

# THE *Lathrop Nor'Easter*

A Quarterly Publication by the Residents of The Lathrop Communities  
at Northampton and Easthampton, Massachusetts

Series II: Vol. 3—3

*A Community Converses*

Summer 2018

## ART AND ARTISTS AT LATHROP



"New England Cove"

Watercolor by Sherrod Perkins-Keane

***On the Cover: The Artist***

Sherrod Perkins-Keane began taking painting classes when she lived in Cobleskill, NY in the 1990's, but started painting seriously when she moved to Florida in 2004. Her early paintings were watercolors; later she moved to acrylics and then to oil paint as her interests and technique developed. She now is working in oil, which she likes for better ability to paint over and improve the work. After coming to Lathrop, she has returned to doing some painting in watercolor, to keep that skill, and plans to find a teacher for oils in this area.

Sherrod and her husband Bill first wanted to move into Lathrop Northampton, but when they learned that it would probably be two years before any house would be available there, while a nice home on Cranberry Lane in Easthampton was ready immediately, they chose Easthampton. After moving, she learned about the Art Room in the Inn, and says it is an unforeseen blessing. Through an arrangement with the Art Committee, that is where Sherrod does all of her painting. She requested overhead "natural" lighting

fixtures for the rooms and now paints there most days, only needing to clear up her tools when classes are being held there.

Sherrod paints from photographs, since she does not draw. She enlarges the photos to match the size of her canvas, and then traces the image and transfers it onto her canvas. The photographs may be her own, or may come from other sources such as newspapers. She likes to capture people at work, or engaged with others. She has done portraits and landscapes.

***Contributing to The Nor'Easter***

It's about the poems you write, about the vignettes you've related for years but have never recorded, about the foul ball you caught with your *other* hand (or maybe dropped with the favored one), about a chance elevator ride with a celebrity du jour, about that epiphanic moment when it all became clear, about the first sight of the phantom of delight who changed your life, about that time in the Great Depression or in the War of Your Choice, about your genealogy searches, about your travels, about your work or profession — in short, about what interests you to write, and you know better than we do what that is.

We do encourage all residents to contribute to the Nor'Easter, with poetry, art, photography and both fiction and non-fiction writing. Biographies of new residents are a popular feature.

Submissions can be sent to:  
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**Stephen Ahearn**

I was born and raised in New York City where I studied accounting and received my CPA. New England has always been my professional home with companies in Connecticut, Massachusetts (Northampton), and most recently New Hampshire. I came to Lathrop to be near my daughters, Virginia and Carolyn, and because my family enjoyed the years we spent in Northampton. The Berkshires and surrounding area and the interesting music scene – especially jazz -- brought great pleasure.

My greatest enjoyment has always been the outdoors. Over the years, I have engaged in boating, camping, backpacking, rock climbing, skiing (downhill and cross country), sailing, and hiking. I am a member of the Appalachian Mountain Club and have served as an instructor, trip leader, and volunteer for the New Hampshire chapter, which is largely focused on the White Mountains.

During my lifetime I have experienced many memorable moments

some of which related to important world events. When I was beginning my senior year in high school, World War II was declared over. In our Queens neighborhood, folks ran out into the yards, yelling, laughing, and banging on pots and pans. Some of us ran to the subway and went down to Times Square. People were packed so tightly that you couldn't even move, everyone shouting, hugging, kissing, and celebrating the victory.

One position I held required quite a lot of travel. In 1989, I was sent to Germany for the company. My hosts insisted that I go to Berlin to witness history being made by the wall coming down. I watched as long lines of people formed to go up to the wall with hammers to take pieces for souvenirs. I had a subway map of the city which showed one stop on the east side of the wall. Being curious, I took the subway to that stop. When I came out I saw a line of people with passports having to go through the East German checkpoint. I asked a very stern-looking East German guard whether I should be in the line and showed him my American passport. He pointed me back to the subway saying that I had to go through Checkpoint Charlie if I was an American. As I started back to the subway, I turned and he flashed me the V for Victory sign. My hosts told me that if I had taken that subway in previous months, I would likely have been jailed!

My family enjoyed backpacking,

but when our daughters became teenagers, they weren't so interested in tracking through the wilderness. They stayed with friends at Lake Placid while my wife and I backpacked for six days to meet them there. When we arrived, they excitedly said, "We have a riddle! How do you spell the President's name?" Thinking that because this was a riddle, we were supposed to spell Nixon wrong, we were stumped. Then they all shouted, "F-O-R-D." While we were enjoying the quiet, peaceful outdoors, far away from news, Nixon had resigned and Ford had become President.

I'm enjoying my time here at Lathrop. Residents have a richness of experience and knowledge that I value. I look forward to more great conversations.

**On Long Pond**

Standing on the lip of the lake  
I watch the moon  
unroll a highway of light.

Tonight I will walk on water.

By Lisa Colt



## “Walkin’ in the Rain”

by Joan Laird

Teaching, writing, clinical practice, endless meetings, the detritus of academic life are not necessarily good for the body, and Ann and I were not paying much attention to our bodies. Both of us were gathering pounds, which sat much better on her five feet, ten inch frame than on my five feet two. In Ann Arbor we had had a pool, swam lazy laps, gardened, and occasionally played a round of golf or went for a walk in the park. That helped. But hey, let’s face it, by 1998, after 12 years in the valley, we were seriously out of shape.

In 1999, we received an invitation to give a plenary talk in Adelaide, Australia. We’d visited Australia before and this time thought it would be exciting to visit New Zealand as well. (The talk was titled “The Social Construction of Gender, Sex, and Sexuality” and it was just about the time of Bill Clinton’s truth-telling problems, so we had plenty of material to spice things up. The Australians thought Americans were insane to be making such a mountain out of a molehill. One wag commented to us: “Thank God we got the prisoners and you got the Puritans!”).

Back to being out of shape. Ann had heard about a famous and fabulous trek in New Zealand, The Milford Track, a four-day, 33-mile guided hike beginning at the head of Te Anau Lake in the south island and ending with a boat ride up the gorgeous Milford Sound. As part of the Fiord National Park and a World Heritage Site, the Milford Track is billed as one of the two or three most beautiful walks in the world. I’m sure, upon reflection, that undertaking this challenge was Ann’s idea. She was 72 and I was 64. She had to have a note from a doctor as part of the application. The doctor thought the whole idea was crazy, but gave her permission. We had several months to prepare, and prepare we did. Over five days we walked the 55 miles of carriage trails at Acadia National Park, climbed Cadillac Mountain twice, explored the many trails in the Pioneer Valley, struggled around our neighborhood with backpacks full of books, and walked from North Hadley to Northampton. I lost 20 pounds and Ann lost a few

too. We were ready, right?

**Day 1:** Arriving late in the afternoon, meeting our international group of 20 or so hiking buddies, including our friend Phebe, we were supplied with wine and dinner and invited to go for an optional one-mile walk. I’d had emergency temporary root canal surgery the night before in Dunedin and both of us were tired from the Adelaide conference and the 1500 mile trip to New Zealand. So we demurred.

**Day 2:** Slipping on our 12-pound day packs (which we kept emptying over the course of the trek until there was almost nothing left) we set out for a ten-mile relatively flat hike through forests of hardwood, pine, and giant ferns, through meadows coated with wildflowers, criss-crossing a serene river on narrow footbridges. It was amazingly quiet compared to our American woods, not a rustle, since New Zealand has no native mammals. We became well acquainted with the sweep (the rear guide) that day, since we brought up the rear by about an hour. I acquired a nasty blister that almost ended my new career as a hiker. We didn’t realize we were all being watched to see if the organizers thought we could make the next two days, which were going to be a serious challenge. For some reason, they didn’t weed us out.

**Day 3:** Over the mountain through MacKinnon Pass, about 3700 feet up and 4500 feet down. But not your ordinary soft 3500 feet up a New England hill. After hours of climbing steeper and steeper terrain and still no signs of the glorious mountains we knew surrounded us, we became encased in heavy, wet fog. Finally, our sweep, whose name I have blocked out, let’s call him Angus, informed us we had reached the top. Who knew? We could see nothing but the narrow path beneath our feet. I wanted to lie down and sleep for a few hours, hoping the fog would clear so that we could see the spectacular view we’d been promised. Ann, as always, was stoic. We needed to start down, however, if we were to get back by dark. Angus warned us that there was a steep drop to the right off the narrow path

so, terrified, I began crawling down the left side of the path. It was only a little later I learned that the mountain was shaped like an upside-down ice cream cone and I was doomed no matter. I was glad I could see neither to the right nor the left, or paralysis would have set in.

Hours later, having climbed over boulders and roots, our legs like jelly, we could hear Angus radioing in to the hut, "They're going to make it. They're going to make it!" Another hour or two of sheer torture and we could see the hut in the distance. Twenty or so people were running toward us, two of them holding glasses of wine, cheering us on. They had all arrived three or four hours earlier. I think we became the group mascots that day. And it began to rain,

**Day 4:** We set out for a 13-mile walk to the foot of Milford Sound. And it rained. In spite of our new, guaranteed-to-keep-us-dry waterproof jackets, we were soon soaked to the skin. Before long we reached the serene river we'd seen two days earlier, which had widened and become a surging, raging, boiling monster, reminding me of the Niagara of my childhood nightmares. Thousands of waves were crashing over brutal looking boulders while a number of spontaneous waterfalls were surging down the mountain to the side of us, gouging holes in the path as the water headed for the river. After a few miles, Ann stepped into a depression in the path, injuring a tendon in her leg, rendering her unable to continue. Our guide decided to radio for a helicopter. I waited a while as Ann cried, not out of fear but because she knew she wouldn't be able to reach our goal. He directed me to move ahead along the path, promising he would soon catch up. It felt like I walked for hours, at some point seeing a tiny bubble of a helicopter flying overhead. Surely it was a dream, no, a nightmare, the river spewing water in every direction, the waterfalls spilling onto the path, Ann in the sky someplace, and I alone.

And then I came to a gully full of water, the width of the path, mountain on one side, the river on the other, no space to get around it. Though I stuck my hiking stick in it, I couldn't tell how deep it was and concluded I better wait for the guide. But no sign of him for

what seemed hours, as I shook in my drenched mackintosh. Finally, I walked back a quarter mile or so and decided if I didn't see him, I would attempt to wade the pool. But there he was. He had me hold one end of his walking stick while he stepped into the water. And he was almost pulled into the river by the vicious current! He finally held his ground, and I ventured into the water, trying to stay vertical as the current tried equally hard to push us into the river. Now I was soaked up to the waistline. Well, we survived that, walked on for a mile or so, he got a radio call and told me that they had closed the path up ahead and that we were going to go upriver by boat. "Not me," I said, "I'm not getting in a boat on that river," and I burst into tears because I knew we would be unable to finish the challenge we had worked so hard for. He told me the river was much calmer up ahead so we forged on, finally arriving at what was supposed to be our morning tea stop. It was now about 2 PM. Our friend Phebe was waiting for us, and together with four or five strangers, Phebe and I boarded a tiny boat and began motoring. As I looked around us, I saw dozens of waterfalls catapulting down the mountains into the river, an absolutely unbelievable and magnificent sight. It took my breath away and for whatever reason, perhaps profound relief, I began to laugh and couldn't stop. It was contagious and Phebe also began laughing, while the rest of the passengers wondered what was wrong with us.

Dumped off some several miles up the path on the other side of the river, Phebe and I started walking and were soon approached by four walkers from England. "How did you get ahead of us?" they demanded. We acted surprised and said, "We must have passed you while you were enjoying the sights." "Harrumph!"

They quickly marched on, determined to be first to cross the finish line. Ann was waiting at the end of the hike, various doctors and other experts on the trip arguing about her diagnosis. We boarded the boat and traveled the spectacular Milford Sound, covered in fog. It looks so magical and mysterious in the video we bought. But we got our certificates, honest we did!

"The Trouble I Have  
Seen"

Acrylic by Sherrod  
Perkins-Keane



Tenderest revelation -  
    hand touching face -  
the heron's flight  
    crosses our path.  
These woods bear scents  
    the priests would crush for myrrh.  
This water needs no blessing -  
    fallen pine, altar at the river's edge.

I kneel,  
    unconscious of the act;  
    set before me  
    the golden leaf, the acorn and the feather.  
And then, tenderest revelation,  
    beside me you place  
    the small green bough.

by Doris Atkinson

*Ann and Ed Shanahan*

Our Northampton roots go very deep - for more than 46 years we have lived at four different locations in this same small but vibrant city of 29,000. Our move to the Lathrop Community at Dogwood Lane in Northampton makes number five.

But the Northampton connection reaches much further back to 1958 when Ed innocently courted Ann, then a junior at Smith, both in Northampton and Cambridge. College graduation followed the next year, as did our marriage.

Yet it was not until 1971 that we and our three sons finally moved back here permanently as a family.

In the intervening years, there were brief entry-level jobs in banking and advertising in New York City before we launched what became a somewhat nomadic quest, the first stop being Stockbridge in the Berkshires, where Ed was a reporter for the Berkshire Eagle, Ann a correspondent, teacher, and mother.

Next stop, Washington. Ed had a year-long Congressional Fellowship while Ann was more than challenged by responsibility for three young children, especially when, for three months, Ed was in Illinois working as an aide to Sen. Paul Douglas in his unsuccessful re-election campaign.

Events moved quickly with newspaper tours of duty in Winston-Salem and at the Detroit Free Press. Then, from out of the blue, a query came as to whether Ed would consider becoming the editor of the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* in Northampton. Are you kidding?

For the next 15 years he toiled with enthusiasm editing a small daily newspaper in an extremely lively community. On two occasions during that time, he served as a Pulitzer Prize juror had a year-long journalism fellowship at Stanford University.

Meanwhile, Ann had a number of writing positions that led to her being hired by Smith President Thomas Mendenhall as news director for the college, where she also later reported to Presidents Jill Conway and Mary Maples Dunn.

In 1986 it was Ann's turn to call the shots, accepting an offer to be director of college admissions at Salem College, a women's college in Winston-Salem. She invited Ed to join her in this new adventure. He accepted and left the *Gazette*.

Ann's job entailed recruiting students from various areas of the South and Southwest, which required traveling and marketing strategies in an attempt to build a stronger student body. During that four-year period decided to return north, editing newspapers in Quincy, MA and Torrington, CT. This arrangement created a commuter marriage, which, by 1990, led them happily to join forces back in Northampton.

Ann quickly was hired by Loomis Chaffee Headmaster John Ratte (now he and his wife, Lou, are Lathrop neighbors) to be College Guidance Director. The job was a special one for Ann, who was able to spend virtually all of her professional time with eager young students.

Meanwhile, in pursuit of a dream of sorts, Ed opened a used book store, Bookends, in the heart of Florence, which continues to operate today after nearly 30 years.

In 1996, Ann returned to Smith College, where she was named Director of Communications, which involved directing all aspects of internal and external news about the college.

Eventually, we gave up our day jobs, Ann at Smith and Ed selling his bookstore, in order to pursue other interests. For several years Ann was chair of the Friends of Smith College Libraries, the Northampton Center for the Arts, and later was on the Lathrop Communities board. Ed redirected his bookish interests by attempting to sell his inventory of 3,500 titles on the Internet, one book at a time. Slow work.

Retired, we found new pleasure in frequent, ambitious road trips, including two cross-country jaunts.

Closer to home, we found that our age was showing as each of our three sons was moving well into their 50s - Ed Jr. an editor at the New York Times, Chris, a social worker with the state dealing with foster care issues, and Mark, a reporter/columnist for the Boston Globe. Importantly, there are five healthy grandchildren some as old as we were when we married at age 23 way back then. And so it goes.

## “My Life As A Girl Scout”

by Joan Cenedella

Have you ever known anyone who was kicked out of the Girl Scouts? No? Well, now, you do and here's how it happened.

First of all, I must let you know that I remember very little about the Girl Scouts, so you won't get a lot of historical background or vivid details about what the Girl Scouts was actually like in my day, what was in the handbook, the steps toward getting a badge, the motto, if there was one—Be Prepared? Yes, that was it—and now that I think of it there was a pledge, too: “On my honor, I will try, to serve God and my country, to help other people at all times, and to obey the Girl Scout laws.”

No, most of what I remember about the Girl Scouts is what my sister told me when I was a Brownie. Peni was a Girl Scout before me, of course, because she was three years older than I. But by the time I flew up from the Brownies, she had outgrown the Girl Scouts and was wearing lipstick and fixing her hair to look like Rita Hayworth's and reading romance magazines.

Peni's troop was Troop 1 and her leader was Mrs. Murray. The Murrays lived in a grand house at the top of Nod Hill Road. (We lived in a house at the bottom of Nod Hill, a colonial in quotation marks, that had been built ten years before in the 1930's, a house that in a township of houses that sported vintages on their doors like labels on fine wines, was nothing to write home about.) Mrs. Murray looked just like the cartoons that appeared in the *New Yorker* of that time by local cartoonist Helen Hokinson—matronly Connecticut garden club ladies, big on the top and spindly on the bottom.

Mrs. Murray thought everything her girls did was tops. She was, from my sister's description, kind of relaxed about things, so Troop 1 was not very disciplined and it sounded like a lot of fun. Every week, Peni told me, Violet, the Murrays' housekeeper, appeared in the living room, about halfway through the meeting with snacks: hot, buttered biscuits with apricot jam, and tea, I always imagined. Not only that Mrs. Murray took her troop on trips, to Orem's dairy in Norwalk to milk

cows for the dairy badge, to the Civil War graveyard to do rubbings for the history badge, and even to New York to the museum for the art badge.

Mrs. Murray stopped being a troop leader when her daughter Ann got tired of the Girl Scouts at about the same time that Peni did, and so by the time I flew up, going to the Murrays house once a week, always my dream, was out of the question.

My scout leader's name was Mrs. Bodenmiller, and she wasn't anyone's mother—or maybe she had been once, but she was older than our mothers. She was a singer, the kind of singer whose lips and cheeks jiggled when she sang in the Gilbert and Sullivan productions at Town Hall. Mrs. Bodenmiller's house was okay, plenty of room in the living room for all of us, but it wasn't the Murray's house and there was no housekeeper to make snacks. We had Oreos and milk.

Mrs. Bodenmiller had dark hair streaked with gray that she wore swept up, back and sides, piling it on top of her head where it bloomed into frizzy curls. She had bushy eyebrows and wore dark red lipstick.

I had loved the Brownies, the little brown gingham checked dresses and the brown beanies. And I expected to love the Girl Scouts, too, from my sister's stories about the pleasures and joys of Troop 1 under Mrs. Murray.

We were seven girls, and our meetings were on Wednesday afternoons after school. We got there on the school bus, and by the second or third meeting, I was surprised at how much our meetings were like school, which we had just got out of—more sitting, more work.

At the beginning of each meeting we assembled in a circle on her living room floor and Mrs. Bodenmiller said what we were going to do, emphasizing certain words with her head going forward like a duck—as if we were stupid. She told us we could work on any badge we wanted independently by looking at the guidebook and showing her our progress.

“But” she said, “we also learn cooperatively. That's when we all work together on the same projects. So



your independent projects are best done at home. For our first badge together, the sewing badge is a perfect goal, easy and fun. I've put out some materials for you to practice your stitching: we'll begin with the running stitch, and the hem stitch. Our first sewing project will be simple dickies and then we'll move on to more complex projects."

And so we collected thimbles, needles and thread, and scraps of cloth to work with, and with all heads bent and Mrs. Bodenmiller occasionally glancing at our work as we progressed, we fell in with practice stitching, completely ignorant of the fact that Juliette Gordon Low founded the Girls Scouts of America in 1912 in the belief that girls should have the same opportunities as boys.

There was always something about enforced quiet situations that made me feel antsy, wanting to shake things up, situations like so much of school, like church, and, as it turned out, like our Girl Scout meetings that winter.

I had, as a child, a gift for mimicry. When I was really little I imitated mechanical sounds—the whirring of a lawn mower, the gurgling of kerosene bubbles as they broke the surface in the upended bottle by my grandmother's stove, a dripping faucet. As I got older, I imitated people, too, in ways not always flattering and when I had fights with anyone in my family, that is, my sister or my brother, my only strategy, short of hair-pulling or punching, was to imitate them instead, which made them really angry. I am probably a good mimic still, but it now seems unkind. And one of the awful things that's happened to me as I've gotten older is that I've become much kinder, much more burdened by a sense of what it's like to be someone—almost anyone—else, and thus deprived of one of the great sources of pleasure and hilarity that brightened my childhood: making fun of others.

Back then, though, as the afternoons grew darker and after of the merest scatter of conversation, I'd look up from my sewing the moment Mrs Bodenmiller left us and went to the kitchen, hold my hair up on my head and begin to pantomime her opening speech, stretching my lips, bending and swaying from my waist,

poking my head forward, and pasting a fake smile on my face. Pretty soon Anne, always the first, started to laugh and, reddening, laughed harder and harder as she was joined by Mary, then Sandy and finally Sofia. Myrna and Frances continued on with their evenly placed running stitches while we all cracked up, the others joining in with their own Mrs. Bodenmillers until finally three or four of us were pantomiming in unison and laughing.

"Troop 2! Troop 2!" Mrs Bodenmiller would cry out as she came back into the room from the kitchen (where she was often talking on the telephone), her red lips turned up in a frozen smile and looking straight at me for some reason. "We can't have all this noise." And we'd quiet down and she'd look at our work and point out spaces too big or small.

Anne Peabody and I never quite managed to finish our dickies, but we eventually got our sewing badges anyway. I remember feeling vaguely guilty and undeserving as I sewed it onto the sleeve of my green Girl Scout dress.

But the fact was, I wasn't a girlie girl. I wanted to be, just as I wanted to be more like Myrna or Frances with millions of badges crawling up the sleeve of my uniform, but I wasn't, and there didn't seem to be anything I could do about it.

It may appear that I was just an undisciplined cutup, a clown trying to get attention and admiration, but nothing could be further from the truth. I had serious interests. I was fascinated by birds, for instance, and watched them with my binoculars in my back yard. I had joined the Audubon Bird Society all by myself and waited with excitement for the society's envelope addressed to me to arrive in the mailbox each month, containing a folder about a new bird. I loved the beautifully colored pictures of the each month's bird, male and female, and the sheet of information that came with them. And when I recognized them in my backyard, I memorized their call

I also loved to take pictures with the Brownie my father had given me the year before for my tenth birthday. I was amazed over and over again by the experi



**"Wait For Me"**  
Oil by Sherrod Perkins-Keane

...*Girl Scout continued from p. 9*

ence of taking film to the drugstore and going back some time later for the envelope miraculously full of the images of my world that I'd seen and captured through the viewfinder: an Ajax carton on the floor by the toilet in the upstairs bathroom, a woodpecker clinging to the black walnut in our backyard, our mailbox with its red flag up at the end of the driveway—three-and-a-half by five, all of them in black and white. Somewhere in my mind I had thought the Girl Scouts might be about birds and photography, not about the sewing and cooking badges that we worked on all winter.

In fact, I've often thought had the Girl Scouts been different, I'd have been a brilliant girl scout.

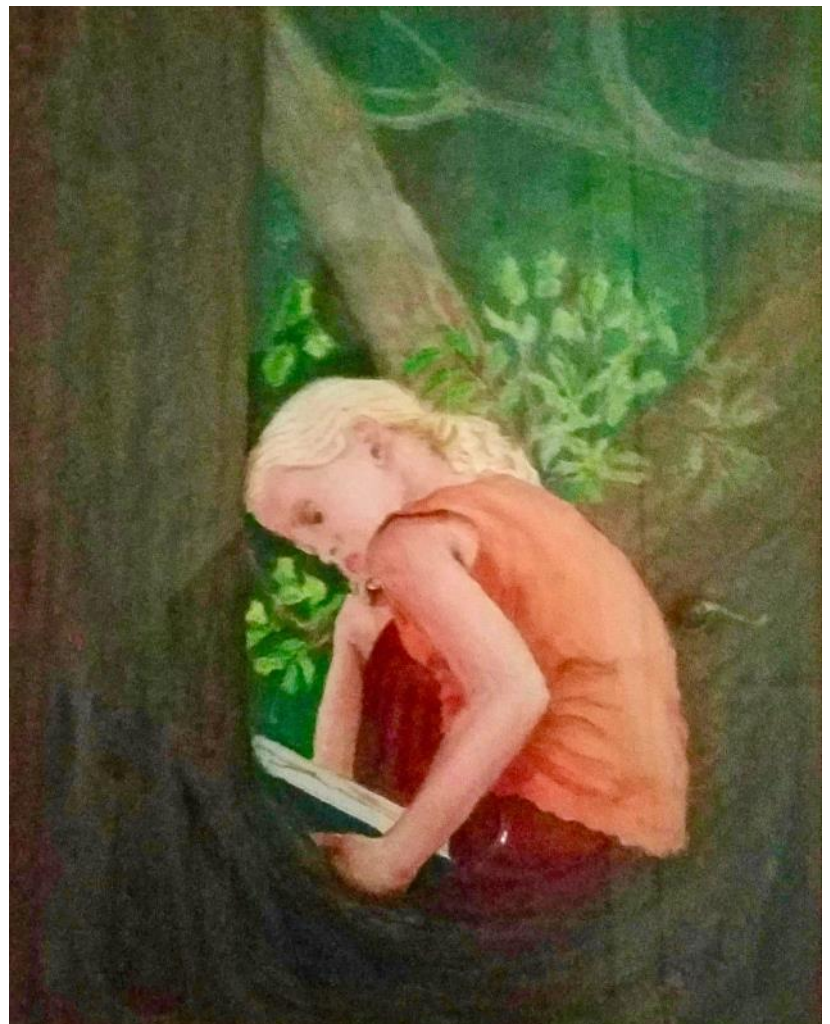
As time went on, I spent more and more of my girl scout hours being silly. I couldn't stop myself from imitating Mrs. Bodenmiller behind her back, from making my friends laugh. Somewhere along the line, Mrs. Bodenmiller flew into the living room week after week and separated me from my friends. I thought it was unfair and sulked. After all, they were doing it, too.

Finally she called my mother. They had a talk. My mother asked me if I wanted to be in the Girl Scouts. I said not really. She said why. I said because it's boring, our projects are stupid but I like being with my friends so I don't want to quit. She said Mrs Bodenmiller thinks you misbehave too much and you get everybody else misbehaving. I said nothing. My mother called Mrs. Bodenmiller back. They had a talk. My mother said to me, I think you should stop going to meetings for a while and then in September you can decide with Mrs. Bodenmiller if you want to go back. I said okay.

September came and went and the subject never came up except when my friends asked me why I wasn't joining them as they got into the bus to go off to Mrs Bodenmiller's. I told them I had quit. I felt left out, and regret, but more than anything, I felt relief.

As time went on, being kicked out of the Girl Scouts took on the aura of a different kind of badge, but whether of disgrace or honor, I've never been able to decide.

### "Harry Potter and Me" Watercolor by Sherrod Perkins-Keane



*John and Lou Ratte*

Lou and John met in graduate school in Cambridge. Lou was working toward a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Religion with a special interest in India and John was studying European history. A friend who knew both of them separately thought that the only two Catholics in the Harvard Graduate School ought to get together, and so arranged a meeting. Those were the days: 5 years and 4 children later John had completed his degree and was an instructor in the History Department at Amherst College. A few years passed; Lou did some adjunct teaching at Amherst and Smith and then decided to finish her degree in the History Department at U Mass. At this time in the Valley, the closest she could get to the study of India was to specialize in the history of the British Empire, so she added a field in Social Anthropology to her program and finished her degree. The family spent a year in England (1965-66) where John finished turning his dissertation into a book, *Three Modernists*, on failed reform in the church, and then a year in India where John was

a Fulbright professor and Lou pursued her study of Sanskrit (1969-70).

Both Lou and John spent a year at Lander College in Greenwood, South Carolina, where Lou taught courses on colonial Africa, colonial India,

and the history of women and John served as Dean of the college (1974-76). In 1975, though tenured as a full professor at Amherst College, John decided to pursue his interest in pre-collegiate liberal education by accepting appointment as the Headmaster of the Loomis Chaffee School in Windsor, CT where he served for 20 years as chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Independent Schools. Until full retirement, in 1996, he was a consultant to schools in development and strategic planning.

According to statistics, 1975 was the worst year for teaching jobs in history, so Lou taught in a number of adjunct positions at various universities in Connecticut. In 1982 Lou had a post-doctoral fellowship in Literary Theory at Brown University. In 1984-85 she won a Fulbright to pursue research in India. After that, Lou arranged her schedule so that she could spend up to three months of every year, from 1986 to 1996, in India, initially to pursue her study of women in India and later to do research in

colonial looting of indigenous art. Back in Connecticut in 1999, Lou founded and directed the Hill Center for World Studies (HCWS), which ran yearly seminars for high school, community college, and college teachers taught by university faculty from Columbia, NYU, and Brown (2000-2008.) John assisted Lou in the HCWS as fund-raiser.

When one of Lou and John's sons moved with his wife and four children to Honolulu in 2001, Lou decided that the time had come to look elsewhere in the empire to continue her study of art and empire. The British, French, Dutch, Germans, Spanish, and Americans built colonies in the Pacific; hence her present interest in Maori art in New Zealand. She has written several articles on indigenous art and colonial encounter and is currently working on her manuscript on the history of an art exhibition that brought Maori art from New Zealand museums to New York's Metropolitan Museum in 1984.

Lou and John had deep roots in the Valley, and when the time came to scale back from their home in Ashfield, the obvious choice for them was Lathrop.



**Maud Fischer**

Here's the history of my lengthy journey to Easthampton, Mass.

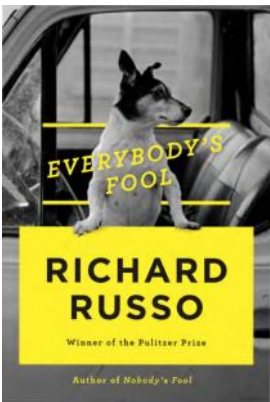
I began life in Brussels, Belgium, second of three siblings born to a French mother and a Dutch father. We did travel every year – alternating visiting grandparents in Denmark where we spent summer at the seashore and went to school – in 1939 for four months. The other summers were spent with relatives in Alsace Lorraine in the beautiful little town called Dambach-la-Ville.

Unfortunately the fun stopped on May 5, 1940, when Nazis parachuted into Brussels. My very wise father packed up his little Buick and attached a small trailer. So began our family's travel through France, Spain, and finally neutral Portugal where we spent four and a half months, finally sailing to New York.

My teenage years in Manhattan were unimaginably educational and exciting. I loved New York!

I married at age 21 after completing my social work degree and two years later moved to Baltimore for seven years, and then to Abington, Pennsylvania, where we remained with two daughters and our beautiful dog, Shamrock. By the way, I was a Real Estate Broker from 1963 to 2006.

Finally, if you want more details of how we survived WWII and why I've made my last move (hopefully), call me at the Inn at Lathrop!

**Everybody's Fool by Richard Russo**

Humor and pathos, a combination that Richard Russo has mastered. In *Everybody's Fool*, Russo recreates North Bath, NY, ten years after his previous novel *Nobody's Fool*. It hasn't changed much, still full of quirky characters that you love in spite of their abundant faults. Sully,

the protagonist of *Nobody's Fool*,

is older and faced with possibly two years but maybe only one before his heart gives way. Douglas Raymer, the police chief filled with self-doubts, is consumed by learning the name of his dead wife's lover. Rub, the hapless handyman, yearns for Sully's attention as his "best friend" and never knows when Sully is addressing him or his dog, also named Rub. Ruth, the proprietor of Hattie's Lunch and Sully's former lover, struggles

with her husband's hoarding and her daughter's ex-husband. Wise-cracking Charice, Raymer's assistant, needles him while pushing him out of his comfort zone. In all, a panoply of zany characters, each developed adroitly in Russo's inimitable style.

You'll laugh out loud reading this novel; in error, Raymer's campaign cards read, "We're Not Happy Until You're Not Happy," an embarrassment that he's unable to escape. Or picture Raymer's climbing down from a second-story balcony that separates from the building during a thunderstorm – pure slapstick. But you will be touched by the doubts that Raymer has about his own worth and his despair over his failed marriage. You can laugh at Rub's spending the day in a tree where he has cut off the branch he needs to descend, but you will hurt for him as he longs for Sully's friendship and attention. Russo's novel is both funny and bittersweet, a book that provides both humor and profound insights into character.

**SK**

## Movie Reviews: Three Films About Putting on a Show

By Dave Morrissey

In the 1939 film “Babes in Arms” Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney uttered a line that would be repeated in many of their subsequent Andy Hardy films, “Hey, kids, let’s put on a show”. With each retelling it evolved from trope to cliché to running joke. It was all of these but the phrase also reflects a fundamental and timeless human compulsion to express ourselves in public and our equally strong need to witness that expression. Doesn’t matter if its song, dance, music, theater or film. For the creator, performer and audience the act enables us to transcend the mundane and experience the sublime. Here are three films that explore the lives of the people who create and perform in theater, music and film itself and what compels them to do it.

“A Late Quartet”, a 2012 film focuses on a famous string quartet in their 25th year together when unexpectedly their cellist and emotional nexus, Daniel played by Christopher Walken, is diagnosed with Parkinson’s and announces quietly that the coming year of concerts will be his last. The announcement exposes long suppressed fault lines and resentments in their established professional and personal lives, lives that had gained them critical acclaim, financial security and emotional satisfaction. None had ever questioned the status quo. Now, not only is the cohesion of their collaboration threatened but its very existence. How and even if the group can heal these newly exposed wounds and also integrate a new cello player forms the crux of story. It is played out in wonderful performances by the entire ensemble of actors including Phillip Seymour Hoffman in one of his last film roles and Catherine Keener as his wife. But it is Christopher Walken playing against his usual type as a creep who quietly brings the quartet to an understanding that their collaboration in the service of making great music is primary to their existence and worth the associated personal and professional sacrifices.

“Shakespeare in Love” is a 1998 film about the birth of Elizabethan theater and emergence of Shakespeare as its genius. The film plays fast and loose with any number of facts about Shakespeare (in the film he has writer’s block finishing his newest comedy, “Romeo and Ethel”) and the world of 1590’s London theater and politics. But a dazzling script by Tom Stoppard nails the ferment of the time and place as well as the Elizabethan passion for language. That passion infused the writers, actors and audiences and gave birth to the theater as we know it

today. Even in the face of the plague, the censors, artistic rivalries, the demands of the moneymen and shifting political allegiances, art is created, performed and devoured by its audiences.

“Day for Night” is Francois Truffaut’s 1973 valentine to the art and passion of the people who live to make movies. Just like Shakespeare and the stage, the creator of a film, in this case Truffaut himself, has to contend with the vagaries of securing funds, finalizing the script, confronting the insecurities and jealousies of his family of actors and technicians against the unyielding constraints of schedule and budget. In the end it works because for all the people involved, the act of making films is their passion and the core of their lives. When the film is completed they disband and return to reality but not to their real lives. Creating films is their real life. Think the French don’t believe that films and their creation are serious business? Jean-Luc Goddard accused Truffaut of making a film, “Day for Night”, that was a lie. Truffaut responded with a 20 page letter accusing Goddard of being a “radical-chic hypocrite” and the two former friends and colleagues never met or spoke again before Truffaut’s death in 1984.

As smart, entertaining and insightful as these films are, in the end the compulsion to make and perform enduring art remains ineffable, a miracle beyond our complete comprehension. The following excerpt from the script for “Shakespeare in Love” gets at this truth in a slightly different way. Phillip Henslowe, the theater owner, is speaking with Hugh Fennyman, the moneyman:

PH: Mr. Fennyman, allow me to explain about the theater business. The natural condition is one of insurmountable obstacles on the road to imminent disaster.

HF: So what do we do:

PH: Nothing. Strangely enough, it all turns well.

HF: How?

PH: I don’t know. It’s a mystery.

A mystery? A miracle? Who cares? We the audience are blessed.

Each of these films is available on disk from the Forbes Library.





*"Thinking"*

Acrylic by Sherrod Perkins-Keane

*Postcards From . . .*



*"Securing the load of recyclables before crossing a busy street."*

**Hong Kong, March, 2018 - L. Howe**

*The Lathrop Nor'Easter*  
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Easthampton, MA 01027



**"Joy is Dancing"**  
Watercolor by Sherrod Perkins-Keane