

Letter from the Editor

The return to Daylight Savings has always been my favorite harbinger of Spring. The added daylight helps shake off winter's hibernation with anticipation of walks in the garden and reconnection to a world of renewal outdoors. Our book selections shift from fireside to beach reads. Fresh air and sunlight seem to lighten the weight of political and ideological divides deepened by an endless news cycle. The outdoors beckons all of us. Personally, my fair weather 60° threshold for getting out on a bike is repeatedly tested by deceptive sunny 50° April days. Whatever your personal reawakening brings, we share the good fortune of living in this place...surrounded by the beauty of New England, the quiet comfort of Groton, and the warmth of neighbors who care.

A recent snowstorm presented a challenge for Groton Neighbors and serves to prove my point. One of our members had requested a non-local ride to an inflexible appointment inside Rte128. Two Groton Neighbors volunteer drivers collaborated each offering to provide one leg of a same-day trip. An impending snowstorm threatened the entire plan. At the last minute over a weekend, plans were changed to create a two-day arrangement accommodating both requesting member as well as both volunteer drivers. This was all done out of an abundance of caution and was successful due to the total cooperation of all parties. Terri Ragot and Henry Bachteler deserve special mention for going above and beyond in service of their fellow Groton Neighbor.

This Spring 2023 edition of your newsletter offers a panoply of interesting articles and stories that serve to introduce new members, give oxygen to new ideas, explore our past, and celebrate the present. We are always looking for stories from our members. If you have a story to share, please send it to us at info@grotonneighbors.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Video links found throughout your newsletter serve to enhance your enjoyment. If this is uncharted territory for you, please seek out a friend who has a computer and visit the Groton Neighbors website at www.grotonneighbors.org. On the Home page *without a need to login*, simply ask your friend to click on the Newsletter icon to access the enhanced digital version of the newsletter with video links. Enjoy!

Bill

Meet Our Newest Members



Paul Blount



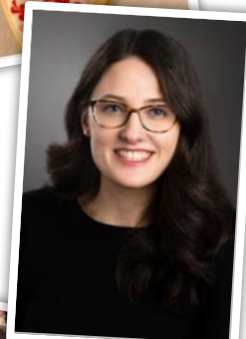
Mary Tibma



Jack Petropolous



Lynn Spadone



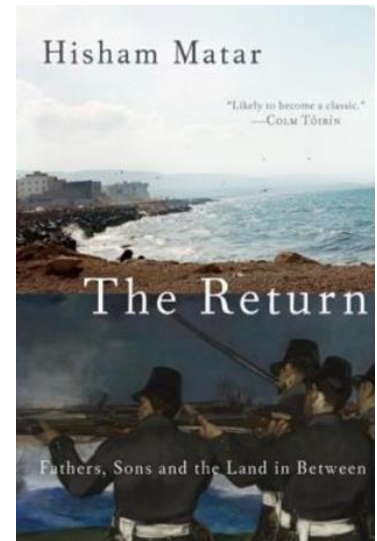
Book Discussion: The Return

The Return *Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between* by Hisham Matar

The author was nineteen years old studying in England when his father was imprisoned as an outspoken opponent of the Qaddafi regime. Matar would never see his father again but never gave up hope that his father was still alive. "Hope is cunning and persistent", says the author.

Over twenty years pass, and Qaddafi has fallen. Hisham returns to Libya with his mother and wife filled with hope in an effort to find closure. *The Return, Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between* is the story of what he finds.

In late January **Bob Lotz, Chuck VanderLinden, Bob Anderson, Jane Fry, Carole Greenfield, Betsy Bair, and Bill Knuff** assembled via Zoom to discuss the latest book selection by our discussion leader, **David Smith**. David was a late scratch due to a conflict, but we managed to muddle along on our own. Here is a brief recap of thoughts and observations from the group.



Generally, everyone thought the book was well written, but the flashback structure was confusing. Bob Lotz and Chuck VanderLinden both listened to an audio version read by the author and felt that his voice added significantly to internalizing the author's experience as he walked us through his journey.

We all agreed that we learned much about life in Libya under the oppressive Qaddafi regime but not much about the relationship between the author and his father. There was a sense of tension or suspense to the story but owing more to the uncertainty of life under a violent dictator than anything to do with the search for his father.

The lack of respect for women in Libyan culture was reflected by the way the author treated his mother in the story. Her feelings were generally ignored, and her care seemed to be taken for granted.

The question was raised about whether the author was driven to write this story to assuage his guilt from having been given a very comfortable life by his well-known and successful father...something of a Libyan Prodigal son.

Everyone seemed to feel the author was more than a bit obsessed with finding closure around his father's imprisonment. We briefly discussed whether we felt the author derived any satisfaction or closure from writing his story. The consensus of the group was that there was no closure for the reader.

Like all good book club members, everyone read the book but not without some question about how it could have won a Pulitzer.



Bob Lotz, Bob Anderson, Chuck VanderLinden, David Smith, Carole Greenfield, Bill Knuff, Jane Fry, and Betsy Bair met to discuss *The Return* by Misham Matar

There is still time to register for the next book discussion. Click [A Man Called Ove](#) by Fredrik Backman to register for our next discussion on April 13th.

Two films have been made of this story. The Swedish film (w/subtitles) available on [Amazon Prime](#). An American film titled *A Man Called Otto* with Tom Hanks was recently released and is available on demand. 🏠



Groton Neighbors

Helping each other live independently at home

BOARD MEMBERS:

Bob Pine
President

Jason Kauppi
Vice-President

Bob Anderson
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Bob Collins
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Carole Greenfield

Brooke McKeever

Krys Salon

Contact us to learn about joining our growing community

Help Wanted *Office Staff Team looking to add two new members.*

These volunteers form the front line of Groton Neighbors staffing our virtual office twice a month from the comfort of home...or anywhere they happen to be. Internet access, our website, and a cell phone provide freedom. Our experienced team pictured below provides flexibility and support. We would love to have you join us. Contact Bill at wknu2@gmail.com to learn more.



Betsy

Dick

Camilla

Linda

Bill

Bob

Terri

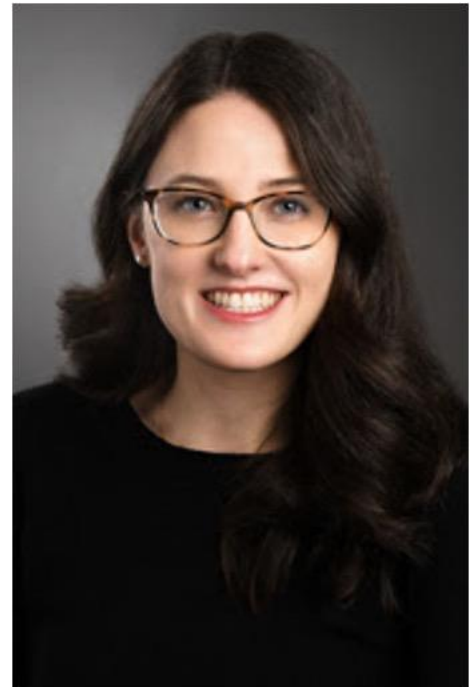
Beverly

Meet Megan Wirth

If you happened to miss the recent Groton Neighbor Meet Your Neighbor Zoom event, you are in for a treat. On March 3rd Megan Wirth sat down with Groton Neighbors Board Member, Carole Greenfield, to discuss a myriad of topics by way of an introduction.

Megan is one of our newest members...and our youngest member. She is intelligent, thoughtful, and funny. A clinical genetic counselor at Dartmouth Hitchcock in New Hampshire, their conversation ranged from what attracted Megan and her husband to move to Groton, to become a member of Groton Neighbors, to what exactly is genetic counseling, to how she met her husband.

As a genetic counselor, Megan works with patients to help them understand how inherited conditions may impact them and their families and supports them in making informed decisions about their healthcare.



Megan is a graduate of Ithaca College where she majored in Biochemistry, and met her husband, Blaise. After graduation, Megan and Blaise lived in Boston for five years where Megan worked in genetic research at Boston Children's Hospital before attaining a Master's in [Genetic Counseling](#) at the MGH Institute of Health Professions. In addition to her work in the field of genetics, Megan is a proud former volunteer for the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) and Samaritans, Inc., two organizations that push for better resources for underserved, and often misunderstood, patient populations.



Megan and Blaise moved to Groton in December 2021 where they live with their Australian cattle dog, Sydney. Megan fell in love with Groton, as it reminded her of where she grew up on a small farm in New Hampshire. In the cooler months, Megan and Blaise (and Sydney) have enjoyed cozying up in front of their first wood stove. In the warmer months, the couple has enjoyed gardening and walking around town. They love to support local restaurants and bakeries as much as their budget allows! Megan is slowly getting back into her former hobbies (hiking, reading, and sculpture) and picking up new skills (carpentry) in her spare time. Megan and Blaise are looking forward to making new friends in the community. 🏡

This Zoom discussion between Megan and Carole was recorded.

To watch the video [CLICK HERE](#).

Letters from Our Members

Dear Groton Neighbors

On October of 2022 I requested help with grocery shopping once a week for the months of November and December 2022. I decided I wanted to go to the market and shop for myself. I just needed transportation. When I moved East my car did not come with me.

A lovely, kind-hearted, and able gentleman volunteered to be my driver. His name is John Sopka. He was much more than a driver! He came into the store with me. Sometimes he shopped for his own family as well. Other times he just made sure I could get what I had on my list. He could reach that item I wanted which was on the very top shelf! When I still used a cane, I was able to manipulate it in a way to edge the item off the top shelf and into my grocery cart. This works well with canned and bagged items only.



John Sopka also volunteers on the Operations Team vetting Service Providers. He has been a member since 2017.



Jane Fry regularly takes advantage of the many benefits of her membership in Groton Neighbors since joining in 2017.

Now, I use a Rollator walker. So, having someone taller than me to assist is very helpful. In December the church I attend has a Giving Tree in the part where we gather for coffee hour. I took a tag off the tree, so I had some gifts I needed to buy for another family. John can see better than I, so he knew to show me the turn-style area in the Market Basket where there were many options for gift cards. I could buy a teen-age girl a TARGET gift card without having to go to the TARGET store. We lucked out there. That young girl's mother asked for a gas card. John drove me gas station in Groton, but they did not have gift cards. So, John drove me to a gas station in Devens where I was able to buy a gas gift card.

I appreciate knowing that John and all the volunteers from Groton Neighbors are there for me.

Thank you,

Jane Fry

Please write us at info@grotonneighbors.org. Look for it in this space. 🏡

Bach's Lunch

by Rick Muehlke



Overlooking the Skyview room where guests eagerly await the concert which is about to begin.

Photo: S. Lieman

On February 9 I had the great pleasure of listening to local, live music, for free. I was joined by eight Groton Neighbors members and friends, some of whom I knew, and others who I was meeting for the first time. GN had thoughtfully reserved two tables for us. By arriving at 1 pm, I had time to socialize over coffee and cookies before the concert began. The Skyview room was almost full, with 96 attendees.

The weather was typical of February in New England - overcast, cold, and windy. But Laura Altenor, Groton Hill's Community Engagement and Summer Programs Manager, woke us up with a

hearty greeting musically and verbally. She introduced us to pianist Bonnie Anderson, violinist Lisa Kempeskie, and cellist Shay Rudolph, who comprise the Stone Arch Piano Trio. They played eight pieces in just one hour. The theme was "Four Seasons for Three: Vivaldi's Spring to Piazzolla's Summer".

Of the eight pieces they played, I was familiar only with the movement from Vivaldi's "Spring" and Cole Porter's "Anything Goes". The musicians gave us a short introduction to each piece of music, which I found helpful. My favorite was "Vocalise" for cello and piano, by Rachmaninoff. The musicians performed beautifully. Individually, they are true professionals. And they clearly enjoyed playing as a group.

As a former singer, and now burdened by hearing aids, I'm sensitive to the sound quality of any performance venue. I'm happy to report that the acoustics in the Skyview room were excellent. The room is sized for about 100 people, so we were all near the musicians.

Many thanks to Groton Neighbors and Groton Hill Music Center for the chance to experience top quality music right here in our town! 🏡



Author relaxing in the lobby waiting for Groton Neighbors friends.

Photo: S. Lieman



Members Richard Hewitt, Carol Jewitt, and Lois Young attending the Bach's Lunch Concert at one of the tables reserved for Groton Neighbors.

Photos: S. Lieman



Not long ago this was a construction site. It is now hosting afternoon concert guests who still have to pinch themselves to believe this is happening in Groton



The Stone Arch Trio with Bonnie Anderson (Piano), Lisa Kemske (Violin), and Shay Rudolph (Cello) play to a packed Skyview Room at Groton Hill

Photo: S. Lieman

Puzzle Page

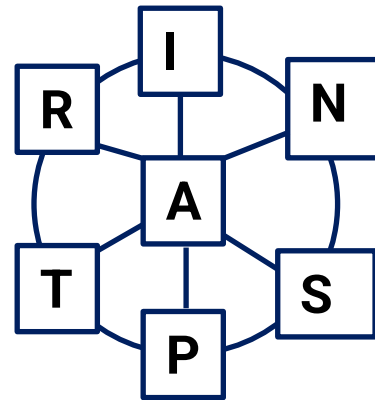
Word Wheel

Find words using 4 or more letters from the wheel. You are free to use any legitimate word, but all words must contain the letter in the center. Our answers worth 35 points can be found on page 11. 🏞️

7+ letter words = 3 points

6 letter words = 2 points

5 & 4 letter words = 1 point



_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

SUDOKU

Fill in boxes so each row, column, and 3x3 section contain numbers from 1 to 9. Solutions on page 11. 🏞️

EASY

4				5			8	
	6	7	2				9	4
8	1		3	9	4	5		
9	2		5			6	1	3
6		3		2	1			
7				3		8	4	2
			9	6			7	
1		5		8	3	9	2	
	9		1	7	5	4	3	

HARD

		9				5		
6			5	8	4			3
	8			2			1	
	9			3			8	
	2			7			6	
8			1	9	2			4
		5				6		

In Memoriam



Rosemary (Mimi) Giammarino October 30, 1954 - January 23, 2023

We have very sad news to report. Mimi Giammarino died on January 23 after a six-month battle with cancer. She was a good friend to many of us and a dedicated volunteer with Groton Neighbors. Mimi served on the Groton Neighbors Board of Directors and was a member of both the Marketing & Membership Committee as well as the Virtual Office Staff. She regularly transported our neighbors and never hesitated to care for a pet or make soup for anyone who needed support.

Mimi was an avid golfer, pickleball player, and member of the Garden Club. She brought laughter and joy to everything she did. Her beloved dog Ollie will miss the daily walk with Mimi and her friends. She will be terribly missed by so many.

Mimi was born and raised in Springfield, MA. After graduating from Notre Dame High School, she attended Becker College in Worcester, MA. After graduating from Becker Mimi became a buyer for Gilcrest Department Store in Boston eventually leaving the fashion industry for a sales position in the liquor industry where she retired as Northeast Regional Director for Chateau Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. Mimi's affinity for good wine and her expertise in the field led Chateau Ste. Michelle to name a Chardonnay and a Cabernet after her. 🏡

At her request contributions may be made in Mimi's memory to:

Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue, P.O. Box 808, Hudson, MA 01749 (<https://www.ygrr.org/donate/>)

Groton Neighbors, P.O. Box 1006, Groton, MA 01450 (<https://www.grotonneighbors.org/>)

What's Cookin'

Meet fellow Groton Neighbor Brooke McKeever. A recent transplant from Utah, Brooke spent many years in the culinary industry, including time as a Pastry Cook with one of Salt Lake City's top pastry shops. In this session, she will be using easy-to-find ingredients and basic kitchen equipment to create beautiful yet delicious Valentine's sugar cookies. Brooke will be sharing cookie dough mixing tips, baking tips, and some fun decorating options using chocolate.

For those unable to attend this Groton Neighbors event *"Just in Time for Valentine's Day: Baking with Brooke"*, we are pleased to share this recording: [CLICK HERE](#). 🏠

Sugar Cookies

Yield: 12 cookies

Ingredients

Butter.....1 stick-($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
 Sugar..... $\frac{2}{3}$ cup
 Powdered Sugar.... $\frac{1}{3}$ cup
 Oil..... $\frac{1}{3}$ cup
 Water.....2 Tbsp
 Eggs.....2 whole
 Vanilla.....1 tsp
 AP Flour.....3 cups
 Baking Soda..... $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp
 Cream of Tartar..... $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp
 Salt..... $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch video on how to make a paper cone used to decorate the cookies

Directions

1. Beat butter, sugar, and powdered sugar together with an electric mixer until the butter is a very light yellow color and fluffy.
2. Combine flour, baking soda, cream of tartar, and salt in a separate bowl.
3. Combine water, oil, eggs, and vanilla in an easy-to-pour container.
4. Once the butter/sugar mixture is fluffy, slowly stream the oil/egg mixture into butter while mixing, just until combined.
5. Add the entire bowl of dry ingredients to the butter/egg mixture. Mix just until almost combined, and finish mixing by hand so as not to over mix.
6. Wrap dough tightly using plastic wrap and chill in the fridge for at least one hour before rolling out. Using a rolling pin, roll out to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Cut using any cookie cutters.
7. Place cookies on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. These cookies will not spread, 1" between cookies will suffice. Bake at 325 for 9 minutes, rotate the baking sheet and bake for another 9-11 minutes. Look for a very light brown edging to start to appear on each cookie.



Autumn Ridge Luncheon



Groton Neighbors members at a luncheon gathering held in the Autumn Ridge Community Room. (L to R) Theresa Fisk, Nancy Peters, Sylvia Lee, Jan Cochran, Betty Irelan, Marion Stoddart, Carol Canner, Diane Hewitt, Beth Kubick, Iris Staub, Lois Young, Beverly Smith (inset)

Puzzle Answers

2	1	5	7	4	8	6	3	9
8	6	3	1	9	2	7	5	4
9	4	7	3	5	6	8	2	1
3	2	4	8	7	1	9	6	5
7	9	1	6	3	5	4	8	2
5	8	6	4	2	9	3	1	7
4	5	8	9	1	3	2	7	6
6	7	2	5	8	4	1	9	3
1	3	9	2	6	7	5	4	8

HARD

2	9	6	1	7	5	4	3	8
1	7	5	4	8	3	9	2	6
3	8	4	9	6	2	1	7	5
7	5	1	6	3	9	8	4	2
6	4	3	8	2	1	7	5	9
9	2	8	5	4	7	6	1	3
8	1	2	3	9	4	5	6	7
5	6	7	2	1	8	3	9	4
4	3	9	7	5	6	2	8	1

EASY

WORD WHEEL
 3 points: Partisan, Aspirant, Trapans, Spartans, Spirant, Spartan
 2 points: Tapan, Partan, Pinata, Paisan
 1 point: Prana, Tapir, Pants, Prat, Prats, Taps, Para, Part, Rapt

SUDOKU

*Many thanks to the
 very gallant gentlemen
 who helped me and
 drove me to Chelmsford
 on so many occasions*

*Merry Christmas
 &
 A very Happy New Year
 To all of you*

*Best wishes,
 Sylvia Lee*

This note of appreciation for all our Service Providers from Member Sylvia Lee pictured above is one of many we receive from our members.

[CLICK HERE](#) to contact us and learn about becoming a member. 🏡

Nuclear Influencer

Best Hope vs Fossil Fuels?

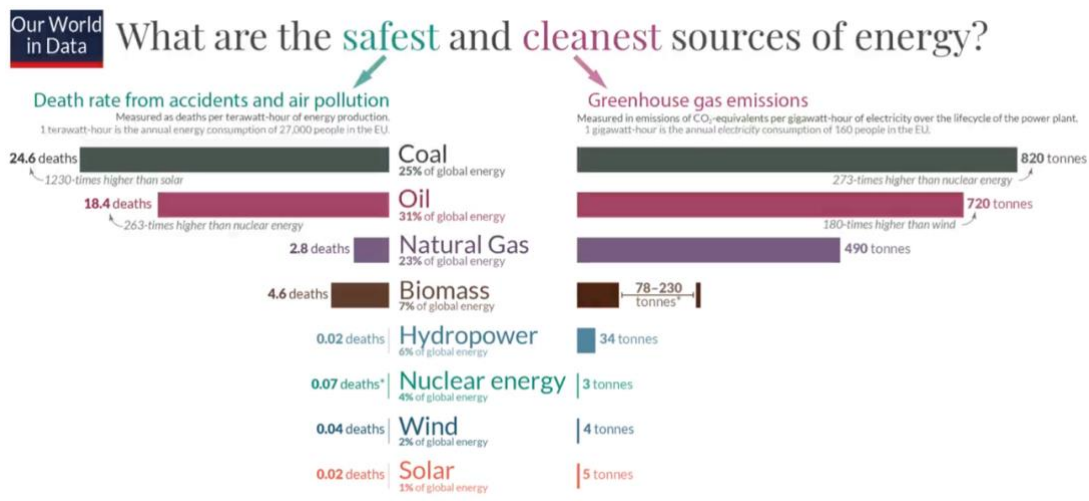
by Bill Knuff

We all hope to leave the world a better place than we found it. Most reasonable people recognize the dangers inherent in the continued use of fossil fuels to power the global engine of our lives here on planet earth. Much attention is given to tapping planet friendly renewable energy sources like wind or solar or hydro.

When I think of coal production, West Virginia and Pennsylvania immediately come to mind. You might be surprised to learn that Wyoming is the #1 coal producer in the US generating three times the coal output of West Virginia and almost seven times that of Pennsylvania.

Projects like Cape Wind have been trying to gain traction for over 30 years working against those who would opt to preserve their view over our planet. As Americans we pride ourselves on stepping up in a crisis...even if it is one of our own making. Unfortunately, this is not just an American problem and, as the wealthiest and most industrialized nation in the world, we do ourselves no favor by not setting an example for the rest of our global neighbors.

Three Mile Island marked the end of nuclear power plant construction in the US. Chernobyl and Fukushima further erode confidence in nuclear as an answer, but the graphic below presents a compelling argument for a closer look.



[Isabelle Boemeke](#) has decided that one person *can* make a difference and is setting out to be a voice in support of nuclear energy. When you have a few minutes to spare, click on photo above to watch her impressive presentation at a recent TED conference.

Look for other solutions to our global climate crisis in this space in future editions. 🏡

Poetry Corner



3:00AM

by Billy Collins

Only my hand
is asleep,
but it's a start

Here are two short poems that struck me for different reasons. As some may have guessed from previous works shared on this page, Billy Collins is a favorite of mine. I find this two-time former US Poet Laureate to be accessible, humorous, and pointed. The first poem entitled "3:00 AM" is from *Musical Tables*, a new collection of short poems by Collins published late last year and reminiscent of A.R. Ammons.

I am not familiar with Enrique Reyes but have always loved road trips. Reyes poem is reminiscent of many road trips...mostly on "blue roads" without agenda. There is a sense of wonder, connection, and freedom traveling where the wind...or the road...takes us. Reyes poem is occasion to revisit those moments where the reward is a pace that allows unfettered connection with the world around us. 🏡

Things the road shared with me

by Enrique Reyes



See the road extending forward
like elongated arms bound together
luring us towards these adventures;
Electrifying sunsets
splashing the sky with hues of red.
Brightest moon
with glimmering stars like shattered glass overhead.
Towering mountains
with winding roads and scenic views below outspread.
Snow-draped fields
inviting us to jump on its soft cold bed.
Stretching trees
Swallowing sun light and branches rustling secrets
unsaid
Listening to the soft rolling murmur
of rubber on asphalt whisper further,
what will you show next I wonder,
as the road climbs and bends ahead.

Exploring Our Past

by Bill Knuff



Charlie at the helm of Soleil on a blustery day in Spring 2004 heading down Delaware Bay on our way to Cape May for the night Photo: W. Knuff

We first met in Annapolis in October 2003. Having sailed up Delaware Bay and through the C&D Canal into Chesapeake Bay, Kris and I planned to spend a few days enjoying this beautiful capital city with a rich nautical history. We were meeting old friends of Kris for dinner. Charlie Heller casts an imposing shadow, but his bright eyes and warm welcoming smile prove disarming. I immediately wanted to get to know this man. In the years since we have become friends spending snippets of time on-board *Soleil*...but mostly ashore sharing stories and getting to know one another.

I knew that Charlie and his parents had emigrated from Czechoslovakia with little but the shirts on their backs to eventually find success in America. Always a writer, *Prague My Long Journey Home*, is the first of his memoirs published in 2011. It tells a fascinating story he had not previously shared. A labor of love, this book followed an arduous path into print for a previously unpublished author. 🏠

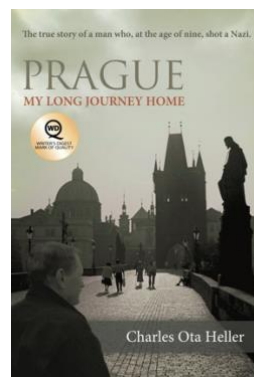
The [Defiant Requiem Foundation](#) recently hosted a Zoom event where Charlie offers us a glimpse into a most significant chapter in his life. The following is a brief bio from that event.

The son of a mixed marriage, Heller was born in Prague in 1936 and raised Catholic, unaware of his Jewish roots. When the Nazis invaded, Heller's father escaped to join the British army and through the course of the war fifteen members of his family disappeared. Before his mother was taken away to a slave labor camp, she hid him on a farm to protect him. As the war was coming to a close, young Charles came out of hiding, picked up a pistol he found in a ditch, and shot a Nazi. He was just nine years old.

In 1949, Heller and his parents immigrated to the United States where he has had distinguished careers in engineering, academia, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, he is a renowned lecturer, columnist, and author of five memoirs.

To watch recording of An Evening with Charlie Heller
[CLICK ON BOOK COVER.](#)
[CLICK](#) ▶ to play video.

Also visit www.charlesoheller.com



Remember Me?

*Struggling to recall something?
You may not have a memory problem – just an attention problem*

by Lisa Genova
September 2021



Nata Schepy

Not long ago, when I was somewhere in my mid-40s, I drove to Cambridge, Massachusetts, from Cape Cod and parked my car in a garage. I was scheduled to give a talk a couple of blocks away and had hoped to arrive earlier. Normally I take a photo of the floor number or the row letter whenever I park in a garage. But worried I was late, I raced out of there without getting a photo and, worse, without consciously registering where I had parked.

I arrived on time, gave my 45-minute talk, answered questions, and signed books. When I returned to the garage, I walked to where I thought I had parked, but my car wasn't there. I paced up and down ramps, becoming increasingly frustrated and hopeless. I was sure I had parked on the fourth floor, but maybe it was the third or the fifth? And did I park in section A, B or C? No idea. I knew I was in the right garage, but that's all. I was just about to report my car stolen when I stumbled upon it in 4B.

If we want to remember something, above all else we need to notice. And noticing requires two things: perception (seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling) and attention.

Relieved, embarrassed, and sweating, I wanted to blame the whole experience on my memory, but the neuroscientist in me knew better. I couldn't find my car not because I had a horrible memory, amnesia, dementia or [Alzheimer's](#) – I couldn't find my car because I never paid attention to where I had parked it in the first place.

If we want to remember something, above all else we need to notice. And noticing requires two things: perception (seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling) and attention.

Your memory isn't a video camera, recording a constant stream of every sight and sound you're exposed to – you can only capture and retain what you pay attention to. And since you can't pay attention to everything, you'll be able to remember some aspects of what is happening before you but not others.

Let's say you're standing in front of the glitzy and colossal Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center in New York City. You take in the visual information – the shape, the size, the colors of the lights – through receptors called rods and cones in the retinas of your eyes.

If you're awake for 16 hours today, your senses are open for business for 57,600 seconds. That's a lot of data. You simply can't — and won't — remember most of it.

This information is converted into signals that travel to your visual cortex at the back of your brain, where the image is processed and actually seen. It can then be further processed in other brain regions for recognition, meaning, comparison, emotion, and opinion. But unless you add your attention to seeing this Christmas tree, the activated neurons will not be linked, and a memory will not be formed. You won't even remember seeing it.

Think about the vast amount of information that your senses are exposed to in any given day. If you're awake for 16 hours today, your senses are open for business for 57,600 seconds. That's a lot of data. But you simply can't — and won't — remember most of what was available to your eyes, ears, nose, and brain today.

The number-one reason for forgetting what you just heard, a person's name, where you put your phone, or whether you locked the front door or not is lack of attention. You can't later remember what is right in front of you if you don't pay attention to it. So, if we want to remember something, we just have to pay attention to it.

We tend to pay attention to — and therefore remember — what we find interesting, meaningful, new, surprising, significant, emotional, and consequential.

Unfortunately, this isn't so simple. Even if we didn't live in such a highly distractible time, paying attention isn't easy for our brains. We tend to pay attention to — and therefore remember — what we find interesting, meaningful, new, surprising, significant, emotional, and consequential. Our brains capture those details. We ignore, and fail to remember, the rest.

Let's consider an example that will probably feel familiar. You're at a party, and your friend Sarah introduces you to her husband. "Hi, I'm Bob," he says. You tell him your name and shake hands. Two minutes later, you're still chatting with him, and you realize that you have no idea what his name is.

Or this happens: You bump into him a few days later at the store. He says, "Hi, [Your Name]!" You recognize him, you know you met him, and he's Sarah's husband. But you cannot [recall his name](#). You say, "Hey, you!"

It's not enough to be exposed to the sound of Bob's name. Once the name is spoken, you'll have the sound of it available in your brain for about 15 to 30 seconds. If you don't add the neural input of your attention, Bob's name will quickly disappear into the ether. It will never be consolidated by your hippocampus and stored as a memory.

Paying attention requires conscious effort. Your default brain activity is not attentive. Your inattentive brain is zoned out, daydreaming, on autopilot, and full of constant background, repetitive thinking. You can't create a new memory in this state. If you want to remember something, you have to turn your brain on, wake up, become consciously aware and pay attention.

Getting enough sleep, meditating and a little caffeine are other powerful distraction fighters and can enhance your ability to establish long-term memories.

Because we remember what we pay attention to, we might want to be mindful about what we focus on. Optimists pay attention to positive experiences, so these events are consolidated into their memories. If you look for magic every day, if you pay attention to the moments of joy and awe, you can then capture these moments and consolidate them into memory. Over time, your life's narrative will be populated with memories that make you smile.

If you want to improve your memory, try minimizing or removing things that distract you. Getting enough sleep, [meditating](#) and a little caffeine (not too much and none 12 hours before bed) are other powerful distraction fighters and can enhance your ability to pay attention and establish long-term memories.

People in my generation — X — regularly boast about multitasking as if it were a superpower. Meanwhile, millennials see no problem with watching Netflix while Snapchatting while talking to you. But there is a problem with both approaches if you want to remember any of what you're doing and experiencing.

So, the next time you can't find your car, pause. And before you accuse your memory of failing, before you panic and worry that you have Alzheimer's, think: Did I pay attention to where I parked my car to begin with?

Excerpted from the new book [Remember: The Science of Memory and The Art of Forgetting](#) by Lisa Genova. © 2021 Lisa Genova. Published by Harmony Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisa Genova is the New York Times bestselling author of the novels *Still Alice*, *Left Neglected*, *Love Anthony*, *Inside the O'Briens* and *Every Note Played*. *Still Alice* was adapted into an Oscar-winning film starring Julianne Moore, Alec Baldwin, and Kristen Stewart. She graduated valedictorian from Bates College with a degree in biopsychology and holds a PhD in neuroscience from Harvard University. Genova travels worldwide speaking about the neurological diseases that she writes about and has appeared on *The Dr. Oz Show*, *Today*, *PBS NewsHour*, *CNN*, and *NPR*. Her TED talk — called "What You Can Do to Prevent Alzheimer's" — has been viewed more than five million times to date. *Remember*, her newest book, is a New York Times bestseller and her first work of nonfiction.

[CLICK HERE to watch video](#)

[Medicare Affordable Internet Connectivity Program](#)

If you or someone you know needs help paying for internet service, you may qualify for a **monthly discount on a new or existing internet service plan** through a government program called the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

You may also qualify for a one-time device discount of up to \$100, to buy a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers.

[Do I Qualify?](#)

To apply, visit [AffordableConnectivity.gov](#) or call 1-877-384-2575 to request an application. Once your application is approved, you can contact a [participating internet service provider](#) to start receiving your monthly discount. Only one monthly service discount and one device discount is allowed per household.

Research suggests Internet access is associated with improved health outcomes.

Broadband makes it easier for people to take advantage of information on [Medicare.gov](#), like comparing the quality of nursing homes and hospitals, or finding the health plan that's best for you.

Adventure of a Lifetime

by Alex Woodle

We were led hurriedly past long lines of frustrated passengers and out onto the tarmac to tables manned by a stern looking, robotic Intourist staff. Intourist was used by the KGB to track foreigner's movements within the vast Communist empire. It was well past midnight and we had been at this internal domestic airport for what seemed like forever. Now we were finally being processed, albeit, at a frenetic pace, our backpacks hurriedly dropped off into a large-wheeled cart never knowing if we would see them again, and we were quickly dispatched across the runway to an awaiting Russian jet passenger plane. We were the last to board this 12:45 AM Aeroflot (as we came to know Aeroflot) flight to Irkutsk, astride the Angara River, the only outlet for [Lake Baikal](#) deep inside [Siberia](#).



Winter on Lake Baikal

After one week of rooting around the grim city of Moscow and the even grimmer accommodations of Moscow State University, we were heading to the hinterlands and

[Lake Baikal](#), known to Russians as the "Sacred Sea." I was beside myself with excitement to see this great natural wonder of the world. A mile deep, with as much fresh water as all the Great Lakes combined, it was like a siren call.

The interior of the plane was like being inside a drab room, lived in for a long time. The seat coverings were seedy at best and filthy at worst.

Smoking was allowed back then, and the smell combined with the odors from the aircraft made one hope for a short flight. Airplane food is a joke today but being awakened in the middle of the night by a beefy, unfriendly stewardess and given a piece of greasy chicken and a hard-boiled egg, was hardly worth the wake-up call. An infant's small cradle was hung from a cord so that it swung freely overhead in the passenger compartment. This occupant was probably the most comfortably arranged passenger on the whole plane!

As dawn broke, we approached the outskirts of Irkutsk and its airport. It should be noted that the foggiest that plagues this airport has seen numerous crashes, and we were not disappointed, when we spied out the window wreckage pushed off the runways and left to slowly disintegrate into the landscape. Fortunately, none of this cautionary information was known beforehand, sparing us from heart failure.

As we waited to deplane, someone spotted a dump truck filled with colorful packages. It was our backpacks! Well, at least, they had arrived safely! Since it was an internal flight, we were not subject to the intimidating and bureaucratic morass that greets foreigners when they arrive at Moscow's international airport. A bus took us to our first

night's accommodations that was part YMCA and part youth hostel.

Wandering the narrow streets of this three-hundred-fifty-year-old city with its old wooden structures decorated with hand carved facades and window frames was in stark contrast to the crude concrete creepiness of Moscow. There is a quaintness and warmth about Irkutsk that is missing in Moscow. Even the people seem less severe. The infrastructure, however, was appalling. Unfinished road works became barriers to traffic flow and an open sewer project looked as if it had been abandoned for months! We skirted this area carefully and made note of where it was to avoid future encounters.

The next day we visited an open-air market that was quite colorful both with its fruit and vegetable offerings and by its vendor's outfits. The warm richly textured faces of the sellers reflected Irkutsk as a crossroads of many ethnicities. The long line outside the local Russian version of a Wal-Mart revealed another side of life under communism. We asked a man in line what they were waiting for? When he grasped that we were Americans, he became very animated and vocal. He told us that all these people were waiting in line to buy laundry detergent, a commodity in short supply and what an outrage it was to have live this way.

We visited this multi-story version of a Russian department store and were amazed at the poor quality of everything we saw. We were especially interested in camping equipment and gaped at items we would never buy. As I moved from shelf to shelf, I suddenly encountered a rather different product; not aware that all departments tended to be merged together. It looked like a giant rubber whoopee cushion and as I held it aloft, one of my colleagues said it was a woman's girdle!



Nothing prepared us for our next stop, the Polytechnical Institute across the Angara River where we were to stay in a dormitory for a few days prior to our journey up Lake Baikal. It was a modern looking building less than five years old. As we approached the entrance, we noticed the plate glass windows were missing and replaced with plywood. We reached our floor and our assigned rooms. They were not much different in size than an American dorm, but there were a few things missing: light bulbs, toilet paper and toilet seats. This barely new building had been looted of products scarce in Soviet homes. The shower had three inches of water on the floor and many missing showerheads. We scavenged as best we could for the missing items from the deserted floors of the building.

Our visit to Siberia had only begun. What lay ahead made this seem like paradise! 🏔️

Classmates

by Bill Knuff

The USS Constitution has always occupied a special place in my heart. Frequent visits to her at dockside in the Charlestown Navy Yard always stirred my nautical juices. I would listen to stories of her exploits and answers to my endless questions by the knowledgeable and patient crew of the oldest commissioned ship in the US Navy. As many times as I have visited Old Ironsides, I managed to completely ignore the destroyer USS Cassin Young on exhibit in a drydock at my back. Then one sunny day about 16 years ago that all changed.



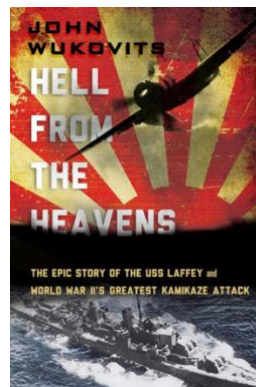
The USS Hart (DD594) on maneuvers off the California coast where she was built.

My father was in the Navy. A 90-Day Wonder, he was assigned to the destroyer [USS Hart](#) (DD594) as a Lieutenant JG in the latter years of WWII somewhere in the Pacific theater. Like so many of his peers, my father

never spoke about his war experience. I was visiting the Constitution one summer day and wandered over to read about the Cassin Young. All US Navy destroyers are named after a Naval hero. Captain Young distinguished himself at Pearl Harbor and died at the Battle for Guadalcanal in 1942. The [USS Cassin Young](#) (DD793) was commissioned the following year.

Boarding this small but sturdy ship I joined a group just starting a tour. A Park Ranger, who was to be our docent, had just finished a brief explanation of the role of a destroyer and was sharing some history of this ship. I mentioned the USS Hart and asked if the two ships were similar...in the same class. It turns out both the Hart and Cassin Young are both Fletcher Class destroyers built in the early 1940s. They were sister ships! This added a whole new dimension to the tour for me. As we wound our way in and around the ship, the docent would look at me and say, *"This is where your father would have slept."* *"Here is where your father had breakfast."* *"Here where your father reported for work each morning."* Needless to say, I was rapt. It was as if my father was with me on the tour, if only for the fleeting moment it took for the sound of the Ranger's voice to fade away.

My cousin, John Wukovits, is a history buff and author of several books about WWII. The war in the Pacific is an area of particular interest. [Hell From the Heavens](#) tells the story of Captain and crew of the Sumner Class destroyer [USS Laffey](#) (DD724), and their fight for survival during 80 minutes of the worst kamikaze attack suffered by a US Navy ship during the war. Today USS Laffey is a floating museum at [Patriots Point](#) near the mouth of the Cooper River in Charleston, SC...her legacy secure in the annals of naval warfare. My cousin John lives in the Detroit area and enjoys speaking to small groups about his work. 🏞️



To watch John's recent video presentation about the USS Laffey [CLICK HERE](#)