

December 2012

Office Phone: 508-564-7543

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**BEST WISHES**  
**FOR A**  
**HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!**

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### **NF Can Receive Investment Shares**

Eric Asendorf of Sound Financial Advisors of Janney Montgomery Scott, sponsors of NF's recent Safety for Seniors Seminar, has kindly set up an account so that we can receive donations of stocks. Our thanks go to Eric for making the first donation!

The current tax code allows a deduction for donation of property to charity equal to the fair market value of the donated property. Where the donation is "gain" property, the donor does not have to recognize the gain on the donated property. These rules allow for the "doubling up," so to speak, of tax benefits: a charitable deduction plus avoiding tax on the appreciation in the value of the donated property.

Further information in the form of an example of this kind of donation to Neighborhood Falmouth is

available from the NF office, and questions may also be directed to the Falmouth office of Janney Montgomery Scott, 508-548-0008.



**Madeleine Hecht, Member**  
*by Pamela Nelson*

A week after Hurricane Sandy, during the height of the nor'easter that followed it, we collected Madeleine Hecht to drive her to an appointment, as arranged through the Neighborhood Falmouth volunteers. Madeleine had told me on the phone that if we did not mind picking her up in such bad weather, she preferred not to cancel her appointment.

"I love the wind!" declared Madeleine, as she climbed up into our SUV. "Perhaps I am a witch!"

I wondered at the connection between wind and witches (perhaps explained in a French fairy tale?) and made a mental note to inquire about it when

we met to chat a week later. I looked forward to our meeting because Madeleine, born in Paris, occasionally lapses into “franglais,” delightful for anyone who enjoyed high school French.

Madeleine’s father, a Jew who escaped pogroms in his native Poland by using falsified papers, met her mother, a Russian Jewish emigrant, in Denmark, where they married and where Madeleine’s sister was born in 1925. They moved to Paris in 1930, and were able to obtain working papers. Madeleine, born a year later, recalls living in Montmartre and sneaking into the Moulin Rouge to watch the can-can on the way home from school. Her parents worked in the garment industry, bringing items from a nearby atelier to work on at home.

The Germans rounded up Jewish men in Paris, including her father, in November of 1941. Nine months later and just five days before Madeleine’s eleventh birthday, Jewish women and children were loaded on buses, to be taken to Auschwitz. A French policeman, failing to find Madeleine’s name on his list, ejected her from the bus before it departed with her mother and sister. She never saw them again.

Madeleine took refuge with other Jews in hiding. Because she was born in Paris and spoke perfect French, she was sent out for food. A Yiddish-speaking group that included at least one member of Madeleine’s extended family, they hid together in one room—without electricity, gas, or facilities for basic hygiene—for 2½ years. Madeleine, who had removed all traces of Jewish identification from her clothing, was their emissary to the immense, tree-lined Père Lachaise cemetery, where the Resistance had arranged for food to be left at one of the mausoleums. Here, little Madeleine, who sat on a gravestone to eat before returning to the hideout with bags of food for her companions, eventually made peace with her fears of wind and witches: “The witch is in me still, a source of strength to help me get through adversity.” There is a corollary thought as well: “Nature never disappoints.”

After the war, Madeleine was reunited with her father, but he was not the same man. In 1945, he sent her to live for a year with her aunt in Sweden. By that time a very angry teenager, Madeleine

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## NF DATES TO REMEMBER

### **NF Board Meeting: December 20<sup>th</sup>**

The next Board Meeting will be held at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>, at Highfield Hall.

### **Meet for Breakfast/Coffee: January 7<sup>th</sup>**

Please join us at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>, at Friendly’s for a cup of coffee and/or breakfast. It’s a great way to begin the week!

### **NF Book Club: January 10<sup>th</sup>**

The NF Book Club is open to members, volunteers, friends and guests. We are currently reading, *Animal, Vegetable, and Miracle* by Barbara Kingslover. Please call the office (508-564-7543) for more information or if you’d like to join us to discuss this book at 2:30 on Thursday, Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Meet for Lunch: January 16<sup>th</sup>**

Our next monthly luncheon at Coonamessett Inn will be on Wednesday, Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>, 11:45 a.m. (There will be no luncheon in December because of the busy holiday season.) 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.

### **SAVE THE DATE: January 26<sup>th</sup>**

NF’s annual winter luncheon will take place on this date at noon at the First Congregational Church on the village green.

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says she was just getting close to her aunt when she died suddenly.

Thereafter, it was hard for Madeleine, based on her experiences as a child and teen, to allow herself to get close to people, convinced that anyone she became attached to would die. However, back in Paris at the age of 17, she was introduced through a Jewish organization to 20-year-old Richard Hecht, who had hidden in a monastery during the war. He was in clothing design school,

studying ladies' clothing design and pattern making; of like mind, Madeleine had learned the sewing trade on her own. "We were two crippled people when we met." Yet they married in 1951, and Richard promised to take his new wife to America. Their daughter was born the following year, and they continued to work in Paris, until finally allowed to enter the United States in 1959.

Within three days of arriving in New York, they found employment, he as a pattern maker, and she on Fifth Avenue doing fancy sewing, including fine buttonhole work and beadwork on wedding gowns. However, because he was unable to provide required documents, Richard could not break into the garment workers' union. They moved to Boston the following year, finding good employment there. Madeleine did finish work and alterations, and Richard worked in a coat factory. Their son was born in Boston.

Richard discovered that Kansas City was a center for the production of ladies' coats, and he moved his family there in 1963. They returned in 1976 to Boston, where Richard worked as a designer for the Forecaster of Boston Clothing Company. After Richard suffered a heart attack, the family moved in 1987 to Falmouth, where he and Madeleine opened L'Artisan, a shop specializing in alterations, tuxedo rentals, and some clothing sales. They lived on Nursery Road, except for wintering in Spain.

Richard died nine months ago, and Madeleine now lives in an apartment. She has had her own health problems, with a hip replacement and also, a year and a half ago, a heart valve replacement.

Through all the moves, Madeleine says she always joined the local Temple and found support in the Reform Jewish community. She teaches classes and gives talks on the Holocaust, because, she says, on no day is she able to forget what she and others experienced. "You have to forgive to live, but forget you cannot," she says. "War is ugly," and yet she has a belief in something bigger than herself.

It took years of therapy to get past the depth of her anger. For example, "I heard Mozart the first time when I met Richard." At first she reacted with anger, wondering what this beauty had to do with

her. But her husband took her to concerts, and over time he built up a large collection of recordings. "He would always talk, pointing out things in the music he thought I would miss. I could never get him to allow me to listen to a recorded piece of music without interruption!"

After the war, Madeleine spent healing hours in the museums of Paris, and even imagined living in museums, with their beautiful collections. In Boston, she loved to visit the Museum of Fine Arts and was especially fond of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. "We were walking up the steps one day and met the nephew of Isabella Stewart Gardner!" She also enjoyed the art museum in Kansas City, with its large Japanese collection, and the Truman Library was another favorite.

"If I'm going to be alive, I have to be part of the living," she says. Madeleine is active in the Falmouth Jewish Congregation, currently taking a class in Yiddish. Recently, the teacher suggested that they translate Snow White into Yiddish. Madeleine's first reaction was frustration. "What does Snow White have to do with us?" she demanded. But she participated anyway. "Such laughter. You have never heard such laughter as we have in this class!"

### **Safety for Seniors Seminar Defies Nor'easter**

Despite the coincidence of a nor'easter and NF's first Safety for Seniors Seminar, more than 50 people braved the winds to gather at St. Anthony's Church. Our thanks go to Eric Asendorf and the staff of Sound Financial Advisors of Janney Montgomery Scott for funding and co-sponsoring the seminar with us.

Three state and local speakers provided valuable advice during the program. Barbara Anthony, Commonwealth Undersecretary for Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation, summarized the extensive responsibilities assigned to her agency, whose purview ranges from tenant, landlord, and shopping rights to identity theft and data security, small claims, and home improvement. She distributed copies of "Consumer University: Your Guide to Protecting Your Money in Today's Consumer

Marketplace,” published by the consumer affairs agency and available by calling the state’s consumer hotline (1-888-283-3757 or 1-617-973-8787) or visiting [www.mass.gov/consumer](http://www.mass.gov/consumer).

The Falmouth Police Department was represented by Patrol Officer Elvira Ferrer, who reminded the audience to be wary of phone and email scams and provided examples of them. Fire Inspector Boyd DeMello of the Falmouth Fire Rescue Department discussed a range of cautions regarding the importance of maintaining operational smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, care with candles, and removal of heating oil tanks. He also described the availability of a lock box that can be attached to the outside of a resident’s house to contain a house key accessible only to Fire Rescue personnel. This arrangement can allow ready access to a resident in distress without knocking down a door.

Additional Safety for Seniors seminars are being planned by Program Committee members Lou Larrey, Bob Reece, and Les Wilkinson, along with Eric Asendorf and our Executive Directors, for February, May, and October of 2013. Suggestions for topics to be covered may be addressed to these individuals or the NF office.

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We gratefully acknowledge support from the following merchants and organizations:

Cape Cod Five Cents Savings Bank  
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Locust Street Sign Company  
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