

April 2013

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NF FOUNDERS

Pamela Nelson and her camera kindly captured Neighborhood Falmouth's three founders at a Woods Hole Library event in March. We are all grateful to, from left, Dick Jones, Paul Ferris Smith, and Joanne Voorhis for giving us our start back in 2006, when discussions first began for creating a "village" in Falmouth.

NF STARTS YEAR FIVE!

On April 6, 2013, we will have been actively serving members for four years. We are now about 100 strong, with 65 or so wonderful volunteers helping us to stay in our homes with comfort and safety. As we continue to expand, please be sure we are offering the services and social activities you would like to have. Let us know what you are thinking—we like to hear from you.

ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, April 18th, 2:00 p.m. at Highfield Hall. Fifteen NF members are needed to constitute a quorum to elect members of the board of directors. Those nominated to serve a three-year term are Bobye Anderson, Vicky Cullen, Davien Gould, Becky Moffitt,

Cristina Pingal, and Les Wilkinson, and Jackie Webster is nominated to serve a one-year term. More information on those who have not served on the board previously (Boby Anderson, Davien Gould, and Becky Moffitt) is being sent with this newsletter. We'd welcome your attendance!



Deborah Gates Senft, Member

Debbie Senft came first to the Cape at three months of age, having been born in New York City in March 1927—which, she says, always made her feel like a "washashore." As her family lived at this time in Cambridge, where her MD father had a Rockefeller Institute lab at Harvard, they built a summer home in Woods Hole in 1927. All her youngest years were spent here in the summer with her four older brothers and sisters.

Upon her father's death when she was six years old, she went to live with old family friends in Connecticut, where she was the oldest of five chil-

dren. She moved to New York City when her mother remarried, and then to boarding school at twelve. First, she went to Garrison Forest school in Maryland and then to Northampton School for girls from which she graduated in 1948. She chose to go to Mills College in Oakland, CA, to get as far away as possible from Smith College where her mother and two sisters went.

During her junior year at Mills, Debbie spent a year at the University of Zurich. There, she met Alfred Senft who was spending a year in Switzerland after serving in the war in Okinawa. They spent their spring vacation traveling together through Spain and North Africa, including Tangiers.

Before returning to the States, they decided to spend a summer traveling in Europe. They acquired a jeep and camping equipment and drove through Czechoslovakia during 1947, the only year it was free before Russia occupied the country. They went on to Nuremburg, where they were able to attend a session at the second year of the Nuremburg Trials, and then across Germany to the Low Lands, which were totally flattened by the war, and finally to England before returning home.

Al and Debbie were married in Woods Hole in August 1948, after Debbie had graduated from Mills, majoring in physiology, and Al from Berkeley. From there, they returned to Cambridge, where Al spent four years at Harvard Medical School and Debbie completed an MA in physiology at Boston University's medical school. Debbie then worked at MIT in one of the early labs developing computers (mostly doing soldering!). Summer vacations were always spent in Woods Hole at the family house on Vineyard Sound.

After more training at Chapel Hill, NC, they took a leap of faith and moved to New Guinea, where Al worked as a medical missionary. However, this was not to be his career for he preferred the medical over the missionary part of his work. Debbie took care of young Steve (two years old) and did not participate much in the mission. Al traveled a good deal in New Guinea that year.

Back in the US again, Al completed a master's degree in public administration at Harvard focusing on research in tropical medicine, having recognized in New Guinea it would be more helpful for the local people if doctors knew why patients became sick again and again rather than just treating them. Al and Debbie then returned to Woods Hole, where it was possible to have a lab at MBL and a private medical practice as well.

NEED HELP WITH SPRING CHORES?

Members of the Falmouth High School Civic Leadership Project group are offering to help NF members with some spring chores on Saturday morning, April 6th. If you are interested, please call the office. It is a small group so they can help only a few.

NANA'S NAUGHTY KNICKERS

Would you like to attend the Woods Hole Theater presentation, "Nana's Naughty Knickers" on Saturday, May 18th? One of our volunteers is offering to take three or four NF members to an evening or weekend event, once or twice a month. Please call the office if you'd like to attend.

GRANT FROM THE FALMOUTH FUND

NF received a grant from the Falmouth Fund of the Cape Cod Foundation to support services to NF members by a knowledgeable Advocate Contractor. He is available to review and evaluate bids for home repairs and to ensure that they represent a comparable scope of work. He is available to do a site visit. Please call the office to take advantage of this service.

VOLUNTEERS: SAVE THE DATE

We are having a volunteer meeting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 8th. This will be an opportunity for you to ask questions, make suggestions, and to meet your fellow volunteers. Details will follow in the next newsletter.

During the years from 1958 to 1968, the Senfts had two little girls. Via one of his patients, Al received an offer from Brown University to establish a new department as Professor of Geographical Medicine. He also continued research in parasitology, where Debbie helped him for a number of years.

When Debbie turned 50, she wanted to do something more related to people and became an Associate Director of Volunteers with Hospice, and also was a volunteer herself. At this time, there were only three hospices in the country.

Earlier, in 1955, the Senfts bought over four acres of land in Woods Hole and began building their house. It was designed by a student of Frank Lloyd Wright whom they had met in Zurich and

who was best man at their wedding. Wright is perhaps the most famous of all American-born architects, and their house reflects the influence of his teaching. It appears unpretentious on approach and sits on a steep slope of land, its dark brown color blending in seamlessly with the wooded landscape that surrounds it.

When Al retired in 1968, they moved back to Woods Hole to finish their house. Al had hoped to continue working in MBL and Brown labs, but he died of a brain tumor in 1990. Debbie then turned her attention to Falmouth's free clinic and was one of the early formulators, working with a great group of volunteers, as well as continuing hospice work here on the Cape.

While they traveled often to international tropical medical meetings (in East Germany, Poland, France, Germany, and Italy), it was some years after Al died that Debbie started her adventure travels. She took each of the grandchildren to a country of their choice in the Elderhostel Grandparent/Grandchild program. She especially loved the times in Africa with the animals.

For other travels with a friend from Australia, her list of favorite countries includes Bhutan ("Gross National Happiness"), Buddhist countries, far west China, and North Pakistan. As the saying goes, she doesn't like going places where everyone is in three-piece suits, much like the USA.

Debbie herself has recently come through a major crisis in her life, one of which she has no memory at all. For seven weeks she was in intensive care at Cape Cod Hospital after an aortic valve open-heart surgery in January 2012. While the surgery was successful, use of the heart/lung machine resulted in many of her bodily functions shutting down. Fortunately, her brain turned off her memory also, for during her hospital stay and much of her four months in rehab, she has no recollection of the entire event. Today she is a healthy, bright-eyed individual with a zest for life and is planning a trip to the prehistoric caves of France next fall. This planned vacation is a continuation of the life Debbie loves to lead, similar to the many travels she has enjoyed in the past.

TEA HELD TO INTRODUCE NF

Thanks to the hospitality of Board Member Anne Dewees, NF held a public informational meeting at Dillingham Place on March 27. The Membership Committee served sandwiches and tea to 15 prospective members and volunteers, and Joanne Voorhis led a discussion on how NF helps seniors.



NF REPRESENTED AT FHS JOB FAIR

Last week, twenty-four FHS students expressed interest in volunteering for members of NF during the summer. We will contact each of them to see how they'd like to help.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Meet for Lunch: April 17th

Our next monthly luncheon at Coonamessett Inn will be on Wednesday, April 17th, 11:45 a.m. All members, volunteers, and guests are welcome. We order from the menu and individual checks are provided. Please call the office to reserve a place.

Falmouth Chamber Players Orchestra Concert

Saturday, April 13th at 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 14th at 3 p.m., the Chamber Orchestra will present a concert at John Wesley Methodist Church. It will include music by Mozart and Beethoven and will feature Robert Wyatt, pianist, with Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue". This is the orchestra which was founded by Fritz and Laura Sonnichsen. Admission is by donation at the door. Suggested donation is \$15.

Meet for Breakfast/Coffee: May 6th

Please join us at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, May 6th, at Friendly's for a cup of coffee and/or breakfast. It's a great way to begin the week!

Annual Wine Tasting Party: June 28th

Save-the-date postcards went out recently for NF's annual wine tasting fund-raising event to be held this year on June 28 in West Falmouth. Watch for your invitation to arrive in early May!

REMEMBERING NAT CORWIN

We are saddened to report the recent death of one of our members, Nat Corwin. A memorial service is being planned for later this spring. We send our condolences to Nat's family. He will be missed by many friends in Falmouth.

We gratefully acknowledge support from the following merchants and organizations:

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