

News and Views *Ávila*

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THE AVILA ROCK GARDEN

Don Stauffer



Photograph by Max Tiller

One of the beauty spots on the Avila campus is the central courtyard rock garden with its fish pond and waterfall.

It was constructed about 13 years ago, when a contractor from Rotterdam offered to design and build it free of charge if Avila paid for the materials. He was interested in training about 20 landscapers in the building of rock gardens and ponds, so they provided the labor for the project. They laid out the rocks, and installed the pond and the pump for the waterfall.

They also put in some of the plants. The rest were provided by former resident Ed Dahlstedt and his late wife Irene, who brought favorites from their former home and cared for the garden in the early years. After Irene died, Ed purchased the lovely granite bench with her name on it that now sits by the pool. When Ed moved away he asked me to continue maintenance of the garden, which I have enjoyed doing.

The eight koi in the pool are all that are left out of the original sixteen. These have survived every winter, but some of their comrades were eaten by a crane a few years ago. The maintenance staff, who care for the pool and feed the fish, devised a deterrent by stringing fish line across the pool which has kept the crane out. But a duck or two have occasionally decided to swim there, too.

The beautiful pink geraniums in the pot bearing the name "Ginnie," originally belonged to former resident Virginia Andres. These same plants have been taken in and out of the conservatory every fall and spring, and cared for by Joy Harding and the garden committee.

Stop by and enjoy this lovely spot. It's a quiet place for reading, for contemplation--or for just plain loafing.

FEATHERED FRIENDS

Marge DeMello

Some years ago, I hung a small wreath made of branches and fake flowers, on my front door. One day, much to my surprise, as I opened the door, a small bird flew out of the wreath. Sure enough – I found a small nest.

Despite the inconvenience, we discontinued using the front door until the baby birds and their mom left, coming and going through the garage instead. But we were determined not to let this happen again.

The next year, no wreath graced our front door until June. We did not want to have to open the garage door every time we exited or entered our cottage. It worked. No feathered visitors.

Fast forward to spring 2017. Thinking there would be no visitors, we hung a large wreath on the glass storm door. Foolish reasoning! In March a large bird flew at me from the wreath as I opened the front door. A mourning dove had made her home with us.

Checking on Google, we learned that the male sits on the eggs during the day and the female takes over at night. We cautiously watched this procedure and one day, when the male left the nest, were able to see two white eggs. In late April, we noticed that the male was sitting up much higher in the nest, and were privileged to see two fluffy balls breathing.

I was able to retrieve our morning paper without the male bird flying away, even though the paper was very close to the front door. As long as I moved slowly, the mourning doves seemed to trust me. Every once in a while, I opened the inside front door to get a close up look at the birds from inside the cottage. Papa watched me very carefully with one eye but didn't move. By the middle of May, we could see the babies' heads tucked close to the male bird.

We have missed watching them since they left but it made our lives a little easier, allowing us to use our front door rather than the garage.

But now every time I see a mourning dove, I wonder, "Are you one of our doves?"



Photograph by Max Tiller

SWEET SIXTEEN

Nina Larrabee

Elizabeth was celebrating her 16th birthday. Sweet 16! I thought and thought. Was there something special this grandmother could do to make the day memorable for her? I really wanted to do something different. Then it came to me; I would make a crown for my princess.

How to begin? I would need the basic structure. The crown had to sparkle, and it needed some creative decorations

Using a sturdy wire to make a circular form, I carefully covered it with aluminum foil about four inches wide – shiny side out and reinforced it with masking tape.

Now for the fun part. I accordion-pleated the width of 16 one dollar bills, and tied each in the middle with a piece of fine wire. The result was a lovely fan shaped flower. All that remained was to attach the "flowers" to the crown. This was



Photograph by Max Tiller

done with my trusty fine wire and a needle.

Elizabeth loved her sweet sixteen crown.

P.S. Only a grandmother would give up three days of Rummikub to complete this project

ALICE BEGLEY**Interviewed by Wilbur Shapiro**

Photograph by Karl Gohlke

After living in Guilderland for 53 years, Alice moved to the retirement community of Avila. Alice's husband, James, died some 15 years ago. He and Alice enjoyed a marriage of 57 years. Subsequent to graduating from Siena College, James went to Notre Dame for Naval Officer training, and upon completion, he and Alice were married. He then served in the Second World War as a Naval Officer. Afterwards, he worked as a chemical engineer at GE. James and Alice were the parents of three children: Alice, James Jr., and Paul.

Alice Senior graduated from The College of St. Rose as an English and Communications major. She raised her three children, and when they were grown, she entered the work force, and had an interesting career.

She originated a newspaper called the "Turnpike Record" to fill a vacuum that existed among other publications at that time. Subsequently, she worked for the State of New York for some 20 years. She authored and distributed health care policy letters and regulations. Her final position was with the Guilderland Township at the Town Hall, as the Guilderland Historian, from 1994 to 2016.

Alice, Sr. has written three books concerning Guilderland history. They are:

- "More from the Historian's Desk. Historical Essays"
- "Congressman John L. Schoolcraft and His House"
- "Town of Guilderland, Historical Markers"

These wonderful books capture the history of Guilderland and the surrounding areas in brilliant fashion, with delightful pictures and text. The books are available for reading enjoyment in the Lodge Library.

Alice has traveled to Hawaii and the Caribbean, but her most prominent destination was Ireland, where her mother was born (she had come to the United States at 12 years of age). Alice's principal hobby is writing. She laments the fact that modern education has relegated History to a minor subject.

Alice is a most welcome addition to her Lodge neighbors as she shares her background and knowledge with many interested Avila residents.

EUGENIA GERBER**Interviewed by Murray Block**

It is interesting to learn how Eugenia Gerber (she prefers "Gene") came to be our neighbor here in the Capital District. Gene was born and raised in Chicago. During her high school years she and her family moved to South Texas to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Her father had business interests in citrus groves that grew all over the area in those days. Gene and her parents made many trips across the border to Mexico, which gave her an early appreciation of other cultures.

Following graduation from High School in McAllen, Texas, Gene attended University of Texas Pan-American in Edinburg, from which she graduated with a double degree in Art and in Education. This was a true turning point in her life because shortly after college she married Dr. Philip L. Gerber her former professor who taught American Literature.

In the 51 years of their marriage her husband's work brought them to the University of Utah, Salt Lake, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and SUNY Brockport, NY. Gene finally received her graduate degree in Brockport some 25 years after her first graduation.

Citizens of the world, they loved to travel, numerous times to Europe, Egypt, Mexico, South America, the Caribbean and India. They resided in Rio de Janeiro for a year where Gene, moderately fluent in Spanish, found Portuguese a challenge.

In addition to traveling and working overseas, they managed to raise three children, two sons and a daughter who are all great travelers today. One son is a Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The other son is a PhD biologist working in the San Diego Zoo on the conservation of animals that are finding life difficult to survive. He has little to do with animals living in the zoo. Gene's daughter, Vivien, who was a teacher, and her husband John Anderson now live in Pennsylvania where he is President of Millersville University after working many years at SUNY as well as being President of SUNY Alfred College for five years. He will be retiring from Millersville early next year and he and Vivien have bought a house in Voorheesville to be near their daughter Katie who graduated from SUNY Albany and now works in the Bureau of the Budget in the Capital. Their younger daughter, Shelly, graduated from Skidmore College and now owns a photographic business in San Diego and travels around the world with her camera. Gene's family manages to get together often. Living closer together will make it that much more fun. Katie's husband's family is nearby as well as John's sister who teaches at Skidmore and also lives in Albany.

Gene has settled in comfortably at Avila. She especially enjoys visits to museums having worked as an Art Docent in Rochester for many years and in the Education Department of the new Strong Museum where she established the volunteer program. Her years of travel and appreciation of art in many forms are evident in her beautifully appointed home here in Avila.

We all extend a warm and hearty welcome to our new neighbor, Eugenia "Gene" Gerber!



Photograph by Max Tiller

JANE GRAHAM

Interviewed by Maxine Koblenz



Photograph by Max Tiller

A line from the artist, Georgia O'Keefe is a most fitting introduction to my interview with Jane Graham, "What I have done with where I have been, should be of interest."

Jane was born and spent her early years near the University of Illinois where her parents taught. She moved on to Ohio, then into New York State as both parents were academics and moved accordingly. Her Dad was a British/English Literature professor; her Mom taught Debate, Speech and Public Address.

Jane is an only child, so her friends and cousins constitute her family. She came to Albany after spending five years in Washington, D.C. working for an educational non-profit. She travelled extensively around the country studying how different States governed and developed their public higher education institutions to allow more opportunities for programs and to multiply choices for college placement.

She loved being in administration rather than direct teaching as it offered the challenge of growth and variety in a synthesized rather than a specialized profession.

In Albany, she liked living in the Park Lane Apartments before coming to Avila. But as she became aware that the ordinary chores such as shopping, cooking and transportation became more difficult, she realized she needed some help. A move to Avila would answer those needs.

Murray Block and his wife had introduced her to Avila. During visits with them, they showed her apartments and invited her for meals. She and Murray shared friendship as well as a professional connection since both worked in State University of New York administration.

Jane was drawn to the Avila community because she could look forward to interacting with residents with similar interests. She is very happy with her apartment and pleased that she is not isolated from the city. She has already found people who share her interests in politics and the arts, and is pleased with all the cultural choices and community events for which Avila provides transportation.

Jane is enjoying her continuing growth as she is stimulated by exposure to so much that is new.

JUST ANOTHER BIRTHDAY

Aris DeNigris

I don't know how it happened but, lately I've been told

"It's not really so unusual, you're just growing old!"

When you're holding hands while walking

It's love... (but that's not all)

You're really concentrating carefully...

'cause you're both afraid you'll fall.

The sidewalk curbs seem higher this year and

The walking's not the same,

Floor strips are such a hazard, so

If we fall, we're not to blame.

We'll just cling together carefully

(Gosh, I don't mean to be alarming)

Just a friendly word or two reminding us

Might seem a bit disarming...

But as a cautionary warning from one

Who's survived a multitude of Earth Days,

Be careful of your footsteps, so you can

Celebrate another birthday.



CARE MANAGEMENT FOR SENIORS: A NAVIGATOR FOR THE JOURNEY

Karl Gohlke

We learn strategic planning by observing others who have tried to navigate the complexities of the health/mental health and insurance industries as they function in the American marketplace. The maze of bureaucratic policies and procedures of the long-term care business is daunting. The consumer encounters complicating and confounding situations when life care decisions need to be made with unfortunately little support from the providers.

Like estate planning where one accesses a lawyer or accountant, it is wise to consult experts in long-term care who know the language, policies, and procedures of hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, and other providers. These life care management professionals can develop a strategy for navigating this complex system before one is in an ambulance headed for the emergency room.

Life care managers, geriatric care managers, and senior care sherpas are some of the titles of professionals who specialize in providing guidance to resolve many of the complex challenges encountered passing through the acute and sometimes chronic phases of long-term care. Not only do they understand the language of the providers but they also are familiar with the variety of independent and dependent housing institutions. They know how to question providers to resolve conflicts in medication and other misadventures. These professionals come from the nursing, social work and rehabilitation fields and are usually retained on a fee- for- service basis. Some insurance plans provide this service as part of their plan.

Life care managers are particularly helpful to consumers who wish to maintain their independence in the most cost-beneficial manner. They know the ins and outs of federal, state, and insurance funding rules and the procedures for accessing these funding streams to minimize dependence upon residential care to solve short-term and chronic problems.

IF you go to the hospital, your next of kin, particularly those out of town, benefit substantially knowing that you have a life care manager competent to help you deal with the many stresses associated with long term care. It's an investment that will provide many benefits to you and loved ones.



- **IT GETS LATE EARLY OUT HERE.**
- **PAIR UP IN THREES.**
- **TAKE IT WITH A GRIN OF SALT.**

INQUIRING REPORTER

Joyce Gibbs

What was your most special, best birthday?



Photograph by Max Tiller

Erin Teichman:

My Sweet Sixteen swimming party at the Country Club was surely the best. We had so much fun swimming, followed by a wonderful lunch. Then we played lots of "45s" (remember those?) We played *Blue Suede Shoes* many, many times. Of course, we lacked the main ingredient of most country club parties – adult beverages!

Mary Ellen Bendick:

How well I remember my fifth birthday party! My god-mother gave me the most amazing present. I became the proud owner of new roller skates that clipped on to my shoes. The best part was that I could adjust them with a key. Those skates and I spent many happy hours together. (That wonderful god-mother's generosity extended to my sister too. We both now had brand new adjustable clip on skates.)



Photograph by Max Tiller



- A NICKEL AIN'T WORTH A DIME ANYMORE.
- IT AIN'T OVER TILL IT'S OVER.
- IT'S DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN.



MY LIFE

Sally Tiller

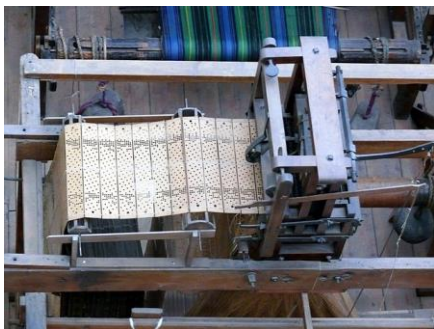
My life at Avila goes by real fast
 Before I know it another week has passed
 After breakfast on Monday at 8:15
 A dedicated group at Pilates can be seen
 There are exercise classes going on all week
 Wonderful for those who healthy bodies do seek
 More exercises that are really cool
 Aqua-Motion and Hydro-Riding in the pool
 Stretch and Flex and Balance classes
 Help with all our muscle masses
 Chair Yoga and Sit to Be Fit
 Are time consuming but worth every bit
 Strength Training for Seniors and Low Impact Aerobics are great
 Taking them will assure our bones don't break
 There is also entertainment, games, movies and meetings
 Wine and Cheese on Thursdays, a time for friendly greetings
 On Friday nights you can find a group of friendly folks
 Sitting together snacking and telling funny jokes
 Life at Avila is like being on a cruise
 I'm tired now, think I'll take a short snooze



COMPUTERS AND THEIR ORIGINS - PART I

John Wagner

Of the many technical developments in the 20th century, two are notable for their widespread impact on our daily lives. The first was the invention of the electric generator and the network/grid that distributes its electricity. This energy lights and heats our homes and factories and powers our appliances, our transportation and communication equipment. The second development was the digital computer that lies at the heart of our businesses and, more importantly, has made possible the revolution in our communications via cellphones and the Internet.



The digital computer story starts in the 19th century. The first thread begins with Joseph Marie Jacquard (1752-1834). He invented an addition to a power loom that simplified the process of manufacturing fabrics with complex patterns such as brocade. It was invented in 1804 and became known as a Jacquard loom. His device used a pattern of holes punched in a pasteboard card to selectively raise threads in the warp to permit a shuttle with the weft thread to pass underneath, thus creating a line of the pattern in the fabric. A number of such cards could be linked together to weave the entire pattern into the fabric. This was the

first instance where the inner workings of a machine were automatically controlled by an external source of information.

The U. S. Census Bureau provided the next event of interest. It had great difficulty with the 1880 census. The population exceeded 50 million people and it took the Bureau more than eight years to process the data. With the expected population growth, the Bureau was concerned about the 1890 census. Herman Hollerith (1860-1928), a former Census Bureau employee, won the Bureau's competition to develop a new system that could expedite the processing of the 1890 census data. In his system, the collected data was stored on punched paper cards (later called Hollerith cards). These cards were read and tabulated on specially designed business machines. (This was the first time data was stored on punched cards.) Hollerith's system was used by the Census Bureau until the 1950s. The company that Hollerith founded later became known as the International Business Machine Company, IBM.

The second thread of the computer story begins with Charles Babbage (1791-1871), an English mathematician, who first designed a Difference Engine, a special purpose mechanical computer. It was intended to create tables of logarithmic and trigonometric functions by calculating finite differences to create approximating polynomials. The Difference Engine used decimal digits and was powered by a hand crank. The British government funded this effort because of the high cost of generating such tables by hand for use in astronomical calculations at the Greenwich Observatory. Unfortunately, the metal-working techniques of the time were unable to produce adequate parts and so the Difference Engine was never built.

Babbage also designed an Analytic Engine which was a mechanical, general purpose computer. It consisted of an arithmetic logic unit together with flow control via branching logic and loops. The Analytic Engine was logically structured in the same way as the electronic computers of today. Babbage wrote several programs for the machine, some of which were improved by Ada Lovelace, for which she is considered the first computer programmer. A computer programming language has been named for Ada.



CURLING; NO, NO, NOT YOUR HAIR

Pat Frey

Let me tell you about the wonderful team sport of Curling. Each team has four players; with teams alternating in delivering two 42 pound polished stones/rocks

A turn of the handle on top of the stone during the release makes the rock curve-or-curl as it travels down the 146-ft. sheet of ice toward the 'house', a circular target, 12 feet in diameter which is marked on the ice. The house is divided into quarters and consists of a center circle and three concentric rings usually distinguished by color.



The skip, or captain of the team directs play from the 'house' at the end of the ice sheet. One person delivers/slides/throws a stone while the two other team members are ready to sweep with brush heads to alter the state of the ice in front of the stone affecting the course of the stone or helping it to travel straighter and farther. A great deal of strategy and teamwork go into choosing

the ideal path and placement of the stone. The skill of the curlers determines how close they will be to achieving the desired result. Little wonder that curling is given the nickname of "chess on ice."

Sweepers walk almost two miles in a typical game which consists of eight ends and lasts about two hours. An end is complete when all 16 rocks (eight rocks per team) have been delivered/thrown.

Curling rocks are made from special granite from Scotland and Wales. The ice differs from skating ice. It is made as level as possible then sprinkled with droplets of warm water (pebble) that freeze on contact. The surface resembles an orange peel and the stone moves on top of the pebbled ice. Any rotation of the stone causes it to curl to the inside or outside.

Curlers wear layered clothing and gloves to stay warm. The temperature of the ice area is usually 35-40 degrees Fahrenheit. Curling shoes are similar to ordinary athletic shoes except they have dissimilar soles; the slider shoe is designed for the sliding foot, and the gripper shoe for the back foot.

Curling clubs form leagues – women's, men's and mixed, as well as junior and little rockers. Tournaments, known as bonspiels, are also great social occasions often involving ten or twelve teams, with entry fees paying for the meals and prizes.

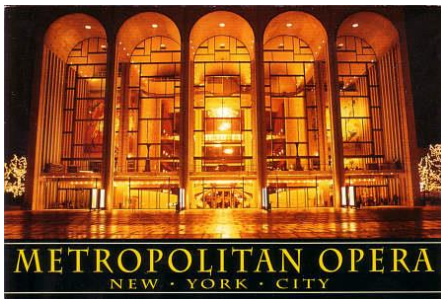
Now that you and curling have been introduced, enjoy watching the biggest bonspiel of them all - the 2018 Winter Olympics. Also, check out the Curling article in Wikipedia.

OPERA IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Murray Block



Opera lovers miss a wonderful experience by not attending the HD performances of the Metropolitan Opera on selected Saturday matinees during the Met's opera season. Those of us who experienced the last HD performance of the 2016-2017 season of the Met were treated to a magnificent and rather clever new production of Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, with the added excitement of viewing the farewell performance of Renee Fleming in one of her greatest roles.



Some may think that seeing an opera on screen at Crossgates is not as good as attending in person. True! It is even *better*, more enjoyable, less expensive, and certainly less tiring in terms of getting there. I speak (I hate to admit this) after attending performances for well over 80 years at the Met, both in the old house on Broadway and 39th Street, and in the *new* (50-year-old!) location at Lincoln Center. In my younger days, I would get standing room tickets for \$1. Even after moving to Albany, I kept my 20 performance season tickets until frequent trips to the Big Apple became too tiring and expensive.

I've seen hundreds of opera performances at the Met---and I enjoy them even more at Crossgates. The close-ups of the singers and the action bring you in contact more with what is going on. No matter where you sit at the magnificent Met itself, you cannot see the detailed action and expressions of the performers. The subtitles on the HD screen are excellent, especially for older eyes. And for me, a very enjoyable feature of the HD performances is the fascinating intermission programs. Famous Met performers interview members of the cast and crew, and you can watch amazing and remarkable scene changes going on backstage. There is also time left for a trip to the food concession, and (most important for me) to the Rest Room. And it is all in our backyard!

The coming season's first HD performance is on October 7th, with a new production of Bellini's majestic *Norma* (which opens the Met season a few weeks earlier). The operas that follow are spaced at one or two each month...

If you are not familiar with opera, this is a great time to try one out. If you like beautiful melodies, Puccini's *Tosca* or *La Boheme* are tops; for comedy, there is Donizetti's *L'Elisir D'Amore* or Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*; for fantasy, Mozart's *The Magic Flute* is a magnificent production. Massenet's *Cendrillon* is a French take on the Cinderella story which has never before been performed at the Met.

Tickets must be purchased in advance at the Crossgates box office or on line at www.fandango.com/regalcrossgatesstadium18 - at a cost of \$24. Sign up in the Mail Room Event Books for Avila transportation.

If you are not an opera devotee, but enjoy beautiful music, an HD performance is a wonderful, inexpensive introduction to this great genre of music. I would be happy to chat with any of our neighbors about next season's Metropolitan Opera HD performances.

SING OUT AND BELT IT!

Jim Leonard

"SING OUT. Louise!"

That's what the stage mother in the musical *Gypsy* shouts to her charge on stage. And when Louise does "sing out", she is really "belting" it.

To "belt" or not to "belt", that is the question. In polite society, there is no question about it. You just don't. But when speaking to a large group of people, or especially when acting, "belting" is essential.

A deeper than usual breath is the start. The intercostal muscles surrounding the ribs contract to raise the chest a bit. The muscles of the abdomen relax, and the air pours into the lungs, and the diaphragm (between the lungs and the abdominal muscles) lowers.

With a good amount of air in the lungs, the abdominal muscles contract to send the air upwards (belting). The air then passes through the vocal chords to produce sound. This is "phonation"; followed by "resonation" when the air (sound) is in the mouth and the nose. A balance is usually maintained between the mouth and the nasal passages. However, an actor may adjust this balance to project his idea of the character being portrayed.

After "resonation" comes "articulation", when recognizable speech sounds are formed. (The International Phonetic Alphabet provides the symbols used to identify the wide range of vowel sounds and consonants of our language.)

Articulation is the process of modifying the resonated sound into recognizable words and sentences. This is achieved by the action of the lips, tongue, teeth, and soft and hard palates. The infinitely variable use of the abdominal muscles continuously supports the process of speech.

The actor knows that the seat of all his fictional emotions lies in the abdominal muscles. A sincere laugh is powered from the stomach; a sob from the same place. Sadness, joy, and all the myriad emotions portrayed in print reside in the "belt", the stomach muscles of the actor's body. Respiration, phonation, resonation, and articulation are the processes the actor uses to create and project his notion of the character he is portraying.

Remember, whether you are speaking to a large group or auditioning for a role in a play, SING OUT!





HAIR DRESSER

Anecdotal Odes From Wilbur Shapiro

*It happens once every week
Same time and place she seeks.
She wants to look so fair,
So, she operated on her hair.*

*Only one place will she go.
Only one stylist does she want to know.
Sometimes it is for a wash and set,
And once a month a color rinse she gets.*

*The parlor is a busy place.
Women march in to enhance their face.
From perms to sets and also bleaching,
The services are far reaching.*

*Hair dressing goes back a long, long way.
It's amazing how women's customs stay and stay.
It goes on and on without reprieve;
It might go back to Adam and Eve.*

*A case can be made that it's a woman's religion
To regularly see her hair beautician.
The economy also adds to the situation
Working women increases the population.*

*They must attend no matter what the weather.
Without it they can't get their act together.
So, it must be accepted, it cannot be lesser
They must make that appointment with the hairdresser.*

*After the appointment is done,
Then a protective mode is begun.
To go out in weather that is not fair,
It's not allowed, it could muss my hair.*

