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NAH Summer and Fall Trips

Trips the past summer included an Architectural Cruise on the Charles River, and visits to the Edward M. Kennedy Institute, Garden in the Woods, Fruitlands, and



NAH Members Kathleen Plovnick and Judy Karelitz

The Paper House.

In June, a group visited Fruitlands, a Utopian agrarian commune established in Harvard, Massachusetts, by Amos Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane in the 1840s, based on Transcendentalist principles. The Fruitlands Museum is home to five collections on 210 majestic acres of meadows and woods. Visitors can go on a hike and commune with nature, learn about the lives of the

Transcendentalists, Shakers, the Hudson River School and Native Americans, and view the Art Museum collection, as well as contemporary exhibits and outdoor sculpture.

In July, NAH hosted a trip for Newton at Home members along with residents of the Scandinavian Living Center. The trip started with lunch at the Cheesecake Factory and then a 90-minute tour, hosted by Charles Riverboat Company, which offered spectacular views of historic and contemporary architecture along Boston Harbor, the Charles River Locks, and the Charles River basin. The tour—narrated by a guide from Boston By Foot and co-sponsored by BSA Space, a center for architecture and design—includes landmarks such as Marriott's Custom House, the Prudential Building, and the Hancock tower, as well as cutting-edge contemporary design by today's top architects.

In August a group went to Rockport for lunch at Bracketts Ocean View Restaurant – with a wonderful view – and a visit



A group of NAH members visits the Fruitlands Museum to The Paper House, built by Elis F. Stenman, a mechanical engineer who designed the machines that make paper clips. He began building his summer home out of paper as a hobby in 1922. The house has wooden framework, floor, and roof, but the wall material -- originally intended as insulation -- is pressed newspaper about an inch thick -- layers and layers of newspaper, glue, and varnish on the outside. There is paper furniture as well, including some intricate and beautiful pieces. Following the visit, members had free time to see other Rockport sights on their own.

On August 29, the group visited the Garden in the Woods, a 45-acre woodland botanical garden in Framingham founded in 1931, when Will C. Curtis purchased 30 acres and began to create a botanical garden on the site. When Curtis died in 1965, the land and gardens were deeded to the New England Wild Flower Society. The Garden is the largest

landscaped collection of wildflowers in New England, containing over 1700 kinds of plants representing about 1000 species, including over 200 rare and endangered native species, all within a mature oak forest on glacial terrain of rolling hills, ponds, and streams that provide a variety of microhabitats.

It also contains the largest retail native plant nursery in New



NAH members Ela Pelish and Carole Slattery at EM Kennedy Institute

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Faye is the great-granddaughter of a Louisiana sharecropper. She is a petite, quiet spoken dynamo with an extraordinary family history. Her great-grandparents moved North during the Great Migration, her father's family moving from Louisiana to Kansas City, where she grew up, and her mother's family moving from the farming community of Sherill to Little Rock, Arkansas. Her grandmother would tell her about the hard work on the cotton farm and each summer would take her to visit her great-grandparents' house in Cotton Valley, Louisiana, located across the road from the "Big House."

After college at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Faye got a Masters' degree in Social Work from the University of Kansas School of Social Work in 1955 and moved to the San Francisco area, where she spent 2 years working in a state mental hospital in San Jose, and then moved to San Francisco, where she worked as a medical social worker in the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgical Services at the University of California Medical Center. There she experienced some "tough moments," particularly on the Children's Unit.

In 1967 she married and moved to Boston, where her husband had received a fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital, and she got her second Masters' degree in Public Health at the Harvard School of Public Health. "The class was composed largely of physicians with a few non-physicians, including me."

After the Harvard School of Public Health, Faye began a long series of jobs in public health and social work. She joined the Boston Department of Public Health, working at Boston City Hospital, the Long Island Chronic

Disease Center, and the Meltzer Disease Center, among others. She was in charge of the social work programs and community health programs, which became the seeds for Boston's community health centers, many of which later merged into the Boston University Medical Center.

After some 7 to 10 years, Faye switched back to social work and spent some 20 years as the Administrator of Family Services of Greater Boston, a revered Boston institution. She worked with health centers she had helped form many years before, including the Neponset Harbor Health Center, the Dorchester Health Center, and the Geiger-Gibson Community Health Center, among others.

Faye retired at age 65. She had moved to Newton from San Francisco, spent some time in Newtonville, moved to West Newton the year after she retired, and has been here for about 20 years. Her husband was killed in an airplane crash, and her daughter died from cancer in 2011. She now lives with Angel, a 21-year old Maltese she got at the Angel Memorial Rescue Center in 2005. "Angel has rheumatism and is blind, but can hear and smell, so she gets around o.k. he is very popular with the neighborhood kids.... they even come back to visit her after they have graduated from high school and college and moved away."

Faye was ready to stop working when she retired. "I dabble in stuff." By way of her "dabbling," she has been knitting for years ("I like complicated things."). Her current project is a Hitofude Cardigan, hitofude meaning "a single brush stroke," knitted from a continuous thread in a



Hitofude Cardigan

lace pattern [see photo]. Newton had a Garden Club; the Newtonville club started in 1927. "It's a bit of history people should know about. I'm thinking of giving my collection of programs from 75 years of monthly meetings to the Jackson Homestead." She loves chamber music and concerts, has attended opening week at Tanglewood for over 10 years, has traveled to London, Austria, Paris, Turkey, Israel, Kenya, and, most recently, St. Petersburg, and goes to Tai Chi at the Senior Center every day.

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Spring Fundraising Event: Jimmy Tingle's "Humor for Humanity"

NAH held its Spring Fundraising Event on May 11th at the historic Neighborhood Club in West Newton, hosted by locally and internationally known humorist Jimmy Tingle. The 80+ guests enjoyed drinks and hors d'oeuvres on the patio in beautiful weather before being treated to a highly entertaining presentation of Jimmy's new program "Humor for Humanity." As always, his observations were timely and funny. As some members of the audience said, "He knows how to tell jokes and make digs without insulting anybody...." "He's political without being political."

Jimmy also conducted an auction of items donated to NAH for the occasion, including one-week offseason in a stunning architectural retreat in West Tisbury which sleeps 13 people; a gourmet pizza party for 20 prepared at home by Personal Chef Tony Carbone-Urban Epicurean; two tickets to shows of the winning bidder's choice for all of the following in the 2019-2020 season: New Repertory Theater, American Repertory Theater, Lyric Stage Company, and the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra; loge box seats and a meal in the exclusive State Street Pavilion for a Red Sox game; and tickets to a



Volunteer Linda Sweeney, past board members Emily Meyer and Tamara Bliss



After bidding against each other, board member Rachel Kango and husband Todd react to winning a week on Martha's Vineyard

weeknight Boston Celtics game during the 2019-2020 season.

Each guest had a program with a unique number on it to be held up for making a bid. One of the highlights of the bidding occurred when Rachel and Todd Kagno each bid on the same item from adjacent seats and ended up in a bidding war with each other. Rachel won.

NAH SUMMER AND FALL TRIPS

(Continued from page 1)

England. This trip was so well received that people asked to return in the spring, so another trip is planned for early May.

In June the group visited the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate on Columbia Point on the University of Massachusetts Boston campus near the JFK Presidential Library & Museum and the Massachusetts Archives and Commonwealth Museum. Advancing Senator Kennedy's lifetime of service and passion for engaging in the public square, the Institute is dedicated to educating the public about our government, invigorating public discourse, encouraging participatory democracy, and inspiring the next generation of citizens and leaders to engage in the civic life of their communities.

Visitors interact with a variety of digital exhibits related to the Senate's history, explore life-size replicas of the U.S. Senate Chamber and Senator Kennedy's Washington, D.C. Russell Senate office, and can take part in a live vote on the Senate floor.

Trips this fall include one to the Orchard House on September 19. Orchard House in Concord (c. 1650) is most noted for being where Louisa May Alcott wrote and set *Little Women* in 1868. This noble home also has a rich history stretching back two centuries beforehand, as well as more than 100 years of life as a treasured historic site open to the public. The documentary *Our Orchard*



Orchard House

House: Home of *Little Women* won the Emmy for Outstanding Historical/Cultural Program/Special at the 42nd Boston/New England Emmy Awards in June 2019. The Alcotts were a famous yet flawed family who firmly believed in the power of unconditional love, personal agency, and social justice and who impacted literature, education, philosophy, art, and reforms of all kinds in many ways. A monthly Living History Tour, "Welcome to Our Home," offers an interactive tour with an expert living history guide, with anecdotes about the Alcotts' lives and times. 19th Century games, songs, and a treasure hunt make the tour an experience suitable for all ages.

In addition to trips, NAH each month offers some 20 wide-ranging interest groups, meals, presentations, plays, and movies – but more about them in a future article.

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Connie Spillane

Volunteer Spotlight

Cornelius "Connie" Spillane

Connie is a big, friendly, engaging guy. Born and raised in Brockton, he attended U. Mass. Amherst, lived in Waltham for about 10 years, then moved to Newton, where he has lived for about 25 years.

After college, Connie worked for about 7 years with a start-up software company writing financial planning applications for financial advisors. After some

time, he left and started, working for Fidelity Investments as an independent contractor testing software for an initial 3-month contract and stayed on for 23 years. "The math worked for me to be an independent contractor with a higher hourly rate of pay rather than an employee with benefits." He has a condo near West Newton Center, greatly enjoys the sense of neighborhood, and likes walking to lots of places. One of his favorite haunts is the Cherry Tree ("very friendly people there").

Connie has a variety of interests. He is a sports fan, enjoys traveling overseas, likes to read, and loves the beach, spending two or three weeks in Wellfleet each summer, and is concerned about the increasing number of shark sightings ("They follow the seals."). He attends town meetings to stay current on developments in Newton and is concerned about the changing nature of the neighborhoods. ("The ranch houses are disappearing, and the big houses are coming in.")

About six months after retiring in April 2017, Connie started looking for volunteer opportunities in Newton. He found Newton at Home on-line and "went in cold." He started volunteer driving in early 2018 and loves it, doing about 3 to 5 rides each week, primarily in Newton and going to the medical centers. He was concerned at first that his passengers would not want to talk, but he found quite the opposite. "They tell great stories, often about their kids, the neighborhood, what's changed in Newton over the years." He also enjoys socializing at the volunteer breakfasts.

Connie considers himself "somewhat of a slob" and admits he doesn't keep his 2015 Ford Fusion ("a truly great car") as neat as he could. He often has to clean up the front passenger seat before picking up his passenger. One time he showed up for a ride and his passenger turned out to be two people, so he had to clear out the back seat so the second person could get in. The ride went well, and the three of them had a great conversation. No wonder he is such a popular driver!

SPRING FUNDRAISING EVENT: *(continued from page 3)*

Another unexpected feature was what Jimmy Tingle calls "Fund a Need," in which he asked members of the audience to hold up their hands if they would donate specified amounts to NAH. "Who can donate \$500... \$200... \$25?" Everyone in the audience raised their hands for various amounts. It was a fundraiser within a fundraiser with 100% participation. The fundraising event was made possible by the efforts of many members, volunteers, staff, donors and friends of NAH. Newton at Home would like to thank all those who donated items for the auction: Laura and Jim Jacobson, Micael Chamberlain, Kari Tannenbaum and Mark Pelofsky, New Repertory Theater, American Repertory Theater, Lyric Stage Company, Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, and Tony Carbone-Urban Epicurean, and thank NAH's community partners for their ads in the event program. Grateful thanks also go to the event sponsors The Village Bank, West Newton Hearing Center, and Rosenberg, Freedman and Lee, LLP.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT *(Continued from page 2)*

She was the last President of the Newtonville Garden Club. She enjoys "reading up on my family;" and enthusiastically showed me volumes she pulled from her bookshelves: *Women in the Material World* by Faith D'Alusio and Peter Menzel, *Henry Ossawa Tanner, A Spiritual Biography* by Marcus Bruce, *I Dream a World*, *Portraits of Black Women* by Brian Larker, and many volumes of the *Library of America Series* by such figures as Frederick Douglas, W.E.B. Du Bois, and James Baldwin.

Faye learned about Newton at Home from her friend Brenda in a bridge group, who volunteers at NAH. "Brenda really talked it up, so I joined, and it's been great. I enjoy the trips and meeting other members... the home services are excellent – they fix the problem or tell you who can. Joining was a great decision." And NAH is lucky to have her!

In Memoriam

Newton at Home extends its condolences to the family and friends since the publication of our last newsletter:

Severyn Bruyn 1927-2019
John Collins 1944-2019
Robert Gold 1919-2019
Tina Guilemin 1949-2019

William Meagher 1941-2019
Betty Southworth 1920-2019
Arthur Wolfson 1928-2019



Newton at Home

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