



## Letter From the Editor

Where did the time go? This year is almost over and while we were enjoying the fall color your Membership Team was busy with outreach and recruiting new members.

Our newest members in the photos below reflect the success they are having as Groton Neighbors continues to grow. The mission and the message clearly are resonating. Kudos to the entire MMO Team. Keep up the good work!

Groton Neighbors launched in January 2017. Since that time our website has provided monthly performance metrics in addition to selected annual demographic data. For those of you who may not have seen this information on our website, a brief overview can be found in this edition of the Newsletter. Let us know if you have any questions. More importantly, we rely on the generosity of our members to make Groton Neighbors work for all of us. As Bob Pine said at the recent Potluck Social, "Giving makes us happy!" These charts can't measure happiness, but they speak volumes about the generosity of each and every one of you.



I hope 2023 treated you well and that 2024 brings good health and good times. Covid is still with us. Stay safe. To order free At-Home tests click <https://www.covidtests.gov>. Visit the Groton Neighbors website [www.grotonneighbors.org](http://www.grotonneighbors.org) to access the newsletter archive. Be well. 🏡

### Meet Our Newest Members

*Bill*



Barbara

Tara

Ingrid

David



Pat

Kathy

Caitlin

Sheila

Julie



Nancy

Becca

Kathy

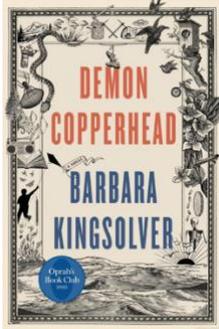
Bob



## Book Discussion

### Dickens in Appalachia

By David Smith



Barbara Kingsolver's *Demon Copperhead* was going to be our book discussion choice for July, until the library informed us the novel was so sought after they could not keep enough copies on reserve. We were happy enough to have chosen *The Tender Bar* for our mid-summer read when that discussion became our most lively to date.

But our July discussion paled in comparison to the robust turnout on October 25, when the Zoom screen was filled with twelve Neighbors ready to take up *Demon Copperhead* at last: **Bob Anderson, Betsy Bair, Carole Greenfield, Carol Jewitt, Bill Knuff, Sue Pelletier, Kathy Reiff, Sally Russell, Lydia McClure, Susan Shay, Diane Hewitt** and yours truly. And there was plenty to talk about.



Kingsolver took Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* as her model to imagine a young orphan growing up in Twentieth Century Appalachia (rather than Dickens's Victorian England). Those who recall *David Copperfield* recognized the many similarities of both plot and the many characters with sound-alike names. An obvious first question is why? Why pattern a story on another author's work rather than create an original tale start to finish? In an interview with Oprah Winfrey's Book Club, Ms. Kingsolver explained her creative choice this way:

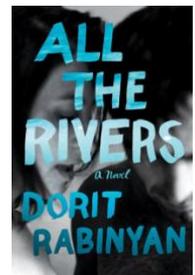
*Mine is a modern retelling of David Copperfield, which Dickens wrote to protest the ravages of poverty on the children of his time. I wrote mine for the same*

*reason. I spent years wondering how I could get readers on board with such dark material before I hit on this device. It was challenging and fun to transpose Victorian characters and situations to my own place and time.*

To read the whole interview, [CLICK HERE](#).

And dark it is, as red-headed Demon endeavors to reach a healthy adulthood despite the desperate poverty, inadequate education, the failures of the welfare system and the grasp of opioid addiction, promoted by the predatory practices of Purdue Pharma (which the novel calls out by name). But don't give up! While the topics are disturbing, Kingsolver keeps up a lively energy through the resilient, spunky humor of the young narrator. All the way through the story, we believe this young orphan, like Dickens's, will escape the hopelessness of his early environment.

Please join the discussion on Wednesday, January 24, when our book will be [All the Rivers](#) by award-winning Israeli author Dorit Rabinyan. In a *Romeo and Juliet*-like tale, an Israeli and a Palestinian who meet in New York City begin a sudden love affair despite the tensions of their warring cultures back home. Though written several years ago, the story has new immediacy in the context of the tragedy that fills our daily news. Beautifully written, the novel has been translated into seventeen languages. 🏠



**Thank You!** [Office Staff Team adds new members](#)

Please join me in welcoming two new members to the Office Staff



Betsy Dick Camilla Linda Bill Bob Terri Beverly

Team. **Mary Tibma** and **Tara McNamara** have volunteered as members of the Office Staff and hope to soon begin taking a regular shift covering our virtual office. If this is a role that appeals to you, please email us at [service@grotonneighbors.org](mailto:service@grotonneighbors.org) to learn more.



Mary



Tara

**Groton Neighbors**  
*Helping each other live independently at home*

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

**Bob Pine**  
President

**Jason Kauppi**  
Vice-President

**Bob Anderson**  
Treasurer

**Bob Collins**  
Secretary

**Gregg Baker**  
**Carole Greenfield**  
**Brooke McKeever**  
**Krys Salon**

Contact us to learn about joining our growing community

# Can You Spell Perspicacious?

On November 17<sup>th</sup> a team of Groton Neighbors members participated in the first annual Community Spelling Bee organized by the Prescott Community Center. This Spelling Bee is a friendly competition among teams representing several local organizations. In addition to the Groton Neighbors Team “Won’t You Bee My Neighbor”, several fellow members participated in various roles including Master of Ceremonies Steve Lane and Moderators Jason Kauppi and Becky Pine. While the home team failed to win, everyone enjoyed themselves and may have even learned a word or two.

[Click HERE](#) to watch the video of this event as filmed for the Groton Local Access Channel. Stick around to the end to find out who won.

[Click HERE](#) to access photos by Kirsta Davey then click “View Gallery”.



Groton Neighbors Team, “Won’t You Bee My Neighbor” including (L to R) Betsy Bair, Carole Greenfield, Judy Anderson, and Sue Lotz are ready with their white board and markers.



Groton Neighbors members Jason Kauppi and Becky Pine challenged teams to spell words that ranged from common to obscure. They get a thumbs up from fellow member Mary Jennings, former head of Prescott Center. Photos: K. Davey

# 'Tis The Season

by Bill Knuff

The world has more than its fair share of grifters. These slick operators are polished at tricking an unsuspecting person into doing something they will regret. These are very sophisticated operations that succeed because honest people simply do not suspect anyone would be so unscrupulous. These grifters come out of the woodwork especially at this time of giving and thanksgiving.



Seniors are particularly vulnerable because we are targeted more than any other demographic. To help drive this point home Mark Rober has made it his crusade to help stop these thieves. To that end he has created a couple of YouTube videos that



explain how the scams work and chronical some of his efforts to stop them.

It is worth a few minutes of your time.

[Click on these images](#)  To watch these videos.



Who among us has not received a spam call with what, at first glance, appears to be a plausible story. This is the time to remember a few basic rules.

- *Respectable organizations (Amazon, Banking Institutions, IRS, etc.) do not make cold calls...ever!*
- *If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.*
- *Do not give out personal information over the phone.*
- *It is OK to be rude...Just hang up the phone!*

Better to be safe than sorry. 

# Puzzle Page

by Bill Knuff

Will Shortz is celebrating 30 years as Puzzle Editor for the New York Times. For those puzzle solvers amongst us these two puzzles are from the early years of Shortz' tenure as he began his journey to becoming one of the most recognized Puzzle Masters in the world.

The Times begins each week with an easy puzzle on Monday and graduates to a hard puzzle on Saturday. The Sunday Crossword is simply a large format Thursday puzzle which is said to be "tricky". Try your hand at a Monday puzzle from 1994 and a Thursday puzzle from 1996.

[Click HERE](#) to read more about the career of Will Shortz.

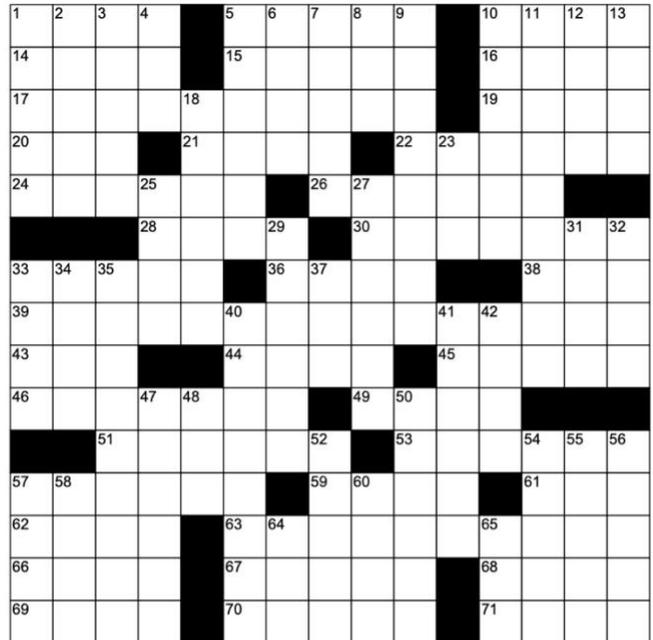
Monday, November 21, 1994

## The New York Times

Norman S. Wizer / Edited by Will Shortz

- ACROSS**
- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Hatteras, N.C.
  - 5 Clearheaded
  - 10 Egyptian cobras
  - 14 Mimics
  - 15 Video arcade name
  - 16 Turn obliquely
  - 17 SCRAM
  - 19 Antitoxins
  - 20 Football's \_\_\_\_\_ Bowl
  - 21 Safety org.
  - 22 Current, as accounts
  - 24 Russian grassland
  - 26 Black Sea reorst
  - 28 Actors Silver and Howard
  - 30 Illegal trader
  - 33 Words preceding war or God
  - 36 Young 'uns
  - 38 Half of MCII
  - 39 SPLIT
  - 43 Indiana Jones's quest
  - 44 Franchise
  - 45 Vertical
  - 46 Made tea
  - 49 Crimson and carmine
  - 51 Adulates
  - 53 Standards of perfection
  - 57 Plant pests
  - 59 Italian wine district
  - 61 Hawaiian garland
  - 62 Cut in a skirt
  - 63 BEAT IT
  - 66 The Mikado's Lord High Executioner
  - 67 Papal vestment
  - 68 One of the Brontes
  - 69 Suffix with road or hip
  - 70 Opera voice

- 71 Miss Trueheart of the comics
- DOWN**
- 1 Summer getaways
  - 2 "You'll always be \_\_\_\_\_ of me"
  - 3 Tea type
  - 4 Language ending
  - 5 Yankee pitcher Don
  - 6 Great Salt Lake state
  - 7 Chocolate bean
  - 8 Get on one's nerves
  - 9 Allocate
  - 10 St. Francis's home
  - 11 VAMOOSE
  - 12 Llama land
  - 13 Barter
  - 18 Finish
  - 23 Dolt
  - 25 Egg on
  - 27 Mental confusion
  - 29 Took deliberate steps
  - 31 Grammy-winning Fitzgerald
  - 32 Peril
  - 33 Discoverers' cries
  - 34 "Dead \_\_\_\_\_" (Dick Francis novel)
  - 35 SKIDDOO
  - 37 Hall-of-Famer Mel
  - 40 Went too far
  - 41 Finnan \_\_\_\_\_ (fish dish)
  - 42 \_\_\_\_\_ dixit
  - 47 Film cutter
  - 48 Pea holder
  - 50 One of two
  - 52 Guy with a tail
  - 54 "Home \_\_\_\_\_"
  - 55 Shows partiality
  - 56 Allies (with)
  - 57 Proposes
  - 58 Scheme



- 60 Normandy invasion town, 1944
- 64 Dander
- 65 Tell (on)

You may be familiar with the current puzzle mania around [Wordle](#) and [Connections](#). These are two of Will Shortz' current favorite puzzles to solve. For those of you who have yet to try *Connections*, see how to play following the crossword puzzles. 🏠

Thursday, November 21, 1996

# The New York Times

Martin Ashwood-Smith / Edited by Will Shortz

**ACROSS**

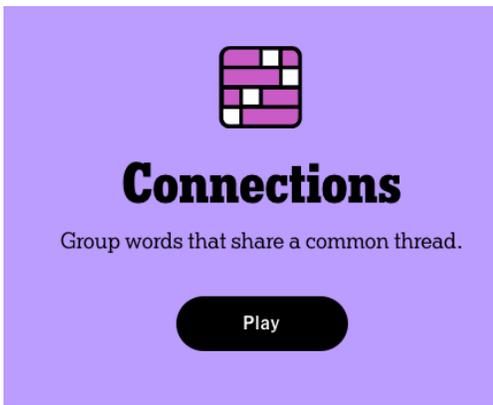
- 1 Whence the words "That the English Church shall be free"
- 11 To-do
- 15 Baker Street group
- 16 Old-style education
- 17 Freshens, in a way
- 18 Ethereal
- 19 Sticky substances
- 20 Aspirant
- 22 Chinese principle
- 23 Slippery \_\_\_\_
- 24 Shut (up)
- 25 Gift
- 27 Cup of cafe
- 29 Lush
- 31 Motley crew
- 32 Writer's block?
- 34 \_\_\_\_ Mahal
- 36 Firm bosses
- 37 Play Paul Revere
- 41 Pull a fast one?
- 42 Rocks
- 43 Came by
- 44 Out-and-out
- 46 "Horrors!"
- 48 Worsted fabric
- 52 Amoretto
- 54 Acquire signs of age
- 56 Work unit
- 57 Agatha Christie's "The \_\_\_\_ Murders"
- 58 Wet weather boot
- 60 Former Winter Palace resident: Var.
- 61 Ten below?
- 63 Relative of a helicon
- 65 Capp of the comics
- 66 Delaying tactics
- 67 Welfare state?
- 68 They get what's coming to them

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15											16			
17											18			
19					20					21		22		
23				24					25		26			
27			28			29		30		31				
			32		33		34		35		36			
	37	38				39				40				
41					42				43					
44				45		46		47		48		49	50	51
52						53		54		55			56	
57				58			59				60			
61			62		63					64				
65											66			
67														68

- 1 Peewee
- 2 Anatomical ring
- 3 Ring bearers
- 4 Beatty and Rorem
- 5 In the past
- 6 A mummy may have one, perhaps
- 7 1986 Sigourney Weaver thriller
- 8 Level
- 9 Odyssey
- 10 Plus
- 11 Monk's title
- 12 Drugstore cowboy
- 13 Haphazardly
- 14 Mescaline cacti
- 21 Encouraging word
- 24 Shooter's ammo
- 26 Pin down
- 28 Volleyball player, at times
- 30 Menlo Park monogram
- 33 Agnus \_\_\_\_
- 35 Popular sports car, informally
- 37 Longtime Holmes portrayer
- 38 Predate
- 39 Fort Worth sch.
- 40 At sea
- 41 Mexican peninsula
- 45 Toupee, slangily
- 47 Cavalryman
- 49 Change from commercial to residential, e.g.
- 50 It's big in Spain
- 51 Way out
- 53 Iraqi city
- 55 Quota
- 59 Obstreperous
- 60 So
- 62 One of the Chaplins
- 64 Certain battery term.

**DOWN**

Solutions on Page 14



## How to play Connections

Find groups of four items that share something in common.

- Select four items and tap 'Submit' to check if your guess is correct.
- Find the groups without making 4 mistakes!

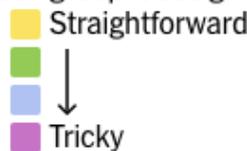
### Category Examples

- FISH: Bass, Flounder, Salmon, Trout
- FIRE \_\_: Ant, Drill, Island, Opal

Categories will always be more specific than "5-LETTER WORDS," "NAMES" or "VERBS."

Each puzzle has exactly one solution. Watch out for words that seem to belong to multiple categories!

Each group is assigned a color, which will be revealed as you solve:



To play: Click Link Above

WAFFLE	TOWEL	YO-YO	MARY
HEDGE	WEDGE	UMBRELLA	MULE
FLIP-FLOP	BREEZE	WAVER	CURLY
RUSSIAN	SHOESTRING	SUNSCREEN	SEE-SAW

Mistakes remaining: ● ● ● ●

Shuffle Deselect All Submit

<b>BROUGHT TO THE BEACH</b> FLIP-FLOP, SUNSCREEN, TOWEL, UMBRELLA			
HEDGE	WEDGE	MARY	MULE
YO-YO	BREEZE	WAVER	CURLY
RUSSIAN	SHOESTRING	WAFFLE	SEE-SAW

Mistakes remaining: ● ●

This example displays the 16 words to be sorted into four groups having a connection

This example displays a group with their connection. It also indicates two wrong guesses with two remaining

<b>BROUGHT TO THE BEACH</b> FLIP-FLOP, SUNSCREEN, TOWEL, UMBRELLA
<b>TYPES OF FRENCH FRIES</b> CURLY, SHOESTRING, WAFFLE, WEDGE
<b>EQUIVOCATE</b> HEDGE, SEE-SAW, WAVER, YO-YO
<b>SECOND WORDS OF VODKA COCKTAILS</b> BREEZE, MARY, MULE, RUSSIAN

Here is the solution to this word grouping

## An Outward Bound Odyssey

by David Smith

The sailor struggles in open waters, his mouth barely above the waves, his fingers clawing the air as, in the background, his battleship, smoke billowing, tilts as it sinks into the sea. The drawing was the two-page title spread for an article in "Boys' Life Magazine" that described a new adventure school based on a training philosophy employed by the British navy. Dismayed by the numbers of men who gave up and died when they might have saved themselves, the navy adopted a program to enhance recruits' fortitude and resilience. Appropriately, the adventure school described by the article took its name from the nautical phrase *outward bound*, with the implication that participants would journey far beyond their perceived personal limits.



There were to be three schools, in Colorado, Michigan and North Carolina, all offering the same adventures – hiking, canoeing, rock climbing and a three-day survival solo. I showed the magazine to my mother. "We'll see," she said, her gentle way of avoiding a direct "no". And I somewhat understood. The \$300 tuition was not insignificant. Then there would be airfare and logistics at a time when plane travel was not so common and a young boy traveling alone, even rarer.



In 1964, as a seventeen-year-old junior at Lawrence Academy, I learned that Peter Willauer, a teacher at Groton School, was creating a new Outward Bound program on Hurricane Island off the coast of Rockland, Maine. In fact, one of my friends (Dick Pleasants, who would go on to be a beloved local radio personality) had just enrolled. I contacted Mr. Willauer. He was sorry to inform me he had already filled his program. I was simply too late.

Some years later, as a young English teacher in the 1970s, I read with envy student essays of their Outward Bound adventures and statements of personal growth. In the afternoons, I coached my students in hiking, canoeing and rock climbing. I was more

than ready for my own Outward Bound challenge, but at that time, the needs of a young family came before a personal adventure for myself.

Then, life took a dramatic turn. At the age of thirty-seven, I found myself divorced and rattling around in a sparsely furnished apartment. The Hurricane Island School had added mountaineering courses to their customary ocean experiences. One of them offered twenty-six days in the Adirondacks. It was finally time to fulfill the dream I had nurtured for nearly a quarter of a century.

I was ready for a challenge in the mountains, but fate took an unexpected twist just as I prepared to depart – I met Betsy. When you finally meet the one you know is right, it might not be the cleverest idea to take off for a month to play in the woods. But she gave me her blessing, and I gave her a recording of Billy Joel's "For the Longest Time". I tucked her picture into my journal and departed for the Outward Bound base camp in Keene, NY.

I spent the next twenty-six days with a group of teens and young 20-somethings, hiking, canoeing, rock climbing, traveling by map and compass, simulating mountain rescues, and, of course, spending time alone on the program's signature three-day solo. I have priceless memories of accomplishment and camaraderie, canoeing three miles in driving rain, and bushwhacking through an impenetrable stand of krummholz - a tough and twisted vegetation that survives in subalpine mountain landscapes.

But my greatest memory came on our next-to-last day. We finished our trek with a 5-mile run through the woods to a welcome splash in a meadow pond. I'm happy to say I finished the race third behind two leaders and ahead of all my younger group members. Coming out of the pond, I noticed a group of men standing nearby, looking out of place in street clothes. I asked who they were and learned they were some of the original Hurricane Island students, celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Unbelievably, this was the group I might have joined – might have been friends with – that long-ago high-school summer I learned I was too late. High on my adventure, I introduced myself to say I had almost been one of them. They were receptive, appreciating my enthusiasm and all that the coincidence meant to me.



On our final day, our leaders gathered us in a circle and laid our award pins on a rock in the center. This was our graduation ceremony, they said, but only we could truly graduate ourselves. If we felt we had met our personal challenge, we were welcome to step forward to award ourselves a pin. In those rewarding few steps, I felt myself cross the twenty-two years since I first saw the sailor struggling in that wild sea. 🏔️

## Potluck Social

by Bill Knuff



This first Fall gathering of Groton Neighbors brought together many new members and guests on December 1<sup>st</sup> in the First Parish Church Hall. The hall was filled with a festive air as fifty members, and several guests enjoyed an array of appetizers and beverages that lent a holiday atmosphere to an evening of new and old friends coming together over lively conversation.

Bob Pine, President of Groton Neighbors, took a few minutes to speak primarily to new and prospective members sharing his thoughts about what Groton Neighbors means to him and how this fledgling organization exemplifies the spirit of the larger Groton community which originally attracted he and Becky to settle here some fifty years ago.

Bob also made mention of the many opportunities Groton Neighbors affords its members to be rewarded by volunteering to help fellow members or in a committee/leadership role. Our goal is to leverage your interests and skills in whatever capacity you are able.

Speaking of volunteers, this evening would not have been possible were it not for everyone who brought a treat to share. A particular shout out to **Diane Hewitt** for her able leadership and the roll-up-your-sleeves efforts of the **Events/Programs Committee**. Volunteerism is the lubricant that makes Groton Neighbors hum. So, if you would like to get more involved simply let us know. We would be remiss not to acknowledge Kirsta Davey for capturing the evening through her artful camera lens and so generously allowing us to use them in this Newsletter. 🏡



Members of the Events/Programs Committee responsible for organizing the Fall Potluck (L-R) Beverly Smith, Judy McDermott, Carole Greenfield, Diane Hewitt, Mary Tibma, Pat Hartvigsen, Steve Lane, Krys, Salon, Vigo Kragh. Not pictured: Lynn Spadone, Betsy Bair, Jan Cochran, Photo: K. Davey

More Potluck photos...





To see the entire album of this evening  
[Click Here.](#)



# Coming Events

Check out these upcoming events and activities arranged by Groton Neighbors or other local organization. Call us at **(978) 272-0123** and let the Office Staff know you would like to attend. They will help you with registration and/or scheduling a ride. 🏠

### Trivia Night



### News Year's Resolution



### Adult Game Night



### COA Event Calendar

### Prescott Center Event Calendar

**The Groton Center**  
Groton Council on Aging  
*The Center That Builds Community*

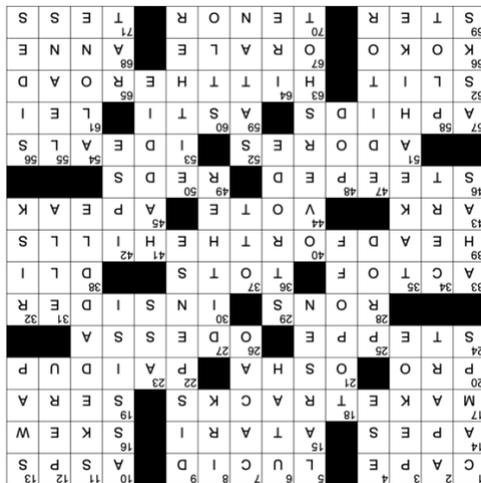
163 West Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450  
978 448 1170  
[Directions](#)

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8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Closed: Saturday & Sunday  
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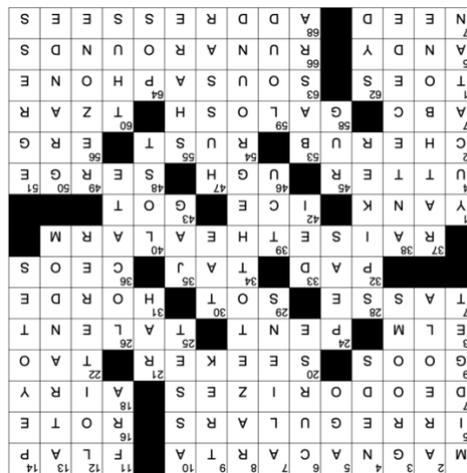


## Crossword Puzzle Solutions

### Easy Monday 1994



### Tricky Thursday 1996



## Poetry Corner

My late-in-life attraction to poetry was triggered by [Robert Pinsky](#), US Poet Laureate from 1997-2000 and Boston University Professor, whose mission it was to make poetry more widely accessible. This led to an introduction to Billy Collins, two time US Poet Laureate, whose words painted pictures that I could both understand and relate to...unlike my formal educational dalliances with poetry. My fascination with short poems has been nourished by the likes of Collins, Ammons, and others. Unlike haiku, the only rule that applies to short poems is...that they be short.

These short poems are from [Musical Tables](#), Collins latest collection of short poems. I hope you find them light-hearted, accessible, and bring a smile to your face. 🏠

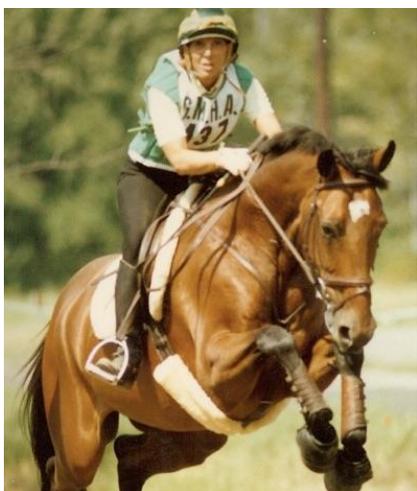
### *Dog*

When she runs in her sleep,  
eyelids twitching,  
legs churning sideways on the floor,  
I wonder if she's chasing  
a squirrel or being chased  
by an angry farmer waving a rake.



### *Carbon Dating*

He tried it once  
as a last resort  
but most of the women  
were a million years old.



### *The Code of the West*

Say what you want  
about me,  
but leave the horse  
I rode in on out of it.

### *Look*

The morning lake  
was smooth as a mirror.  
A few angels were even seen  
flying down  
just after dawn  
to check themselves out.

## What's Cookin'

Eggnog is an immigrant having arrived at the shores of North America from England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It has long been associated with the Christmas holiday. Although it has fallen out of favor in many corners of the US, eggnog seems to be holding its own in New England. This recipe is from *Spirited* by Adrienne Stillman, my favorite cocktail reference book. It can be made with or without spirits and yields about 25 drinks. Happy Holidays! 🏠

### Ingredients

12 Eggs  
 2-1/4 cups White Sugar  
 1 qt Heavy Cream (Double Cream)  
 1 qt Half & Half (Single Cream)  
 1 qt Rum, Brandy, or Whiskey  
 Freshly Grated Nutmeg

### Instructions

Separate egg whites and yolks  
 Beat egg yolks until pale and thick  
 Slowly add sugar continuing to beat  
 Add Spirit of choice and both  
 creams continuing to beat  
 Cover and refrigerate for at least 3  
 hours

### Serving

Beat Egg Whites into soft peaks  
 Fold Egg Whites into Refrigerated  
 Mixture  
 Serve in punch glasses and garnish with fresh ground nutmeg



NOTE: Eggnog will keep for several weeks when refrigerated. Ingredients tend to separate so gently shake or stir before serving.  
 For thinner version use only 8 Egg Whites and/or substitute Milk or Half & Half for some of the Heavy Cream



A pair of young deer pay a visit to Bob & Judy Anderson's yard. Photo: R. Anderson

## A Letter from Dad

by Bill Knuff

*This is a letter I sent to my daughter following a family Zoom in the wake of two completely unrelated events. The early acceptance of a grandchild into the college of her choice is at once self-affirming and life changing. The January 6<sup>th</sup> attack on our nation's Capital is the most dangerous assault on our democracy since the Civil War, an act of domestic terrorism, and a wake-up call. A copy of this letter has remained on top of my desk for the last three years serving as a reminder of how quickly life trajectories can change and, through it all, parenting remains a constant. Parenting of adult children is particularly difficult...responsibility with no authority! 🏠*

January 25, 2021

Hi Kiddo,

I've been thinking about a couple things you said yesterday during our Zoom. It was great news to learn of Tiernan's decision to attend Fordham next fall. The Jesuit reputation as educators promises to make her experience rich, challenging, and expanding. I think it is good to go to college far from home. It helps expand our horizons in ways that no visits or vacations ever do.

It never would have occurred to me to consider the political make-up of student population as a college selection criterion. I think all institutions of higher learning are cauldrons where ideas and ideologies of all stripes come together to help mold who we are becoming. Being exposed to a panoply of thought is an important part of our maturation process. Wherever Tiernan chooses to educate herself, it is her core values and the character that you have instilled in her from birth that she brings to this collegiate ideological melting pot. Through that filter and in that context she will sort the wheat from the chaff. We give everything we have to parenting. You have done that as well as any child could ever hope. I have every confidence that my granddaughter is more than ready to take on the life expanding experience of her own higher education. I know she will thrive no matter the ideological stew in which she finds herself. This is what you have worked so hard to prepare her for. She is ready.

I want to say a word about labels. I realize you have long despised the use of broad labels as judgmental...a lazy way to unfairly characterize. Emojis aside, human beings use words to communicate with one another. These "labels" give meaning to our thoughts and enable a common understanding. That said, language is a living organism. The English language is rooted in Latin however, unlike meaning frozen in a dead language, the meaning of words in a living language is evolving. As I mentioned on our Zoom, the definitions of Republican and Democrat have undergone a complete reversal in my lifetime. You recall that Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, led

a predominately Republican North against a Democratic Confederacy intent on destruction of the Union. That same Democratic post-war South was also responsible for the oppressive Jim Crow laws that we abhor and are still fighting to abolish today.

In terms of ideology, to think party labels are as clear cut as *laissez-faire vs big brother* ignores some important facts. Democracies rely on shared truths, free exchange of ideas, and compromise. Truth has been under attack. Mainstream and social media have been irresponsible contributors. Compromise, the grease that moves us forward, is a lost art. As a nation we need more shared truth, less social media, and lessons in compromise. Trump's legacy as the worst President in American history is well deserved. There has not been a less qualified leader on this planet since Nero ruled Rome 2000 years ago. Trump is a man totally without character and unprincipled beyond belief. Yet an unshared truth but nonetheless...a fact.

There seems to be a misguided notion that any federal government is bad government. We need look no farther than the failed efforts of individual States to control the pandemic in the absence of national leadership. National defense aside, imagine what the landscape would look like without the Interstate Highway System, Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment Benefits, National Parks, OSHA, NTSB, the United Nations. History shows that the size and reach of the US federal government has consistently expanded under Republican leadership and contracted under Democratic leadership. This is also fact.

As we witnessed on January 6th, silence can have powerful unintended consequences. Those who have remained silent will need to live with their decision. They along with those who have given oxygen to the big lie (McCarthy, Cruz, Hawley, and others) are a disgrace to their office and what it means to be a Republican. It cannot be lost on those paying the least bit of attention that leadership matters. The COVID death rate in the United States (25% of global deaths with 5% of the global population) is a perfect example. Trump has also taken a page from his autocratic friends Putin and Kim, that anyone who disagrees with him is evil and should be disenfranchised. The largely silent Republican leadership should be ashamed.

You and I may disagree on the approach, but we agree that the wealthiest democracy in the history of the world has a moral obligation to ensure citizens have a right to vote, access to affordable health care, reasonable protection against military style weapons, the right to protest without fear of attack from armed militia, and the rule of law.

I believe the Republican Party will either (a) remain with Trump and devolve into a fringe party or (b) part ways with Trump and reclaim their place as a strong and civil voice of opposition in the ongoing experiment that is the United States of America. This offers a ray of hope for democratic (small "d") government. While over 70 million

people voted for Trump, not all are hardline extremists. For the sake of our nation and the future left to you and my grandchildren, I hope they choose the latter.

As a lifelong political Independent, I welcome honest discussion and debate of ideas put forth by anyone regardless of how they identify themselves. Labels are not bad. It is the distortion of meaning that is bad.

Love, Dad



A view from the Rail Trail across Broad Meadow as a church steeple points at an angry cloud.

Photo: K. Geils

## Christmas Giving

by Carole Greenfield



*"I was a recipient of this generosity in the past. Very special. Filled me with gratitude for the compassion people have for others unknown to them. And the time taken to bring sunshine to a person on an alone day."* Anonymous

*"Just wanted to tell you how impressed I was by the dinner delivery process yesterday. You and your team thought of everything and wow, what a project! I was delighted to participate and to meet some members that I haven't met in person before. Thank you and I'd love to be part of this effort next time. Wishing you a happy new year,"* Beverly Smith

For the third year, Groton Neighbors has participated in a wonderful holiday tradition of neighbors providing Christmas dinners to senior Grotonians. This project was initiated by the Groton Jewish Community Group over 25 years ago and has expanded to include people of all faiths and ages. The quotes reflect the level of appreciation of this generosity from those who give and receive.

This year we delivered 38 meals, almost 20% more than last year! Thirty-two volunteers provided a litany of items, including squash, green beans, peas, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, carrots,

potatoes, stuffing, turkey, chicken, ham, meat loaf, short rib braised ravioli, Swedish meatballs, breads, rolls, relish, teas and sugars, waters, charcuterie, clementines, apples, brownies, cookies, candy, and cupcakes.



Nicole Irvin and Carole Greenfield prepare to assemble Christmas meals for delivery.



The Motley Crew ready to go to work (l-r) Henry Richardson Irvin (Nicole's son)), Tom Gulick, Stephanie Malone, Nicole Irvin, Doug Irvin, Carole Greenfield, Emily Gulick (Carole and Tom's daughter) and (front) Larissa Fegundes

Thank you to all the Groton Neighbors who provided boxes, cooked, baked, collated the boxes, and delivered meals to seniors and/or needy on



Cupcake Kitchen Photo: K.Geils

Christmas Day: **Betsy Bair, Kathy Doody, Caitlin Furcolo,**

**Nicole Irvin, Cheryl King, Bill Knuff, Donna Koski, Judy McDermott, Beverly Smith, John Sopka, and Carole Greenfield.**

We are truly grateful for all the kind people involved! It truly took a village. Happy Holidays and a Happy, Healthy New Year. 🏡

**Note of thanks for all Groton Neighbors working together for each other.**

Dear Groton Neighbors.  
 Thank you, I truly appreciate all your kindness + help throughout this year, thus enabling me to keep all my medical appointments in Chelmsford.

Merry Christmas  
 + a  
 Happy New Year full  
 of love, Joy + happiness  
 Kind regards  
 Sylvia Lee



# By The Numbers

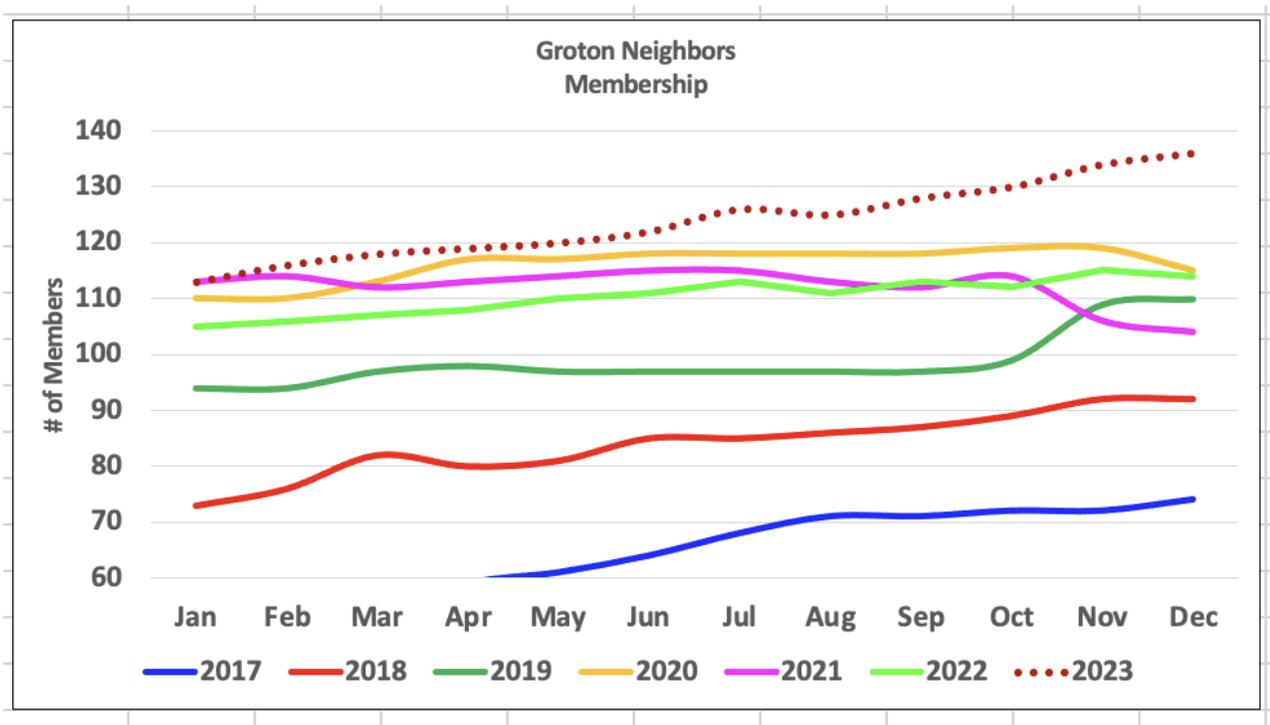
by Bill Knuff

2023 has been a very good year for Groton Neighbors. Membership is up over 20% thanks to the hard work of the Membership Committee and broad acceptance of our mission by the residents of Groton. While the pandemic slowed us down, we have seen steady growth in the number of services provided over the past two years. Seventy-five percent of the requests we receive are for rides, so it is helpful that over eighty percent of our members still drive and are willing to give those who don't a ride when they need one.



The most heartening improvement over the past year is the overall increase in Service Providers. The three-fold increase in the number of members who completed 1-4 services last year is notable. This is a measure of the true spirit of neighbor-helping-neighbor that is alive and well among us. In the category of "many hands make light work", we see more members doing their part as indicated by the reduced number of Super-Providers. We have limited overall participation data, but the numbers show us a better balance among those who provide services, those who request services, those who help run the business, and those who support the mission by paying it forward. There is a place for everyone in Groton Neighbors.

Charts tracking all the metrics we monitor are accessible at [www.grotonneighbors.org](http://www.grotonneighbors.org) but you may [CLICK HERE](#) to check out 2023 year-ending results. 📊



## Make a Difference for Groton's Elderly and Disabled Community



Donate today to help provide financial assistance to elderly and disabled residents who are struggling to pay their property taxes. Help us ensure that those who are most vulnerable in our community are able to remain in their homes and continue to live independently.

### Send donations to:

Town of Groton, Attn: T.R.E.A.D.  
73 Main St., Groton, MA 01450

### Questions:

Contact Hannah Moller, Treasurer/  
Collector at [hmoller@grotonma.gov](mailto:hmoller@grotonma.gov)

# T.R.E.A.D.

## (Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled)



The T.R.E.A.D. program is authorized by Chapter 60 Section 3D of Massachusetts General Laws and adopted at the Groton Spring 2016 Town Meeting. It provides financial assistance to elderly and disabled residents of Groton who are struggling to pay their property taxes. The program is designed to help alleviate the burden of property taxes on those who are most vulnerable and in need of financial assistance. The T.R.E.A.D. program is funded by donations from individuals, businesses, and organizations and it aims to build a sustainable source of funding through private donations. This important program helps create a strong, more supportive community for all residents of Groton.

### T.R.E.A.D. Committee Members:

Resident Members: Charles Vander Linden, Louis DiMola, Pascal Miller  
Treasurer/Tax Collector and Chair of the T.R.E.A.D. Committee: Hannah Moller  
Chair of the Board of Assessors: Garrett Boles

***(\*) Donations to the Town of Groton T.R.E.A.D. Fund are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.***