks to Troy and the Pivot Committee, "a group that really knows how to reach consensus!" She then introduced our founding president, Janet Giele, who reviewed our history (see page 3). The BOD was then divided into several "break-out rooms" and given points to discuss. The entire group later reconvened to hear from each break-out group. The first involved mainly members of the Technology Committee, who said they need more members to help with technology support. Such helpers need not be super techies: people with medium skills

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From the President: Replacing Parts



There is most of a blender sitting on my dining table. I say “most of,” because the plastic base that holds the container is broken, which makes the blender unusable. It makes me sad that the days are over when fixing small appliances could be a profitable business. When I was a young bride, and for at least 20 years after, a toaster that sputtered or a blender whose beater got bent meant a trip to see Paul Lauterbur. His shop was narrow, with boxes stacked so high that one could easily imagine one pile toppling and bringing all the others down, domino style. Perhaps that was why the aisle... more appropriately called a canyon...that led from the front of the store to the back was not a straight aisle but a wandering maze-like pathway. I would always follow him as he moved slowly toward the back, eyes searching the towering boxes, his

friendly voice sharing the gossip he reveled in knowing, until the ‘ah ha’ moment came, and he retrieved the needed part. Ordering a new blender from Amazon simply doesn’t provide the same joy.

But these thoughts led to my recognizing that, as the days of spare parts has faded for small appliances, a new replacement part market has brought us—and I do mean the “us” that are counting the mounting years—opportunities that Mr. Lauterbur never could have dreamed of. My 84-year-old sister will soon swap out her bum knee for a replacement, less than two months after she traded in a broken-down hip for a new one.

And who knew we came with our own replacement parts? Those veins in my leg that provided the material for my carotid endarterectomies must have been spare parts: I certainly haven’t missed them, and there are other spares deep inside that I know of. What a marvel that the art of replacing parts, which used to keep our small appliances going (and still keeps our cars and large appliances in service), offers the chance to regain mobility and relieve pain, thus extending the number and quality of our years. Isn’t this world a miraculous place?

Catherine

From the Executive Director: Support Local Restaurants

We’ve all been learning about the impact of the pandemic on food establishments and perhaps seeing some closings when we drive by local restaurants. Owners are asking for our help as indoor dining restrictions continue. Take-out is a safe option and will help keep many restaurants in business.

If you’re concerned about catching the virus by ordering food, Dr. Sunil Parikh, Yale Professor of Epidemiology, citing guidance from the CDC wrote, “Overall, the risk is extremely low.” While third party services such as GrubHub deliver meals for restaurants, they add 15% or more to the bill. If you pick up a meal, experts say you can remain safe by wearing a mask and paying electronically or over the phone.



Dr. Anthony Fauci recently told CNN that “...it’s almost a neighborly obligation to keep neighborhood restaurants afloat, ...so several nights a week I go out for take-out...” I too want to help my local restaurants remain in business, so I’ve been ordering take-out a few times a month and encourage you to do the same.

Joyce

NOTE: The pandemic has reduced the need for a box to report “service and support” requests, but Joyce still welcomes your calls for support (e.g., rides) and offers service referrals at 781 283-0417, ext. 1.

Newsletter News

Readers with sharp eyes may notice that a name is missing from the staff list below. That’s because Jean Boyle has stepped down after many years as editor. An early member of Wellesley Neighbors, Jean has also served as WN clerk and a Board member. She recently left Wellesley Green for Waterstone but plans to stay active in Wellesley Neighbors. We thank her for all her contributions and wish her the best in her new home!

Newsletter staff: Mickey Goldin, Marcia Goldsmith, Curt Martin, Lucy Phillips, Ann Swanson

Janet Giele: How Did We Get Here?



While looking to the future (see article page 1), we can certainly take pride in our past. For newer members—and for others who may need a reminder—below is the brief history provided by Janet Giele at the February 1 retreat. Janet was the logical source, being a founding member and our first president—and she has an amazing memory!

Her devotion to WN is an extension of her academic interest in sociology and public policy as related to the family and aging. She taught many years at Brandeis, is still writing books, and discussed one of them (*Family Policy and the American Safety Net*) for our speaker series. Always up for a challenge, she helped to establish the Denton Road Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) to protect against tear-down of trees and houses--the first and still the only NCD in Wellesley. She and her husband David have lived many years on Denton Road and are active in St. Andrews Church.

Our history begins in May 2008 when the president of Beacon Hill Village spoke at the Wellesley Free Library (WFL) on the “Village Movement” and how it helps seniors stay active and independent. A small group that included Janet and Stan and Ruth Treitman met afterwards “to see what we could do in Wellesley,” Janet said. In fall 2008, the Council on Aging publicized a WFL meeting at which Janet gave a PowerPoint presentation about other villages to a packed audience. It was voted to go forward as Wellesley at Home (WAH), and names of potential members were collected. “Parky Damon

asked if we needed money,” Janet remembers. “So we passed the hat and collected a few hundred dollars. That became our working capital!”

From 2009 to the official opening in November 2011, the organization expanded through meetings, lunches, and coffees at people’s homes, to which interested friends and neighbors were invited. The Treitmans started a newsletter, and Stan created a website. Tom DeRiemer, the treasurer, found an office and a pro bono lawyer to incorporate WAH as a nonprofit. Tom and Hank Solomon forged our unique link to Wellesley College, assisted by faculty member Mary Lefkowitz. With Ralph Wagner, Janet commissioned two Brandeis graduate students to develop a business plan that included a dues structure, plan for member recruitment, and a range of programs. It suggested a part-time executive director, so a search committee found Emily Grossman (2010) and ultimately Joyce Wadlington (2011).

Janet also raised funds from private donors, the Wellesley Hills Junior Women’s Club, and the Babson Foundation. She and her husband David made their own significant donation to assure that WAH would become a reality. In October 2012 she resigned as president “to make way for new leaders. My role was mainly to get us going.” Under her successors—Margot Lansing, Nancy Gans, Ilse Sangree and Catherine Connor—the organization has thrived and made two major changes: changed its name to Wellesley Neighbors (as “at home” might suggest “homebound”) and expanded to include more towns. Most recently, it has adapted to the pandemic, finding new ways to keep us all in touch. **L.P.**



Mickey Goldin took a long view of The Brook Path while Rosalie Gimeno caught a bird in a bush.

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can certainly help those with lower skills. Of course, any kind of helping is difficult as long as the pandemic curbs face-to-face meeting.

Hank Solomon spoke for the second group and emphasized “engagement, orientation and integration” for new members—and for longstanding members who rarely participate. He suggested that member-to-member help could go beyond technology to include all kinds of expertise. He also suggested using Zoom to orient new members.



Rosalie Gimeno, speaking for her group, said that “volunteering” would more tactfully be called “participation.” And whatever we’re doing, we need to consider that people will continue to have diverse attitudes about “distancing,” which may soon be complicated by different levels of vaccination. On behalf of her group, Sara-Jane Green advised that buddies

helping new members must be sensitive to what an individual really wants to do.

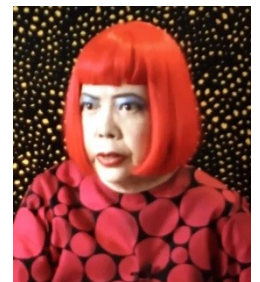
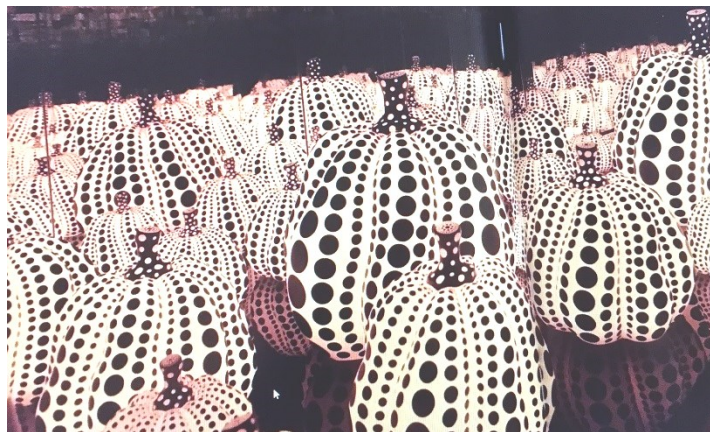
Margot Lansing, Membership chair, foresees that her committee will expand and divide in two parts: one for finding new members and one for helping new members to feel at home. The discussion turned to sources of new members, and Linda Griffith suggested “New Beginnings,” an organization for newly divorced or widowed people. Everyone agreed that many such people need time to adjust before they can consider joining a group like ours.

When the retreat ended after two hours, everyone praised the Pivot Committee and agreed with Hank, who said, “We need this kind of discourse more often.” This report can’t begin to convey all that occurred but hopes at least to give all WN members an idea of our challenges going forward. Any member with helpful ideas is welcome to share them with one of the officers or board members. Wellesley Neighbors needs all the talent of its members to thrive and grow! **L. P.**

Happenings



Barbara Slavin brought a very lifelike Bernie Sanders to a Zoom event.



Yayoi Kusama was born in 1929 and is still creative.



Our tireless Activities Committee keeps finding interesting discoveries like Yayoi Kusama, a multimedia artist who is mostly preoccupied with polka dots (even in the clothing she makes), but sometimes she branches out, as in the work at left. She’ll soon turn 92.





March Zoom Events

Wed. Mar. 3, 5:30 pm— Women's Night Out (In)

Thu. Mar. 4, 12:30 pm—Men's Lunch

Fri. Mar. 5, 5pm—Cocktail Hour

Fri. Mar. 12, 3-4:30 pm—Afternoon Tea

Tue. Mar. 16, 3 pm—*Historic Boston*, an architectural tour

Wed. Mar. 17, 4 pm—*Katie Roche*, a play by Teresa Deevy

Fri. Mar. 19, 5 pm—Cocktail Hour

Mon. Mar. 22, 3 pm—Russian Icon Museum, Black Lacquered Boxes

Thu. Mar. 25, 7:30 pm—Mary Lefkowitz, *The Plague in Athens* (see p.1)

Fri. Mar. 26, 3 pm—Afternoon Tea

March 2021

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	Fri	Sat
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7	8	9	10	11	12 .	13
14	15	16 .	17 .	18	19 .	20
21	22 .	23	24	25 .	26 .	27
28	29	30	31			

Early April Events

Thu. Apr. 1, 12:30 pm—Men's Lunch

Fri. Apr. 2, 5 pm—Cocktail Hour

Wed. April 7, 5:30 pm—Women's Night Out (In)

Have You Tried *ON YOUR OWN*?

Next time you're on the WN home-page, click just above the events list and see what ON YOUR OWN has to offer: internet sites to make you laugh, think, dream, and travel. It's "on your own" because you choose what and when to watch.

The list of sites keeps growing, and time-sensitive events may disappear, but many are timeless—like streamed opera performances or an interview with British actress Maggie Smith. ON YOUR OWN is a perfect pandemic escape, especially in the dead of winter.

Irish Soda Bread for St. Patrick's Day

From Maureen Donlon

4 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for work surface
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 tbsp. baking powder
 1 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. baking soda
 6 tbsp. cold butter
 1 cup dried currants or raisins
 2 tsp. caraway seeds
 1 1/2 cups buttermilk

Preheat oven to 350 F and grease large cookie sheet. In a large bowl, combine first five ingredients. Cut in the butter, using a pastry blender or two knives, till mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add currents or raisins and caraway seeds, then stir in buttermilk until flour is evenly moistened. On a floured surface, knead dough 8-10 times, just until combined. Shape into a flattened ball on the cookie sheet. Cut a ¼-inch cross on top. Bake 1 hour or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool completely on a wire rack.

Wellesley Neighbors
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March Newsletter

«Name»
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