

# THE *Lathrop Nor'Easter*

A Quarterly Publication by the Residents of The Lathrop Communities  
at Northampton and Easthampton, Massachusetts

Series II: Vol. 9—3

*A Community Converses*

Summer 2024

## ART AND ARTISTS AT LATHROP



Children in Hebron, Palestine

## ***About the Artist: Doug Hostetter***

It was while doing my alternative service with the Mennonites in Vietnam in the middle of the war that I realized the power of photography to convey the humanity of a people that we were being taught to fear and hate. I quickly learned that sharing a print with the person being photographed had the power to change the relationship from exploitation to friendship. In Vietnam I worked exclusively in black and white so that the film developed locally and I could share prints with the person being photographed. Later, when doing photography in areas where I was only visiting, I always brought a Polaroid camera so I could also share prints with those I photographed.

The photographs in this magazine are images selected largely from a permanent exhibit of photos by Doug Hostetter at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York, where I worked for two decades. The exhibit, "In the Image of God," is a collection of photographs of people from "enemy" nations. The photos selected here are portraits of children, close enough to recognize that we are related, each created "in the image of God," all part of our wonderful and diverse human family.



Girl, Afghanistan

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### ***Contributing to The Nor'Easter***

It's about the poems you write, about the vignettes you've related for years but have never recorded, about the foul ball you caught with your *other* hand (or maybe dropped with the favored one), about a chance elevator ride with a celebrity du jour, about that epiphanic moment when it all became clear, about the first sight of the phantom of delight who changed your life, about that time in the Great Depression or in the War of Your Choice, about your genealogy searches, about your travels, about your work or profession — in short, about what interests you to write, and you know better than we do what that is.

We do encourage all residents to contribute to the *Nor'Easter*, with poetry, art, photography and both fiction and non-fiction writing. Biographies of new residents are a popular feature.

Submissions can be sent to: [Sgauger@lathrop.kendal.org](mailto:Sgauger@lathrop.kendal.org)

### ***The Lathrop Nor'Easter***

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## Mary Young, Northampton



The Connecticut River has flowed through my life as long as I can remember. In the 1950s and 60s, my family travelled through the Valley on Route 10 en route to New Hampshire. (There was no Route 91.) “What’s that?” I asked my mother when I noticed a white building, high on a mountain top and glinting in the sun. “That’s where the Mount Holyoke girls go camping,” she told me.

The next landmark I always looked for was in Northampton, where my father knew a short cut to avoid downtown. “What’s that?” I asked when I noticed the “Tea Room” sign on State Street. “That’s where the Smith girls go for tea and cake,” said my mother.

Camping and cakes and a mountain-top castle: I could already taste the sweetness of living in the Valley.

Farther north, the family car crossed over the Connecticut past Northfield School for Girls (now Northfield Mount Hermon), where I later spent my high school years.

As seniors we were allowed to take the bus *unchaperoned* to Northampton on Saturday afternoons. At the record store across from Forbes Library (later to become East Heaven Hot Tubs and then the Smith College bookstore), I bought an early blues album by Bessie Smith. Back at the dorm, our jug band sang along: “You’ve been a good old wagon, Daddy, but you done broke down.”

I married while still in college, moved to Ohio, and graduated from Case Western Reserve. It was the early 1970s. We were hippies. We moved to Vermont and I taught high school English..

When my marriage ended, I was still very young and clueless about what to do next, so moved south to what, by then, was known as “The Valley.” Over the next fourteen years, my life zig-zagged up and down the Connecticut River: Charlemont, Northfield, Bernardston, Amherst, Brattleboro, South Hadley, and finally Northampton.

But what really deepened my local roots was writing for *The Valley Advocate*—in those days an actual newspaper. I started out as a feature writer and then had my own weekly column. Over four years, I wrote over 200 stories chronicling curious slices of life in the Valley: the carnival bear-wrestler, the backyard museum of dinosaur tracks, the Mothers of Twins Club, the hair-dresser who built a living-room shrine to Elvis and refused to believe he’d died. I even wrote about the Summit House, that alluring white building atop Mount Holyoke. I got to watch the Pekarskis of South Deerfield make sausage. I rode shotgun with the Diablos Motor-

cycle Club for the Blessing of the Bikes. In deep winter, I followed wildlife biologists into the Windsor forest to replace the telemetric collar on a hibernating bear. Week after week, I simply followed my nose, moseying back and forth across the River, browsing for interesting stories. Every article was one more tether to this place.

Eventually, I settled into a more conventional life. I wrote articles for the UMass magazine and speeches for the chancellor. I became director of university communications. Fascinated by the never-ending institutional dramas I’d witnessed at UMass, I left for Boston to get a doctorate in organizational behavior.

I stayed there for 35 years. After graduate school, I worked (virtually) for The Conference Board, a global nonprofit. I did research on the challenges that large organizations face in attracting, managing, and retaining talent. As a former hippy who had lived ten summers in a cabin in Northfield with no electricity or running water, I became, ironically, an expert on topics that executives paid to learn about. I began that job with little experience outside the U.S. and ended up as a frequent flier to Europe, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, and China.

My world became a lot wider in the years before I retired. But whenever I came back to the Valley, I felt the same flutter in my heart. Those were *my* mountains I was looking at. That was *my* river.

I left the Valley, but the Valley never left me. I’m contented to be back here now, living at Lathrop in what I hope will be my forever home.



**Saturday Morning at Tanglewood***by Dianne Hobbs*

There were hints of rain in the air as we disembarked from the Lathrop van at Tanglewood for an open rehearsal by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Undaunted, we decided to take our chances on the Lawn seating rather than trying to upgrade to seats in the Shed. We found a welcoming tree, whose leaves would provide shade when the sun came out as well as some shelter from rain.

It was the perfect place for people-watching, both before and during the music, as convivial groups of friends and families gathered. Attendees trekked in with a great deal of equipment, many using collapsible wagons to transport it. Some brought ground cloths, chairs, tables, and coolers. Some struggled setting up the portable chairs. Some portable chairs had built-in awnings, useful whatever the weather but looking like small footlockers when not in use. One family did bring in a small trunk. There was at least one tent and quite a few umbrellas in case of rain or shine. Tanglewood sells gigantic umbrellas, embellished with a tasteful logo.

There were many children enjoying running, running, running. Two little girls danced across the open space blowing bubbles as they went, until a man wearing an “Audience Services” tee-shirt stopped them. Other dancing girls twirled in their princess dresses and struck poses reminiscent of Olympic gymnasts. Before the rehearsal three young lads with soccer balls in hand looked for a place to play. The parents of four young boys were challenged by their personal “crowd control” efforts, judging by the looks on the faces of all concerned. Some very young audience members seemed entranced by the experience, until they reached meltdown, precipitating an early departure by their families. Other people left early to avoid the long and tedious exit traffic.

In the end, it didn't rain more than a few drops for a few minutes. Oh, and the music—it was superb! ❁



Friends, Wayana People, Suriname

**Alice Shearer, *The Inn, Easthampton***



Alice could be called a “founding mother” of the Lathrop Community. In 1987, when she was a member of the Board of Directors of The Lathrop Home (a “rest home” for low-income aged and invalid residents), the Board saw a need for a facility for middle-income retirees. Alice suggested they visit a retirement community in Worcester that called for prospective residents to pay a set price for a life lease on a unit, which payment would be returned upon the re-leasing of the unit to another resident. The visit gave rise to a plan to establish a similar facility in Northampton. A Long Range Planning Committee set about the work of site selection and acquisition, construction design and financing, and the establishment of a separate nonprofit corporation. The first residents moved into the Lathrop Community Bridge Road campus in June 1989.

Alice grew up in Newton, Massachusetts, where she played high school basketball, softball, and field hockey. For five summers she attended a camp in Poland, Maine, where she made many long-lasting friendships. She attended Wheelock College for two years and then became a secretary at the Harvard Business School (HBS) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a job she held for seven years and that she describes as a “lot of fun.” She met her husband David on a tennis court one summer, and they were married the following December.

David finished his degree at HBS, and his career took him to a bank in Worcester, Massachusetts. They lived in Worcester for eleven years, raising three children. While the children were small, Alice and two

partners operated a needlepoint shop called Sew Special for about five years. They had a lot to learn about running a business, but she recalls really enjoying the experience, particularly meeting people and helping them with their projects.

Alice and her family moved to Northampton in 1977, and she lived in their South Street home until she moved to the Lathrop Community in 2023. She is an accomplished fiber artist, specializing in quilting and knitting, and is a skilled bridge player.

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### Never Run

*by Claire Blatchford*

Yesterday,  
 walking down the road,  
 I walked back into  
 my six year old self,  
 saw sunlight on leaves  
 up close  
 all over again,  
 smelt morning wetness,  
 touched silky, smooth grasses,  
 heard the voice telling me  
 shadows are always  
 within it all  
 and can be a comfort,  
 a blanket,  
 a coolness,  
 a respite  
 from the blinding sun,  
 and never,  
 never to run from them.



**Summer Mornings in Cotuit***by Susan Garrett*

Up before anyone else,  
sun barely above the neighbor's house,  
my childhood summer mornings  
begin thick with expectant silence.  
Dew sops my sneakers as I carefully cross the yard,  
avoiding stepping on clover flowers or ant hills.  
I break the breathless still with a  
whir of my bike wheels,  
a crunch of gravel under my tires.  
The birds have finished their hymn to dawn.  
Only a few twitter now,  
as I whiz through our village in thrilling solitude,  
down the steep School Street hill,  
right at the big intersection, one of only two in town,  
another up-hill toward the mansions lining the shore.  
No cars pass in my memories— although there must have been an  
occasional motorist on their way to work.  
Resting my legs, I coast to the town beach,  
pause at the edge of the soft sand,  
watch the wind swirl the fine crystals.  
The beach is noisy now with gulls and terns,  
fighting over treasures left behind,  
by sun-burned families:  
bits of french fries, crumbs of burger rolls, potato chips.  
Pale sanderlings race the foamy waves.  
The scent of brine excites my nose.  
Sometimes I peel off my shoes and socks,  
wade into the chill and shiver as the sand—soft as flour—stuffs the  
spaces between my toes.  
On the way home, completing the circle,  
I pass houses alive with humans waking,  
muted voices calling, clattering dishes,  
doors banged shut behind running footsteps.  
Figures emerge,  
clothes flap noisily from white rope clotheslines,  
scissors snip at shrubbery.  
Wheels squeak on mowers, snick, snick,  
clipping the grass close.  
I pant my way up the big hill,  
calling a greeting to my best friend as I skim past her home,  
sunlight glinting through my squinting eyelids,  
I brake hard, squeal to a stop at my back porch.  
A summer day begun.

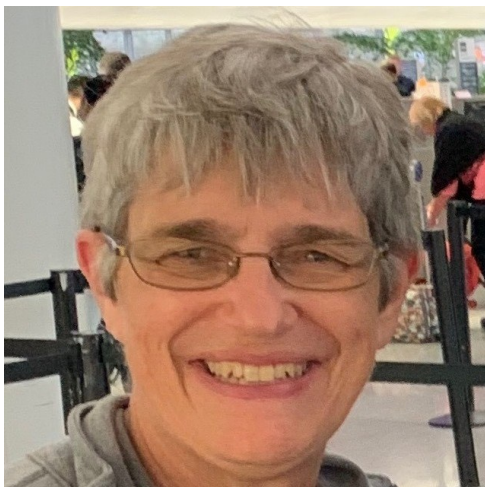
## My Last Bike Ride

by Susan Garrett

I knew it was my last ride  
In my heart.  
I was healthy enough,  
I thought.  
I was brave enough,  
barely,  
To mount this spindly, wobbly, machine.  
To lift the kickstand with the toe of my sneakers,  
Place myself gingerly on the hard seat,  
still holding on with one foot.  
To shift my weight and begin pumping,  
Sweaty hands gripping the handlebars,  
as if they tethered me to safety.  
I gained speed, did not fall over, recalled how to shift.  
I threw back my head and laughed.  
I was six years old, testing the limits of my balance.  
I was ten years old, feeling freedom blowing my hair astray.  
I was eleven and twelve and fourteen, stretching the breadth of my independence.  
I was seventy-eight, taunting death.  
The sun was warm and soothing.  
The air was cool and bracing.  
The scent of dying leaves tickled my nose.  
My leg muscles stretched; my hands relaxed.  
I turned back toward home.  
Satisfied.  
I knew I was not invincible.  
Not really.  
Images of previous falls,  
mishaps, flickered behind my eyes.  
I might not survive a fall intact this time.  
I swung my leg off the bike.  
Wheeled it into the garage,  
brushed some dirt off the side of a tire,  
Stroked the back fender,  
Smiled.



Deb Karl, *Northampton*



I grew up in Chatsworth, California, in the far northwest corner of the San Fernando Valley, within the Los Angeles City and County limits. Chatsworth was a sleepy town in the 1950s, with many dirt roads, orange groves, and horses. I loved scrambling up sandstone rocks at friends' ranches. (Small world department: Rob Olmsted and I graduated from the same high school, some years apart.)

My older sister, younger brother, and I played and fought together, as siblings do. Our mum was a war bride from Edinburgh who met dad at a Red Cross dance when he came to Edinburgh on a three-day pass. Theirs was a true love story.

I started folk dancing at Girl Scout camp and was delighted when I started at Stanford to see that I could take folk dance classes for credit. It was dancing that got me through the turbulent years on campus in the early 1970s. I continued dancing after graduation until I headed east to business school at Dartmouth, figuring I would experience winter and the east for two years and then return home to California.

Well, I met and married a guy, and we compromised on living in the Boston area. I knew we would have wonderful children together, and we do, though the marriage didn't last.

I resumed dancing after a 22-year hiatus when a college dance friend came to town and we went to an international folk dance evening together. I heard the music, and my feet started moving. I felt like I had come home. I danced international dancing, some contra, a little Scottish—but it was English Country Dancing that spoke to me, and which I have now been dancing for over 25 years. I love the combination of music, movement, and community.

And it was English Country Dancing that led me to Lathrop Northampton. Gary Roodman invited some dancers from the Boston area to Lathrop to test-dance some of his new material. I looked around the Meeting House, toured Rowena and Gary's home, walked around the community, and thought "I can see myself living here."

And here I am! ❁

### We Need Your Biographies!

If you are an "old timer" or even a "middle timer," and you are aware of any new residents who have not already had their biographies published in the *Nor'Easter*, let them know that we are a kindly, benign group of folks who welcome learning anything our neighbors wish to share about themselves! If you are a new resident, please believe that we at the *Nor'Easter* would like to know more about you! If you've won a Nobel Prize, most definitely tell us about it. But if, like most of us, you've raised a family, had a meaningful job, done some significant volunteer work, had an interesting hobby, or traveled to places near or far, we'd love to hear about those parts of your life even if you didn't win any prizes for them. Send us your biography, and don't worry if you think you can't write. If you can put words on paper in more or less coherent order, you can write.

We propose about 700 words. We are not looking for the great American autobiographical novel! In case you need a little help and encouragement, we have a staff of experienced editors who will be glad to work with you. Unlike your third-grade teacher, we won't grade you on your bios: we just want to print them, have others read them, and benefit from having gotten to know something about you.

So, newbies: go for it! Share a bit of your life with your new community!





Boys, Kinshasa, Democratic  
Republic of the Congo  
(above)

Child, Democratic Republic  
of the Congo (right)



## What We Are Reading

We have been asking Lathrop readers lane by lane to submit their recommendations for absorbing and interesting books. It's no surprise that our neighbors' suggestions are so varied and intriguing. Thank you, friends, for sharing your thoughts!

### Huckleberry and Blueberry Lanes, Florence Road (The Hilltop)

Peter Caddick Adams, *Sand & Steel: The D-Day Invasion and the Liberation of France* and *Fire & Steel: The End of World War II in the West*

In my continuing exploration of world history, I recently dug into the two “bookend” books of the World War II trilogy by British military historian Peter Caddick-Adams. The first book is *Sand and Steel*, the third is *Fire and Steel*. The book in between, still in my to-read stack, is *Snow & Steel: The Battle of the Bulge, 1944-45*. All were published by the Oxford University Press. Critics have described these as the most comprehensive, authoritative, and readable histories of the last months of the war in Europe. Caddick Adams, a historian, educator, and combat veteran with over thirty years' service in the British military, brings his research and interviews to life in these books. I found them to be “can't-put-'em-down” page turners.

Recommended by Bruce Kriviskey

Dan Egan, *The Devil's Element: Phosphorus and a World Out of Balance*

Written in a riveting narrative style, it begins with a fascinating, factoid-full primer on phosphorus, an element essential for all life on earth, including its often discomfiting and alarming role in history and geopolitics—past, current, and future. The book focuses on the Phosphorus Paradox: the world is rapidly exhausting its easily extractable reserves of this critical resource. We are literally flushing it down the drain. The main culprit is runoff from agribusiness, in the form of wasted synthetic fertilizer and especially excess manure from the beef industry's massive animal feedlot operations. Phosphorus flooding into our watersheds is the main cause of the explosive increase in HABs (harmful algae or cyanobacteria blooms) wreaking havoc in our ecosystems and economies and endangering our health.

Recommended by Allison Ryan

Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*.

Vera Brittain is best known for two achievements: first, as author in 1933 of the best-selling memoir *Testament of Youth* about her WWI experiences, and second, for her activism from the 1920s until her death on behalf of pacifism. Brittain was a prolific writer. She published poems, short stories, novels, and nonfiction articles and books. She never achieved the fame nor literary status of men whose works were fueled by their responses to World War I—e.g., Hemingway, e e cummings, Remarque, Wilfrid Owens, among many others—but she stands alone in providing readers with a woman's eye view of that terrible war, up close and very personal.

Recommended by Bobbie Reitt

David James Brown, *Facing the Mountain*.

A lifelong lover of fiction, I have recently found my most absorbing reading in tomes of narrative history. One of the most memorable is *Facing the Mountain* by David James Brown, an account of the experiences of Japanese American soldiers in World War II. It's the product of a staggering amount of research, including many interviews with veterans, woven into an authoritative, compulsively readable, and deeply moving narrative.

Recommended by Kristin O'Connell

Claudia Gray, *The Murder of Mr. Wickham*

Many familiar characters from Jane Austen's novels are house party guests of married Mr. Knightley and Emma at their country house. George Wickham, whose nefarious behavior has made him unpopular among the assembled company, crashes the party and comes to a suspicious end for his comeuppance. Nearly everyone at the party is a suspect, and the two youngest members of the party (progeny of original Austen characters) set about uncovering the guilty party. The story combines an opportunity to revisit beloved Austen characters and to relish a charming mystery.

Recommended by Dianne Hobbs



Merlin Sheldrake, *Entangled Life*.

An eye-opening exploration of the realm of fungi and their amazing mycelium networks, largely out of sight but dominating the ground beneath our feet and critically supporting the rest of life on earth. To say nothing of our enjoyment of bread, cheese, and beer! The illustrated digital or hardcover version includes stunning photos to complement the morphological marvels and truly mind-boggling behaviors of this third phylum, mostly yet to be discovered. Sheldrake catapults us from fungi facts into challenging musings about some “big ideas,” such as the nature of intelligence and individual identity. He also gives us glimpses of how fungi might populate our future—in the form of substitutes for fabrics, leather, plastics, building materials, or as tools for combatting the pollution we have spawned.

*Recommended by Allison Ryan*

### Aspen and Dogwood Lanes

Hampton Sides, *The Wide, Wide Sea: Imperial Ambition, First Contact and the Fateful, Final Voyage of Captain James Cook*

All of Hampton Sides' books are engaging and informative; his latest continues the tradition. James Cook is a fascinating figure from history. He was one of the first sea captains to keep his crews from getting scurvy; he “discovered” Australia; he had interest and sympathy for indigenous peoples, their cultures, abilities, and knowledge. He accomplished a number of botany projects for his superiors, for better or worse bringing plants around the world. And especially enjoyable reading right now are descriptions of where his final voyage took him. He “discovered” Hawaii, attempted to sail south to Antarctica, wound up proving from the Bering Sea that there was no Northwest Passage over Canada. What's not to like about reading about snow, ice, and tropical islands right now!

*Recommended by Sally Ives*

Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Volume 4, *Within a Budding Grove*

I am pecking away at the fourth volume of Proust. I started into Proust because I decided it was about time to see what all the fuss was about . . . and I found myself drawn into that Parisian world and enjoying the often languid, convoluted sentences, the pointed asides, and the engaging (if often *outré*) characters.

*Recommended by Michael Schwartz*

Jill Ker Conway, *A Woman's Education*

Years ago, I read with great pleasure Jill Ker Conway's autobiographic works *The Road from Coorain* and *True North*, a fascinating account of her journey from the Australian outback to a Harvard Ph.D. and a career in higher education. Recently, I finished the third volume, *A Woman's Education*, about her presidency at Smith College 1975-85. I loved her thoughtfulness and candor about her own development, and the revelations about Smith College in those years.

*Recommended by Barbara Walvoord*

Elly Griffiths, the Dr. Ruth Galloway mystery series (multiple volumes)

I was recently introduced to author Elly Griffiths. I enjoy that in the series of mysteries at hand, there is a background chronological story of the main characters, who are not perfect. They struggle with personal problems and relationships like regular people.

*Recommended by Sheila Lyford*

Lauren Willig, *Band of Sisters*

I just finished *Band of Sisters* by Lauren Willig. This is historical fiction, but strongly based on library archives. It is the story of a group of Smith College women who traveled to Europe to give aid during World War 1. It provides fascinating information about a somewhat obscure part of history. I just donated the book to our Lathrop library.

*Recommended by Maureen McCarron*



*The Lathrop Nor'Easter*  
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Orphanage, North Korea