

March 2015

Phone: 508-564-7543
PO Box 435, Falmouth, MA 02541
www.neighborhoodfalmouth.org

DATES TO REMEMBER

Members, don't be shy! If you would like someone to read to you, sort your mail, or attempt an unusual household task, let us know. We are open to all requests and will do our best to find a volunteer or someone else who can help you.

Meet for Breakfast: March 9

Our monthly Meet for Breakfast is Monday, March 9, at Friendly's at 9:00 a.m. All are welcome. We order from the menu, and separate checks are provided. Please call the office if you need a ride or to reserve a place. We'd love to see you!

Meet for Lunch: March 18

This month, we'll meet at the Coonamessett Inn on Wednesday, March 18, at 11:45 a.m. We order from the menu, and get separate checks. Please call the office if you need a ride or to reserve a place. All are welcome.

NF Book Club: March 26

We'll be meeting on Thursday, March 26, at 2:30 p.m. at the Falmouth Main Library. The book is *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel Brown. We've chosen *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd for April's book. Newcomers always welcome!

Shred Those Private Documents and Support Neighborhood Falmouth

Saturday, April 11
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Lawrence School Parking Lot

Members and Volunteers free,
all others pay \$5 per box
NF thanks Sound Financial Advisors at Janney
Montgomery Scott for donating shredder
services. Call the office for more details.



Christiane Collins on her spiral staircase.

A Profile of NF Member **Christiane Crasemann Collins, Part Two** By Pamela Nelson

When Neighborhood Falmouth member Christiane Crasemann Collins welcomed me into her home recently, it was clear that she had been thinking about what she wanted to discuss and, in particular, about what she thought readers of the newsletter might find interesting. She offered me a seat by a window, overlooking a meadow enclosed by an old fieldstone wall, with a view of trees and a distant body of water over which a pair of swans made a brief, gliding appearance.

"I've led a very long life, in many different phases and places. Soon I will be eighty-nine," she said. "I think I will tell you of my last few years, when I have become conscious of my age. I am active, I'm healthy, and people might be interested in how I manage that. When many people find out that I'm living by myself, and I've done so for decades, they cannot understand. They say, 'Aren't you lonely?' I'm not lonely. I enjoy solitude. I'm glad to be self-sufficient."

We talked about her typical day—getting up, fixing coffee, eating small simple meals, reading “something of substance,” climbing the spiral staircase to her office where she works on her writing and correspondence, going to the market to pick up her newspaper, collecting her mail at the post office, taking long walks. She keeps “active with the simple things of daily life, not making an issue of it.” She breakfasts on “yogurt and banana moosh” as she listens to the news. If Christiane has not picked up her newspaper by 1:00 p.m., the market will call to see if she is okay, with instructions to call her sons if she does not answer. In decent weather she walks along the bike path or through her property with a cane in one hand and a pair of clippers in the other, “enhancing nature.” She continues, “If the weather is benign, I may see squirrels, rabbits, foxes, coyotes, and birds. Eight of my ten acres are under conservation restriction, with guardianship by the 300 Committee, who check yearly to be sure that I maintain and protect it. My gosh, I protect it more than anybody!”

Christiane purchased her Falmouth property in 1962. The house was built in 1888 as a summer guest cottage, with a single upstairs bathroom, not really adequate for a growing family of five with three lively boys. In 1975, she had it insulated and redesigned the layout, with minor additions, including a downstairs bathroom, a porch, a deck, and a tower to enclose her marvelous spiral staircase. The staircase was offered to her by an architect friend who knew that Columbia University was preparing to dispose of it. Her Falmouth home has absorbed items from her Manhattan apartment as well as beautiful antique furniture, artwork, and memorabilia from her parents’ home outside Santiago, Chile, especially after Christiane took up permanent residence in Falmouth in 1993.

Christiane was invited to join the building committee of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Falmouth to assist with the design of the site they had purchased on Sandwich Road. She became involved with choosing the architect and with the design of the building, completed in 1995. She selected the furnishings and designed some of the furniture to harmonize with the modern building.

Although she enjoys solitude, Christiane is not a hermit. With a background as a scholar of art history, as well as of the history of architecture and of city planning, she is very interested in meetings taking place at Town Hall, and also in the activities of The 300 Committee. She recently stopped driving after dark, so was pleased to discover a Planning

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MARCH CULTURE CLUB

Enjoy the cultural life of Falmouth with help from NF! If you’d like to go, we’d love to get you a ride and give you a friendly person to sit with. Please call the office to learn more.

Lecture, "A Tempest in a Salt Pond: 200 Years of Hurricanes, Wildfires and Human Activity in Falmouth"

**Thursday, March 5, 7:00 P.M.
Falmouth Museums on the Green**

Through the examination of sediment preserved at the bottom of Salt Pond in Falmouth, Dr. Jeff Donnelly, a WHOI geologist, and his team have found evidence of many large-scale storms making landfall. Jeff’s presentation will highlight what the findings tell us about past climate change, sea-level rise and hurricane strikes, and what they may mean for Falmouth’s future. Free and open to the public

Irving Berlin: A Robert Wyatt Lecture Thursday, March 19, 7:00 PM Highfield Hall & Gardens

Irving Berlin began writing songs before he knew how to read music. A self-taught and rather pathetic pianist, he morphed into a genuine musical icon by the age of 23 and remained the standard bearer for all songwriters until his death at the age of 101. Tickets are \$20 for Highfield members and \$25 for non-members.

Falmouth Chorale Saturday, March 21, 4:00 P.M., and Sunday, March 22, 3:00 P.M. Falmouth Academy

The Chorale will be singing Parts II and III of Handel's Messiah, "Life, Death, and Victory", a very exciting concert in an acoustically appealing concert hall. Tickets for NF members are at the discounted price of \$15. Please contact Susan if you wish to buy tickets. You can have them mailed to you ahead of time or pick them up at the designated "Will Call" (NF section) on the day of the concert.

Falmouth Chamber Players Orchestra Concert Saturday, March 28, 4:00 P.M., and Sunday, March 29, 3:00 P.M. John Wesley United Methodist Church

The 2015 Winter Concert of NF’s own Laura Sonnichsen’s orchestra. Featuring Mozart’s Regina Coeli K108 in C Major with the Falmouth Chamber Chorale Singers and soprano Joan Kirchner; Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 Eroica; and Telemann’s Concerto for Recorder and Viola da Gamba with Molly Johnston and Jan Elliott. For details, call Laura at 508-737-2390. Admission is by donation at the door. Suggested donation is \$20.



Save the Date!

If you are ready for Spring, then mark your calendar for the

NF Spring Flowers Gala
Friday, May 8, 2015
6:00–8:00 p.m.
Highfield Hall & Gardens

Enjoy an upbeat evening out with NF Members, Friends, and Volunteers. Find that flowered tie, scarf, brooch or hat at the back of your closet and be part of the flower theme.

There will be music (not too loud for talking), plentiful hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, and silent auction items with a flower/garden theme.

*It's going to be great fun,
even better with **YOU** there!*

Tickets are \$75 and are now on sale. Invite your friends and (adult) children so they can support NF, too. Call Susan at the NF Office for details or to purchase your ticket.

Members, let us know if you need a ride!

We gratefully acknowledge support from:

Amy Rader, Photographer
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Waterbury Optometry
Windfall Market & Windfall Florals
Wood Lumber Company
Woods Hole Foundation

Christiane Collins continued

Commission subcommittee that meets on Wednesday afternoons to work on a comprehensive 50-year plan for the town of Falmouth and its surrounding villages. She has been attending their meetings as an observer, delighted to be applying and sharing ideas she has studied for years to real situations.

She also continues her scholarly endeavors. In 2006, her tome *Werner Hegemann and the Birth of Universal Urbanism* was released. With her husband, Columbia professor George Collins, she co-wrote *Camillo Sitte: The Birth of Modern City Planning*, first published in 1965 and recently reissued by Dover Press. She is preparing to self-publish a 70,000-word manuscript, a memoir of a student and neighborhood campaign against Columbia University's intention to build a gymnasium in Morningside Park. (This manuscript was edited by Vicky Cullen, NF's second president.)

Christiane traveled to Barcelona in October 2014, invited there as one of three honorary presidents for The First World Congress on Spanish Catalan architect Antonio Gaudí (1852–1926.) George Collins was an expert on Gaudí, and Christiane is now working on a Spanish translation of her husband's major book on Gaudí. She addressed the meeting in Spanish, in which she is fluent, but admits that the Catalan language, which is similar to Spanish and French, is a challenge for her.

"I consider that my time devoted to intellectual pursuits is what I have contributed to the world, although at times I feel a bit guilty that I don't volunteer. But I spent many years dealing with my husband's illness [early onset Alzheimer's]. I don't mean to sound pretentious, but I now lead my own life, being self-sufficient, not really reaching out to others." She enjoys reading on her porch and deck and taking walks on the paths near her home, clippers in hand, doing a bit of pruning. Carrying her cane for stability, she enjoys the views around her and the natural world, which she cherishes. "Solitude in relation to nature—that is what I really enjoy!"

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Friends and Family Sing the Praises of Neighborhood Falmouth

We'd like to share a few comments we have received recently. The first is from NF volunteer Rhona, after our January Soup Lunch Gathering:

Dear Susan,

That was a wonderful party! A wonderful celebration of all that Neighborhood Falmouth is and can be, warm, sharing, magnificently organized and caring. The odor of freshly made soup greeted me as I came in the doors of the church, out of the not so very cold that made it possible to have the gathering after all. The murmur of easy voices and clank of utensils overridden by polite requests to assist, to guide, to provide were warm welcome to those of us who arrived a little late. It was so nice to see people I knew already, to catch up a little with those I had not seen recently - Judy T. telling me that our jury-rigged curtain rod had held its place - Phyllisanne presenting herself, looking sparkly and well rested after her holiday with family, agreeing to a time soon for sharing and talk - many friends, all at ease and enjoying themselves. I met new people too, as instructed - Don, who works at the Falmouth Public Library on Saturdays, Woods Holers at my table that I knew of but did not know well...It was nice to be able to reach out as part of the "Neighborhood" of Falmouth.

Please thank all the members of the hospitality committee for me. They were splendidly insistent that they do all the chores. I would have been glad to join in, and also enjoyed not having to since I was able to continue talking, closing the party (as it were!). It turned out that (Member) Frances B. had been a "babysitter" for me one summer a long time ago. So we will have much to share, especially when the weather is warmer and she can visit the house and allow memories to creep back "on little cat feet."

And so, again, my warmest thanks for all I know that went in to the success of the celebration of Paul Smith's vision of a network of neighbors supporting neighbors to create a safe way for families to maintain their roots.

Take care,
Rhona

The second is from the daughter of NF member and volunteer Phylisanne Simpson:

Dear Susan,

A heartfelt note of thanks and praise, this is, for you and your organization's volunteers, all of whom have been so helpful and supportive to my mom, Phylisanne, while she has undergone medical treatment. Below are the names of the people who have been helping her, and if anyone has been inadvertently left out, please forgive and feel free to add to the list:

Karin B., Rebecca M., Kathy M., Sherry W., Caroline L., Marcia E., Maria M., Rhona C., Jackie W., Han C.

I will end with a quote from my mom about you all: "These are the names of my personal ANGELS who do just as much for others as they have done for me."

Peace and blessings to you all!

Much love,

*Ellene Holt
Oakland, CA*

As an NF member, volunteer, or friend, we hope YOU will take pride in all that you are helping to make possible by your participation with Neighborhood Falmouth. Enjoy March and know that Spring is on the way!!