



Newsletter

January 2012

Office Phone: 508-564-7543

Volunteer Meeting: January 11th

Please come to a working meeting for all current volunteers on Wednesday, January 11th, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at John Wesley Methodist Church. We plan to look at how we can improve the process for the important work we do together. Guests who may be interested in volunteering are also invited. Hope to see you there!

Two Small Gatherings:

Two small gatherings are offered this month with the hope of introducing NF to some prospective members. As a current supporter of our group, you can help by suggesting names to Karin or Ken (564-7543) or by bringing a guest to one of the meetings. Call for locations and directions.

We will become stronger as a helping group if we all try to get the word out to our friends and relatives. Thanks from Chair Joanne Voorhis, for the Membership Committee.

NF Computer Class: January 28th, 10 a.m.

We are pleased to offer a friendly computer learning class for NF members. It will be held in the new library and computer lab at Falmouth Academy on Saturday, January 28th at 10 a.m. Since it will be primarily one-on-one with Falmouth Academy students, it will be a great opportunity to ask any question, no matter how basic or advanced, to help you navigate your computer. It will be a relaxed atmosphere, and **not** in a lecture format.

Everything will be hands-on, so bring your laptop if you have one. Computers will be available at the school for those who do not have one or can't bring one. To give us some advance information, we will ask you what areas you are interested in, whether it be emailing, handling attachments, printing, photographs, word processing, surfing the web, Google searching, or anything else.

Transportation can be arranged. Please let us know if you will be attending by emailing or calling the NF office. We hope you will join us!

Soup/Bread Gathering: Saturday, January 28th

Our annual homemade soup and fresh bread luncheon and a time to socialize for members, volunteers, and guests will be held on Saturday, January 28th, at 12:00, in Fellowship Hall, 1st Congregational Church on the Green. We have invited the Falmouth Academy students to join us following the computer class that morning. Please RSVP to the NF office.



Eleanor Bronson Hodge, NF Member

by Mavise Crocker

It is not often that someone can live a wonderfully adventurous life and then be able to write a memoir years later as a nonagenarian—but that is exactly what Ellie Bronson Hodge has done. She has always been a free spirit, and fortunately had the right companions and resources to turn her life into an exciting adventure. She also has a talent for writing that has captured her experiences in several delightful self-published books. In addition, she has an artistic flair for embellishing her work

with pencil sketches that catch the spirit of the moment and give spark to her writing.

It all started in 1937 when, as a Smith College student, she spent her junior year abroad in France. It was then she fell in love with France, she fell in love with travel, and she fell in love with a life of adventure. Her first job after graduation seemed rather ordinary— as receptionist and proof-reader at Houghton Mifflin in Boston— but she soon worked her way up to editorial assistant. As she wrote in her memoir *Sojourner*, “I loved working with words, reading them, assessing them, seeing them become actual books...”

But Ellie’s life was not only in the world of publishing. With the advent of World War II, the mystique of a life abroad surged back in her veins. During the war she served with the American Red Cross, first in England, then in the south of France. After the war, she remained for several months in Paris, taking art classes and enjoying the city. She was loath to leave her exciting life abroad, but finally, inevitably, it was time for her “to come home and get on with her real life.”

Back in the States, Ellie was soon working at McMillan publishers in New York as an editorial assistant, but always with one eye cocked toward Europe. In 1949, she and a girlfriend decided to vacation in France. While she was there a new tenant had moved into the brownstone apartment house back home, a floor below hers. Sam Bronson was an engineer by profession, a true musician by temperament, but also an adventurer like Ellie. They dated, and “by the time spring came,” she said, she felt he was ready to propose. “If he didn’t, I might have to suggest it myself,” she said.

Life with Sam was rather unorthodox, which suited Ellie just fine. When the engineering department at his job was dissolved, “the severance pay was substantial,” she said, “so we decided to spend it in an interesting part of the world.” By then, they had adopted their son Peter, but even traveling with a two-year-old did not hamper their adventurous spirit. Denmark was their choice, so for a few months in 1955, that was their home. As she had done throughout her life, Ellie kept a journal during her wanderings, savoring with delight new foreign cultures and new friends. These journals became the backbone of her future books.

On their return, changes were made in the Bronsons’ lives. Sam switched jobs to become a math teacher; they adopted their newborn daughter, Amy, and settled into a sedate family life in Stamford, Connecticut. But when the children were teenagers, the urge for adventure loomed strong again. They decided to go to Vienna, where Sam would teach in the American International School, the children would be students there, and Ellie would have time to explore “a fabled city and learn a brand new language.”

Back home after two years in Austria, life resumed with multiple activities for Ellie and her family. She called them “waiting years,” as the children grew up. She earned an MA at Manhattanville College, they became devoted members of a local Congregational church, and they spent summer vacations in Woods Hole where her parents had a cottage.

In 1981, a tragedy occurred in Ellie’s life when her mother and her husband Sam both died on the same day—Sam while playing golf in Florida. They had bought a house in West Falmouth, and that is where Ellie spent the next few years, rebuilding her life with the help of friends and family.

In 1984, she renewed a friendship with a former high school friend Stuart Hodge, whom she had met briefly again in France after the war. She was now a statuesque white-haired woman of 68, but still as adventurous as ever. “Our friendship became a courtship,” she writes in *Sojourner*, and they were married in August of 1985. During their twelve-year marriage, Ellie and Stuart traveled extensively—Australia, Africa, Brazil, Russia, and all over Europe, including, of course, France—certainly fulfilling the dreams of true adventurers.

Since becoming a widow once again, Ellie has searched her lifetime journals to record her memoirs, including one titled *Still Boy Crazy at Ninety*. At 93, Ellie Bronson Hodge is still living life at its fullest. She has met challenges, dared to do the unusual, and enjoyed an adventurous life along the way. She ends her book “A sojourner on a pilgrim journey, that is what I am. I have been fortunate in my journey and I have a grateful heart, mindful of the many joys that have come my way. I’ve had many People and Places to love!”

PHONE SCAM

Local seniors have been the target of a recent phone scam where the caller informs them that their Medicare card will be invalid beginning in January 2012. The caller asks for bank account numbers that are attached to Social Security deposits. Please do not give them any information unless you have initiated the call. Medicare is not calling anyone to request these numbers. If you feel that something is not quite right, simply hang up. You can call Medicare (1-800-633-4223) if you have questions or concerns.

OTHER DATES TO REMEMBER

Meet for Breakfast/Coffee: January 9th

We have reserved a table at Friendly's for Monday, January 9th, at 9 a.m. Please join us for a cup of coffee if you can.

Next NF Board Meeting: January 12th

NF Board of Directors will meet at 2:00, Thursday, January 12th (one week earlier than usual) in the Faxon II at Falmouth Hospital (on the floor below the Faxon Center).

Meet for Lunch: January 18th

We are reserving tables at the Coonamessett Inn for 11:45 a.m., Wednesday, January 18th. Please call the office to reserve a seat. If you find you can attend at the last minute, just come. We'll simply add another chair.

"AGING WITH DIGNITY" WORKSHOP SERIES

The Falmouth Jewish Congregation is sponsoring a series of workshops on the theme "Aging with Dignity and Knowledge" during the month of January. On Monday, January 9, at noon, the program will concern "The Next Step": Options for Senior Care and Housing," and following programs will feature films and an author book talk. Descriptions of the series can be found on the Web at <http://falmouthjewish.org/news> and in the *The Falmouth Enterprise* for Friday, December 30, on page 10. The programs will take place at The Falmouth Jewish Congregation, 7 Hatchville Road, East Falmouth.

NF/SENIOR DISCOUNTS

Falmouth Taxi Company: 25% discount to Falmouth Seniors. Be sure to ask for the discount if you use their service.

Eastman/Ace Hardware: 10% discount to members of NF on most full priced items and available every day.

Windfall Market: 5% Senior discount every Wednesday.

Family Foods: 10% Senior discount every Wednesday (no deli items or alcohol).

Mahoney's Garden Center: 10% Senior discount every Wednesday.

Dunkin' Donuts: 10% any time—you have to ask.

We gratefully acknowledge support from the following merchants who responded to our recent business appeal letter:

Four Guys in Tuxes
Dr. Edward H. Fitch
Hamilton Tree & Landscape
Falmouth Elks Club
Stone L'Oven Pizza Co.
Chapman, Cole and Gleason
Lawrence & Lynch