

News and Views *Avila*

A publication of the Resident Council at Avila Retirement Community

Albany, NY

February 2017

FROM THE DESK OF MURRAY BLOCK

The Capital District is rich in the availability of the arts and of cultural events. We are surrounded with theaters, concert venues, museums, and academic institutions that offer much for our enjoyment. In many cases, Avila arranges for tickets and provides transportation. Sign up sheets are in both mailrooms.

NEWS AND VIEWS would like to present articles written by our neighbors who are very much into these events. If you enjoy a particular cultural activity in our area, why not share it with all of us? Write a piece for a future issue. Or, if you prefer, share your information with me, and I will put it together for a future edition. (Phone number: 554, mail box 204, or email: blockfolks@gmail.com)

We are delighted to present Eugene Garber's article *Three Russian Masterpieces* elsewhere in this issue.



NEWS AND VIEWS 2017

(an Avila Resident Council Publication)

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NEWS AND VIEWS

Paul Ward and Karl Gohlke

Avila residents recently learned of the death of Don Layton who resided at Avila for several years before relocating to a continuing care facility in New Hampshire.

Don, a retired educator from SUNY at Albany, was a major contributor to the Avila community residents' life and welfare. He was a founding member of the Protestant congregation and of the library committee. It was his dedication and the professional skills he brought to the editorship of *News and Views* that made the publication a leader in its genre.

We continue to try to emulate his example.

MAXINE KOBLENZ

Interviewed by Joyce Gibbs



Photograph by Max Tiller

Maxine Koblenz was born in Albany and lived here for 17 years with her wonderful parents and one brother. Her Dad was a man of his word whose role was to take care of his family. Her Mom's priority was to provide her family with lots of love. Maxine earned her degree in Special Education and became an elementary school teacher, then went on to being a Language Speech Pathologist

She was married to her longtime sweetheart, Herschel, whom she met when she was 13 years old. They were married in Albany in Temple Israel and had a traditional wedding with a beautiful white gown. Then they were off on a honeymoon to Bermuda. They had been married for 58 wonderful years before he passed away. Maxine decided to move back to Albany from

Ohio. She visited Avila where she stayed for three days in one of the guest suites. After checking out Avila thoroughly she decided that this was the place she wanted to live. She would be near her family.

Maxine loves to travel, play bridge and do volunteer work. She is an avid swimmer, and looks forward to getting a lot of use out of the pool. Reading is also high on her list as is participation in book discussions. Avila extends a warm welcome to Maxine.



"I am not a paranoid, deranged millionaire. I'm a billionaire." - Howard Hughes

BERNICE "BUNNY" LESNICK

Interviewed by Karl Gohlke

When Bunny moved into Avila in November, it was not her first introduction to the Avila community. She and her late husband, Dick, had visited friends who were already in residence. It was the death of her husband in May that motivated her to join a community where she would enjoy the advantages of communal living. After 67 years of marriage, she did not want to be living alone in a big house. She has integrated quickly and has been very pleased with the attentive staff and friendly residents.

A native of New Jersey, she was attending Sage College when she was introduced to Richard Lesnick, a WW2 veteran who had attended Siena before enlisting. Because of his facility in interpersonal relations, he was working as a salesman for his uncle, Gordon L. Hayes, who owned an appliance dealership in Troy. Eventually, he became the owner. Subsequently, he founded two other businesses, one in electrical appliances, the other a real estate management company.

The Lesnicks were very active in the Loudonville, Troy and Albany communities. They raised two children who married and eventually moved, one to New Jersey, the other to Massachusetts. There are six grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Bunny has found the bridge players and is interested in participating in many of the other programs and activities at Avila.



Photograph by Karl Gohlke

AMIE SHERWOOD

Interviewed by Wilbur Shapiro



Photograph by Karl Gohlke

Amie came to Avila in December, 2016 after living in Chadwick Square, Glenmont, for 25 years. Some 21 years ago, Amie's husband Robert died of cancer. He was a graduate of Albany Law School and a member of the firm of Henton, Ford, Sherwood and Whelan. A retired U. S. Marine, he fought in WWII and Korea.

Amie was a homemaker and mothered six children, two girls and four boys. All attended college and are doing well. Amie has 14 grandchildren and eight great- grandchildren.

During her younger years, Amie and Robert traveled extensively, visiting England, Scotland, Ireland, and Canada, as well as Florida and Seattle in the United States. Amie was an avid tennis player. She volunteered at St. Peter's Hospital and was trained to teach exercises to breast cancer patients.

Amie is an excellent conversationalist, knowledgeable about a variety of subjects. A private person, she will be a pleasant asset to the Avila community as she slowly makes friends in her new home.

MORNING CUP OF COFFEE

Joyce Gibbs

*As I sit here sipping my morning cup of coffee,
I gaze out at the snow-covered ground
ice crystals on the limbs of the tree.*

*A brilliant red cardinal appears.
He cocks his head and listens.*

What is it he hears?

*Not making a sound,
He flies to the feeder on the window,
Snatches a few seeds, not letting one slip to the ground.*

*As I sit sipping my morning cup of coffee,
I watch this day unfold.
And I am thankful for God's beauty
In all that I behold.*



NO FOOD FOR THE WEARY

Elane and Fred Seltzer

The next time it seems forever for dessert to arrive at your table, perhaps you can be cheered by our memory of this experience in the Lake Champlain Islands.

We were on our way to visit friends who lived on the shore of Lake Champlain in New York State. We had decided to take a circuitous route via Vermont and the Champlain Islands. After leaving Burlington, Vermont we were soon hungry and looking for a place to eat. But it was off season in the Islands and most places were closed. We finally found a small diner where a waitress took our lunch order.

We waited, and we waited and finally, after half an hour, with no other patrons or staff visible, I went to the kitchen. I was told that the waitress had finished her shift and had gone home. None of the rest of the staff had thought to look to see whether anyone else was still in the restaurant!

Yes, we finally did get our lunch.



"As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind – every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder." – John Glenn

ODE TO AVILA

Marie Shore

*There are Right Wingers, Left Wingers, Middlers as well
But no matter where we are placed,
At heart, we are Avila's finest and
As such, we are hard to replace.*

*Consider our friend, Connie Whitehurst
(I knew Connie before we moved here.)
And Mickey who arranged all the hosting,
And the rest of the neighbors so dear.*

*So, here's to our Avila corner
We're lucky to live in this spot.
And here's to our third-floor neighbors
And to others who visit our plot!*

*This ode must not end without kudos
For our wonderful, cheerful staff!
We appreciate all their kindly care
And their courtesies on our behalf.*

*So, give a loud cheer for Avila.
Hip! Hip! Hurray! Say one and all
For family and food, for fun and friends
At Avila, we have them all.*

(Composed for the December 17, 2016 3rd Floor West Holiday Party.)

TELL IT AGAIN-FAMILY FAVORITES

You were about 11 years old – old enough to stay home alone while Dad and I went out for dinner. Since you sometimes liked to go with us we invited you to come along.

With all the aplomb an 11-year-old can conjure up you said, "Well, if you're going to Cosimo's for spaghetti, I guess I'll stay home. But If you are going to Stone Ends for lobster I'll come along."

THREE RUSSIAN MASTERPIECES

Eugene Garber



On Thursday, February 16, 2017 at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, the Troy Chromatic Concert Series will present a program by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine: three Russian masterpieces, each with significant historical interest; Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto #3*, Stravinsky's Suite from the ballet *The Firebird*, and Shostakovich's *Symphony #5*.

Shostakovich's *Symphony #5* premiered November 21, 1937 in Leningrad. Shostakovich was in deep disfavor in the Soviet Union, his recent compositions derided in *Pravda*, the official party newspaper, his future very much in doubt with the Composers' Union. The fifth symphony would be a do or die work. As it turned out, it was not officialdom that rendered the verdict but the Leningrad audience, on their feet applauding and cheering for 30 minutes after the performance, the conductor waving the score triumphantly. One still hears today in this masterwork something of the clangor of required "socialist realism," but artfully mixed with a heroic inventiveness, the Shostakovich the Soviets could never kill, despite a number of attempts. The artist his was own savior.

Prokofiev, older than Shostakovich by 15 years, suffering little of the political trials of his younger countryman, managed to move with surprising ease from Russia to Europe and back, and even to the United States, a true cosmopolitan and yet intensely Russian. If his music lacks the heroic tensions of Shostakovich's, that is compensated for by its wit, restrained virtuosity, and profoundly earned optimism. The *Piano Concerto #3*, generally considered his masterpiece in this genre, premiered December 16, 1921 in Chicago with the composer as the soloist. His command as composer and virtuoso pianist was never in doubt. Prokofiev died March 5, 1953, the same day as Stalin. Happily, they never locked horns.

Igor Stravinsky, impish bad boy and towering figure of 20th century music, was born in June of 1882, a year after Prokofiev, near St. Petersburg and died in New York in 1971. World War I and subsequent events in Russia prevented him from returning to his homeland from 1910 until 1962. In any event, Paris was the scene of his early triumphs, three memorable ballets composed from 1910 to 1913: *The Firebird*, *Petrushka*, and the *Rite of Spring*, the last causing catcalls, walk-outs and even riots. All three were commissioned by the grand ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev. The music of *The Firebird* is astonishingly varied—from infernal dance to lullaby—and one need not know the ballet's story of magical enchantment and ultimate liberation to enter almost as a child into this entrancing music of a future master as he takes wing.



The National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine "is an orchestra of many virtues. Its strings can conjure up a vibrant songfulness; the woodwinds have a fruity, penetrating ripeness; the brass could endanger the walls of Jericho; the percussion might wake the dead..." this from the *Sydney Herald* during the orchestra's 1999 Australian tour.

A little over the top? Sign up to listen and decide.

FRIENDS

Sally Tiller

*Throughout our lives friends come and go;
Good ones stay forever, others go with the flow.*

*As we age new friends appear;
Many I see often, others once a year.*

*My new friends are on a special list;
Their names all end with "ologist."*

*My audiologist looks after each ear.
Just to be sure that I can hear.*

*My cardiologist takes care of my heart.
He says that in my body, it's an important part.*

*My dermatologist looks after my skin.
He zaps me all over; tells me what good shape I'm in.*

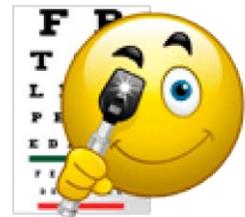
*My gastroenterologist I don't care to see;
He's the one that orders my colonoscopy.*

*My gynecologist I see once a year;
Checks me over and takes a Pap smear.*

*My hematologist and oncologist order blood tests;
After reading those I can put my mind to rest.*

*My ophthalmologist tests my eyesight
To make sure I see everything just right.*

*So, now these are all my new friends;
And I hope at this point my list ends.*



DRONES

John Wagner

A drone is an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), an airplane controlled via radio by a human operator located in a flight control center. UAVs are called "drones" because early models sounded like angry bees. The growing use of drones is due to their ability to perform aerial photography and mapping. Advances in sensor, computer, and communication technologies have enabled the development of light weight, inexpensive aircraft. Furthermore, the creation of software tools has led to efficient and user-friendly drone systems.

Drones come in a variety of sizes and have found many uses. For the military, they provide an excellent platform for reconnaissance cameras and air-to-ground missile launchers. These aircraft are rather large, having wingspans measured in tens of feet. They carry enough fuel to linger over a target area for several hours. Capable of being operated from a control center thousands of miles away, these drones cost more than a million dollars each. The Predator MQ-1 is such a drone and has been in the headlines in the war against the Taliban.

Commercially, drones such as the Kespry 2, are used in many industries. They are employed in agriculture to monitor plant growth, water and pesticide usage and to detect trouble spots. Utilities use drones to monitor power and pipelines. Aerial photography enabled by drones is used by the construction industry to measure on-site materials such as piles of aggregate. Drones provide realtors with site surveys, and insurance agents with tools to evaluate and inspect damage; roofs, for example.

These aircraft typically use rotary wings (helicopter); many have four rotors and are known as "quadricopters" (See illustration). Less than four feet in diameter, their light weight permits battery powered flight which can last for about 30 minutes. Machines for general commercial use typically cost from \$1000 to \$2000, although special designs (e.g., for cinematography) can be 10 to 15 times more expensive.



Domestic government agencies have also found drones useful. They can assist in border patrol, the search for fugitive or missing persons, the detection and location of mudslides and small wildfires. Drones have also aided first responders, including the delivery of medications to remote locations. The aircraft used here are specially modified commercial machines.

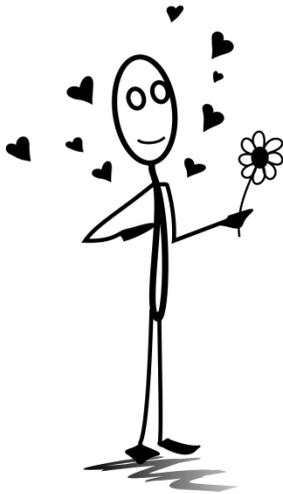
The simplest, smallest, and least expensive drones are those for the hobby market. These are the current version of the radio-controlled model airplanes popular several decades ago. Such toy drones cost about \$100 and can give pleasure to young and old alike.

However, the control systems of today are a far cry from those of yesterday. Advances in computers, sensors, communications, and software (for flight dynamics) make possible the "complete package" of features offered to commercial users. For example, using an aerial photo of his farm, a farmer can prepare a flight plan to study his crops and determine what multi-spectral sensor data is to be collected. The built-in flight dynamics module controls the take-off and landing maneuvers. It carries out the flight plan using the GPS receiver to locate itself. The sensor controller module activates the spectrally sensitive cameras to carry out the data collection. Using the on-board Wi-Fi link, the data is sent to the manufacturer's Cloud. There the sensor data is processed to produce the graphic display the farmer can use to manage his farm. The flight autonomy here is likely to become widespread in the future.

Jurisdiction over our airspace is the prerogative of the Federal Aviation Administration. Since technology advances faster than a bureaucracy, it is not surprising that regulations governing the use of drones are in their infancy. Use by hobbyists was addressed first, requiring that flights be in daylight, under 400 feet, in approved areas and within sight of the operator who had to be registered and at least 16 years of age. Commercial users are requesting changes that would allow the use of the autonomy found in their complete packages.

There may be a drone in your family's future. Sales in 2016 are expected to surpass those in 2015, which amounted to more than a million dollars. When the FAA approves autonomous flight operations, Amazon and Google may use drones to deliver your purchases to your doorstep. Cocomic anticipated this in a cartoon showing Santa and a reindeer looking at a sky filled with small black dots; Santa informs Prancer, "Sorry, but I hired a fleet of drones this year".

TRUE LOVE
Norman Greenfeld



Where is my true love, where can she be?
She is not in heaven, nor placed beneath me.
Tender, beautiful, beloved is she,
A side that is all-good - let all there see
Rolling lanes and winds blowing,
Magic spells that did enfold you
Will be over when next I behold you
In your shift arrayed.

Heart engaged, my fate portrayed
As together we seek that promised land.
There is no other but you for me
Together we shall abide eternally.
Oh, where is my true love, where can she be?
She's not on the lawn rolling free
She's not in the kitchen preparing dinner.
Darn it, of course, she's in Dott's garage where they parked her.

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INQUIRING REPORTERS

Joyce Gibbs and Max Tiller

We asked Fred Seltzer, Earle Flatt and Mary Ellen Bendick, "What is your strongest memory of World War II?"



"I remember it vividly," said Earle Flatt. "I was on a ship that had been ordered to Japan, and we were just about to land in Japan when we were told that 'the war is over' by our commander. He had that ship turn right around and head for home."

"I remember Pearl Harbor being bombed. I was seven years old and my family was making plans for my eighth birthday party on December 11th," said Fred Seltzer.



Mary Ellen Bendick remembered, *"I was a kindergartener returning home from school on a day in April 1946 to find my Dad home and discharged from the Navy."*

A PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY; AND FOR ALL OF US**WHO ARE THE LIFE-GIVING HEART OF ITS BEING.****Sr. Meg Canty**

Loving Creator and Living Goodness,

We pray through the thoughts and deep desires of those whom you inspired to create this democracy.

We want to continue *"to form a more perfect union."* Help us to open our ears, minds and hearts to hear differences and, with courage respect the right to be different from each other. Help us to go a step further than respect. Let us want to be one in our search for reconciliation and compassion in the strength of union.

"To establish justice" is a deep call in this land as we struggle to live truth and integrity. Let us forgive ourselves, our self-righteousness. Strengthen our sense of balance, and may our deepest desire for equality be active.

Show us what we need to do *"to insure domestic tranquility."* Here in our own home, this piece of the planet so blessed in every way, let us create peace as the environment where we live and move and have our being.

When we are threatened by a lack of goodness let us *"provide for the common defense"* supporting the defenseless and fearful. Free us from greed and mistrust that we may protect with the courage of our minds and words as well as all that is necessary to prevent evil.

Open our heart and minds to desire *"to promote the general welfare."* We are people not just individuals. Give us a sense of helping and the will to build community with a sensitive awareness of the needs and dreams of all and each of us.

Oh God in whom we trust, inspire us *"to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."* With hope and confidence, we count on your gift of wisdom to show us the way to make wise and generous choices to move and live in Freedom. Amen.



HEAVEN AND HELL

Anonymous



*Contrary to popular belief
The tables of Hell are laden
with the most exquisite dishes of food.
But the people are gaunt and malnourished
Whatever you could possibly desire is before you:
soups, salads, stews, sauces, curries,
fruits, succulent meats grilled to order
pastries, ice cream, cakes and sorbets.*

*The single unusual factor is that everything
Must be eaten with a fork three feet long.
Only by holding the fork close to the end of the tines,
can you get the food to your mouth.
But when you do so, a demon immediately
slaps you or pokes you with his fork
And says, " Hold it at the other end."
Alas although an abundance
Of delicious foods appears readily available,
it is impossible to get it to your mouth.
In Heaven the situation appears to be is exactly the same;
Same long tables covered with tasty dishes,
same three foot forks
But everyone is rosy and well nourished.
The only difference in heaven
is that everyone is feeding the person sitting
across from them.*

