

From the Board

As a member of your Groton Neighbors Board I have the luxury of using this space to share some thoughts with you. Ends and beginnings are times often given to reflection. It is a time for resolve...for wishes. *I wish we could have done better...I wish for a brighter future.* As 2021 takes its place in the rearview mirror and we look hopefully forward to 2022, I ask your indulgence while I engage in some wishful thinking of my own.

This past year gave us a hint of life returning to a semblance of normal. Vaccines enabled us to see friends and to hug loved ones for the first time in many, many months. We were able to re-open Groton Neighbors to provide many services. Membership has remained relatively stable which speaks to the hard work of our member-volunteers and the resonance of our mission among the broader community. That said, looking back I wish we could have done more for one another...provided more services...held more events...added more new members...become more woven into the fabric of our community that is Groton. The future is uncertain, but the commitment of each and every one of us toward making 2022 a year of doing more for one another is an unquestioned strength of Groton Neighbors and the reason that together, we will succeed.

On a much broader scale and in spite of a news cycle that focuses on the negative, the past year gave us examples of how people of all races and nationalities can work together toward a common good...whether it be social justice, economic opportunity, climate change, or the myriad other issues central to our collective wellbeing. I wish that all the peoples of the world continue a dialogue leading us to a safer and more peaceful planet for all of humanity.

Next year will see my role in Groton Neighbors changing. After several years in development and on the Board, the time for me to step down is approaching. I will remain an active member of Groton Neighbors working toward the success we wish for Groton Neighbors and for one another in the year ahead. 🏡

Bill Knuff



A Sense of Place

By Diane Hewitt & Pat Hartvigsen

A Special Sunday Afternoon: Extraordinary Sense of Place Art Exhibit Features Members of Groton Neighbors.

A Sense of Place was a special themed art project sponsored by the Groton History Center, which brought together an extended group of talented artisans from our area, including Groton Neighbors members **Mary Minifie**, **Scott Wilson**, **Carol Canner** and **Elizabeth Goldring Piene**. Each of the artists represented in the exhibit created an inspired piece of art related to this theme. The extensive collection highlighted our connection to the arts from the past and sought to capture a glimpse of the arts in the 2020's, looking back to the future. The exhibit spanned multiple locations including the Groton History Center, the Groton Inn and the Old Frog Pond Farm in Harvard.



Member Carolyn Perkins guiding a tour at the History Center

On Sunday, October 26, Groton Neighbors members were treated to a private tour of the Boutwell House by **Carolyn Perkins**, a Groton Neighbors member and a board member of the History Center. Her remarks included a fascinating history lesson about George Boutwell, the 20th Governor of Massachusetts and Secretary of the Treasury under U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant. Carolyn also shared information with us about the diversity of art represented in the exhibit—from fine woodworking to metal sculptures, poems created in stone, restored oil paintings, pottery and the fine art portraits of Groton native, Edmund Tarbell.

To cap off our afternoon, Groton Neighbors member and award winning artist and portrait painter, **Mary Minifie** provided us with a mini lecture from an artist's perspective on the inspiration behind the Boston School method of painting and



Member Mary Minifie giving life to a portrait

portraiture. Gathered in the front parlor of the Boutwell House and surrounded by both Edmund Tarbell's portraits and Mary's still life and portrait, she expertly guided us in viewing these paintings and method with a new eye on light, shadow, lines and the focal point of each piece of work.

Once again we realize how fortunate we are to live in a community so rich in resources and talent. We especially appreciate the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the artistic talents of several of our Groton Neighbors members. 🏡

New Lower Fees & Rate Structure

By William Knuff

The Groton Neighbors Board of Directors is pleased to announce new lower membership fees and a household rate structure for 2022. From the beginning it has been our goal to be self-supporting. An all-volunteer organization and low operating expenses enabled us to renew existing memberships at no cost while weathering a pandemic. This roll-up-your-sleeves approach enables us to lower annual membership fees.

Effective January 1st, membership for the first member in a household is reduced to \$95/year. Concurrently, a new *household fee structure* takes effect. The membership fee applicable to all others in the same household becomes \$65/year, lowering annual membership for a couple to \$160/year. The lower household rate applies to all additional memberships in the same household.

You need do nothing. The new lower rates will automatically be applied at your next scheduled renewal. You are now able to *renew on-line* by credit card or PayPal. Renewal reminders will guide you through the renewal process of your choice. Whether by mail or on-line, it is now easier than ever to renew your Groton Neighbors membership.

As always, membership fees are never an impediment to membership. Contact us to learn more. Call (978) 272-0123 or email service@grotonneighbors.org. 🏡



Anthony Corsetti

1941 - 2021



Anthony "Tony" Corsetti, Groton Neighbors member and longtime Groton resident, passed away peacefully on November 18, 2021. Tony was 80 years old and the beloved husband of Irene (Mason) Corsetti for 56 years.

Tony was born on August 9, 1941 in St. Angelo Cassino, Italy, a son of the late Vincenzo and Graziella (Palombo) Corsetti. He emigrated with his family to the United States in 1956 and honorably served in the Army National Guard. In 1965 he married Irene, the love of his life, and began a love story that would span over 56 years. The couple lived in Woburn and eventually settled in Chelmsford

where they raised their family. They moved to Groton in 1992 where they were active parishioners of Our Lady of Grace (St. James Church) and Tony was active in the Knights of Columbus. Tony was a talented barber by trade. He also enjoyed woodworking and was a gifted handyman. Tony was extremely outgoing and his smiling face and energetic conversations will be missed by many.

In addition to his wife, Tony is survived by his children; David and his wife Laura of Stratham, NH and Paula and her husband Thanos of Pasadena, CA; as well as four grandchildren and many friends. He is preceded in death by his loving son, Matthew George Corsetti. 🏡

Memorial contributions may be made in Tony's name to:
[Alzheimer's Association](https://www.alz.org/). Online at: <https://www.alz.org/>

Would you like to get more involved? We could use your help.

As you know, we are an all-volunteer organization and welcome your help in whatever way you are able. If you would like to lend your voice and energy into shaping the future of Groton Neighbors, we would love your help. If you have a friend or neighbor who may be looking for ways to become more involved, Groton Neighbors may be the answer.

If you would like to work on committee, have marketing communications experience, website administration experience, or experience working in a virtual office...please give us a call at **(978) 272-0123** or email us at info@grotonneighbors.org. We are happy to explore these or other opportunities with you. 🏡

Olive Kitteridge Book Discussion

By David Smith

"How Can He Stand Her?"

Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout is a jigsaw-puzzle of a book in which the title character and her small town on the coast of Maine take shape through thirteen separate vignettes. Olive takes center stage in most of the vignettes, while in some, the focus turns to other members of the town. Altogether, the novel's nuanced composition and complexity invite a second reading – they do, that is, if you can tolerate Strout's largely unlikeable title character. As one character says of Olive's lovable husband, "How can he stand her?"

On December 2nd several Groton Neighbors (**Betsy Bair, Pat Hartvigsen, Diane Hewitt, Carol Jewitt, Bill Knuff, Sally Russell, Marion Stoddart, Chuck Vander Linden, Lois Young** and yours truly) gathered via Zoom to share their thoughts about Olive,



Our fearless leader (outlined in yellow) deftly guides the group in a discussion exploring the personality of a prickly main character through a series of vignettes with former students and residents of a small town on the Maine coast.

her neighbors and Strout's Pulitzer Prize winning creation. Most had read the novel once before, and a few had discussed it previously in other book groups, so there were plenty of strong opinions about Olive's difficult personality, whether she has redeeming qualities, and whether we can muster some sympathy for her as she sustains personal losses and fears for the remaining years of her life.

The group felt Olive's personality bore traits typical of small-town life where everyone knows everyone else's history. Some added that Olive's hard pragmatism was typical of coastal Maine. *Crusty with a good heart*, we suggested. *Her forthrightness does some*

good, we agreed. *Because of her own troubles, she's a champion of the underdog*, others thought. Her sweet husband Henry can stand her. That should tell us something. And don't we see in Olive some of our own complicated – not always admirable – traits? However we played with the pieces of the Strout's jigsaw puzzle, we had to agree that she was masterful in keeping us engaged with a difficult main character.

These books discussions are comfortably conversational and open to all who like to read and share their thoughts with others. The next meeting is planned for late February or early March, when we plan a change of pace by reading some recent non-fiction. Watch for the announcement soon in the new year, read a good book and join us for a enjoyable hour. 🏡

This book discussion was recorded. Click [HERE](#) to watch video.



Groton Neighbors

*Helping each other live
independently at home*

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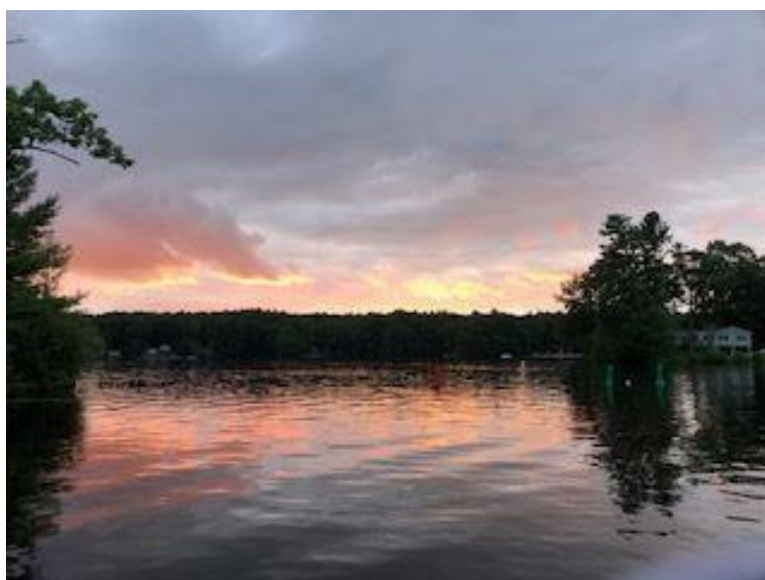
Bill Knuff

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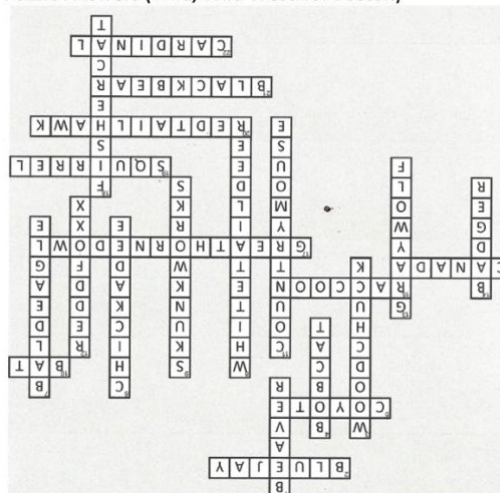
Lois Young

*Contact us to learn
about joining our
growing community*



Sunset Cruise on Lost Lake

Puzzle Answers (Wild, Wild West...of Boston)



Moving to Groton

(Or life on my own in the country)

by Sally Russell

I had been looking for a long time. And I had been dreaming about it for longer than that; a house of my own in the country with a window in the kitchen, space for a garden and an art studio, and a tree, preferably a very big one! It didn't seem like too much to ask. Lots of people had that, but after living in parsonages, and after my husband died, living in a condominium waiting for my turn, I began to despair that it would ever be a reality. Prices of houses were so high!

I took one last trip with a realtor to look at a house in Groton, which seemed so far from Boston! It was January and sleeting and I nearly cancelled the trip. The house was as grey as the day, inside and out; "needed work" the realtor said. But somehow when I stepped inside, I felt I had found it; I had found my house; it had potential, and it had the window and a huge tree, I thought I could make my mark on it. I felt as though it needed me as much as I needed it. I made an offer and called my friends and family to come and see.



Removing trees to let the sun shine in

Evidently at first glance no one else could quite see the potential as I could. My daughters: "Why do you want to take on so much AT YOUR AGE? A condo is so much better for you!" My friends: "But are you sure you know what you're doing? You've never bought a house before. Do you know what you are in for? Are you prepared for mowing the grass and shoveling snow? The house needs a lot of work. How can you do this by yourself?" But they all saw I was determined and admitted that the house and the town "had my name on it". My friends did a thorough inspection of the house, listing what had to be done and how much it should cost. I asked a carpenter to do the same and got his list so there would be no surprises. And I bought the house. One

snag was that a septic system paid for by the seller needed to be approved by the Comm. of Mass. and the Board of Health, and I couldn't close on the house until the approval came. I agreed to rent in the meantime.

Moving day was March 1 on a day which reached 90 degrees. Friends had helped me pack but on moving day itself, I was on my own; I and my 83 yr old mother who insisted on helping and did work very hard. There was a vernal pool in the backyard which was swollen from the spring thaw, and in the 90 degree spring warmth a million peepers

and a million more tree frogs made an incredible noise all night and we couldn't sleep. It was three months before the septic system was approved and during that time I tried to make "friends" with the house as the toilet kept backing up and the tub as well. There were strange gurgling noises in the pipes. The water heater was 18 years old I discovered, and the stove and dishwasher didn't work very well. I put out bird feeders storing the seed on my back porch and learned that squirrels are very good at gnawing through screens to get what they want. At night I could see bats flying around and hear animal noises on my porch roof. I never dared look out to see what kind of animal kept knocking down my bird feeder. Living in harmony with nature was not going to be as romantic or as easy as I thought. Clearly, I had a lot to learn.

The day I finally closed on the house, I came home alone and poured a glass of champagne. It seemed strange not to have anyone here to celebrate with, but I was happy; my new life was about to start. I contacted my carpenter who had been waiting in the wings and we set to work. Progress was hampered because the contractor hired to put in the septic system was nowhere to be seen. No sense putting in a new bathroom with gurgling pipes! But there was plenty of other work to be done: repairs to the siding, renovating a bedroom, exterminators, cabinets, painting, and a basement finished off for a studio and a new roof. John, my carpenter, would shake his head often and say, "I hope you didn't pay too much for this house. When you own a house it's always something! It's a hole to throw money into!"



Roofers at work to make sure the rain stays out

As months went by and I was still waiting for the septic system, my pleas to the realtors were met with comments such as, "No Sally, we all have to work together on this. We mustn't get them (the contractor, Board of Health, engineers, etc) upset or grumpy!" or "Now Sally, you can't be too polite, you have to keep after them, it's the squeaky wheel you know." I had no control over this process since I wasn't paying for it, I discovered. My carpenter would say, "Are you sure they aren't going to put a big hill in your front yard? I know a house where they have a mound 5 feet high!" and he would walk away chuckling. "No, no," I declared "They can't do that". My purchase and sale agreement says it will be put back just as it is and landscaped and graded...I might lose a couple of trees, they said....a little elevation, they said!"

In November, 5 months after the closing and just as a roofer had started his work removing shingles, one of the realtors called. "The contractor is coming tomorrow", she cried hysterically. "You had better tell the roofer to move all his stuff right away!"

I had moved as many plants from the front yard as I could and ran out that night to put red yarn on the remaining shrubs and trees I wanted saved. In the morning a harried roofer moved his equipment as I watched truck after truck and backhoe after backhoe descend on my front yard. One truck was labeled, "Tree Surgeons". One would think that the welfare of trees was uppermost in their minds, however as three large spruces and three other tall trees came unceremoniously crashing to the ground, I decided "Tree Butchers" was a more appropriate title. Orders were shouted back and forth between the contractors, tree men and the realtor and the digging began. I watched in horror as plants marked with red yarn disappeared, my plum tree was uprooted and placed in a bucket. As truckloads of earth were piled on top of one another, the elevation in my front yard quickly grew!

I tried talking to the contractor, who changed his story every day. "What are you contracted to do?" I asked. "Just seed afterwards?" "Why is it so high?" "Why are these round cement lids above ground?" "Three of them?" "What is that motor noise I hear?" "Does that run all the time under my bedroom window?" I decided to be a "squeaky wheel" and assert myself. I went out in my bathrobe and slippers with a raincoat thrown over my shoulders, to communicate with this contractor on his caterpillar on my mountain. "You have to deal with me, not the realtor!" I yelled feeling like an ant. He nodded at me from his high perch with an uncomprehending expression. I asserted myself again with the banker, the realtors, the landscaper, anyone who would listen; the lawyer was next. That night I felt satisfied that I had made an impact and settled down to watch TV. The first station I tried was about autopsying murder victims, and second was about child molesters. I gave up and went to bed. At 2:30 a.m. I was awakened by my cat Molly, who having found her true calling, brought me a live mouse and dropped it on my bed. At this point I was beyond shrieking and tossed it off the bed, followed it and the cat downstairs, stepping on two more dead ones as I went down. I was unfazed and thought I must be getting adjusted to country life.



Earthmovers...a sign of light at the end of the tunnel

After the crew installed the septic system, it was time to hook it up to the house, which they did by crashing a hole through the finished wall that John the carpenter had painstakingly built and running huge pipes through my studio space. It was supposed to be hooked up through the other side of the house, but the contractor said after he had done it, "Well, everything has changed". "I think they have been taking advantage of us," John said quietly.

Well, holes were fixed, pipes were changed, new partitions put up, the contractor and his equipment left, and I began to see a tiny light at the end of my tunnel. The stone wall around the new driveway, the landscaping and grading would be last on the list to do.



Sally in her new home sharing her art with friends

Just as I began to let out my breath, the pump made a grinding noise; there was no water. The contractor had emptied my well to fill the septic tank. Two men came from the pump company to discuss the problem. It was clear to me they were new and didn't have a clue as to what to do. They were looking for my well which was right in front of them and began digging in the back yard.

Old metal things like radiators and such were being unearthed. One young man

with his visor over his eyes and his hair sticking straight up through the hole in the back asked me, "Do you know anyone with a backhoe?" At which point, I said, "the pump is working now, go and don't come back!"

Work continued on the house; John the carpenter, John the plumber, and John the electrician would let themselves in early in the morning before I was up and greet each other: "Hi John." "Hello, John." "How are you, John?" I would hear from upstairs. The contractor sent his son over to replace the stones around a much smaller circular driveway, and when he was finished, the stones formed a "V" instead of a "U". The three Johns were laughing at the sight, while another irate phone call was made.

Gradually the house came together. It began to perk up and shine. Everything that needed fixing or replacing was done. "The hole which I poured money into" has filled and my house has regained its dignity once again. Others may not see it as I do, but to me it is the most beautiful house in the most beautiful place in the world.

I am home. 🏡



Home Sweet Home!

What's Cookin'

Peppermint Bark

Wondering what to do with those left over candy canes? Peppermint bark is a candy we cannot wait to get our hands on every holiday season. Luckily, you can make a batch in 10 minutes flat. 🏠

INGREDIENTS

12 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped

12 oz. white chocolate, chopped

1/2 tsp. peppermint extract

8 candy canes, crushed

Yields about 12 servings

DIRECTIONS

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add 3" of water to a double boiler
3. At medium heat bring water to simmer
4. Reduce heat to low
5. Add *semi-sweet dark chocolate* and stir until melted
6. Stir in peppermint extract
7. Pour onto baking sheet
8. Spreading into even layer
9. Refrigerate about 20 minutes
10. Repeat Steps 1-8 using white chocolate
11. Pour over chilled dark chocolate
12. Spread into even layer
13. Top immediately with crushed candy canes
14. Refrigerate about 20 minutes



No double boiler...no problem. Add 3" of water to a large pot and bring to simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat, then place a large heat proof bowl on top.

Poetry Corner

'56 Ford

A Poem by Fred Woods

(Introduction by William Knuff)

This poem by Fred Woods brings fleeting memories of my teenage years. I grew up in Detroit during the halcyon days of the "Big 3" American automobile makers. As with most of my friends, my father was in the auto business. We always had more cars than drivers at home since *one must drive a Ford to make a sales call on Ford*. Dad was rigid about most things, but my brother and I drove a car long before we were of legal age. It seems like only yesterday we were cruising Woodward Avenue...*the main drag in the Motor City*...behind the wheel of a chrome plated, fin-tailed goliath stopping for a burger and a shake at the Totempole - a new-fangled drive-in restaurant with pretty girls on roller skates - on our way home from a post-game sock-hop at the High. 🏠

All aboard!

*Got the keys to the Ford
bench front seat
column shift
pop the clutch and so lit
the suburban night.*

*One arm driving
Sugar shift for me
six Pabst on the floor
knee to knee
sweet air of cut-grass
in the dark.*

*Two buck fill up
slide on over
windows down
arm 'round your shoulder
they're playing our song!
We own this town.*

*Mint green two-tone
fifty-six Ford
I saw one on eBay
fully restored*

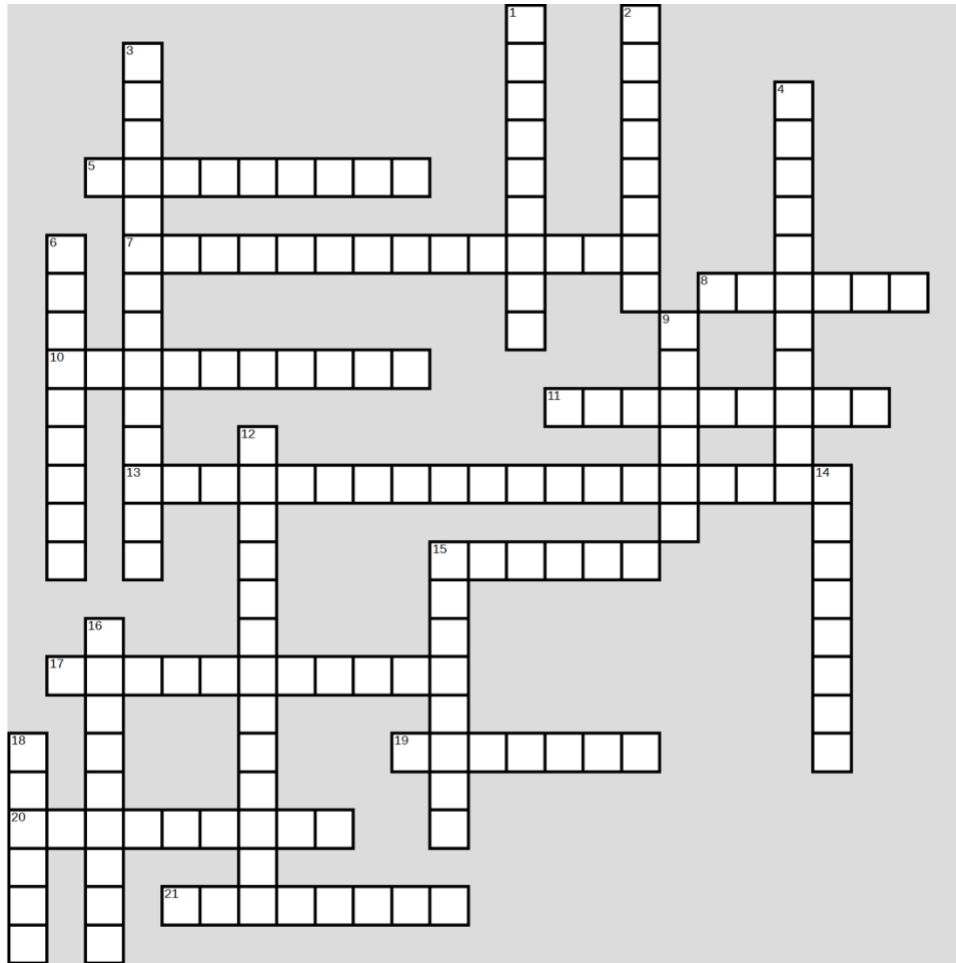


"Mint Green two-tone '56 Ford" Crown Vic Sunliner w/Continental Kit



Wild, Wild West...of Boston!

Try your hand at identifying wildlife found in Groton



Across

- 5 Feline Weasel?
- 7 Big Hooter in the Brass Section
- 8 Acme's Best Customer Wylie.
- 10 L'il Abner Factory
- 11 Punxsatawney Phil
- 13 Kin of Woody
- 15 MIT Mascot
- 17 Bird from Quebec
- 19 Beatles' Friend Rocky
- 20 Maine Attraction
- 21 Papal Elector

Down

- 1 MA State Bird
- 2 U-boat or Canis Lupus
- 3 Rocky
- 4 "Here I come to save the day!"
- 6 Gotham Call for Help
- 9 Pester
- 12 Bambi Relative
- 14 CComic CCanine
- 15 Toronto Nine
- 16 National Symbol
- 18 Cool Dude w/Short Hair

**To Solve this
puzzle on-line,
click on the link
below**

[**SOLVE ON-LINE**](#)

Answer Key on Page 6

How to Age Well & Stay in Your Home

By Jane E. Brody
May 21, 2018

Excerpts from a 2018 article in NYT with advice on how to rid ourselves of clutter and make a safer home...which many of us know but bears repeating. 🏠

Barbara Ehrenreich, popular author and self-described myth buster, has written about how, having reached her mid-70s, she has lived long enough and now forgoes regular medical exams. And Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, a 60-year-old oncologist and bioethicist, argues that we might all be better off, himself included, if he dies at 75. But many who have reached that age — yours truly included — may prefer to think our lives are but three-quarters over.



We may hope to see grandchildren graduate from college, then perhaps marry and have families of their own. We may have projects to fulfill and a "bucket list" of places to visit. And we'd like to continue to live independently — albeit with hired help on occasion for overly challenging tasks — as long as possible.

Which raises the inevitable question: What will it take to age well in place, in the surroundings we've long cherished that bring us physical, social and emotional comfort? What adaptations are needed to assure our safety and comfort and relieve our children's legitimate concerns for our welfare?

Of course, aging in place is not for everyone. But for those of us who relish the familiarity of the status quo and perhaps cannot afford the \$50,000 a year or more that assisted living would cost, our current homes may require some adjustments to postpone — and perhaps obviate — any need to move to safer if not more pleasurable dwellings.

Much has been written by organizations like AARP, and many volunteer and nonprofit services now exist, to help people like me age in place. But too often, the needed adaptations don't happen until there's an accident that may shorten or even end the life in question. Meanwhile, friends and relatives fret, wheedle and cajole — often to no avail — to get their aging loved ones to adopt important modifications to make their homes safer.

I recall how upset I was with a dear friend, then in her early 80s and 14 years my senior, who refused to replace, secure or remove throw rugs in her kitchen and hallway that were a serious trip hazard even for me.

Lynda Shrager is an occupational therapist who has worked with seniors in their homes for more than 13 years. Ms. Shrager has good reasons to believe that addressing the challenges of independent living can help keep seniors safe and their kids sane.

"It's cheaper to stay in your home, even if you have to make some renovations and get an aide a few days a week to help," Ms. Shrager said in an interview. "It's money well spent and a lot cheaper than assisted living. But it's important not to wait until there's a crisis — a parent falls and breaks her hip."

Living near Albany, Ms. Shrager is well aware of weather-related hazards like snow and ice, which may make it difficult to pick up the mail or get to the street for a ride. The entryway, for example, may need a resurfaced path to reduce trip hazards, improved lighting, railings on the stairs, or a ramp and wider doorway for a wheelchair.

Once inside, is the furniture designed and situated to accommodate someone with mobility issues? Identify trip hazards like wires on the floor or furniture legs that protrude, even pets with a habit of lying on the stairs or in the middle of the floor. Get rid of items long unused, piles of magazines and other forms of clutter, a problem I desperately need to tackle myself. Clutter collects dust, creates stress, and takes up space better used, say, to place a phone or a hot pot.

Ms. Shrager's approach: "Categorize items into five groups: (1) keep, (2) give away, (3) sell or garage sale potential, (4) charitable donations, and of course (5) the all-important throwaway pile." There is no "maybe" pile. To avoid feeling overwhelmed by this task, tackle it piecemeal, a room, closet, shelf, drawer at a time.

Kitchens are a special challenge for seniors with physical issues. When mine was built 50 years ago, I was nearly three inches taller. I store most used items on lower shelves, but now reaching even the bottom shelf of some cabinets is a challenge for me. I often use a grabber, but sometimes I need a stool. Ms.

Shrager suggests one with wide steps and treads and perhaps even a safety bar handrail. "Avoid folding stools that have the potential to collapse," she warns.

She also suggests that cooking in a toaster oven or microwave can be a lot safer than using the stove for many seniors.

The bathroom, however, is probably the most dangerous room in the home. Here, safety changes like installing grab bars and easy access in and out of the tub or shower are critical.

You get the idea. "Don't avoid the conversation," Ms. Shrager urges. "Tell Mom, We're really concerned. Please let's talk about it. We want this to work so you can live your life and be safe and we can stop worrying."



Groton Neighbors Step Up

You may have seen this email earlier in December. This is the second year Groton Neighbors members have participated in this community effort. Thanks to everyone who rolled their sleeves up to help make a Merry Christmas for others. 🏠



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP PROVIDE HOME-COOKED CHRISTMAS DINNERS TO OUR NEIGHBORS

For well over a decade, the Groton Jewish Community Group has cooked and delivered home-cooked Christmas meals to Groton residents in need. The project has grown as in now an interfaith effort. We will be providing about 30 meals and would welcome the help of Groton Neighbors in making this a more joyous season for our friends and neighbors.



Terri Ragot packages homemade brownies as her contribution to a Christmas meal.



Bob Lotz bags homecooked carrots in preparation for a Christmas delivery.