

The Wellesley College Class of 1956 presents

Scarlet Letters

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Dear Classmates:

I am writing this on a beautiful fall day in New England, the same kind of day that greeted us as we arrived on the Wellesley campus in September of 1952. Most of the details of that day are a blur in my memory, but I do remember lining up for lunch in the hall outside the Tower Court dining room, and lunch was a square of cheese souffle which didn't taste very good. Strange what one remembers!

Now, I am deep in the details of four large shopping bags of records and memorabilia handed down by our previous class president, Sally Blumberg Linden. She was very well organized, much better than I will be. Tied together with strong twine according to subject matter are old song books, the histories of how our two class scholarship funds came into existence, program books from reunion weekends, notes and program books from Junior Show, agenda

of class meetings going back at least twenty years, and reports from those same meetings. There are notes from phone calls, do's and don'ts. And much more.

Some of this may be of interest to the College archives. I'll find out. What I find of interest and admiration, now, is the strong thread of dedication and responsibility that holds these items together, and the evidence of many hours of thought and effort that drove the details of decisions made.

Dear sisters, in the spirit of the great class of 1956, let's stay connected!

Anne Sinnott Moore,
Class President
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Co-Vivid Tales from an Auld Soul

All my life I have sought to be a wanderer, observing people and cultures from a nearby twig or wall, like a small bird or butterfly. Trying to fit in as an active participant was never as interesting or rewarding as observing and deciphering the subtleties of human interactions and watching them evolve over time. Over a lifetime there are bound to be a few times when life's burdens may become almost unbearable. Those are the times when curiosity about what might happen next in our strange world keeps one going. In my wildest visions of the future, I never thought that the last period of my life would be ushered in by a global pandemic and by the unmasking (pun intended) of not just idiots, but of strange secrets from over 100 years ago. I'll address the latter in an essay I have not yet finished.

During the masked days of our semi-lockdown, opportunities to watch people interact were limited. However, I had a few very interesting, masked personal conversations with an African American nurse, and later, a cardiologist from India, neither of whom I would recognize unmasked. I have also noticed that when we first started wearing masks at the supermarket we have patronized for over 25 years, everyone started out making eye contact. Now all people, most still masked, seem to be avoiding eye contact.

The first few weeks of the COVID lockdown were highlighted by silly jokes and cartoon videos being texted or emailed down long chains of friends and hook-a-ride pickups. Funny distractions, but business obligations left little time for us to spend looking for humor to pass forward.

The silly joke phase soon morphed into the Zoom interactions. Having to become "Zoom ready" abruptly ended the casual (i. e. sloppy) dress code of a normal COVID semi-lockdown day. The only escape valve in getting ready for a virtual meeting is not having to worry about how well coiffed the hair on the back of one's head is.

The next few months of the COVID isolation were filled largely by reassessing one's life—how (and how well) has one reached the point in life, and where does one go from here. The most unexpected (and delightful) event for us during this period was a phone call from a programmer with whom I had worked for four or five years on a consulting contract in North Carolina in the late '80s. The IT (information technology) staff I worked with there was comprised mostly of veterans from Vietnam, about 15 years younger than I, but already scarred for life in various ways. My IT friend and I will not remain in contact for the rest of my life, I believe. Our latest emails have been about colonoscopies.

Those 2020 lockdown musings led me abruptly to the realization that I, 87 years old, and my husband, 88 years old, have very little time left on this earth. This reality went hand in hand with recognizing that my husband's difficulties walking would impact future travel plans.

Things started looking up in 2021, with the vaccines and premature openings of cities. The delta variant and the politicization of mask and vaccination requirements have been maddening setbacks. However, now that we both have had our third shot, a full dose of Moderna, I have a feeling that Spring is coming, even though days are shortening and Christmas supply line issues are dominating the news. It's time to put away every out-of-place thing in our condo and start thinking of the friends we have not seen in almost two years and of the foreign destinations still on our bucket list!

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My Don't Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth!

One Sunday, several years ago, a friend at church asked me if I would take a horse that her daughter had been exercising at Ellis Park Racetrack. This filly had gone lame, and she would need a year of rest before she could resume her racing career. The horse's owner decided to give her to an exercise girl who loved her. But the girl's mother did not have room on their farm for another horse. I took the filly on my farm, and I decided to breed her instead of sending her back to the track after a year.



Thus began the broodmare career of *My Darling Debbie*. We bred her to *Monarchos*, who won the Derby in 2001. She produced a colt, but her maternal instincts did not kick in. She attacked the foal, and we had to hire a nurse mare for *Mojo* who then thrived. We were off to the races. *Mojo* won at Churchill Downs.

The next year the mare loved her foal, *Marine Pilot*, and he went on to win races. Her third foal, a filly, was not cut out for racing and ended up a dressage horse. And so it went. Each year for nine years *Debbie* produced a foal, and I either raced them or found new homes for them until this year, when she came up barren, and is now retired.

My husband, who served in the Marine Corps as a fighter pilot for thirty years, seeing action in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, loved to fly, so I designed my racing silks in his honor. Marine crimson with gold trim and the outline in gold of the Corsair, his favorite plane, on the back. After he died, I put "wing" in the names of the foals. I named them *Winging Ways*, *Wing Commander* (which Ed was), *Wings of Eagles*, and *Wing and a Player* (sired by *The Player*).

This March, *Winging Ways* won at Turfway Park. The next race he was "claimed" and is now racing for a new owner. Claiming racing is the way the competition is kept at a certain level of ability. Horses run for a set price. It is rare that a horse is claimed, but that is a risk the owner takes. Recently one of my horses ran his first race in a claiming race for \$70,000. We were safe, as no one would claim an unproven colt for that price.

Currently, *Wing Commander* is racing at Ellis Park, *Wings Like Eagles* is in training that will move to Ellis Park in a couple of weeks and *Wing and a Player* will start training this fall.

During the Covid crisis I could not travel to Kentucky where I keep my horses. I have not had a chance to see my latest foal, *Wing and a Player*, that arrived in April of 2020, and now she is a yearling. All I have seen is the bills! But I hope to see her soon.

Marian McGrath "Maya" Percy

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Some of the Work of the Very Crafty Joan (Toni) Gallicchio Caviness

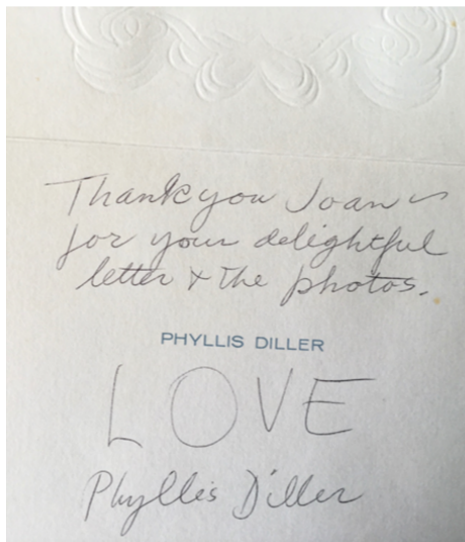
After retiring as a Systems Analyst and Computer Programmer, I studied art, watercolors, loom weaving and dyeing, plastic molding, sculpting, and pastels at a Junior College. Later I took up jewelry making and entered competitions. My grandmother was an early influence. She designed hats, painted dishes, made rugs, and recreated clothes after just seeing them. >



I'm fascinated by methods of creation. When a class in 3D printing was offered nearby, I signed up and made these items. I entered the larger container in an art show. ^

I had been taking basket weaving. When my husband and I vacationed in Hawaii, I saw a Banyan tree root on the ground. I made a basket out of it. Later, I saw an ancient basket similar to mine in a museum. My basket won first prize in the basket category in our Civic Center's art show. >





In another class we made Plaster Casts. Phyllis Diller was popular, and I enjoyed her humor. I liked her line about "Kicking the Bucket." I made a cast of my leg, a little skirt, and a slipper for the foot. I sent some pictures to Phyllis and received this dear note. ^

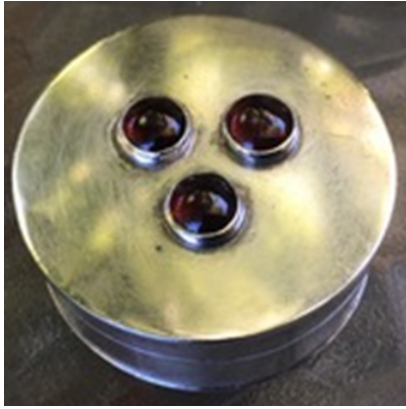


In another plaster project, I made casts of some shoes I was wearing. <

When glass beaded flowers were popular, I made this one. >



When a Junior College offered loom weaving, I made many pieces. <



In a silversmith class, I made this little box and bought some gems to attach on the top. I made the joining of the top and the bottom tight to have a snug fit. <

When my husband retired and our three children were on their own, we traveled to a different country every year: the Soviet Union, Alaska, China, Japan, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Spain, Greece, Poland, the British Isles, France, the Middle East, Morocco, Germany, and Italy. Here are pictures of water ways in Venice. >



Drawings. <

Most Memorable

Sometime in the early 80's when I was teaching in San Francisco, a group from The Center for Independent Living came to the school to give an assembly. This group is featured in the film "Crip Camp" because they became a locus for the disability rights movement, and many of the kids who had gone to Camp Jened, i.e. Crip Camp, ended up in its purview.

They sent a representative group from their base in Berkeley. The assembly was a success in helping introduce us to the lives of what we had been taught by some of them to call the disabled, but even then, one of the participants said she liked the word crippled, and crippled was what she wanted to be called.

I don't remember the order of the speakers, but I do remember their impact, and I remember especially the one who went last.

There was a woman with cerebral palsy who taught us what to do if you are present when a disabled person falls; her clear directive was to stand back. "If the person wants your help," she said, "she will ask for it."

There was another woman, born profoundly deaf, who was a judge in the California courts and used sign language. She spoke to us through an interpreter, a young woman who was so relaxed in her work that at one point she lifted her sweater a little to scratch her stomach. After their presentation, the two of them signed quickly between themselves, and the interpreter finally said, "Ok, I don't want to interpret what she's saying, but she's my boss. She says that I am one of the only interpreters skilled enough to be entrusted with judicial proceedings because I am the child of two deaf parents: ASL was my first language."

There was a young man who showed us that his wheelchair had no arms, a racing chair. He earned his living as a wheelchair technician, customizing chairs for athletes. His story really got to the kids because as he said, the other speakers were born with their disabilities—he was seventeen years old and was playing basketball in his high school gym when he had a seizure. He woke up a paraplegic.

The last speaker, a handsome upright man in his twenties, came onto the stage and called our attention to the fact that he had no visible disability. He wasn't in a chair, he didn't use crutches or canes, he didn't need a guide dog or have an interpreter.

"I have had," he said, "ostomy surgery, which means that waste does not leave my body in the usual way. Colon cancer caused a portion of my intestine to be removed, and at first I had to wear a bag to collect my bowel movements."

Everyone was silent. He continued. "After a number of years, I was able to have a stent installed so that I could irrigate myself and not have to wear the bag, but I am still what you can call disabled, and I am protected under the Americans with Disability Act."

"And now," he said, "I will answer the question that you are all wondering about: can I make love. Who would make love with me without being horrified? Is it even possible? It was

the biggest question in my world, until I met someone who showed me that it was not only possible, but it was also a lot of fun.”

As you can imagine, the place erupted with mad applause.

There’s a coda that I think is an important piece of the complexity of disability and disability rights. The presenters had made it clear that they gained tremendous power and assuredness from being a part of the Center for Independent Living. It had helped them not only towards independence, but towards self-confidence and activism. Their individual strength came through group consciousness.

In that school was a clever, beautiful girl who had been born with a birth defect—one of her arms ended above the elbow. She wore a hook with which she was adept: she found the hook better to use than a prosthetic arm, and we were used to seeing her use it.

When she heard that the CIL was coming to give the assembly, she asked if she too could be a part of their presentation.

They turned her down.

Judith Rulnick Klau

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