

Letter from the Editor

History eventually weighs in on the wisdom of the choices we make. Decisions made in the heat of daily life with imperfect knowledge become seasoned with time and distance – the main ingredients in the recipe for 20-20 hindsight. Unlike the roiling cauldron we face each day, hindsight simmers then cools on the stovetop of public opinion giving us perspective. So it will be with the political, social, and economic challenges we face today. In the meantime, it is important that we not lose sight of norms that extend basic decency, civility, and respect toward one another and contribute to building the strength of character that guides each of us through life.

This strength of character is neither boastful nor arrogant. It is not seen on the evening news or in social media. It is not about flag waving or alternate realities. It is tolerant and thoughtful. It is quiet and unassuming. It is steady and true. It is the generosity demonstrated by those of you who offer rides, rake leaves, pay a friendly visit or volunteer in any number of ways to help each other. It is found in the heart of a Groton Neighbor.

COVID notwithstanding, membership continues to grow, and services provided by our members this past year returned to pre-COVID levels. We are cautiously optimistic as life continues inexorably on a path toward the semblance of normalcy you see reflected in articles found in this newsletter. While circumstances required six years before we could celebrate our 5th anniversary, we well know that this is still only a beginning. There is so much more to be done...and we have members who can do it.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and look forward to including your story in a future edition.

Be Safe. Stay Well.

Bill



Meet Our New Members



Allen King



Doris King



Geoffrey Spicer



Henry Bachteler



Megan Wirth

Groton Neighbors Celebrates 5th Anniversary

Groton Neighbors Builds Community Through the Joy of Service

By Jason Kauppi

As Groton Neighbors is about to complete its sixth year of operation, in November many of our members gathered at The Center for a panel discussion among founding members followed by light refreshments. Several members in attendance are pictured in the collage on the previous page. The discussion was ably moderated by Groton Neighbors Board Member and Vice-President, Jason Kauppi. Thank you to all our members who, in the spirit of volunteerism that defines Groton Neighbors, helped arrange this celebration. 🏡



Moderator Jason Kauppi directs a question to a panel member

Groton Neighbors, Inc., an all-volunteer member organization, is proudly celebrating its fifth anniversary of helping members stay in their homes and remain independent as they age.

On November 2nd, more than 50 members gathered at the Groton Center to honor their founders, Claire Macy and Bob Lotz. Hosting a lively conversation with the “visionaries and volunteers” who built the dynamic service organization, the talk explored Groton Neighbors’ origins, the resonance of its mission, and the behind-the-scenes work to establish and successfully operate the non-profit.

“It’s a very special organization. We describe ourselves as helping people stay in their homes, so they can be part of the community,” said Bob Pine, Groton Neighbor’s president, in welcoming remarks. “But helping goes both ways. It’s not just about the people who get help, it’s also about the opportunity to give to your community, to be part of the community, to assist people. There is a joy in that. It is really the essence of community that is created.”



Panel of Groton Neighbors founding members (l to r) Bill Knuff, Beverly Smith, Claire Macy, Bob Lotz, Diane Hewitt

All Photos: Steve Lieman

Bob Lotz and Claire Macy were joined in conversation by Diane Hewitt, Beverly Smith and Bill Knuff, a few of the many original volunteers who answered the call for assistance in creating Groton Neighbors.

The Sky's the limit!



Our members make Groton Neighbors soar.

"One of the things that gave me confidence to build this non-profit in Groton is there are so many people who are talented and willing to pitch in and do good things in this town," said Lotz.

The panel reflected on the steady growth of Groton Neighbors, even during the time of COVID. Now boasting well over 100 members ranging in age from 30 to 100, the organization offers individual transportation, household/handyman and technical assistance, and help with short term recovery services. Since opening its doors in 2017, members have provided 750 services to its neighbors in Groton.

Services are delivered at no cost to Groton Neighbors members by fellow members. Members pay an annual membership fee and the revenues cover the cost of the computer system and other infrastructure needed to receive service requests and match them with member-volunteers. Fees are kept low – currently under \$100 per year – because Groton Neighbors has no paid staff and no physical office expenses. Operated by member-volunteers, the organization offers partial and full scholarships for members in need of assistance.

"It was very important to us that we serve those who could not afford to otherwise (join)," Macy said. "It's very gratifying to me that that has continued."

A key to success for the organization has been detailed policies and procedures, but also the people involved, Knuff said. "If you're looking for the reason this organization is a success, everyone in this room need look only in the mirror. Everyone, regardless of what you choose to do, you do it. And we are so grateful," he said.

While initially conceived as a service provider, Groton Neighbors quickly added social events and activities as a way to build community and provide social opportunities to address isolation. Offering events such as lunch outings, film discussions, yoga classes, a book club, and walks in the woods seemed like a natural extension, Hewitt said. Often partnering with the Groton Public Library, Prescott Community Center, and Council on Aging, Groton Neighbors has been able to expand its array of programs. During the pandemic, when in-person, indoor events were not possible, Groton Neighbors adapted by using computer teleconferencing and invented "Porch Chats," matching members to enjoy regular conversations outdoors.

"It really was a way of getting all of us through this somehow. We weren't alone. We got to know each other," said Smith, a dedicated volunteer in the "virtual office" and Porch Chat participant who made a new friend through this initiative.

"At the heart of it, Groton Neighbors is simply people helping people," said Hewitt. "We see the joy people get in providing services and also receiving them. That connection is really critical with staying engaged with the organization on both sides of the equation."

For information visit grotonneighbors.org or call us at (978)272-0123. 📞

Visit to Autumn Hills Orchard

By Betsy Bair



Members of Groton Neighbors enjoyed a gorgeous fall day during an outing at the [Autumn Hills Orchard](#) event on Chicopee Row in Groton on Tuesday, October 11th. Orchard owners—and locals—Kim and Ed Herdiech, offered a history of the orchard, how they came to buy it during Covid, and how running a small fruit farm—with an emphasis on pick-your-own—can succeed in the face of a drought.

The community-minded couple, who left full-time professions before buying the orchard, offered a delicious sampling of about half a dozen of nearly 20 varieties they grow. They also grow berries, pears and peaches and are actively involved in regional CSAs. There were many questions about running an orchard and very thoughtful answers. We learned so much and are proud to have them as neighbors.

We encourage our members to support them when they re-open next year! Be sure to walk up to the top of the orchard on a clear day to enjoy the beautiful view of the mountains in southern New Hampshire. 🏡



Owners and Groton residents Ed and Kim Herdiech host an attentive group from Groton Neighbors sharing their story along with apple treats from varieties grown at



Brooke McKeever, Mike Manugian, Aleta Manugian, Bob Anderson, Allen King, and Marion Stoddart learn about fruit farming as guests of Autumn Hills Orchard in Groton



Brooke McKeever, Mike Manugian, and Aleta Manugian listen intently to the story of Autumn Hills Orchard, a hidden gem located in the hills off Chicopee Row about three miles from town center.

Puzzle Page

By John Greenman
Simon Schuster Puzzle Book #17

ANNUAL VISITOR

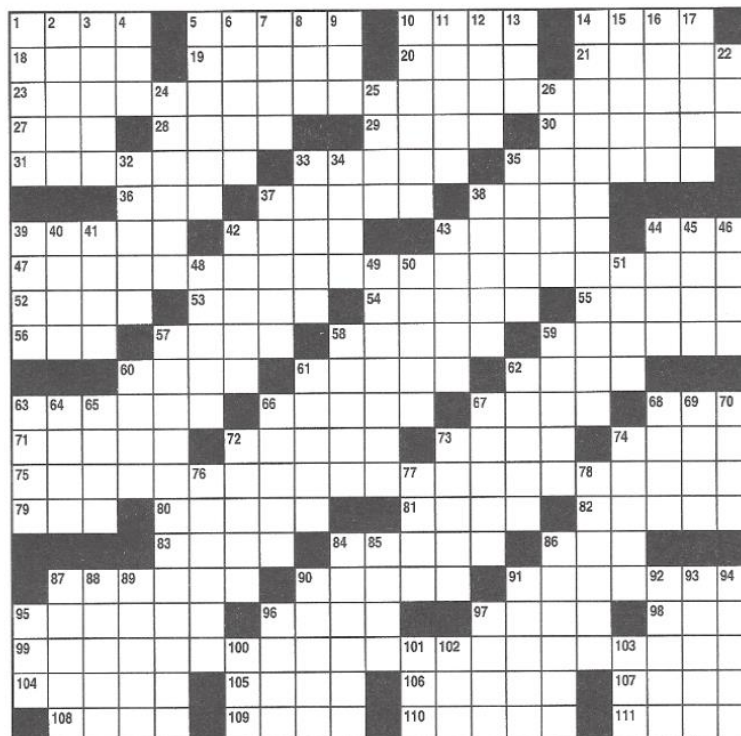
ACROSS

- 1 "Ahem"
5 Rod Stewart's former band
10 Gleeeful shout
14 Letters on a memo
18 Home to Columbus
19 Ambiances
20 Trumpet
21 CBS series "___ the Dome"
23 **Start of a seasonal quip**
27 Supplement the hard way
28 "That's one small ___ for man ...": Armstrong
29 Fluency
30 Makes a long-distance call
31 Case record
33 Flivver
35 Belt beepers
36 Two-timer, e.g.
37 Mob members
38 Jetty
39 Drawing room
42 "Crazy Love" group
43 White of letters
44 "Low" rapper ___ Rida
47 **More of quip**
52 Adored one
53 On a whale watch
54 Turn away
55 Let fly
56 Bad review
57 Bird sacred to Tut
58 Early calculators
59 Hernia type
60 In love, once
61 One way off a pirate ship
62 Portable quarters
63 Unexpected
66 Four on the floor
67 Stuffed shirt
68 Brother or sister
71 Town employee of old
72 "Prizzi's Honor" heroine
73 Kiltie's group
74 Halt
75 **More of quip**
79 Kid's mom
80 Yarn units

- 81 Courlan's cry
82 Bedouins and Berbers
83 Elysium
84 Spleenwort leaf
86 Hall and Oates label
87 Steamy
90 Bittersweet coatings
91 Gloucester goose eggs
95 Garlicky poisonous gas
96 Highlands highland
97 Cut in half by a magician, say
98 Lincoln's "Cap'n ___"
99 **End of quip**
104 Competes in a regatta
105 Padlock part
106 Astigmatic views
107 Threat-ending word
108 It once covered Gorby?
109 Pygmy arrow poison
110 Father
111 Pumps, in a sense

DOWN

- 1 Struck an attitude
2 Plumed military cap
3 Trig functions
4 Moppet
5 Observed Yom Kippur
6 Winter fisherman's need
7 It may need dusting
8 Put down a hero
9 In readiness
10 Durum and emmer
11 Ferrari logo
12 City N of Pittsburgh
13 Sheffield loc.
14 Book signing
15 Subtly derisive



- 16 Hognose snake
17 Flakes off
22 Title for Haile Selassie
24 Ethnicity of four billion
25 Ship latrine
26 Genus of a Serengeti scavenger
32 Grump's expression
33 Swiss Miss drink
34 Mouth top
35 Wine-list selection
37 Gordie and Mark of hockey
38 Fatherly prefix
39 Pal of hop and jump
40 "Shave ___ haircut ..."
41 Bird with a crazy laugh
42 Put forward
43 Sweater style
44 Masterstroke
45 Hawaiian flower?
46 Cy Young winner
48 Force of ___
49 Upholstery fabric
50 Dale on Buttermilk
51 Popular mulch
57 Impropriety
58 Ladd and Lerner
59 "Die Lorelei" poet
60 Starling's supper
61 Colleagues
62 Cod catcher
63 Dermatologist's concern
64 Forehead
65 Klingon ___ of Succession
66 Harry Potter's eye color
67 Tie design
68 Detached portico
69 Anapest's cousin
70 Tournament draws
72 Like Colgate's campus
73 Photo lab colors
74 Rawboned animal
76 Hits from "Your Hit Parade"
77 Barracks no-show
78 Gap
84 New England shake
85 Cambodian currency
86 Most windburned
87 Goody
88 Easier to play, musically
89 Cambodian capital
90 Issued
91 Oyster shell lining
92 Tango shoes
93 Dean's "East of Eden" role
94 Standardbred studs
95 Physical sounds
96 Source of protein
97 Tight, like tights
100 Upsilon neighbor
101 "Chicago" lyricist
102 "Same ___ Me": George Jones
103 Senate affirmative

Solution on page 10

What's Cookin'

CRANBERRY LEMON MERINGUE PIE

This recipe from the NYT was my addition to our Thanksgiving table in a bake-off with my granddaughter for dessert bragging rights. I left much room for improvement but this twist on Lemon Meringue pie was both a visual and gustatory delight.

If you are wondering who won the bake-off... both entries were awarded blue ribbons by everyone at the table. 🏆



INGREDIENTS Yield: One 9-inch pie

9" ready-made pie crust

1 cup granulated sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

2 medium lemons

3 cups cranberries (fresh or frozen)

2 tablespoons cornstarch

4 large eggs, separated

3 tablespoons cold unsalted butter

¼ teaspoon cream of tartar

½ cup confectioners' sugar

PREPARATION

1. Bake pie crust per directions and set aside to cool.

Filling

1. Add sugar, salt, and zest from 2 lemons to a large sauce pan. Gently rub zest into the sugar using pestle or back of a spoon.
2. Squeeze ½ cup juice from 2 lemons and set aside.
3. Add cranberries and 1¼ cups water to saucepan, and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Boil until cranberries have popped and the liquid is red, syrupy and filled with cranberry seeds, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Pour cranberry mixture through a sieve, pressing on the berries to extract all of their juice scraping everything off the underside of the sieve. Discard solids in sieve leaving 2 cups of liquid.
5. Add cornstarch to empty saucepan (no need to wash) and whisk in 2 tablespoons cold water until smooth. Add egg yolks and whisk until smooth, then using a spatula stir in strained cranberry mixture.
6. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring continuously, then continue to boil while stirring until very thick, 3 to 5 minutes. The mixture should be boiling hard with big bubbles. Turn off heat.
7. Stir in cold butter and reserved lemon juice until butter melts. Pour into the cooled pie shell and spread evenly.
(Pie can now be cooled, covered, and refrigerated for 3 days. Return to room temperature before topping with the meringue.)

Meringue

1. Whisk egg whites until foamy on top.
2. Add cream of tartar and continue whisking until soft peaks form.
(When you lift the whisk from mixture, the top will droop.)
3. Add confectioners' sugar and Whisk until stiff, glossy peaks form.
(When you lift whisk from mixture, just the tip will have a curlicue.)
4. Pile meringue in center of room temperature filling, leaving rim of filling exposed.
(If covering the filling, spread meringue over the crust.)
5. Bake at 375 degrees until meringue is golden brown, about 10 minutes.
6. Cool pie at room temperature until filling firmly sets.
(If meringue weeps moisture onto filling, dab away with a paper towel.)

Bach's Lunch at Groton Hill Music

By Bob Anderson



Theresa Fisk & Beverly Smith in from the cold



Betsy Tyson-Smith & David Smith arrive at Groton Hill



Groton Neighbors Bob Anderson, David Smith, Sue Baldwin, Henry Bachteler, Iris & Dick Staub, and Carole Greenfield (l to r) enjoy a mid-day concert



A round of applause!!



Bob Lotz is speechless



Martha McLure singing along



The philanthropic outreach by [Groton Hill Music](#) includes monthly free concerts for residents of more than 50 senior living communities, memory care units, and assisted living facilities.

Coffee, tea, water, and cookies are provided to supplement the bag lunches brought by many attendees. The hour-long concerts are at 11am and 1:30pm and vary across many music genre's, including classical, jazz, and more.

Although high-need community facilities are granted priority reservations, Groton Neighbors has been fortunate to have two tables (12 members) at each of the first two concerts. Members can register to attend the next month's concert on the GN website ([GN Event Calendar](#)) a few days after the prior concert. Members can request a ride by calling Groton Neighbors at (978) 272-0123. The [Groton Hill Music](#) website has more information about these Bach's Lunch performances and all the other types of concert



Pamela Hines Trio

performances currently scheduled. However, please be sure to use the [Groton Neighbors](#) website to register for a Bach's Lunch.

The November concert featured the Pamela Hines Trio, with Pamela on piano, Dave Clark on bass, and Les Harris, Jr., on drums. These artists are well known throughout New England, playing, and recording with other notable jazz artists. The program was

"Music of the Great Jazz Pianists", including compositions by Duke Ellington, Bill Evans, George Shearing, Herbie Hancock, and others. The audience enjoyed the ensemble playing as well as the extended solos by each of the players.

The December concert featured the Violin/Piano Duo of Li-Mei Liang, violin and Chi-Wei Lo, piano, playing 20th Century classics by Stravinsky, Ives, and six others. Li-Mei is familiar to many as the Associate Concertmaster of the Vista Philharmonic Orchestra, whose six-concert season in the new 1000-seat Concert Hall begins in January. The two provided information about the composers and their compositions before playing each piece. The virtuosity, beauty, and energy of their playing was impressive. The beautiful melodies and surprising harmonies and rhythms in some of the less-known works were enjoyed by all. 🏡



Li-Mei Liang and Chi-Wei

Upcoming Event GN Book Discussion

You still have time to join the upcoming Zoom book discussion on January 26th

We are reading Pulitzer Prize Winner

The Return

Fathers, Sons and the Land In Between

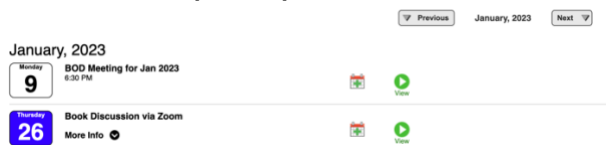
by Hisham Matar.

It is a short, easy read and you are sure to enjoy the discussion ably led by member David Smith

To register:

Click on www.grotonneighbors.org

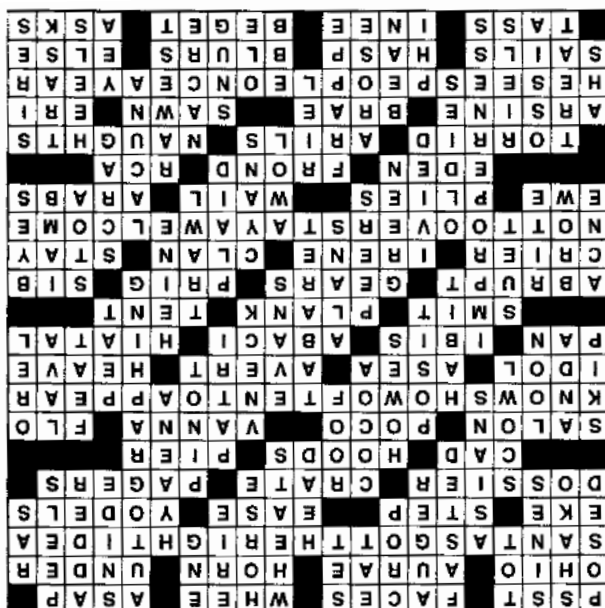
On January Calendar click green arrow then follow prompts



OR

Call (978) 272-0123 and the Office Staff will register you.

Annual Visitor Solution



Groton Neighbors

*Helping each other live
independently
at home*

BOARD MEMBERS:

Bob Pine
President

Jason Kauppi
Vice-President

Bob Anderson
Treasurer

Bob Collins
Secretary

Mimi Giammarino

Carole Greenfield

Brooke McKeever

Krys Salon

*Contact us to learn about
joining our growing
community*

Grotonfest 2022

By Bill Knuff



Groton Neighbors booth is open for business as (l to r) Bill Knuff, Pat Hartvigsen, Mike Manugian, and John Boynton await our first visitors. Note sandbags around a foot of the tent leg.

It was bright and sunny at 8AM on Grotonfest Saturday and Legion Hall Common was alive with the electricity that portends a large community gathering. I turned down Legion Street to be greeted by a fleet of new monster tree service trucks sparkling in the morning sun shouting "Pick Me! Pick Me!" to all passersby.

I had signed up for the first shift which also entails setting up the Groton Neighbors booth. By the time I arrived, Pat Hartvigsen, our fearless event organizer, already had the crew of volunteers at the ready. The rest of this early bird crew included Groton

Neighbors members Mike Manugian, Chuck VanderLinden, and John Boynton.

The booth is actually a small nylon tent that stretches over a metal frame. The frame is a diabolical device requiring an engineering degree to deploy. Undaunted, we charge ahead and soon the jumble of metal, nylon, folding tables and chairs is transformed into a booth. Up to this point I didn't fully appreciate the need for sand bags on the corners. Without them the category 2 wind gusts threatened to turn this into an air show. We set about filling zip-lock bags with sand and strapping them to each frame leg with tape. In a few New York minutes everything was under control and, replete with flowers and flyers, our booth was ready for visitors. Sometimes magic just happens!

A beautiful fall day and the draw of participating without Zoom contributed to a successful event. Several visitors stopped by to say hello, learn about Groton Neighbors, and inquire about becoming a member. A huge "Thank you!" goes out to Pat and all of the volunteers who took part throughout the day. This spirit of volunteerism is the epitome of what it means to be a Groton Neighbor. 🏡



Shift change as (l to r) Bob Anderson, Lois Young, Judy Anderson, Karen & Dick Bettencourt man the GN booth at Grotonfest 2022. Some paperweight gourds are visible protection against the wind.

Tech Tip

By Bill Knuff

I have been vertically and technologically challenged my entire life. There is nothing I can do about my height. Worse yet, I find myself shrinking. The challenges technology presents are another story.



Apple Macintosh II circa 1983

I recall when a desktop was something we sat in front of to write letters and a laptop was something that appeared when we sat down at that desktop. There was a time when I could disconnect at the end of the day when leaving the office. Our first company computer was a snappy Apple Macintosh II which had its own office with a sign-up sheet. Contrast that with wearable technology of today. There is more computing power on our wrists than in the Lunar Module guidance system that took some of us to the moon and home again.

Part of the problem is Moore's Law: "*Computing power doubles every two years*". Just as we are becoming modestly proficient with our cell phones...for me that means I can make a phone call...a new version is released with the ability to cook breakfast. This leads me to the other part of the problem...the human condition: "*We just gotta have one of those*". I have no expectation either of these conditions will change anytime soon. As a result, many of us have a Ferrari in our hip pocket with an ignition key to a secondhand Plymouth.

What to do? Geek Squads and the neighbor's twelve-year-old kid are certainly viable options. However, before crying "Uncle", we can also summon up the courage to try and teach the "old dog" in us a new trick. Access to a library of *How To* video clips on a wide range of tasks that will enhance the function of your electronic devices while providing you with more utility and less stress can be found by clicking [Senior Planet](#) from AARP.



Mobile "Bag" Phone circa 1980s

It cannot go without mention that your Groton Neighbors membership also offers a wide range of tech support services to help you solve that pesky download problem or other frustration caused by our dependence on technology. Simply call us at (978) 272-0123 or email us at service@grotonneighbors.org 🏠

Poetry Corner



Four Seasons of Groton

The Beauty of Yet

By Barbara Rich
Winter 2022

"Did you sign up for the Yoga class?" she asks.

"Not yet" he replies.

"Did you hear from your son?" they ask.

"Not yet", she answers.

The beauty of yet opens the way to possibilities.

Never, always, and should

Muddies the path and hardens the jaw.

Maybe we haven't forgiven, or been forgiven, yet,

Perhaps we didn't create the priorities, yet,

"Did you send that email?" she asks.

"Not yet", he replies.

The power of yet can strengthen

A fierce determination to renew a vow.

Rather than hiding behind a furrowed brow, or

Believing false data,

We can open all the doors

And let in what we don't know, yet.

Letters from Our Members

Our members are the lifeblood of Groton Neighbors. Our volunteers quietly and dependably provide the services that enable us to remain in our homes and connected to our community. We share these letters of appreciation from two of those members as a way of saying "Thank you" to all who give of their time and energy to make life easier for one another. If you or someone you know might benefit from membership, please email us at info@grotonneighbors.org or call (978) 272-0123 to learn more. 🏡

Dear Groton Neighbors,

How wonderful it is that we have neighbors who lend a hand when we need it. And how wonderful it is to be part of an organization like Groton Neighbors and the group of volunteers who can come to the rescue for needs we have as we get older.

I had a need last spring and fall for rides to physical therapy sessions in Concord - two rides every week, to and from, and with an hour wait in-between. It meant so much to me to have my rides scheduled with nice people, leaving me free of anxiety about getting to and from appointments. Groton Neighbors fills other needs as well, with many opportunities to give a helping hand or receive a service, especially as we age and want to stay in our homes.

It fills a very special need necessary for all of us. Groton Neighbors allows us to be in a community where we belong and to continue to be able to be part of old friends' lives and create new relationships.

Thank you to all the drivers. I am grateful for the help I received and grateful to belong to Groton Neighbors.

Sally Russell (Member since 2017)

Dear Groton Neighbors...

Your service is fabulous.

Since I cannot drive anymore and sold my car I'm so very grateful that your service is provided. I'm 100% satisfied with your service. Many thanks to the wonderful, capable, and punctual individuals who have transported me so comfortably and safely.

Blessings to all of you and HAPPY Holidays!!

Gail Jefferson (Member since 2021)

Civil War Veteran Receives a Visitor

By Alex Woodle

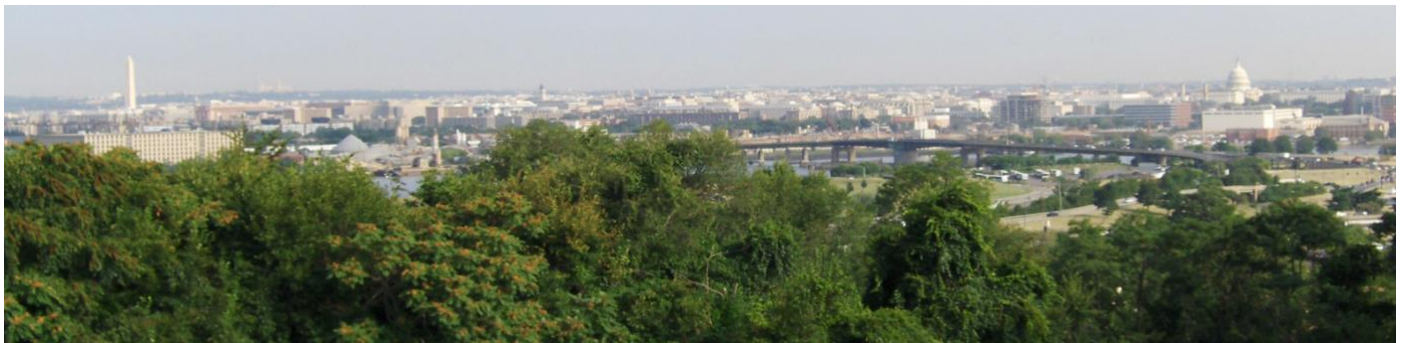
Simon Woodle was one of thousands of German speaking immigrants who came to our shores between 1840 and 1880 to seek a better way of life. His story is not of an extraordinary man who cures a disease, writes a famous novel, or creates a new technology to improve society. He was a common man who found employment, married, provided food and shelter to his family, and served his country during wartime.

He barely registered on the genealogical radar screen when I began my family research, but as I delved into the vital records, census, city directories, etc, a clearer image of him began to take shape. His paper trail led me to the home village of my ancestors in [Bohemia](#) (*Avotaynu*, Volume XVIII, Number 4, Winter, 2002 Page 8), and along the way, I was able to flesh out the bones of this man and his life in America during the last half of the 19th century.

Simon Woodle, an older brother of my great grandfather, David Woodle, was born in Ckyne, Bohemia on April 7, 1841. He embarked for New York City from Hamburg in May 1856 listing his occupation as a farmer. The trail ran cold until he appeared in the New York City directories in the 1870s. During this period his occupation was listed as hat maker, the same profession of his brothers Moritz and David.

Confusion arose when the 1880 census revealed a Charles Woodle, hat maker, born in Bohemia around 1840. The two sisters living with him during this time had been previously confirmed from the archives in Prague, Czech Republic as Simon Woodle's siblings, as well! The birth register for Simon's family clearly revealed no room for Charles Woodle to fit into my great-great grandmother's pregnancy schedule? Who was Charles?

I began to track the wife and children of Charles Woodle to see if I could somehow solve this mystery. The brickwall was finally breached when I found marriage records for two of his children listing Simon as the father in one and Charles in the other, but both married to the same woman. I concluded Charles and Simon were one and the same person. When I combined their records in my family database they meshed perfectly.



View of Washington DC skyline from St Elizabeth's

However, the most important find came from a commercial website that listed a Civil War pension record for a Simon Woodle. I ordered and received from the [National Archives](#) a voluminous record of Simon's complete military history. The file contained information on his enlistment and discharge and an extraordinary number of medical reports in support of his pension application including doctor's examinations and anatomical sketches denoting his wounds received in combat. His unit the [15th New York Heavy Artillery](#) had been in a number of significant engagements in Virginia from 1863-1865.

In 1920, his daughter Mary, crippled by an unknown malady and institutionalized, attempted to secure his pension. There were letters from her relatives and sponsors who pleaded her case, but to no avail. Her request was denied, because her father's death in 1898 was deemed not due to war injuries

Hidden within this pension file were other important genealogical facts; the early death date of his wife, the birth of a previously unknown daughter and his address in New York City in 1890. With this address the 1890 Manhattan Police Census could be examined to determine who was living with him at that time.

Finally, this massive file also revealed his place of burial: the Civil War East cemetery on the grounds of the Government Hospital for the Insane (since 1916 called St. Elizabeths Hospital) in Washington, DC. The federal government had established several hospitals across the country to treat the thousands of soldiers wounded physically and mentally during this horrific conflict.

In the National Archives Northeast Branch I found a microfilm showing the record of Simon Woodle's admittance into the eastern branch of the [National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers](#) in Togus, Maine in 1893, because of defective vision attributed to his service at the siege of Petersburg (VA). The following year he was transferred to Washington, DC where he died in July of 1898 from "organic brain disease."

I contacted the National Archives in Washington and spoke with the curator for St. Elizabeths' records. He said there was a small file on Simon Woodle and would send me copies by mail. The file included a letter written in 1896 by a woman representing Simon's daughters asking for information about whether he was alive or dead as he left home without informing his family! She wrote, *"...Hoping you will be kind enough and let me know something about him, as his children are anxious to know about him."*

A second letter from the then Superintendent of the hospital notified Simon's next of kin of his death. Another written by Simon's daughter Henrietta Woodle following the death of her father states in part, "We are very



East Campus Cemetery St. Elizabeth's Hospital

sorry we could not come on to see him as we are not in circumstances just at present. We are very thankful to you for notifying us as we are very happy to think that he was well taken care of in his last moments and to think we know where he is buried now."

This flood of information filled in many blanks in the life of this man, but I now wanted to find his tombstone and establish closure for the family. I spent a whole day researching St. Elizabeths Hospital and phoning various governmental bureaucracies to find out more about the Civil War cemetery located there. My persistence paid off and I received the first of many emails from an employee of the Government Services Administration (GSA) whose job included property administration over a portion of the St. Elizabeth's. He became my genealogical guardian angel writing to me every day!



It turns out there are two Civil War Cemeteries, the east and west and they are not documented very well. He was, however, able to determine that Simon was buried in the east cemetery. He contacted a local cemetery historian and promised to look for the grave. The cemetery is located just outside St Elizabeth's security wall (the current home of the would-be assassin of President Reagan)

I received an email from my guardian angel that evening stating, *"I wish I could tell you I scanned the 1000s of gravestones that are out on the East Campus...but we were there only about 5 or 10 minutes...there were four of us wandering through the cemetery, just talking...and I turned, and damn if Sgt. Woodle's gravestone wasn't right in front of me!"*

It was one of those miraculous moments all genealogists live for! In this vast sea of graves, they had accidentally stumbled onto Simon's marker. My GSA contact told me that St Elizabeth's was

celebrating its 150th anniversary in June and that I should come at that time. I contacted the organizers of the birthday celebration and was invited to lay a wreath at the memorial service. I purchased an official Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) grave marker to bring with me to mark Simon's grave.

So, in June, I flew down to Washington, DC and spent that weekend listening to speakers talk of the work of the hospital, the horrific accounts of casualties including thousands and thousands of soldiers who suffered from what we now call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Simon's fatal illness classified, as "brain disease" and "chronic dementia" may very well have been PTSD. We will never know for sure. What I do know for sure is my visit to Simon's gravesite was probably the first by a member of my family. I proudly placed the grave marker next to his tombstone and stood for a moment of silence. 🏠

Leap of Faith



Every odd numbered year since 1977 a starting gun has sent a fleet of pleasure yachts on a race that begins off Bird Island at the entrance to Sippican Harbor in Marion, MA and ends over 600 nautical miles away off of St David's Head in Bermuda. For many years I was involved in this race both as a participant and later as a member of the Race Committee in the capacity of Race Book Editor. The following account appeared in the 2017 edition of that magazine. The memory will last a lifetime.

At this time of year when we are particularly mindful of and thankful for family and friends, this story of offering aid to strangers in need reinforces our belief in the goodness to be found in each and every one of us. I hope it will resonate with you. 🏠

Leap of Faith

By Jamie Blaine

“I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world.” Ishmael



Restive on her mooring in Maine

Setting Off

For some unfathomable reason – since I had never been on a small boat miles from land – I accepted an old friend's invitation to sail on the return leg of the Marion-Bermuda race. I looked forward to the opportunity to get away, learn whatever I might and have, perhaps, a bit of an adventure.

It was hot and humid the morning of Sunday, June 28th, 2015, when five of us set sail on *Restive*, a lovely 49' wooden sloop, a rarity in an age of fiberglass. With a forecast of clear skies and a favorable wind, we were bound for Newport, RI, 635 nautical miles away. (A nautical mile, I learned, is not a precise distance, but a fraction of Earth's 360-degree circumference. Each degree is divided into 60 minutes, and a nautical mile is equal to one minute of Earth's arc – approximately 1.1508 miles.)

As we pulled away from the dock, I inexplicably tripped over the cockpit rail and found myself fully airborne and heading straight for the back of our unsuspecting captain, who was intently maneuvering us into Hamilton Harbor. It was a clean hit. The full force of my body drove the startled skipper into the wheel and firmly wedged his Adam's apple against one of its spokes, rendering him momentarily unable either to steer or to breathe. We were off!

At Sea

Restive, with the captain recovered but still bewildered, made for the open sea, destined for Newport with nothing between us but salt water. If the southwest wind held, we could sail straight to Newport on what we salts call a port tack. It also meant high seas, which made stomachs dyspeptic and turned simple tasks into physical challenges. Instead of simply walking to the "head", it was necessary to grab onto whatever was handy and haul yourself painfully forward. Once there, you faced a whole new set of challenges.

A few days earlier, with a different crew, *Restive* had completed the actual race. It had been quite a trip. The jib's roller furler had broken during a storm, forcing the crew to spend several perilous hours wrestling the huge sail onto the deck. But *Restive* sailed on undaunted, navigating only by the stars. Although she had twice won the celestial navigation class, this time she veered inexplicably to the northeast and missed Bermuda entirely. This is not an insignificant miscalculation, as the island is a lonely collection of rocks in an otherwise empty ocean – Cape Hatteras, the nearest dry land, is 580 miles away.

Evening Star

We watched the water change from the aquamarine of Bermuda's coastline to the Atlantic's deep, rich blue; and in two days we had covered 352.5 of our 635-nautical-mile trip, a record pace for *Restive*. Ocean sailing seems to consist of long periods of boredom, accompanied by discomfort, interspersed with moments of terror, all taking place in a tiny capsule on an endless sea. There are those who love it – the hoisting and lowering of sails, charting a course in an ocean without markers, scanning the skies for approaching storms and, my favorite, hanging out with friends, swapping stories.

For me, night was a special time. The sky was filled with millions of distant lights as we sailed beneath the Big Dipper, the North Star directly above our mast. It was the time of the Jupiter-Venus conjunction, and the tiny evening star seemed to pull the fiery torch of Jupiter across the night sky.

After the first night we never saw another boat. There was nothing in any direction but water, all the way to the horizon – which, the prayer reminds us, is "nothing save the limit of our sight." It is amazing to be at once so cut off from the world and so connected to the universe, "alone, on a wide, wide sea."

Cast & Crew

We were five, four old friends, the fifth picked up from an Internet site - sort of a seafarers' match.com where captains look for crew and sailors look for boats.

George: The Captain. A veteran sailor with many Bermuda races in his topsiders. He had lovingly overseen every aspect of *Restive's* design, construction and launching in 2006. Calm, focused, and confident...a skipper's traits.

David: A former Marine combat engineer with a keen mechanical aptitude and a fascination with deciphering how things work. An unruffled sailor, he innately grasped *Restive's* nuts and bolts. An unenthusiastic swimmer.

Fred: A man of remarkable physical strength and unflagging good humor. A tough and fearless seaman, he was also the cook.

Dave: An MIT-trained engineer, who built his first boat from a kit at the age of nine; a genius at determining what is wrong and fixing it.

Your scribe: a rookie.

As we set off, we little knew how critical these attributes would soon prove – especially the personal ones.

To Read more [Click HERE](#)

Groton School



LESSONS & CAROLS

Groton School's Festival of Lessons & Carols—first offered in 1929—is a distinct expression of the school's Episcopal heritage. Groton was likely among the first communities to emulate this service from King's College in Cambridge, England, which held its first festival in 1918, just as World War I ended and during the deadly influenza pandemic.

Each year at this time, Groton School celebrates the holidays with A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. Sung by the student choir, the first of three presentations are held on Friday evening. The public is invited to attend. To enjoy a video of the 2021 Celebration of Nine Lessons & Carols, click on this link: [LESSONS & CAROLS 2021](#). 🏠



In Memoriam

John "Jack" William Kane

December 14, 1948 - December 10, 2022



We were saddened to learn of John Kane's unexpected death this past week. John was an enthusiastic supporter and contributor to Groton Neighbors and to our community at large. We send our deepest sympathy to his wife Karen and their family on their profound loss and will continue to hold them in our thoughts and prayers.

Joining our organization in 2019, John eagerly embraced our mission and provided both handyman and transportation services to our members. We could always rely on John to help with our events and programs. Every activity and each ride extended to another member was made just a bit better by John's infectious smile and gregarious, warm personality. He will be sorely missed by his friends and neighbors. To read obituary click [here](#).

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Jack's memory to the Brian Kane Memorial Scholarship Fund, 27 Oxbow Lane, Groton, MA 01450.

Help Wanted

We are looking to fill two positions on our dynamic volunteer *Office Staff Team*. Office Staff members monitor the GN virtual office twice each month with minimal intrusion on your personal life. Advantages include a predictable schedule, supportive team, and connection with members. Training is provided.

The Office Staff plays a vital role in providing essential services to our members include processing service requests and responding to general inquiries.

The position requires having a computer, a cell phone, and internet access. While it can vary, the time requirement during a typical shift is about 2 hours. To learn more call our office at (978) 272-0123 and one of our Office Staff will help you. 🏠

Christmas Dinner

By Carole Greenfield



On Christmas Day members of Groton Neighbors helped bring holiday cheer to the tables of several Groton families. The brief account that follows tells how many spent part of their Christmas day. All of those who organized and volunteered exemplify what it is to be a Groton Neighbor.

One of my favorite events of the year took place on December 25th. Over 30 people, young and old, Christian, Jewish and Muslim, were involved in the cooking, collation, and delivery of home-cooked meals for fellow Groton residents. One lovely family had their young children create hand-decorated cards for each recipient.

This project was initiated by the Groton Jewish Community Group over 25 years ago. It has since expanded to include people of all faiths and all ages. For the past two years several Groton Neighbors members have participated in this community event.

The morning of the program is always exciting and stressful. At 10:00AM, we had an extra leaf in the table and the banana boxes donated by Shaws Market were piled high waiting for items on today's Christmas menu to appear. As if by magic, by 10:30AM squash, green beans, peas, brussels sprouts, asparagus, carrots, potatoes, turkey, chicken, ham, breads, rolls, teas, waters, clementines, apples, brownies, cookies, candy, and cupcakes had arrived. Our hardy crew filled each box with the appropriate delicacies and the delivery team was on their way by 11:30AM addresses and phone numbers in hand.



Groton Neighbors member Lois Young ready for work



Groton Neighbors member Susan Shay on assembly

Amy Degen coordinates this project every year and Leslie Lathrop worked with the Groton Center to obtain the list of recipients. In addition to the 25 cooks, an assembly crew, and delivery team, the Williams family created a handmade Christmas card to accompany every box. Amy sends a huge thank you to all who made it possible to deliver the "23 meals to seniors" along with a "meal and desserts to the Police Department."



Groton Neighbors member Bill Knuff preps baked potatoes



Special thanks to Groton Neighbors members Bill Knuff (baked potatoes), Cheryl King (cookies and turkey), Susan Shay (delivery person), Lois Young (rolls and asparagus), Diane Hewitt (stuffing) and Carole Greenfield (brownies).

We are truly grateful for all the kind and generous people involved in this effort! If you would like to participate next year or receive a meal, send an email to carolegreenfield3@gmail.com and we will add your name to our list. As Amy said, "It truly took a village!"



Leo Williams and his dad Eric deliver Christmas cards

Happy Holidays and have a happy and healthy New Year! 🏠

