

Avila News and Views

A publication of the Resident Council at Avila Retirement Community

Albany, NY

April 2022

MEET STRETCH

News and Views would like to introduce Stretch, who spends the warm weather in front of cottage 18. Stretch is a garden bench, masquerading as a fashionista. His outfits are changed monthly and try to make a statement about that month. He spent the winter months indoors, but is back, wearing the Ukrainian colors in support of that country and its citizens (and accompanied by two new friends, Oliver and Stanley).



Photographs by Fred Seltzer

GRADUATION PHOTOS WANTED

For the month of June, Avila would like to display graduation photographs of residents (high school, college, nursing school). Please drop off your photo at the front desk before May 27. Make sure that your name is on the back of the photo so it may be returned to you. Please contact Jeanne Bradt (ext. 601) or Eileen Nolfo (ext. 613) if you have any questions.

MEET OUR NEW NEIGHBORS

SYLVIA BUSCH

By Erin and Ray Teichman

Sylvia Busch moved from the warmth of Miami to Albany and welcoming Avila in September 2021, where she is closer to her family. She was married to her late husband, Harvey, for 70 years and has three children, twelve grandchildren and six great grandchildren. She and Harvey met in the high school both attended in Brooklyn.

Her son Robert is an endocrinologist in Albany and son Ronald still works in the shoe sales business begun by his father. Sylvia's daughter Linda is married to a cardiologist and lives in Manhattan.

Sylvia is an accomplished pianist who began playing at age six and continues to entertain us with her playing at Thursday's wine and cheese. Her grandfather was in vaudeville and her brother had a band and did music arranging, so she has had contact with the world of entertainment throughout her life. She traveled widely, once flying to Europe on the Concorde. She and Harvey particularly enjoyed visiting southern France.

Sylvia is enjoying life here at Avila where she is a regular at Monday night bingo. We hope she continues to enrich our lives by her presence for many years to come.



Photo courtesy of Avila Admin. staff

LESLIE AND RICHARD DAVIS

By Rod Correll



Richard and Leslie are lifelong educators who met online and bonded over a shared love of literature and cats. They were both graduate students at the time, Richard at Michigan State University and Leslie at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor. Richard grew up in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and had received his BA in English at the University of Oklahoma and MA in English literature at Florida State. He had gone to Michigan State to work on a PhD. Leslie is a native New Yorker who grew up in Baltimore. She moved to Michigan to work on her PhD in Slavic Languages and literatures after completing her BA in Russian at the University of Pennsylvania. Richard and Leslie were

married in the University of Michigan Botanical Garden in July 1997 and are celebrating their 25th anniversary this summer.

Although both had originally planned on teaching careers, the academic job market led them to branch out from teaching to administration. After teaching first-year writing at several Michigan colleges, Richard worked for a few years in web management and networking before finding a career in financial aid administration at the University of Michigan. Leslie's experience of language study and research in Russia led her to academic advising and study abroad administration at UM. She has supported students going abroad to study in Europe, the United Kingdom, Australia, Turkey, Brazil, and India.

After almost 20 years in Ann Arbor, Richard and Leslie decided to move east to be closer to her family in New York City. They are still working in financial aid and academic advising, Richard at Hudson Valley Community College and Leslie at Excelsior College. Although they expect to keep working for several more years, they decided to simplify their lives by moving from their house in Troy to an apartment community. They chose Avila and have been enjoying their time at the Lodge, where they share an apartment with their two senior cats, Willow and Maus. They are keen to meet other pet parents and would be happy to discuss mutual pet sitting.

Although their time is limited by their work schedules, they are both voracious readers (especially science fiction). Leslie enjoys gardening and is looking forward to working in the Avila garden plot. Richard hopes to hone his bridge skills and learn bocce.

TOM AND ELLEN FITZGERALD

By Erin and Ray Teichman

Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald came to Avila in October 2021. They chose Avila because of the friendliness of the residents. Tom is originally from Springfield, MA, and Ellen comes from Portsmouth, NH, although her father was born in Albany. They have resided in Albany for 53 years, having come here when Tom began work on his doctorate in education.

Tom attended St. Anselm's as an undergraduate and Ellen attended Mt. St. Mary College, both in New Hampshire. They met in Boston when Tom was on the college debate team. Both spent their working lives in the education field. Tom taught briefly at Siena College; then had a lengthy career, first with the New York State Education Department and then as assistant superintendent for Albany Catholic Schools, retiring a second time in 2004. He has also been a consultant with the International Center for Leadership in Education. Ellen began her teaching career in Providence, RI, and West Springfield, MA, finishing with ten years at Albany High School.

The Fitzgeralds have three daughters, Sheila (in Rochester NY), Maureen (in Boston MA), and Eileen (in Burlington VT), and seven grandchildren.

As consultant with the International Center, Tom particularly remembers his work with the migrant program and with a program funded by the Gates Foundation to identify successful schools in the United States where he visited 50 schools in 40 states. Ellen's education work included consulting with textbook publisher, Scott, Foresman.



Photograph by Fred Seltzer

The Fitzgerald's have traveled to Britain, Ireland, Europe, Egypt and China, most often on river cruises. They particularly enjoyed a visit to Spain with a cruise on the Douro River from Toledo, Spain to Porto in Portugal. Their most memorable trip took them to Rome at the time of the canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha. From Rome they went to the Holy Land. Recently they enjoyed a Danube River cruise with their daughters visiting Christmas markets in Germany.

Tom participates in competitive swimming and painting while Ellen relaxes at the piano. Welcome to Avila, Tom and Ellen, as we get to know you both!

BARBARA FLYNN

By Patricia J. Binzer



Photograph by Patricia Binzer

Barbara Flynn is an individual who has lived a full and active life. She was born at Camp LeJeune, NC, when WWII interrupted her father's education. The family moved to Madison, WI, until 1957 and then to Gainesville, FL, where she attended junior high and high school.

As an adult, she has lived in foreign places, including London and New Delhi, India. She earned three degrees from Duke University, including her PhD in history with a Fulbright scholarship that took her to India. She put her education to good use briefly teaching South Asian history at Union College. Her primary career was at the NYS Education Department, mainly in the Office of Higher Education. She held several positions including two assistant commissionerships.

It seems safe to say that some of the most fulfilling times in her life came when she was speaking up for others and helping others have a better life. She has proudly been arrested for civil disobedience more than once. Her first arrest came when she was in high school in Gainesville, when she and a few friends

picketed a movie theatre that was not integrated. Later she became a John Lewis "troublemaker" making "good trouble" for human rights and integration. In the 1960s she helped men avoid going to Vietnam. Barbara and her husband taught English to refugees and immigrants from 2013 to 2018 until John's pancreatic cancer made it necessary to stop.

Her volunteer efforts continued for her alma mater. She chaired the Duke admissions advisory committee for nearly 30 years. She also has been an active participant on the regional Fulbright board, assisting scholars and teachers from other countries studying in this area.

Barbara and her husband had two sons. One is now a local high school English teacher. The older son became a master carpenter after college and lives his dream in Jackson Hole. Following retirement Barbara and John's lives were filled with travel, attending cultural events, enjoying New York City and what it had to offer. Over many years they traveled to 48 states and 40 countries.

Barbara realized when her husband died that it was time to leave their home with great neighbors in a wonderful neighborhood. By moving to Avila, she is looking forward to getting to know people, and having good conversations. She would like more activities of a cultural nature. She also would like to find a duplicate bridge partner. She spends a great deal of her time reading everything: current events, fiction, and non-fiction.

Avila welcomes this talented and interesting individual.

KAREN AND SAMUEL HAZLETON IV

By Karl H. Gohlke



Photo courtesy of Avila Admin. staff

Karen and Sam Hazleton had been contemplating downsizing from their home on Lake George into a retirement community for a while and had been on the Avila prospect list before COVID became a major problem in everyone's life. They were familiar with health and financial issues in senior lifestyle management as they had been professionally involved, respectively, in assisting clients in home health care and in financial planning.

They chose Avila's Knollwood cottage 29 and closed in mid-November. When Karen and Sam moved to Avila at the end of December, the cottage was not ready because of both internal and external

delays—many of which were related to the pandemic. These setbacks required the Hazletons to stay in the main building guest apartment for 11 weeks. They were just moving into the cottage the day they were being interviewed for this profile. Despite the delay, they were enthused about their choice and their experience to date at Avila. Karen noted that she did have one complaint: "The food is so good I'm already well on my way to the dreaded 'freshman 15'."

Karen was raised in Watertown, NY, and moved to Albany with her former husband following their graduation from Le Moyne College. She was employed as a senior economist with the NYS Department of Labor and the NY Public Service Commission. After five years' service, when her second child was born, she elected to work full time raising her children. Eleven years later and having acquired a master's in industrial and health administration from Union College, she founded a licensed home health care agency where she continued as CEO until 2004, when she retired.

Sam's early years were in California. His family then moved to Hartsdale, NY, and later to Delmar, NY. He earned his BS and MBA in business administration at the University of Michigan. He had three children with his first wife. Sam started his career in financial management at General Electric but transitioned into estate planning and wealth management with Northwestern Mutual Life, becoming certified in life underwriting and as a financial advisor. He continued in that business until retirement in 2010.

Karen and Sam married in 1976 and raised their five children in Niskayuna, NY. They have 18 grandchildren. They have wintered at their Longboat Key, Florida, condo since 1988.

They share many of the same interests: music, art, theater, social activities, international travel, and new adventures. They expressed an interest in becoming involved in some of Avila's programs, committees, and the Resident Council. They have always involved themselves in community activities. Sam shared his piano-playing skills as "Piano Sam" at nursing homes for over 25 years, wherever he lived. Individually and as a couple they should add substantial energy to anything in which they choose to become involved.

JANET KEENAN

By Patricia J. Binzer

Janet was born and grew up in Albany around Madison and Western Avenue. After graduating from Vincentian Institute and the College of New Rochelle with a major in math, she headed to New York City.

Janet was just another young person out job hunting in the 70's who ended up working for small consulting firms in technology. There was no computer science offered in college yet, so it was all on-the-job training. She became part of the team who wrote the first automated dispatching system from scratch for the New York City fire department.

She joined JPMorgan Chase bank in the late 70's and was there, still doing computer stuff, until she retired. To her it was creative and fun. It was like a puzzle. Her career revolved around various aspects of the technology field from designing and creating software for operating systems and networks to management roles in these disciplines.

She spent all her adult life living in New York City and enjoying everything it had to offer: museums, ballet, city parks, just wandering around the streets. But there was one thing that had eluded her: learning to speak French. Janet has been successful at almost everything she tried, with this one big exception.

After she retired, she decided she really wanted to learn to speak French. She spent several years going to the Alliance Française, going so far as to rent an apartment in Paris for one summer. It turned out it was the year that Paris had a fantastically horrible heat wave, and everybody was out of town. So instead of becoming the Princess in Paris, she spent a sizzling summer with no one to talk to. Oh well!

Over the years she contemplated where she would move when the time came for her to leave the city. In the meantime, she remained on the Upper East Side in the 80's until she knew it was time to leave.

With the emergence of COVID Janet knew that it was time to make her life a little more secure and easy, so she moved from New York City to Avila. She came back to her roots and a family of two nephews and a niece. She still enjoys puzzles and reading and getting to know her new neighbors.



Photograph by Patricia Binzer

CLAIRESE (CLAIRE) RUSELL AND RAY DIONNE

By Maxine Koblenz



Photograph by Fred Seltzer

Avila welcomes Clairese (Claire) Russell and Ray Dionne together in their new home in apt 128. They've come from multiple years of living in Florida and their RV home to permanence in a beautiful spacious Avila abode.

Claire was born and raised near Syracuse. She attended Cazenovia High School and went on to SUNY Potsdam, with a math major. She taught high school math for 30 years in Morrisville/Eaton and loved spending summers near her parents' home on the lake in this same area.

She had two children with her first husband: her son, a software engineer in Atlanta, and her daughter, an attorney with her own practice in the Orlando area. Her son and his wife have given Claire

special grandmother status and she always looks forward to her monthly visits.

Ray was born in Nashua, NH, and loved having a horse farm in north Syracuse. He attended Syracuse University, majoring in business management. While at Syracuse he was active in the Air Force ROTC and upon graduation was stationed in Washington, DC. He was assigned to the investigative agency OSI and spent four years in counterintelligence. He left his tour of duty as a captain.

Ray developed his own company, Pioneer Warehousing and Distribution, Inc., with such impressive clients as Wegmans and GE Appliances. He sold his business 20 years ago to a former employee. Once retired Ray became a Hospice volunteer and traveled worldwide for them.

Ray had two daughters with his first wife. This has grown to six grandchildren and two great granddaughters, one of whom is a skater with *Disney on Ice*. The family recently gathered in Boston as a cheering section as she performed as Olaf the Snowman.

Claire and Ray met online in 2004. They combined their families in marriage in 2007 in Syracuse, with both parents' blessings.

They discovered how much they both loved travel. Their first trip together was to China prior to the Olympics to check out accommodations with the Syracuse Chamber of Commerce. After selling their homes in New York, they purchased a luxury 5th wheel RV and a diesel truck and travelled four and a half years, covering 42 states and 45 national parks. This was "an experience of a lifetime." They purchased their first home together near Claire's mom in Melbourne, FL, and remained there for 11 years. They still use the RV, which is parked on their property on a small lake in Morrisville.

Following Claire's major health crisis, they knew they wanted to be closer to Ray's daughter and began their search. In Avila they found the answers to their many specifics: generous apartment space, invigorating natural light from many windows, friendly people, and first-class services and professional personnel. They slowly explored this move and tackled it step by step, getting advice in both finance and legal matters. Now that they are living here, they give an even greater endorsement to "come live at Avila."

MONICA AND MIKE SHORT

By Patricia J. Binzer



Photograph by Patricia Binzer

The Shorts were both born in Wisconsin, Monica in Neenah, a small city on the banks of Lake Winnebago, and Mike in Madison, the capital city, southwest of Neenah.

Mike and Monica became sweethearts when they attended Edgewood High School in Madison. After finishing high school, they both attended the University of Wisconsin—Madison. Mike majored in computer science and Monica in elementary education.

They moved east in 1976 when Mike got a job in Albany. They promised themselves they would move back to Wisconsin in three years, but ended up staying in the Capital Region ever since, most recently in Guilderland.

Mike worked for the state of New York at both the Public Service Commission and Civil Service as a software development project manager. He received special recognitions for the website at civil service, for the eligible list management system, and the system for training and experience exams.

Monica earned her master's degree in special education from the College of Saint Rose. She worked as a teacher for several school systems teaching math at St. John's in Rensselaer; science at St. Agnes in Cohoes; special ed for North Colonie and at BOCES as a sign language interpreter and teacher. She finished her career at the NYS Education Department as a reviewer of special ed residential programs and supervisor of preschool special education.

Mike recently became interested in jigsaw puzzles. (Thanks, Bob). He also does improv theater with the group, "Down the Rabbit Hole" that "makes things up" and may include music accompanied by Mike. He hopes to have them perform here at Avila this spring. He also writes songs and performs. As a volunteer, Mike trains new soccer referees in rules and interprets rules for girls' high school soccer officials.

Monica's dad once labeled her a professional volunteer, and she considers that pretty accurate. She cooks and serves at the Saint John/St Ann's Welcome Table; serves on the board of the Charlton School for high school girls with mental health issues; and has facilitated spiritual retreats for many years. She was very proud to act as city coordinator of an event at the Times Union Center in 2018 featuring Beth Moore, a nationally known Christian speaker. She also enjoys needlework and crafts.

They have two sons. David, the professional cellist, lives in Denver and will be married this summer to Emily. Dan, the deaf mathematician, is married to Marissa and has two children, Leo and Avi, living in Columbia, MD. The Shorts also have a great cat named Queen Machu or Queenie.

Mike and Monica are thrilled to have found Avila and are enjoying getting to know the residents.

CORRECTION

In the January issue of *News and Views* we misspelled Virginia Dickensheid's name. We apologize for this error.

FOCUS FEATURE: AVILA'S FINE STAFF

"While in the process of selecting a retirement community in December 2018, I checked out many places. Avila seemed nicer than most. It didn't hurt that the first time I entered the front door, the beautiful, big Christmas tree stood in the living room. After touring apartments and getting answers to my many questions, I left the building with a fistful of floor plans, financial information and brochures to study. While driving out of White Pine Drive, my cellphone rang. Not wanting to talk and drive, I pulled over to answer the call. After a minute or so, an Avila car pulled up and the driver lowered his passenger window to ask me if everything was okay. I assured him I was fine and told him why I had stopped. I soon left the spot to continue on my drive home. But later, I couldn't help but think back about that stop. An Avila staff member wanted to be sure I was okay. Wasn't this the kind of place I was looking for? Soon afterward, I joined the Avila family. The driver, by the way, was Dimitri.

We are all happy that wish Dimitri has had a successful recovery from his health struggles. He's one of our many very valuable staff members."

Marion Burns

"I have lived at Avila since the middle of September, and I am really enjoying living here. The residents have been and are very friendly and welcoming, and the employees so helpful.

I believe that we are not dressed unless we are wearing a smile, and the residents and employees must agree with me as I see so many smiling faces every day.

Virginia "Ginny" Dickensheid

"Thank you to 'Z' in maintenance, for moving our heavy wood recliner from our 4th floor apartment to our son's-in-law truck. He made it look easy.

Ray & Erin Teichman

OUR SYNOD STORY

By John Wagner

Last fall, Pope Francis scheduled a meeting of bishops (a "synod") in 2023 to discern the future mission of the Catholic Church. To provide the bishops with inputs from the People of God, a process of 'listening' sessions was created to give people a chance to voice their hopes and concerns about the future Church.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany began its synodal process in January with three webinars that described the process. Places like Avila were not included in the diocesan plans, so we decided to have our own Listening session. There were two sessions in February and a meeting in March to review the summary report that was submitted to our Bishop Edward Scharfenberger. An article in the March 24th edition of the diocesan newspaper, the *Evangelist*, describes our efforts. Apparently, ours was the first listening session in the Diocese; the first Diocesan session in March was cancelled due to a snowstorm.

SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE AVILA RESIDENTS HAVE:

Sewed for charity



Photograph by Fred Seltzer



Photograph by Fred Seltzer

...listened to a concert of Irish music by Michael Clement and Eileen Mack

...and worked on jigsaw puzzles.



Photograph by Fred Seltzer

HAVE YOU MET THE AVILA BASKET WEAVER?

By Tom and Ellen Fitzgerald

As new arrivals to the Avila Community, Ellen and I have discovered many fellow residents' varied life stories and fascinating hobbies. One recent example occurred in our dinner conversation with Pat and Mike Loudis. As we chatted about our travels, we came to the topic of basket making made famous by the Shaker Community of New York and New England, and the Gullah Community near Charleston, SC as a way of preserving their cultural heritage as well as meeting their needs in everyday life. Little did we realize that these unique skills exist right here in the Avila community thanks to Mike's interest and skills.



Photograph by Pat Loudis

Mike tells us that he found the hobby for his retirement at a Shaker market fair in Latham. After reading extensively on the history, technique and process of basket weaving, he settled on two distinct forms that interested him: Nantucket Lighthouse and Shaker basket weaving. He spent time in the Finger Lakes studying the Nantucket style and later traveled to southern Maine to see the forms of the Shakers. Mike was then ready to build his own tradition of weaving: cutting the black oak trees, soaking the logs in a sheep's trough, pounding each to loosen the tree's rings and fibers, splitting the logs into long strips, before beginning the weaving the strips around wooden forms. Each basket would take one to two weeks to finish. The process required creativity, patience, concentration and nimble fingers.

Pat tells us she enjoyed watching her husband gain knowledge and mature into a skilled basket weaver. She also commented that Mike always had someone in mind as the recipient once the basket was finished to his satisfaction. As a result, Mike kept some baskets, but not a substantial number, most on display in the houses of family and friends alike. Like so many of us, the fruits of his hobby now live quietly in his garage!

Ellen and I are enthusiastic listeners to the stories we hear from other residents at dinner, wine and cheese, and in the hallways. When you next see Mike and Pat, do ask about the Avila Basket Weaver. Do also know that we are eager to hear from many other residents about their unique experiences that you developed over the years. The Avila community is truly rich, varied and welcoming. Thank you all for making Avila truly our new home!

NEWS AND VIEWS 2022

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Co-Editors – Lynn Altonin, Erin Teichman

Layout Editor - Lynn Altonin

Editorial Board – Pat Binzer, Rod Correll, Maxine Koblenz, Fred Seltzer, Wilbur Shapiro,
John Wagner

Proofreaders – Mary Ellen Bendick, Marjorie Jacobs

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IT'S COMING . . . SO, GET READY

By Patricia J. Binzer

*I can feel it. I can see it.
I can hardly wait.
It's just around the corner
I just don't know the date.*

*You can feel it and see it,
if you only try.
Forget about the winter snow drifts
And admire a bright blue sky.*

*The days are getting warmer
Well, not every day
But enough are above freezing
So spring must be on its way.*

*Don't you sense the excitement
And the urge to get things done.
Are you feeling restless?
Is it time for having fun?*

*Or is it time for something new.
A brand-new hobby or makeover for you.
A language you've always wanted to know.
Should you get tickets for a Cap Rep show.*

*We've already had our Mardi Gras
And we knew St. Patrick's Day would follow.
We will see the birds are back
Robins, blue jays, and maybe a swallow.*

*Time to breathe the fresh spring air
And welcome the new plants everywhere
They survived a cold winter and so did we.
We're sturdy and healthy, just like the tree.*

*Start right now. Plan what you'll do
Renew your spirit. And I will too.
Warm months are coming; winter's behind us.
Looking back you'll see we're survivors
No need to remind us.*

*Hello spring.
We knew you'd come.
Blessings on those 80 tulips
Tom Wahl planted one by one!*

