

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



September 13, 2020

Dear Groton Neighbor,

I was just sitting, look up at some puffy, white clouds in an otherwise clear, blue sky. I stared at a tiny one for a while and watched it change, growing fainter and fainter until I couldn't tell it had ever been there. Then it slowly occurred to me. I was relaxed.

Whether it's staring at clouds or any other non-productive pastime, take a few minutes to find your own relaxer. Especially in times like these, it can be very therapeutic...peace.

Mike Manugian

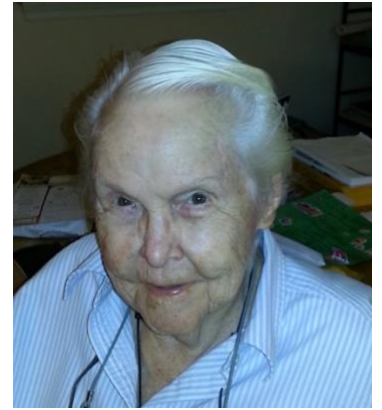
President, Groton Neighbors



My Friend Shirley

By Judy Anderson

I first met **Shirley Man** when I joined the church choir in the mid '90's. We were both altos, and I stood slightly behind, singing in her ear. I saw her only at Thursday practices and Sunday services, but I always enjoyed her company. Then in December 2001, I had a hip replaced. Shirley said she didn't cook or bake, but if I'd like some company while recuperating she'd be happy to come visit. That was the beginning of a great friendship. Over the next year we decided to become "sisters" as neither of us has a sister of own.



A gleam in her eye
(W. Knuff)

I found Shirley fascinating company and our lives have common threads. She has lived in Spain....I, in Switzerland. She has lived in Puerto Rico...My son lived there also. She is from the Midwest...I have lived in Illinois and Indiana. We enjoyed sharing our memories of all those places.

We both enjoy singing, but over time I came to learn a lot more about Shirley. I learned that she played recorder and flute. She painted and enjoyed birds and flowers. She golfed in a couple of leagues, went candlepin bowling with Groton seniors, kept up with newspapers/books/magazines and always had something interesting to say about politics. She plays chess and Words with Friends on her computer. And at some time, she and her husband piloted their own small plane. Our friendship has grown for over twenty-five years, and we've never lacked for conversation.



Watercolor by S. Man
(C. Premru)

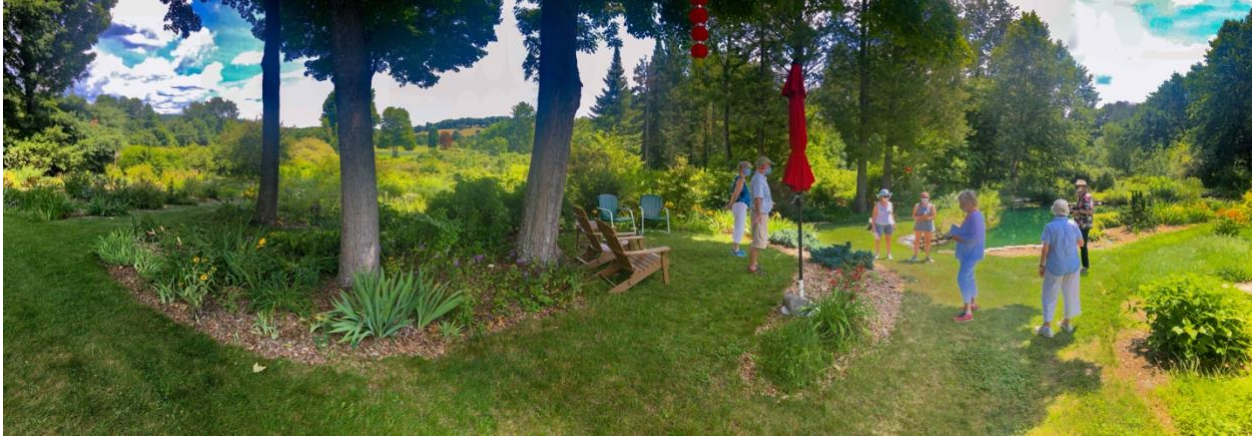
Shirley's life has changed a lot recently. She was frustrated when she had to stop driving because her eyesight was failing. She now listens to books on tape rather than reading. She finds it difficult to paint. She still lives in an apartment on her own, but since COVID, she has not been able to do her own food shopping...which she misses. Thanks to the Groton Neighbors shopping initiative, her pantry is never empty. Most days she still goes out for a walk to

the end of her street with a walker. She also enjoys going for rides or the occasional walk on the John Tinker Trail along the Nashua River.

In celebration of Shirley's 99th birthday, another church member, Cyndy Premru created a video of Shirley's artwork. Click on this link to enjoy [Watercolors by Shirley Man](#) comprising 155 paintings of flowers, landscapes, and still life studies. 🏡

Connecting in the Garden

By Bob Pine



A socially distant tour of their Garden of Eden hosted by Groton Neighbors members Bob and Becky Pine (R. Lotz)

One of the losses for us during pandemic days has been connection with people. Zoom has helped but isn't the same, so when we were asked if we would consider leading tours of our gardens for Groton Neighbors, Becky and I said yes. We love our gardens and enjoy spending time in them. We also enjoy sharing them and talking with friends about gardening, so this was a special opportunity.

It happened that at just the same time the Groton Garden Club asked if we could be part of their daylily tour. So, we decided to 'double-dip,' being part of two tours in one week with only one weeding to get ready for both.

On the designated day, we toured with three different, masked, socially-distanced groups of Neighbors. We strolled through our gardens discussing the different plants and paused to look at frogs, turtles and water lilies in our pond. We talked about nature and agreed in our good fortune to live in such a lovely town. Although the day was hot, no one complained, and we all were able to enjoy not only the gardens but each other as we caught up with friends, got to know new people and regained some of the connection we had put on hold.

Betty Ireland, who helped by greeting the visitors, reported some of the comments she heard as groups left the tour. "Wow, what an amazing garden and yard." "I had no idea this was behind here." "It's so beautiful and peaceful back there. It's hard to imagine we're in the center of town." And Betty added, "Both my daughter Lisa and I were delighted to see what the Pines have done to enhance their 'back yard'. It has given me the notion that I can do something with my field."

Susan Shay shared her thoughts at some length. “On one of the hottest afternoons of the summer, Bob and Becky welcomed us into their beautiful and intentional garden. To step behind their lovely home is to be transported to some of the most delightful and bucolic scenery we have here in town. They have created what every gardener hopes for, a view for all seasons and a surprise around every corner. Bob and Becky shared the evolution of their garden, from clearing the invasive buckthorn trees blocking their view of Gibbet Hill to the design and construction of the lovely swimming pond that looked very, very inviting on that hot afternoon.”



Sue Lotz and Mimi Matisse enjoy a walk together around the garden pond.
(S. Lieman)

Given these enthusiastic reports, we might all take Susan’s final advice to heart: “If you missed this chance to drink in the tranquility of their property, you should definitely put it on your calendar for the next time!” 🏡

[Click Here](#) to enjoy photos of all three tours on our website.



Bob Pine explaining the pond is not deep enough for diving...or maybe the size of the blooms around it?
(S. Lieman)

Help Wanted

Groton Neighbors is an all-volunteer organization. We welcome your help in whatever way you are able. If one of the volunteer positions below peaks your curiosity, please give us a call (978) 272-0123 or email us at service@grotonneighbors.org and we will be happy to explore these or other way you might help. 🏡

Communications Coordinator:

This person will work closely with the MMO Team and Administration to develop and implement a communications plan and supporting materials to create visibility and awareness among our members and in the larger Groton community. This position requires an individual who can learn the basics of the Groton Neighbors website and is comfortable organizing and delivering attractive and professional content through multiple social media channels, our website as well as snail mail.

Office Staff:

As a member of the Ops Team this person will cover a virtual office shift of their choice two days each month. The position requires good communication skills and dependability. In addition to the ongoing support of the entire Office Staff team, candidates will receive training and mentoring. This role offers a regular schedule with complete freedom and flexibility to integrate with your daily life.

Website Administrator:

Working with Groton Neighbors leadership and our web provider, this person is responsible for managing the Groton Neighbors website and database. Familiarity with web-based database management is helpful but willingness to learn is a requirement.



Grin and Bear It

By Bob Anderson



Tree hugger??

(R. Anderson)

Judy and I have lived on Duck Pond for twenty-eight years. We love the town, the setting on the water, and the wildlife we see...and photograph... every day. Location, location, and location are three reasons we are both active in Groton Neighbors; we want to stay right here as long as possible beyond our current 80th years.

We see a large variety of birds at our feeders and flower gardens. In, around and above the pond we see ducks, geese, great blue herons, cormorants, kingfishers, red-tailed hawks, and even an eagle (once), as well as beavers, otters, muskrats,

snakes, turtles. Like many gardeners in Groton, we sustain plant damage from deer and woodchucks, and we receive visits from skunks and foxes. But despite seeing lots of photos of bears elsewhere in Groton, we had never seen one in all our years on the pond...until August 17th.

Judy was weeding one of the gardens in the front yard. I had just returned from playing golf and was walking out of the garage when I saw the bear walking across the parking lot toward her. Fortunately, it changed direction. It walked around the house to the back yard where it climbed a tree and tried to get at the bird feeders.

We have three large squirrel-proof bird feeders that I can lower by ropes through pulleys for refilling. That rig in turn is supported by a 20' metal bar that is connected to two trees by another set of pulleys and ropes, so I never have to climb 20' up a ladder again! The bear couldn't reach the feeders, but started chewing on the ropes, which I feared (and perhaps the bear hoped) would bring the whole complex crashing down! Failing at that, it went up another tree and grabbed the feeder for the Baltimore orioles, which we've left empty recently as the orioles no longer seem to be visiting.



Oh well, off to see the next door neighbor.

(R. Anderson)

I called to alert my immediate neighbors. One of them suggested banging on pans to chase the bear away. I had yelled and slammed doors, but the bear only looked at me as if to say, "Seriously?" The pan-banging actually worked! The bear ran along the back fence, then

walked around the house and across the front yard into the trees between us and our neighbor's house. It was a small bear, making us watchful that mama bear might also be in the area

I knew there was good reason to play golf instead of weeding the garden! 🏔️

To see the rest of Bob's photos of the bear visit [Click Here](#)

What's Cookin'

Cranberry Walnut Shortbread Bars

A perfect treat for fall in New England



Shortbread:

- 3/4 cup Butter (unsalted)
- 2 cups Flour
- 1/2 cup Brown Sugar (tightly packed)
- 1/2 tsp. Salt

Preheat oven to 350°

In medium bowl combine dry ingredients
Cut in softened butter to a consistency of peas.

Spread in 9"x 13" baking pan and pat down until firm

Bake until golden brown (about 20 minutes)

Set aside.



L-R Owen Shuman, Linda Jordan, Susan Hughes, Suzanna Black, Diane Hewitt, Pat Hartvigsen, and Julie Stein cranberry picking on the Squannacook River in 2017
(L. Young)

Topping:

- 1/2 cup Butter
- 1 cup Brown Sugar (tightly packed)
- 1/3 cup Maple Syrup
- 2 cups Walnuts (chopped)
- 1 cup Cranberries (fresh, whole)

In heavy sauce pan on low heat

Combine butter, maple syrup, and brown sugar

Heat until molten (about 1 minute).

Stir in walnuts and cranberries

Spread topping evenly on shortbread

Bake until bubbly (about 20-25 minutes)

Let cool then Cut into squares

(Note: Pizza cutter & knife make cutting easy)

If you have a favorite recipe to share please email it to:

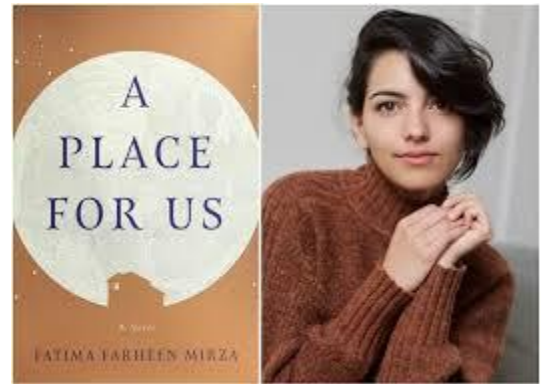
info@grotonneighbors.org and look for it in a future Groton Neighbors Newsletter. 🏔️

A Place for Us? Just barely!

By David Smith

The Zoom screen was packed with the two-inch-square faces of fourteen enthusiastic neighbors who signed up for our August book discussion. Can you have standing-room-only on a computer? We gave it a try. Ironically the focus of our tight gathering is titled *A Place for Us*.

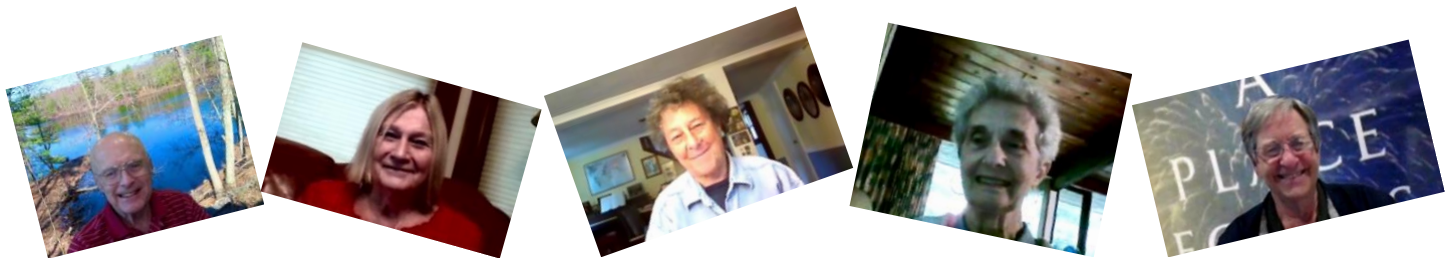
[*A Place for Us*](#) is the brilliant first novel by twenty-seven-year-old Fatima Farheen Mirza. It reveals the inner lives of four members of an Indian-Muslim family living in modern California. The story begins as the estranged son returns for his sister's wedding, stirring up old and bitter conflicts. We are then taken into the past to assemble jigsaw-like the slow-motion train wreck of a family tragedy.



Classic tragedy is so gripping because the characters persist in the belief that they are doing the right thing even as they bring disaster on themselves. And it's that dynamic that makes *A Place for Us* so heartbreaking – misguided traditions, misguided secrets, misguided betrayals, missed opportunities for compassion, missed opportunities to turn back.

Everyone arrived at our meeting eager to share their insights and interpretations of this compelling novel. We all learned so much from what others had to share that many wanted to read the story a second time. We turned off our computer screens richer for what others had brought and looking forward to the time we can squeeze together again from home.

Watch for the announcement of our November meeting when we'll be discussing [*Braiding Sweetgrass*](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer, number 14 on the New York Times best-selling list for paperback non-fiction earlier this year. A member of the Potawatomi Nation and a Ph.D. botanist, Ms. Kimmerer writes poetically about our relationship to the world of plants. It's the kind of book you might want to read slowly, so consider dipping in early. 🏞️



Front Porch Chats

By Diane Hewitt

As the pandemic stretches into an 8th month, our members continue to self-isolate and exercise a high level of caution when interacting in public. At the same time, we have all expressed the need to have more personal contact and connection with others. To help provide some small relief from the boredom and loneliness that comes with prolonged isolation, Groton Neighbors has initiated a new, one-on-one visiting program called “Front Porch Chats”. The goal is simply to bring members together for social conversation.

Since our small launch in early September, we’ve been heartened by the positive response and now have sixteen members who are visiting regularly with each other, on their front porches or in their backyards. Some of these visits are between old friends, and some are between members who are becoming acquainted for the very first time. Either way, folks greatly enjoy these chats, and we are hoping to continue them until the weather drives us all inside for the winter months.



Theresa and Beverly visit in front of Theresa’s home. They plan to meet again.

(D. Hewitt)

Two members, **Theresa Fisk** and **Beverly Smith**, were eager to participate in Front Porch Chats. They had never met and thought it would be fun to get connected. Theresa said she was just looking for someone new to talk with, and Beverly joined for the unique opportunity to get to know someone whom she would never have met. During their first hour-long chat outside of Theresa’s apartment on Willowdale Street, they enjoyed some delicious chocolate cookies from Dolce Amar and shared a few of their life stories. Now that Theresa and Beverly have met, both are eager to stay connected and are planning another get together soon. If you would like to meet with another Groton Neighbor for an occasional social conversation, please call us at 978-272-0123, and we’ll get you connected. You are not required to provide anything other than an outdoor or porch location where proper safety protocols can be followed. 🏡

Connecting with Grandchildren...Digitally

By Krys Salon

Sadly, the pandemic has forced many of us to forego those delightful face-to-face meaningful and memorable visits with our grandchildren. In each newsletter while we are required to stay apart, I'll offer some ideas for digital activities to help us keep up those important connections. Meanwhile, if you have some favorite grandparent-grandchild activities you'd like to share with others, please email me at: ksalon1953@gmail.com

Each of these suggestions requires the use of a private program or an online platform for video chat such as [Zoom](#), [Skype](#), or [Google Hangout](#). Groton Neighbors will provide technical support if you need it. Call (978) 272-0123.



4 to 6-year-olds: Read a Book Together

A website called Readeo allows you and your grandchild read a picture book together. You can see each other and chat, but most of the computer screen shows a picture book with arrows for turning pages. Either person can read and turn the pages as you would if you could sit side by side. With a growing library of over 100 books, Readeo offers a 14-day free trial, after which you can subscribe at a monthly rate of \$10 or an annual rate of \$100. Here's the link if you want to explore this idea: <https://www.readeo.com/>

6 to 10-year-olds: Cook Together

Send your grandchild a recipe, then each of you cook at the same time while you guide them from your computer. This idea requires a laptop computer that can sit on the kitchen counter. Or, for a simpler idea, plan to meet as you eat lunch together. Maybe you eat the same lunch such as the child's favorite sandwich.

10 to 12-year-olds: Create a Story Together

Take turns inventing a story. You start, making up the beginning of the story. Go on for a while until you come to an interesting spot. Perhaps you give the main character a decision to make. Perhaps you put them in a bit of trouble. Perhaps they meet a particular person or find a strange object. Then pass off the story to your grandchild, who picks up the story and carries on until they pass it back to you. Choose a topic that interests your child – a baseball game, a fairy tale, a dark and stormy night, an artist's picture comes to life! Keep passing the story back and forth until it comes to a conclusion.



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Tweens and teens: Share Life Experiences

Take turns comparing your life experiences – what’s happening in their life – how was it for you at the same age? Use the follow topics or come up with some of your own. Of, course, the pandemic makes so much of life different these days.

- 1) Anticipation of a special event. Excitement? Worry?
- 2) A funny story about something that happened with friends or in school.
- 3) Getting into a bit of trouble with friends or in school.
- 4) Family rules do you wish you could change? Why?

[Editor’s Note: Kryss is a retired educator with over 25 years experience in the classroom and administration. Her career spanned elementary and secondary grades with a focus on early primary. Her favorite part of education is watching children explore new ideas. She joined the Groton Neighbors Board of Directors in August.] 🏡

The Lanyard

BY BILLY COLLINS

The other day I was ricocheting slowly
off the blue walls of this room,
moving as if underwater from typewriter to piano,
from bookshelf to an envelope lying on the floor,
when I found myself in the L section of the
dictionary
where my eyes fell upon the word lanyard.

No cookie nibbled by a French novelist
could send one into the past more suddenly—
a past where I sat at a workbench at a camp
by a deep Adirondack lake
learning how to braid long thin plastic strips
into a lanyard, a gift for my mother.

I had never seen anyone use a lanyard
or wear one, if that’s what you did with them,
but that did not keep me from crossing
strand over strand again and again
until I had made a boxy
red and white lanyard for my mother.

She gave me life and milk from her breasts,
and I gave her a lanyard.

She nursed me in many a sick room,
lifted spoons of medicine to my lips,
laid cold face-cloths on my forehead,
and then led me out into the airy light
and taught me to walk and swim,
and I, in turn, presented here with a lanyard.

Here are thousands of meals, she said,
and here is clothing and a good education.
And here is your lanyard, I replied,
which I made with a little help from a counselor.
Here is a breathing body and a beating heart,
strong legs, bones and teeth,
and two clear eyes to read the world, she whispered,
and here, I said, is the lanyard I made at camp.

And here, I wish to say to her now,
is a smaller gift—not the worn truth
that you can never repay your mother,
but the rueful admission that when she took
the two-tone lanyard from my hand,
I was as sure as a boy could be
that this useless, worthless thing I wove
out of boredom would be enough to make us even.



Meditation in Motion

By Pat Hartvigsen

Living in the present with its challenges and uncertainties is not easy, but on Tuesday, August 18, nine Groton Neighbors joined **Barbara Rich** in **Betty Irelan's** lovely field overlooking Gibbet Hill to explore ways to relax our minds and our bodies.

Gathering ten feet apart, our spaces indicated by jars of wildflowers, and wearing masks, we placed our mats and chairs on the ground. Wise in years and life's challenges, Barbara is a talented and experienced teacher of meditation, movement and mindfulness, drawing upon the wisdom of 5000 years of yoga and Buddhist philosophy. Barbara guided us in her practice of mediation and movement, inviting us to breath, move, reflect, observe and relax.

As we sat in silence, we experienced the gentle breeze, focused on the sounds of nature and listened to Barbara's inspiring words. We left slowly and in silence, holding the shared feelings of serenity and peace.

Martha McLure found it "a delight to relax in the quiet outdoor atmosphere as Barbara read us poetry and words of wisdom to reflect upon. She led us through simple poses that enhanced her words with movement. We all came away enriched and with a sense of community we all need during this challenging time.

Steve Lieman joined as both photographer and participant. "This day helped me slow down enough to appreciate how much beauty and light can be found so, so close to home. Betty had picked the perfect spot in the shade with a lovely view out towards Gibbet Hill. Many of the participants were old friends, and it was so good to see them in person in these days of COVID caution. And Barbara, was, well, Barbara; in other words, beautiful, peaceful, gentle, and inspiring those qualities in others. 🏞️



Barbara prepares to guide members through a relaxing mind/body experience.
(S. Lieman)



Members ready their mats and await Barbara's lead.
(S. Lieman)

[Click Here](#) to see photos of this event and others on our web site.

Cycling the Schoodic

By Bill Knuff



Egg Rock Light (W. Knuff)

Five hours drive from home but light years away from the hustle and bustle of even a small town like Groton lies the Schoodic Peninsula. This glacial remain on the eastern shore of Frenchman Bay looks back at Mount Desert which provides a backdrop for one of Mother Nature's incredible shows ... sunset over Cadillac Mountain.

The name Schoodic derives from the native Mi'kmaq "*Eskwodek*" meaning "the end" or "point of land". Schoodic Point with its 430-foot Schoodic Head peak protects Winter Harbor and its working lobster fleet from nor'easters. In 1929 Schoodic Point became part of Acadia National Park. The Schoodic Point District of Acadia is smaller and quieter than its more famous neighbor Mount Desert Island...home to Bar Harbor, Northeast and Southwest Harbors.

Development of Schoodic Point is inextricably bound to the vision and determination of oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller, local financial scion John Moore, and conservationist George Dorr. Dorr devoted much of his life and family fortune to shaping the Acadia we enjoy today. To learn more read [Schoodic Point, History on the edge of Acadia National Park](#) by A. K. Workman

As a cyclist, I am always on the lookout for beautiful places to ride. Riding a bike is a wonderful way to connect with one's surroundings. Keys to favorite rides include beautiful scenery, scent of pine forest, wind in my face, smell of salt air, crashing surf, and chance wildlife encounters. Add to this the luxury of little or no auto traffic and nowhere in my experience is there a more enjoyable stretch of road cycling than the Schoodic Point Loop part of Acadia.

Starting at the Visitor Center, this is a 15-mile loop ride with only 1.5 miles on a lightly traveled numbered route. If you are thinking about doing this ride, it is beginner-to-moderate difficulty on gentle undulating paved road except for a short (≈ 100 yard) climb at the park entrance which you could easily walk.

Whether you are a spandex clad road warrior or a casual cruiser, I am confident you will love this ride as much as I do. Click this link to take a virtual [Schoodic Point Ride](#) with me. This ride begins in Winter Harbor around The Schoodic ending in Corea. 🏠



Looking east across Frenchmen Bay from Cadillac summit. Schoodic is the point of land seen in the distance (W. Knuff)