

## Falmouth Fund Grant

NF has 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 make a recommendation to ensure that they represent a comparable scope of work. He is available to do a site visit to determine the scope of your project. If you are considering having work done on your home and would like to take advantage of this service, please call the office. Ken will answer any questions or will make arrangements for this service.

## Imagery Yoga

Yoga is becoming a popular practice for all ages. Come see for yourself by experiencing simple stretching and breathing exercises for the beginner. The fundraiser will be Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at First Congregational Church. The chair yoga class will begin at 10:00 a.m., featuring "Natures Escape." The 2<sup>nd</sup> class is a mat class at 11:30, featuring "Safari." Ages 12 to 112. Invite your friends. Tickets are \$15 and available from NF Board members or by calling Mary Webb (781-690-2308) or Nancy Costello (508-423-1120).

## Upcoming Senior Center Events

**"How to Remember Not to Forget"**. This program will be Monday, Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. Learn tips to help everyone get better at remembering what you don't want to forget. To register, call the Sr. Center, 508-540-0196.

**AARP Driver Safety Refresher Course**, Monday, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Cost is \$12 for AARP members and \$14 for non-members. Call the Sr. Center 508-540-0196 to reserve a space or

for more information. Please bring your own snack or lunch. The classes will be held at Gus Canty Recreation Building.

**Open House:** Senior Center is having an open house Thursday, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> from 4 to 7 p.m. Come and meet the new director, Jill Bishop, and learn about plans for new center. Light refreshments.



**Jonathan Wittenberg, Member**  
*by Pamela Nelson*

"If someone has entered my house, I must go welcome him!"

I had mentioned to Jonathan Wittenberg, just starting on his late breakfast, that my husband was in his basement, trying to locate the source of a beeping alarm I had noticed earlier that day. Jonathan immediately stood up to go greet my husband. This penchant toward hospitality is characteristic. Jonathan's cordiality complements his openness to fresh experiences and new acquaintances, while his insatiable curiosity and zest for adventure date from his youth and seem undiminished as he approaches age ninety.

Jonathan Wittenberg was born in Brooklyn in 1923, and lived in Brooklyn Heights, an artists' colony at that time, with his parents, Ruth and Philip, and his younger sister, Susanna. Philip was a civil liberties lawyer, who represented the NAACP and various labor unions, and whose smaller practice of divorce law for celebrity clients enabled him to be a sort of beneficent Robin Hood to New York artists, writers, and theater people. Ruth, herself ambitious, held a number of jobs, among them reporting to the International Ladies Garment Workers Union on Dickensian child labor practices in Providence textile mills. Jonathan and his sister attended the Brooklyn Friends' School until Ruth moved the family to Greenwich Village in 1939. Ruth then saw to it that her sixteen-year-old son was enrolled at the Bronx High School of Science. Always interested in natural history and a painfully shy loner, Jonathan had often wandered in the countryside around Brooklyn and in rural Connecticut during visits to grandparents and family friends. During those explorations, Jonathan says he developed a nonverbal, three-dimensional form of thinking that became an asset in his future scientific endeavors as well as in his travels. At "Science High" Jonathan was finally in his element. Intellectually challenged and encouraged at last, he began a process of socialization among his peers as well as of embarking on intellectual endeavors that inspired him to increasingly intensive studies.

At Harvard, where he received his undergraduate degree in biology in 1943, Jonathan continued to pursue his scientific interests, reading widely, and enjoying courses in comparative anatomy, biology, biophysics, and chemistry. There he forged life-long friendships and occasionally made intellectual detours into non-scientific courses such as the art and history of the 1400 B.C Shang dynasty in China.

He completed his master's degree in zoology at Columbia University and then began work toward his Ph.D. in biochemistry at Columbia University Medical School. Studies using isotopic tracers were, in his opinion, "where the action was." Recognizing Jonathan's impressive background in biology, blood chemist David Shemin took him on as his first graduate student. Together they worked on a unique experiment, with groundbreaking scientific results. Shemin took the unusual approach of making himself a test subject, ingesting 70 grams of the amino acid glycine labeled with the

heavy isotope of nitrogen. Sequential blood samples showed that glycine had been incorporated into heme, the red "stuff" of hemoglobin. From this study Jonathan realized that he could break the labeled heme into fragments and deduce how it was assembled biologically. It was, he found, "a monster molecule" made up of smaller molecular components.

After receiving his Ph.D. in biochemistry in 1950, Jonathan visited Arizona's Navajo country for the first time. Mesmerized by the beauty of the landscape and fascinated by Navajo culture, which seeks accord between nature and humans, he spent portions of three summers as part of the Navajo community. His nonverbal thinking made it possible, he asserts, for him to communicate with Navajos who did not speak English. Once, caught in the mud after a rare desert rainstorm, he was rescued by four Navajo returning G.I.'s, who dug out his car and then accepted his offer of a day-long ride to a ceremony they wished to attend. Although Jonathan was not at first welcomed to the sacred event, he was eventually permitted to join the men in a sweat lodge, a purification rite prior to the actual ceremony. Each summer he returned with special gifts for medicine men, such as quartz crystals, abalone shells, and eagle feathers. As he got to know various individuals, he was asked to take their photographs. His hauntingly beautiful collection of portraits was later assembled into a book, *Navajo Nation 1950: Traditional Life in Photographs*, that is described on Amazon as "an incredible historical document." Jonathan still wears an old, classic silver bracelet, a memento of life in the desert.

Eventually, Jonathan went to Cleveland as a senior instructor in the Department of Medicine at Western Reserve University. There he met Bea (profiled in the July NF newsletter) in a seminar course. After their marriage in 1954, they moved to New York to join the Department of Physiology at the new Albert Einstein College of Medicine, where they remained until retirement. Bea's lab there was adjacent to Jonathan's, separate spaces although of necessity shared, as one lab held the spectrophotometer and the other the scientific balances. They collaborated for over half a century, publishing more than 100 papers. One admiring colleague wrote of their "remarkable synergy" and referred to "Jonathan's glittering, imaginative expositions," while another wrote of Bea's special

ability to get coworkers “organized, focused, and efficient.”

Jonathan first came to Woods Hole in 1946, working in MBL’s Old Main, directly beneath the now famous sign inscribed by Louis Agassiz: “Study Nature, Not Books.” After 1954, Bea came to Woods Hole as well, in time accompanied by their three children, two sons and a daughter. Jonathan devoted some of his Woods Hole research to showing how oxygen and inert gases are secreted into the swim bladders of fishes, enabling them to stay afloat in the sea.

Bea and Jonathan now live full-time in their house on Quissett Avenue. Jonathan continues to write review articles and in late August presented a paper in Parma, Italy, on the subject of “What Intracellular Oxygen-binding Proteins Do.” Some of the concepts he presented may have been unorthodox. But Jonathan Wittenberg’s goal is to excite colleagues and students. He is not interested in following the safe route of scientific dogma. His object is to stir things up and make people think.

### **HOW I’VE USED NF SERVICES**

*What a treat to be on the receiving end of NF member services! I’m always in need of computer help. I got exactly what I needed last month when one of the teen volunteers came to fix what I had messed up. He was so pleasant and set me on the straight path again. Thank you so much!*

*Phylisanne Simpson, Member*

### **THANK YOU TO FALMOUTH TEENS**

We’d like to express our thanks to the three teenagers who volunteered their services to NF members this summer. They have provided technical assistance, window washing, weeding, gardening, etc. – very much appreciated by those who received help. We also don’t want to forget the students from Falmouth Academy and Falmouth High School who provided help to our members with spring chores a few months ago. Our community is lucky to have teens with such giving spirit.

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

### **Meet for Breakfast/Coffee: September 10<sup>th</sup>**

Please join us at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, at Friendly’s for a cup of coffee and/or breakfast. It’s a great way to begin the week!

### **Meet for Lunch: September 19<sup>th</sup>**

We begin our monthly luncheons on Wednesday, Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>, 11:45 a.m. at Coonamessett Inn. 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.

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

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

### **Public Information Meeting: October 6<sup>th</sup>**

We’ll be inviting everyone in Falmouth to come to the John Wesley Church on Saturday morning, October 6, and learn more about Neighborhood Falmouth. If you have friends you think might find NF services useful, or who might become a volunteer, please tell them about the meeting. We’ll be describing our services, how NF works, and how to join, volunteer, donate, or be an advocate. We’ll be asking some of you to help us at the meeting, by sharing your own experiences with NF. There’ll be more information as we get closer to October 6, but we wanted you to know our plans. If you would like to be a part of this meeting, call the NF office. In the meantime, enjoy these last wonderful days of summer!

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

Four Guys in Tuxes  
Dr. Edward H. Fitch, Optometrist  
Hamilton Tree & Landscape  
Falmouth Elks Club  
Stone L’Oven Pizza Co.  
Chapman, Cole and Gleason  
Lawrence & Lynch  
Uncle Bill’s Country Store Florist  
Paint’s On Us – David Ward