

Emerald Court Newsletter

Volume 15, Issue 1

January, 2023



Don't Put a Popsicle in a Lunchbox

By Peggy Schleicher

There is an adage that claims that "laughter is the best medicine." Years ago, I attended a Humor Conference that focused on just that, the benefits of laughter. It included everything from biological gains to mental health enhancement. There were lectures by doctors and workshops lead by clowns. The focus was on thinking funny, discovering your inner clown, and adding play to your life. The first step to reaping the benefits of laughter might be to decide what to do for fun. When we were kids, fun came easily. Almost everything was fun. Think about those childhood memories: jungle gyms, swings, red rover, playdoh, baseball, and Monopoly.

What do we do for fun now? Play is still important. It reduces stress. The pandemic has made us all more anxious and less playful. The Mayo Clinic reports that "stress relief from laughter is no joke." Chuckles are just what the doctor ordered. Laughter increases our intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates our heart, lungs, and muscles, and increases the endorphins. The other day while I was walking, I remembered an experience with a first-grade student and a popsicle. The kids had worked hard for several weeks and their earned reward was a popsicle treat. After I distributed the popsicles, I noticed a boy without a popsicle. When I checked with him to be sure he received the treat, he assured me he had. He had simply put it in his lunchbox to save for later. This memory got me thinking that "Don't put a popsicle in your lunch box" is a good New Year resolution. This is akin to enjoying good moments when they present themselves. Enjoy that popsicle when you can! Laughter is like the popsicle, enjoy it when you can. Emerald Court is very lucky. We have people here who like to enjoy the popsicle, have fun

and laugh. A great way to increase laughter and smiles is to attend EC events and activities. Hope we all agree to laugh more in 2023.

♦ ♦ ♦

EC Clubhouse Fun:

Book Club meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7 pm in the Clubhouse. Info: Peggy Schleicher, facilitator: - (Unit 74).

Movie Group meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 1 pm in the clubhouse. Info: Linda Carey, host: - (Unit 1221).

Card Games:

- **SCAT** - Mondays at 1 pm. Info: Bert Lyons (Unit 1230).
- **Cribbage** - Mondays at 7 pm. Info: Bob Schleicher (Unit 74).
- **Poker** - Tuesdays at 7 pm. Info: Betty Fulginiti (Unit 1211). *Men & women welcome.*
- **Texas Hold'em** - Wednesdays at 7 pm. Info: John Tellier (Unit 1226).
- **Bridge Group** - Thursdays at 1 pm. Info: Ginny Thomas (Unit 69).

Games & Chat Groups:

- **Chat Group** - Tuesdays at 2 pm. For info, Dorothy Caterino (Unit 1214).
- **Mahjong** - Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. For info, Pat Stratis (Unit 89).
- **Rummikub** - Thursdays at 6:30 pm. For info, Kathleen Pimental (Unit 1105).

Meet Your Neighbor

By Bob Schleicher

Welcome to the next installment of “Meet your Neighbor”. Without further ado, here are more bios of our wonderful community residents . . .



Amy Primak (Unit #7)

I moved to Emerald Court with my eldest son, Ari, in February of 2020, after almost 30 years in Andover. I'm an involved member of the Umass Lowell community, where I've worked for the past 11 years. I began working part time in the Wellness Center in 2011 and by 2014 had accepted the role of Wellness Center Assistant; through Covid-19 I took on the role of Medical Record Manager. I love my work, and am happy to be part of a team that works to ensure that students can learn in a welcoming, safe, and healthy environment. Ari is also a member of the UML community, as is he pursuing a masters degree in computer science (a skillset he definitely didn't inherit from me!).

Though work keeps me busy, I enjoy decorating and designing event-decor in my free time. Most importantly, I love spending time with all three of my children, Ari, Adam and Shoshana.

Ari and I also enjoy taking walks with our sweet canine companion, Linus, whom you might have seen around the neighborhood. Linus is not only a beloved member of our family; he became our emotional support animal after my husband, children's father, and Linus's best friend, passed away in August 2018. Linus brings us lots of joy, and we truly enjoy the fantastic green space and fresh air that Emerald Court has to offer!



Paula & Tony Barilone (Unit #8)

Tony and Paula Barilone have lived in the Emerald Court community for 5 years. We previously lived in Billerica for 46 years. Both of us grew up in Somerville and graduated from Somerville High. Tony is a veteran. Tony has worked for New England Telephone, ATT, and now with Lahey Clinic. Paula retired from the Town of Bedford. We love traveling. We also enjoy a summer place in Maine. We have 2 granddaughters and love spending time with them. We are very happy to be part of the Community and are glad we chose here.



Paula Cassettari & Michael Pitreau (Unit #9)

Paula and Michael have lived in the Emerald Court community for approximately 12 years. They previously lived in Dracut for nine years. Paula grew up in Medford while Michael comes from Salem. Michael worked for United Airlines for 35 years before retiring two years ago. Michael likes walking, cooking and baking. Paula likes her life as a homemaker and doing prep work.

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David Arnold & Pat Smith (Unit #10)

In October 2004 I moved to Emerald Court from Amesbury. Living in this beautifully landscaped community with a group of wonderful people has been my great pleasure.

While raising the family, I lived in Millis, Billerica, Haverhill & Amesbury. I drove a school bus in Millis and Billerica and taught Jackie Sorensen's Aerobic Dancing, a nationwide exercise program, in Billerica and Chelmsford.

In 1987 I started working for M/A-COM, Inc. in Burlington and Lowell at Pawtucket Blvd. as a Human Resources Administrative Assistant, supporting the Field Sales Offices worldwide. I retired in 2001.

In retirement I have truly enjoyed being with my family. Watching each of my four daughters' families grow makes my heart sing. Just to be a part of the grandchildren's lives has been the greatest blessing. Now watching the great-grandchildren coming along I am in awe!

In 2008 I went back to ballroom dancing. That is where I met David Arnold, a very seasoned competitive dancer. He was a US National Amateur Ballroom Dance Champion in 1980. We have been dancing together for ten years.

Dave is a Physicist who worked for thirty years at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, MA in the Satellite Tracking Dept. His expertise is in tethered satellites and design of retroreflectors arrays for laser tracking of satellites.

Dave does Scottish Country Dancing and plays piano both classical & popular music (or used to)!

I love exercise classes, playing cribbage and reading. One of our favorite walking spots is Salisbury State Park by the ocean and river.



John & Joanne Sordillo (Unit #12)

Joanne and I moved to Emerald Court in September 2004. We visited many over 55 communities within 50 miles North or West of Boston for a few years. When we found Emerald Court, we knew that was where we wanted to spend our senior years. We were particularly attracted to the design of the Plan 2 townhouse. We also liked that the EC complex was set back from the main roads, but close to Route 38, restaurants and two major highways. We have very much enjoyed our 18 years in the EC community.

After our marriage in 1992, we lived in Woburn for 12 years before moving to Emerald Court. I have also lived in Revere and Washington DC. I spent a few years in the US Army, where I served in Ft Bragg, NC and Quang Tri, Vietnam. Joanne has previously lived in Boston, Lynn and Winchester.

Most of my work experience has been in sales management. I worked at Market Forge Industries, a food service equipment manufacturer, for 20 years. I resigned as Vice President of Sales and Marketing to open Postal Center USA, a mail and packaging store. I have also worked in insurance and at US Government agencies. I retired full time in 2006.

Joanne worked at UBS Financial Services for 40 plus years as an Executive/Financial Assistant. She retired in 2008. Joanne also assisted me at Postal

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Center USA.

We both enjoy reading, walking, traveling, following Boston's sports teams and spending time with close friends and family. We have traveled to many US states and several other countries together. I also enjoy playing golf. Joanne enjoys dabbling in writing "amateur" poems for family and friends. We enjoy the antics and companionship of our 10 year old cat Brady.



Kathleen & Peter Pimental (Unit #1105)

Peter and I moved to EC in March of 2021. We lived in Woburn for 20 years but grew up in Somerville, that's where we say we're from! Peter worked for Harvard University for 25 years in the transportation department and retired February 2020. I'm not retired and currently work from home. I work for a liquor wholesale distributor in their credit department. I've been with the company for 38 years.

My hobbies are reading, playing mahjong and Rummikub with others here at EC. Peter's hobbies are playing cards, other games and watching sports. We both love to travel especially to Aruba. Our bucket list vacation is a trip to Italy which we are hoping to do in the not so distant future.

We have two beautiful daughters who live in Tewksbury. This is the reason we moved to Tewksbury to be close by. We have a son who we are proud of that serves in the Air Force in Tucson, Arizona. We have three granddaughters and three grandsons who we enjoy spending time with at all their sporting events and just being able to watch

them grow up. We are coming up on almost 2 years at EC and we absolutely love it here.



Laura Thursby (Unit #1106)

Laura joined our community from the Indian Ridge complex in Tewksbury in March 2020. She chose us for her new home as she was impressed by our one floor condos with garage spaces for all. Laura has three sisters and many nieces and nephews. She has worked for 20 years at John Hancock and, before that, 15 years at Newton Wellesley Hospital. Laura has many interests including solving puzzles and crosswords. She enjoys watching sports and supports local teams. She also enjoys spending time with family and friends.



Rita & Rich Humphrey (Unit #1108)

In the summer of 2006, Rita & Rich moved to Emerald Court. They were not newcomers to Tewksbury where they had lived for 12 years before the move.

Rich retired in 2003 after 20 years from the City of Somerville where he was in charge of recycling. He

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lists golf, travel, and socializing among his interests. Rich spent 8 years in active service for the United States Air Force. He was stationed in Greece, California, and New Hampshire. Their oldest son was born in Athens, Greece. Rita enjoys playing poker and bingo as well as spending time with family and friends.



Elaine Williams (Unit #1110)

In December 2012 I moved to Emerald Court from the Sebago Lakes region of Maine. My only grandchild, now 15, is in Winchester. From the time he was 4 months old I traveled from ME to MA to take care of him 3 days/week. Moving to Tewksbury made the commute much easier. I am thrilled to say I still see him 2 days/week, only now I transport him to activities.

Out of college I was a social worker, then a stay-at-home mom, then an elementary school teacher (grades K and 2nd) from which I retired in 2007. Teaching kindergarten required me to do puppet shows and act out poems and stories. It was then I found I love to act, thus my joy in participating in EC skits.

Another joy I have found in this area is attending classes at the local Sew Together Quilt Shop. I love quilting and have made many quilting friends. Along with the wonderful people I have met at Emerald Court, life in Tewksbury has been great. Besides my daughter and her family in Winchester, I have a son and daughter-in-law in San Diego, CA whom I love to visit.

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Halloween Pie Night

By Frank Carey

It happens every year: "Halloween" and the Emerald Court Social Committee's "Halloween Pie Night". They don't necessarily occur on the same day or night but close enough and they are both fun events.

This year the SC's Halloween Pie Night was held on October 28th three days prior to the actual celebration of "Halloween". Thirty-nine folks had signed up for the delicious event and were welcomed by a super classy witch disguised as Social Committee member Linda Martin. As they arrived they bought the event's 50/50 raffle tickets to go along with the \$800 million "Power Ball" lottery tickets they probably had also purchased prior to coming to the event. (Hope runs eternal in all of us.)

The event got off to a fun start with Social Committee Chair, Peggy Schleicher, welcoming everyone and sharing a few Halloween jokes and riddles, which helped create a halloweenee tone for the evening.

Peggy then invited Frank Carey to lead the group in the singing of what has become EC's theme song and slogan, "Come and Participate". For folks that were not familiar with the "Cabaret" parody, Peggy's hubby and computer whiz, Bob Schleicher, had created a flash drive which enabled him to project the music and words on the clubhouse TV for everyone to follow.

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Prior to the singing Frank decided to have some fun with a good natured Barbara Swansburg who had come dressed as a pregnant woman with a shirt that read "Miracle of 2022". Frank told the crowd that perhaps

Barbara had "participated" a little bit too enthusiastically during the year." Lots of laughs. Thanks, Barbara.

Bob then clicked on the TV and everyone happily sang the EC theme song. The sound was unbelievable. (You decide what I mean.)

Peggy then announced it was time for pie. Tables were randomly called and folks slipped into the kitchen where the very competent SC members served up slices of "Mann Orchard" apple, blueberry, and pumpkin pies, which you could enjoy with or without whipped cream. The standard coffee, tea and water complimented the tasty offerings. The SC has never been accused of being frugal when purchasing eats for their events, thus there was plenty of pie so folks could make two or three trips to the kitchen. Which I did.

As everyone picked at the last remaining crumbs on their plates, Peggy prepared the group for a Halloween story that would require everyone's participation in its telling. Each table had taken a slip from a basket on which a spooky Halloween sound had been printed, e.g. howling, screaming, knocking etc. Peggy then read the story and each time she mentioned a sound, the table with that sound would make the appropriate noise. With the sound effects the story became a very haunting tale.

The story completed, a commotion could be heard in the kitchen area. Upon investigation it was discovered that a wedding was being planned. "Father" Bob Schleicher approached the group in the

clubhouse and asked if they would mind being participants at the blessed event? They agreed and the ceremony began with the introduction of a "Praying Mantis Groom" (Frank Carey) and a walk down the aisle of the "Praying Mantis Bride" (Linda Carey) both receiving loud laughter from the crowd.

The wedding skit was a hoot with the praying mantis groom becoming a bit nervous and upset when he found out his bride will "literally bite his head off" after they have mated. (His father never told him because his father was killed on his own honeymoon.) It was a very funny situation which brought lots of chuckles. **FYI:** A big thanks to Jack McDonough for introducing us to the "Praying Mantis Wedding" video which led to the skit.



The rest of the evening was filled with the singing of Halloween parodies "Deck the Halls" and "The 12 (13) Days of Christmas" along with a number of really funny jokes injected between songs.

The evening drew to an end with, not one but two, Mann Orchard pies being raffled off, and the drawing of the winning 50/50 ticket. Both pies were won by our ever popular Ruth Mosey and the 50/50 was won by one of the very lucky Dempseys. This time it was Linda Dempsey. Ruth gave the apple pie away to Frank Carey who was having company the following evening but kept the pumpkin pie to share with some of her family who were going to be visiting over the weekend.

Cleanup was again made quick and easy with everyone pitching in to help.

Thanks Social Committee for a lovely and delicious Halloween event. You folks work so hard to keep us here at Emerald Court active, happy, and smiling.

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Front - Left to right: Elisabeth Desmarais, Peggy Schleicher, Liliana Cohen, Wanda Corcoran, Diane Fahey, Mike & Rushel Cushing, Linda Carey & Melodie Teich; Back Table: Peter McCoy & Frank Carey

New Residents Coffee

By Frank Carey

Linda Carey has been the Social Committee's one person welcoming board for a number of years. Each month she calls the EC management company for the names of any Emerald Court new residents. She then calls each new resident and makes a request to meet with them at their convenience. Her purpose is to help them get to know better the community they have moved to. She brings a gift bag to each meeting, explains the many activities on the EC calendar, answers any questions they may have or tries to direct them to a source where they might have their question answered. She also uses the framed EC aerial drawing of the community, located in the EC conference room, to help new residents better understand the layout of the EC property.

To complement her effort, for many years the Social Committee has held a November morning coffee for any new residents who had moved into the EC community within a given year. However, due to covid, it has been a couple of years since Social Committee member Linda Carey has been able to get a group of new residents together for what had been this yearly casual morning coffee event. The purpose for the gathering has always been to help new residents meet some of their fellow new neighbors, meet representatives from the various EC committees and Board of Trustees and allow these new folks to ask any questions they may have about their new community.

As mentioned the coffee is a very casual gathering. This year, on November 19th, tables and chairs were set up in the EC kitchen for the 8 new residents who had accepted Linda's personal invitation. Each attendee was welcomed by Linda and given a name badge. While waiting for the actual meeting to start they were invited to enjoy a cup of coffee, tea, and some of the available breakfast pastries.

When all new residents had arrived, Linda started her presentation by welcoming everyone and explaining the morning agenda. She introduced the various EC committee representatives and then asked veteran resident Peggy Schleicher to model the kind of general information she would be asking each new resident to share in her round table segment. Peggy shared bits of her life, family, profession, and how she ended up at Emerald Court. This was followed by each new resident, and committee representative, following suit. As in the past this round table segment was fun, informative and created a neighborly bonding within the group.

Linda then asked new residents for any questions they might have, regarding the community, which the veteran residents or committee reps might be able to answer.

The gathering was a total success. While cleanup took place some new residents hung around to chat with their new neighbors and committee members. Linda hopes this simple yearly get together for new residents helps to exemplify one reason why Emerald Court is such a wonderful place to live. ■ ■ ■

Their Songs Live On

By Frank Carey

After a long hiatus due to various factors, one being the pandemic, Diana D'Amato decided it was time to see if Emerald Court folks might, once again, be interested in joining her in an "Off-Site" event. Thirteen ECers said yes so she arranged with the people at "Greater Boston Stage Company" to hold thirteen second row tickets to the theater's November 12th matinee presentation of "Their Songs Live On". She also asked her friends at Reading's "Venetian Moon" restaurant if they might reserve a table for the group in their street level room, so we could enjoy a delicious after show dinner.

What a treat was this off-site musical event. Richard Willis, the promoter of this show, was not a stranger to some of us. We had enjoyed his past presentations at the GBSC and were looking forward to this latest one.

Willis did not disappoint his audience. He had assembled a terrific and talented group of entertainers. There were five singers which included himself, two dancers, a six-piece band, and a well known local comedian, Johnny Pizzi, for this particular show.

The theme of the production was to demonstrate how many songs have endured over decades of time because of the writing, arranging, and/or the style rendered them by the talented performers who had recorded them.

The program listed 38 songs which had been made

popular by 20 different well known musical artists or groups, many whose lives were cut short due to accidents, illnesses, or drugs, but whose legacy lives on through these enduring songs.

The afternoon's matinee was divided into two forty-five minute segments with a fifteen minute intermission. At 2:00 there was the standard brief reminder of where the exits were and to shut off phones after which the entire entourage took their places on the stage and played, sang and danced to *Frankie Lyman's* "Why Do Fools Fall In Love?" MC Richard Willis then stepped to the mic with a thanks to veterans and salute to their service. Comedian Johnny Pizzi then joined Willis for a short funny skit. This was followed by Willis explaining the tremendous difficulties artists have making it in the music industry. To exemplify this fact he gave a short version of Rock and Roll's legendary Little Richard's difficult but successful rise in the music industry. This led to the beginning of the evenings musical play list starting with Richard's "Rip It Up".

The musical program was almost continuous. Some of the groups and singers represented were "The Platters", "The Temptations", "Patsy Cline", "Aretha Franklin", "The Carpenters" and "Whitney Houston" to name a few.

Brief histories associated with the 20 featured celebrated artists were blended into portions of the program. A special tribute to John Lennon was made by comedian Johnny Pizzi. He spoke of that tragic December 8th day in 1980 when an angry and perhaps mentally challenged person took John's life. Pizzi told of how Yoko Ono and Lennon had spent a scheduled day together but at the last minute decided not to go to their planned dinner at a restaurant. They decided instead to go home and the rest is history. The story was told with the band playing "Imagine" in the background and ended with Pizzi reciting the words to the song. So well done.

All 38 songs were terrific and included many different musical genres, e.g., rock and roll, pop, soul, rhythm and blues, country and gospel. What thought was special about all the singer's performances was that they didn't try to imitate these



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celebrated artists in voice, but instead sang their songs in the style which helped make both the song and the recording artist “Live On” through the years. WHAT A GREAT SHOW!!!!!!!

Ah, then it was on to our favorite Reading restaurant, The “Venetian Moon” where we all ordered drinks, our favorite dish, chatted, and just enjoyed each other’s company for the next hour and a half.

Thank you soooo much Diana D’Amato for deciding to once again plan an off-site event. It was SUPER DUPER. So many of us have missed these wonderful occasions. I know I’ll be waiting for the next one. There will be a next one won’t there????? (no pressure). We love ya and appreciate your hard work.

A little aside I’d like to mention relates to the “all gender bathrooms” now in use at this theater. I never experienced one until this night at GBSC. It was such a surprise to see a woman in a bathroom that, in the past, had always been labeled “Mens” but, was now labeled “All Gender”.

Wow! It was both uncomfortable and funny. I found it odd to be washing my hands next to a woman in a common bathroom and sharing opinions about the show. Ladies and gents, whaddya think?

♦ ♦ ♦



Saluting Veterans At Emerald Court

By Frank Carey

Although the EC Social Committee had to postpone their scheduled Friday, November 11th Vets’ Night event until Friday the 18th, the tribute they wished to convey to our Emerald Court veterans and ALL our country’s veterans was not diminished by the fact the event was not held on 11/11.

Thirty-one EC folks had signed up for the event, eight of which were veterans. Prior to the official start of the scheduled agenda, roast beef, ham and cheese, and turkey sandwiches were served along with Ginny Thomas’ famous tossed salad, chips and drinks. For the next forty-five minutes folks settled in around tables covered with red, white and blue

table cloths, napkins, and adorned with vases holding American flags and a rose. They ate, drank and conversed, all enjoying the presence of each other’s company.



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The scheduled event began at approximately 7:15. Bob Schleicher had prepared a number of videos which could be shown on the clubhouse TV allowing for group participation and a more effective patriotic salute to our veterans and to this country.

Social Committee Chairperson, Peggy Schleicher, got things started by having everyone sing “God Bless America” as the words and beautiful scenes of the USA flashed upon the TV.



A special “white table” had been set up in a corner of the clubhouse. The table had been set by an anonymous person. Its purpose was to serve as a symbol for and remembrance to service members fallen, missing, or held captive in the line of duty. The table had been set with specific symbolic items: A white tablecloth, a single red rose, a red ribbon, a slice of lemon, a pinch of salt, a lighted candle, an inverted glass, and an empty chair.

Peggy had been given a page containing the meaning and importance of each item on the table

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which she shared with the crowd. (Please google “Military White Table” for the touching significance assigned to each of these items.)

After this wonderfully symbolic tribute everyone joined together and sang the four verses of “My Country Tis Of Thee”. This was followed by a reading by Peggy S of “A Reflection on The Star Spangled Banner” which had been written by *Joe Burke*.

Next on the agenda was Linda Carey who read the poem, “Flanders Field”, which she told the group, was written by Lieutenant-Colonial John McCrae who was a Canadian poet, physician, author, artist and soldier during World War I. He wrote the poem after noticing how quickly poppies grew around the graves of those who had died while fighting in Ypres, Belgium. The poem’s references to the red poppies that grew over the graves of fallen soldiers resulted in the remembrance poppy becoming one of the world’s most recognized memorial symbols for soldiers who have died in conflict. VFW members pass out remembrance poppies each year when collecting funds for veteran causes.

Peggy then took the mic and recited the lyrics of the song “Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream” whose first and last verses contained the line “I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war,” a wonderful thought that brought an enthusiastic applause from the audience.



Veterans in attendance: Sam Vucina, Alan Katz, Ron Blanchette, Bob Wilson, Jack McDonough, Jim Korba, Lou Pina, Ray Adams & Kevin Walsh

Everyone then turned to the TV where Bob S had begun a video and music representing each of the United States military forces. While the video played Peggy S requested that veterans stand when the song

representing their branch of service was played. Applause showing appreciation for their service accompanied each military branch.

Ray Adams gave a brief presentation of his experience in the Air Force as crew chief in charge of plane maintenance. He talked about his required flights on the Strategic Air Commands “RB 47 Reconnaissance planes” and the important role they played keeping America safe during the cold war with Russia. He went on to say how all the military branches compile a band of brothers and how proud he was to serve.



A special event highlight occurred at the end of the evening’s program. Elaine Williams, a long time and very talented quilter, had designed and produced a three layered, 58” x 64” sized quilt that she had brought to the event to be raffled off among the veterans who were

in attendance.

As they entered the clubhouse each veteran had been asked to submit their name on a piece of paper. The names had been put in a basket and just before clean-up, a lucky veteran’s name was pulled out. The name of the lucky winner was Army veteran, Alan Katz. (Thanks Elaine.)

Thank you Social Committee for another heartfelt Veterans Day event. There is never enough we can say to thank our veterans for their service and dedication to keep this country safe and free. But you, the SC, work hard to try and show, each year, EC’s community appreciation for the veterans, through this salute and tribute to their service.

FYI: The 50/50 raffle was won by Liz Vucina.

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The Emerald Court Book Club: 15 Years Old and Going Strong

By Peggy Schleicher

Founded in November 2005 by Kathy Walsh, the EC Book Club is still going strong. Over the years, we have read 204 books, and nourished many friendships. The book group meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7 pm. New members are always invited to join. Taking turns selecting the book to read and discuss, the group agrees that we have read many, varied books and expanded our thinking. We use a book rating system. Each member ranks each book read on a scale of 0 to 10 with ten being a "wow" book.

Our top-ranking books in 2022 were:

- The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek -
Kim Michele Richardson - 8.6
- The Paris Library - Janet Skeslien Charles - 8.4
- The Personal Librarian -
Mary Benedict Victor/Christopher Murray - 8.3
- The Snow Child - Eowyn Ivey - 8.1

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When Sad Things Happen

The Emerald Court Community is saddened to learn of the death of Bryna Glater (Unit #1318). Bryna passed away on Saturday, November 12th, 2022. Our sympathy is extended to Mark and their entire family.

We are also saddened by the passing of the passing of Edward Seero III (Unit #1320). Edward passed away on Thursday, December 7th, 2022. Our sympathy is extended to Jean and her entire family.

Because we care about our community, if you are aware of the passing of any of our neighbors, please inform us at bobschleicher1@gmail.com so we can get the information out to the community in a timely manner. One person's loss diminishes us all.

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Thanks for Caring

by Peggy Schleicher

Thanks to the caring people at Emerald Court, 53 amazing holiday gift bags were delivered to the Wish Project. Wish is a local organization serving the Merrimack Valley. Every day, dozens of needy clients are referred to Wish by partner agencies: local homeless shelters, elder services, veteran programs and early intervention programs. Wish provides: bedroom, living room and kitchen furniture, rugs, dishes and all kitchen goods, appliances of all sizes, towels, beds and bedding, and more. Wish also coordinates a project each month to assist the homeless and home-bound. This year Wish's Holiday Bag Project, that we at Emerald Court supported, provided gift bags to home-bound senior citizens. On behalf of the EC Social Committee and Project Wish, thank you for doing good; thank you for the kindness and caring that makes the world a gentler place, one person at a time. ECers also participated in a monetary donation to the Tewksbury Community Food Pantry. We donated **\$1,423!** WOW! THANK YOU! ■■■



Computer Drop-In ...

Computer Drop-In is back in business. If you have computer questions / problems and are looking for a solution, stop by the Meeting Room in the Clubhouse on the 1st Friday of the month any time between 3:00 & 3:30 pm. We'll attempt to solve your computer difficulties - **FREE!**

2022 Social Committee Holiday Event

By Frank Carey

For this article I think I'm going to change things up a bit. Instead of recognizing and thanking various people and groups at the end of the article, I want to do it at the beginning.

First let's thank Norm Johnson for his wonderful and seasonally appropriate wreath photograph display in the Magnolia entrance hallway. Second we want to thank Sue Sandler, Peggy and Bob Schleicher, and Frank Carey (me), for setting up and decorating the clubhouse Christmas tree. It really looks especially spectacular this year. Third let's thank Sue Sandler for making the holiday event's creative and festive, name tags, label signage, kitchen table centerpiece, and individual sweet treat bags. Sue sure has a special artistic talent.

Fourth, we should thank Peggy Schleicher and her Social Committee for their hard work planning and carrying out this year's free December Holiday event despite the absence of more than half of their members due to illnesses. Fifth and probably most importantly, we want to give a big THANK YOU to the three EC committees and all the EC folks who donated to the SC's request for monetary contributions to the "The Tewksbury Community Pantry, Inc." An amount which totaled a generous \$1,423.

Thank You ♥ Thank You ♥ Thank You ♥

And what a great evening December 16th was. Forty-five EC folks had signed up for the Social Committee's yearly holiday event. However as mentioned earlier some folks had to cancel out due to illnesses and sudden conflicting commitments. One surprise and very sad cancellation came from the North Pole. Santa himself was not able to make his usual SC visit to Emerald Court. He was not feeling well and needed to rest to be sure he was ready for the big night. However he sent his wonderfully animated elf, Ozma, as his replacement. She took over as host and emcee for the night's "Singo Bingo" event.

Ozma started the evening off by announcing that

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the SC had purchased a variety of gourmet cupcakes for the occasion. The array of sweet treats included chocolate, carrot, strawberry cheesecake, french vanilla, and Tres Leches. She invited everyone to visit the kitchen, grab one or two of them along with a cup of coffee, tea, or water and enjoy a bit of conversation with their friends.

It was then time for the fun to begin. SC members passed out Bingo sheets to each table. Each table had a different Bingo sheet. On the Bingo sheets, instead of numbers, were names of Christmas holiday songs. Techie, Bob Schleicher, had put together segments of familiar holiday songs which would be played. If people at a table recognized the title of a segmented song and it was listed on their Bingo sheets, they could cross it off. The first table to cross off a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row was the winner and each person at that table won a scratch ticket.

Three games were played. Three out of the four tables won scratch tickets. Table number one didn't win. (Guess who was sitting at table number one?)

After the first game Santa's Elf Ozma reminded folks that Christmas was not the season's only celebration. She invited Alan Katz to explain the history of the eight day Jewish celebration of Hanukkah and Linda Carey to speak about Kwanzaa, an annual, December celebration of African-American culture.

In between the second and third games, Jan DiPietro reminisced with a couple of her and hubby Bob's humorous past Christmas stories. Our own EC resident and favorite joke teller, Ruth Mosey, entertained us with a couple of very funny jokes, and Bob Schleicher along with Frank Carey did a funny song bit about "Gettin Nuttin For Christmas". There were also a couple of holiday sing-along songs ending with, "Let There Be Peace On Earth", a sentiment we all desire.

Clean up was easy. Everyone pitched in.

FYI; the event's 50/50 was won by Sue Sandler. The SC's share was given to the Tewksbury Community Pantry, Inc.

Hope the entire EC community had a super duper holiday. The Communication Committee wishes all

of you a very healthy, safe and happy New 2023 Year.



Penny Lambroukos, Elisabeth Desmarais, Sue Sandler, Sam & Liz Vucina, Valerie & Alan Capone, Elena & Al Mahoney, Barbara Pothier, Larry Cullity, Mary McElroy, Elaine Williams, Alan Katz, Sylvia Usuari, Bob & Peggy Schleicher, Lucille & Peter McCoy, Liliana Cohen, Linda & Jack Dempsey, Nancy Callanan, Ruth Mosey, Jan DiPietro, Helen Wythe, Bert Lyons, Ginny Thomas, Linda & Frank Carey

♦ ♦ ♦

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LILIANA

By Frank Carey

There are 180 units that comprise the Emerald Court Villa and Magnolia community. Within each of these units, I'm sure, is an untold personal and interesting life experience waiting to be shared. As a regular contributor to the EC Newsletter I'm always listening and hoping to hear about an EC resident's special story or experience which might be of interest to the community. With that in mind, in September I was hearing little bits and pieces about Liliana Cohen (1127 Magnolia) who grew up in a city in Italy and as a young girl experienced the traumas of WWII.

Thinking an article like this could be interesting I also knew it would be quite an undertaking. So I immediately contacted Elaine Williams (1110), explained what I was thinking and asked if she would help me if Liliana agreed to an interview. Thank goodness Elaine said yes. From past experiences I knew her note taking ability was fantastic and would contribute so much to the writing of this article.

What follows is the first part of a 3 part series. It will chronicle first, Liliana's childhood in Italy, second, her life during Italy's WWII involvement, and third, her travel to and life in the USA. Hopefully you will enjoy following Liliana's fascinating life.

Part 1 Childhood in Italy

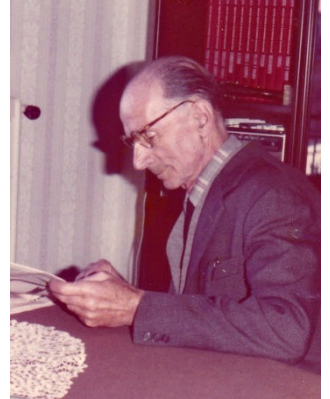
Liliana Di Perna-Cohen was born June 23, 1930 in Salerno, Italy: a port city south of Naples. It is in the Campania region of Italy. There were five children in the family: four girls and one boy.



She describes her mom, Anna, as a good, brave, intelligent and a liberal woman, who loved to read and was a strong advocate of education especially for her children. Liliana said her mom also had a gorgeous soprano operatic voice and would often sing with the windows open for neighbors to

hear.

Her dad, Angelo Di Perna, worked at the Salerno Railroad Station. Liliana says that he was an unbelievably skilled person who could build and/or fix anything. Using basic hand tools he made things for family and friends, e.g. furniture, bags, shoes. He had a radio that only he could touch. At 1:00 PM he turned it on to hear the news. She said he also had a great sense of humor.



The railroad provided three apartment buildings for their employees. They would rent each apartment at a reasonable cost.



Liliana's family of seven lived on the third floor of a five story building an apartment that consisted of one kitchen, one

bedroom, one living room and one bathroom. There was no phone, no refrigerator, and no hot water.

Their meal usually started with pasta. After the meal the warm water from cooking the pasta would be used to wash the dishes which were then rinsed with cold water.

Liliana said the rooms were fairly large and comfortable. At night she and her three sisters would sleep in the living room, there was a bed in the kitchen for her brother, and her mom and dad slept in the only bedroom.

Liliana shared a bit of interesting information about the apartment. She said that upon retirement the company transferred ownership of the apartment, at no cost, to her father. When her father died, it went to her mother. When her mother died it went to the children.

Times could be difficult. Her father got paid only once a month. Although her parents were frugal,

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they worried whether the money would last until the end of each month.

Because there was no refrigerator, Liliana's mom would shop every day for fresh food. In winter the balcony served to keep things cold.



Liliana with her sisters
Rachele & Anna

As a child, Liliana's youth was typical of most kids living in her area. She rarely did work in the home except when her mother made noodles and gnocchi. The girls would help with that.

She went to the movies where she saw films from the US. She saw Shirley Temple and a funny male twosome that she thought might have been either Abbott and Costello or Laurel and Hardy. She also went to live theater and remembers seeing "Madam Butterfly".

Liliana played with the children from the three railroad buildings. They often wrote stories and put on plays. The kids that were not part of a particular play pretended they were paying to attend the play by giving a rock or something like that to see the show.

Italy's Mussolini government provided and allowed kids to go to camp for free. The day camp Liliana attended was located near the beach which was within walking distance of her home. It was where she learned to swim. She also learned to dive off the rocks that protruded from the water. Liliana and her friends loved to swim and dive and became very good at it. They would often swim or dive to the sea floor to gather "Black Sea Urchins".

Elementary school in Italy consisted of grades one - five. Although the average age to start school in Italy was six, Liliana started her schooling at the age of five. She loved school and studied very hard. She finished the 5th grade when she was nine years old. However, her mother thought she should repeat 5th grade at a Catholic school run by nuns where her

mom thought she would get a more comprehensive education. Liliana said it turned out to be a great decision.

At the new school Liliana said she and her classmates could be a bit mischievous when the nun was out of the room. Perhaps, recognizing that Liliana was a major contributor to the problem, the nun decided that whenever she had to leave the room she would put Liliana in charge of the class. The problem disappeared which exposed a strong leadership quality in Liliana. Liliana also loved to write stories. Her teacher would often send her to other classes to read her stories to them.

It was also at this time when Liliana, while playing with other neighborhood kids, first heard that Italy would go to war and be allied with Germany and Japan (June 1940). Her father's radio also spoke of war. It was a concern for her family and many other Italians that being aligned with Germany meant that the US, France and England would be their enemies.

While Liliana continued her education, she and the people in her neighborhood continued to hear stories of the war which made them scared and worried. There was a scarcity of important food staples such as bread and flour. The war got closer to Salerno. Liliana began hearing the sounds of the large bomber planes as they flew overhead towards Naples, which was a major target of the allies and just 40 miles away from Salerno. One day they heard bombing in Salerno. Their mother told them to run to the basement where they sheltered while hearing the bombs falling and exploding. Fearing the potential of a gas attack her mother gave them wet cloths to cover their nose and mouth for protection. On that same night there was bombing again. Although they could feel their apartment building shake, it was not hit directly. The bombing created a constant fear and worry within the whole neighborhood. Liliana's father decided the family had to leave their home and he set out to find a means by which they could evacuate the area and move to a, hopefully, safer place.

(To be continued in the April Newsletter)