

OTIS OBSERVER

Your Town, Your Neighborhood and You

July 2023 Vol IX Issue 3

Bee the Change — Literally

By Sandy Balayan

Daniel Wollman is somewhat of a renaissance man. His endless curiosity leads him down many paths and there clearly is not enough time in his schedule to pursue every interest he has. He knows a lot about a lot of things and is a plethora of facts and information. This personality trait leads to many hobbies and projects at the same time that are simultaneously being thought about and acted upon. He also works in a full time capacity as a physician. He is very active on his beloved Big Pond and is a very giving and loving neighbor, helping out when the need arises.

His wife Debra Pollack, also a physician, was lamenting a few years ago about the crisis of bee colonies under stress with climate change and other environmental changes. She felt strongly about the ecological importance of bees and what was happening. They both made a commitment to “No Mow May” and not putting any chemicals on their lawn and plants. They also concentrate on planting native species and not planting till warm weather when the bees and insects have already established their routine. Simple things that really help the ecological balance.

But Daniel, being Daniel, took it to the next step and started to research what it would take to raise their own bee colony. Debra was for it but did not want to physically go near or be part of the project.

Within a short time, Daniel had bought his starter equipment and ordered his bees. In 1851, Lorenzo Langstroth invented an efficient way to house the bees in a box with hanging frames inside. Now referred to as a “langstroth box”, it still is in use today as the foundation of any home setup. The hanging frames create the foundation to “draw” honeycomb. You need a lid and a base and a couple of odd tools of the trade such as a smoker which looks like a can with a squeeze box attached to it. You burn some yard debris in the can and, as you puff it, the smoke works as a calming agent for the bees. A veiled hat and gloves must be worn but a full suit, always white because colors attract the bees, is necessary to protect yourself. Daniel said that if you don’t

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Daniel Wollman gets suited up to work with his bees

Photo: Sandy Balayan



Frame from hive showing unused cells and honey

Photo: Sandy Balayan

👉 Notice Otis Series

By Hilary Harley

The Otis Historical Commission and Otis Preservation Trust (OPT) are hosting the fourth *Notice Otis Series* cultural event of the 2022-'23 season featuring the Robbins-Zust Family Marionettes Company on **Saturday, July 29th (rain date Sunday, July 30th), from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.**, Otis Town Hall Green, One North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253. Two one-hour shows will be performed with a one hour break at 12 noon. *Picnics, blankets and lawn chairs are welcome.* Ice cream will be available.

Genie Zust and her late husband, Richard Robbins, founded the Robbins-Zust Family Marionettes in 1971 after the couple moved to the Berkshires from New York City. The family has used wooden and plaster puppets to bring fairy tales to life for local children. Their son, Dion, remains the only family member to stay with the business.

"[Puppetry] is like an exercise. Some people go canoeing or play a sport. We just happen to practice the art of puppetry. It's the same thing. The art of puppetry is an exercise of life."

Many of the family's 100 puppets, which vary in size from a foot to two feet in height, are handmade. The marionette bodies were whittled from wood by Richard Robbins over the years, a skill he learned from a book checked out from the




Robbins-Zust Family Marionettes Company performs
Photo: File photo.



A few of the Robbins-Zust Family Marionettes Company puppets
Photo: File photo

Volunteer Bakers Needed

Support the Otis Library by donating your favorite cakes, cookies, pies or other treats to the **OTIS LIBRARY COUNTRY CRAFT FAIR**. July 8th from 10am to 3pm.
INFO: Diane Dyer 413 269-6335



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RAFFLE PRIZES

Berkshire Athenaeum. The heads were cast in plaster molds by Robbins and Zust, who also made their clothing and wrote the scripts.

"I just turned 50 and it's taken me my whole life to understand why my parents started this company. Perhaps I understand because I have a son. They did it for us — their children. That's why I keep doing it."

The OPT works with the Historical Commission to organize and preserve the history and heritage of Otis, MA for future generations by supporting efforts to preserve, restore, repurpose and educate about buildings, monuments, lands and memorabilia of Otis. The OPT is a not-for-profit (501)(c)(3) organization operated for fundraising and educational purposes. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Otis Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The event is in-person at the Otis Town Hall Green, One North Main Road, Otis, MA, 01253. To register or for more information, please visit: www.otispreservationtrust.com, or www.townofotisma.com. There is no charge to attend this event. Donations are welcome. ☺

Bee the Change - Literally
Continued from page 1

bother them they will not bother you and you just move cautiously around them not to incite them. He recommends an electric fence enclosure as our Otis friend, the black bear, is fond of hives!

We certainly can understand the phrase “busy as a bee” after becoming familiar with what is going on in the box. There are three categories of bees. The Queen and there is only one per hive. She perpetuates the colony and serves all the bees single handedly. She will only be replaced if she dies or weakens. The drones are the male bees, and are not plentiful but necessary to groom the Queen and fertilize the eggs, and lastly, the worker bees. The majority of the bees fall into this category and are all female.

Workers have specific jobs like building and drawing honeycombs which are perfect octagons. Miraculously, they repair or restore the comb after larva hatches or when honey is extracted. The scouts report back to the hive about where nectar sources are, the undertakers take the less strong or dead bees a distance away from the hive because dropping them right outside of the hive would attract predators. Most of the worker bees are foragers. They bring the nectar from plants and the pollen into the hive for a food source. The pollen is their protein source and the honey the energy source. They are really quite a well thought-out and executed community. They all work together for the good of the hive.

The pollination function of bees is far more critical than the honey production. Pollination allows for genetic diversity within a plant species and farmers rely on bees for their innate talent. In fact, farmers rent hives from commercial bee keepers and the langstroth boxes are shipped around the country by truck.

Although this is just an introduction to beekeeping, the knowledge Daniel shared was amazing. These creatures are worth learning about and saving as they perform a very important role in our world. They are hard wired for this incredible job they perform and there is nothing stopping them. Let's all try to do our part to make their world, and in turn ours, more ecologically sound. 🐝

REGISTER FOR THE SMILE LIKE JACK 5K/10K!



SMILE LIKE JACK
MEMORIAL
FOUNDATION

Join us Saturday, July 8th at the Knox Trail Inn for the 2nd annual Smile Like Jack 5k/10k, sponsored by Associated Electro-Mechanics! This is a fundraising event to support the Smile Like Jack Memorial Foundation, in honor of Jack William O'Brien, an avid outdoorsman who loved the great outdoors and his hometown, Otis, MA.



Smile Like Jack 2nd Annual Road Race Entry Pricing:

- \$42 from April 16th to July 1st.
(Includes race day shirt until May 27th)
- \$45 day of race (Race shirts not available)
- Online registration closes on July 1st. Day of registration will be available for \$45.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



smilelikejack.com



darbybailey26@gmail.com or
chaffee0179@gmail.com



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to register!**



Smile Like Jack 5K/10K -
Berkshire Running Center

berkshirerunningcenter.com

OTIS HISTORY

Political Compromise: A Lost Art?

By Peter Cameron

As I write this column, congressional leaders and the President are locked in negotiations to raise our country's debt ceiling and fund our government. If no resolution is reached soon, financial chaos could result. Sadly, American politics today are extremely adversarial. The two political parties are seemingly more interested in gaining dogmatic leverage supporting their agendas, as opposed to considering their constituents' welfare. In the past, discussion and compromise, attributes in scant supply today, were what got things done in our nation's Capital. Here is a historical example of how well they can work.

On July 20, 1790, at the temporary capital in Philadelphia, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson happened upon a despondent Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, waiting outside the President's office door. Upon inquiring for his reason for seeking an audience with the President, Jefferson learned Hamilton was about to tender his resignation. Hamilton was dejected because he could not persuade congress to pass his plan that would put the fledgling country on firm financial footing. The roadblock was the

adamant opposition of the Speaker of the House, James Madison of Virginia.

Jefferson was not a fan of Hamilton, but he respected Hamilton's financial savvy. He persuaded Hamilton not to see the President. Recognizing the need for a strong financial foundation for their young country, Jefferson offered, as an alternative, to host an intimate dinner party. Here Hamilton and Madison might meet privately, out of the public eye, and sort out their differences under the influence of a fine meal and good wine.

The two antagonists accepted Jefferson's invitation, and after the meal, with a glass of wine in hand, Jefferson, Hamilton and Madison retired to the study. Jefferson opened the discussion about Hamilton's stalled financial bill inquiring about the reasons for Madison's opposition. Madison responded; his singular objection was the portion of Hamilton's plan that called for the national government to pay the Revolutionary War debt of those states that had not yet paid. He noted his state, Virginia, as well as many of the other southern states, had paid their debt in full, while many of the northern states had yet to pay a dime. At that point Jefferson had a stroke of genius. The major issue of the day was choosing a location for the permanent national capital. Most expected it to be in the north, either in New York or Philadelphia. Recognizing Madison's staunch allegiance to the south, and especially his home state, Jefferson proposed that the permanent United States capital be built in Virginia. This would make the objectionable sections of the financial bill more palatable to the southern states. The main thrust of the proposal was that the nation's capital would be in the south rather than the north. Madison was all ears.

During the next legislative session Madison withdrew his objection to Hamilton's financial plan which was then passed. Shortly thereafter Congress passed the Residency Bill, placing the nation's capital in its

present location along the Potomac River in Virginia. Our country's financial viability was set for the next century and the location of our nation's capital had been determined, over wine, a meal and compromise.

Perhaps it's time for another intimate dinner for the congressional leadership and the President. Good food and wine might just rekindle those age-old, proven, political skills: frank discussions, constructive negotiations and mutual compromise. Throughout our country's history those skills have gotten the nation's business done and made this country great. If the far left and far right can't get together somewhere in the middle, calmly discuss the issues, and reach a compromise, I fear that greatness may disappear.

As mentioned in the history column last month there will be an Otis Preservation Trust event at Norton Cemetery in Otis on July 22nd from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. The *Walk through History in Norton Cemetery* tour is with authors Peter Cameron and John Hanson as they come together to expound on the history of Norton Cemetery. Peter has written about the families which include the longstanding Otis names of Kibbe, Flint, Haskell, Benton and of course, Norton, in his book, *Norton Cemetery, May We never Forget; A History of Loudon, Massachusetts*. John's book, *Reading the Gravestones of Old New England* explains the meaning of the epitaphs and what the designs of the headstone can tell us. Their books will be available for purchase by cash or check. Wear sturdy walking shoes. Directions from town hall to Norton Cemetery: Head east on Rt. 23, 2.9 miles to Norton Road, turn right. The cemetery will be on your left. Park on the road. Rain date: TBD. ☼



Peter Cameron is an Otis, MA resident and a retired policeman. He is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a B.S. in History with a concentration in U.S. Colonial History.



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Memorial Day

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



MEMORIAL DAY, THE VETERANS VISITED THE OTIS AND SANDISFIELD CEMETERIES



On the commemoration of Memorial Day, the veterans visited the Otis and Sandisfield cemeteries to pay respect to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. The ceremony was held at the Otis Church Green at noon on Sunday, May 28. Tom Soules, Commander, AMVETS Post 77, thanked everyone for coming and introduced Bill Sturgeon and his wife. Bill explained the significance of the day as well as it being the 50th anniversary of the end of combat operations in Vietnam, in which Bill served.



NOTICE

If you were a client of **ROBERT J. MCMAHON, ARCHITECT** and WISH to have the architectural drawings & files pertaining to your project from his files, please email Jeanne Randorf at **mcdorf@gmail.com** to arrange to pick them up.

Files remaining will be destroyed in 3 months.



We are back! Can't believe it's been four years. We hope to see everyone come roll the dice and win some lobster.

DICE GAME

Come join the fun!

Sat., August 12th

Knox Trail Inn, East Otis

Doors Open at 2:00 p.m.

A Family Event - Bring the Kids!

Win Lobsters and try your hand at the 50/50 Raffle!

\$1.00 Lobster Raffle

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OF LOBSTER!

(you do not have to be present to win.)

Information:

Tom Soules (413) 429-1119

★ **Proceeds to benefit the AMVETS POST 77 OTIS, MA** ★

Otis Council on Aging

By Eila Bell

Otis Council on Aging July Happenings

The Otis Food Pantry is open every Wednesday 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.

July 3 – The center is open 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

July 4 – Independence Day.

July 5 – The Center is open. The **foot nurse** will be at the center 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

July 6 – **Out to Lunch** at The East Restaurant in Great Barrington, MA, 11:30 a.m.

July 10 – The center is open 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. **Fitness class with Michelle from Soules Fitness** will be at the center 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

July 12 – The center is open 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

July 13 – **Trip to Lake George, Luncheon Cruise. Trip is full.**

July 17 – The center is open 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. **Fitness class with Michelle from Soules Fitness** will be at the center 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

July 19 – **Summer Bar-B-Q**, 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Cost \$7. Please call for reservations. (413) 269-0100, ext. 5. Sara the Fiddler will be performing at 11 a.m.



On June 14th the Otis Seniors enjoy a potluck luncheon and an informative presentation on senior living at Holiday Devonshire Estates by Nickolas Sereda. Nickolas also treated the seniors with some wonderful oatmeal cookies from Devonshire's kitchen. Photo: Kendra Rybacki

July 21- **Brown Bag** 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. The CHP Wellness Van will be parked at the Town Hall in Otis 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

July 24 – The center is open 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. **Fitness class with Michelle from Soules Fitness** will be at the center 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

July 26 – The center is open 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. The **blood pressure nurse** will at the center 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

July 31- The center is open 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. The **hairstylist** will be at the center 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

This information is sponsored in part by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. ☺

Frederick Olszewski was honored on his ninety-first birthday at the Otis Council on Aging

We wish him a happy and healthy year.



On June 1, 18 seniors from the Otis Council on Aging enjoyed going out to lunch at the Tavern Restaurant in Westfield, MA.

The Council on Aging enjoys lunch at a different restaurant on the first Thursday of each month. All are welcome to join us. For more information contact the Otis Council on Aging at (413) 269-0100, ext.5.

Photo: Moe, Waitress



OTIS LIBRARY NEWS

By Brad Havill

Many great writers of the nineteenth century (1801-1900) got their work published in periodicals or magazines. This list includes many great and famous authors – those whom we revere and respect, such as Dickens, Twain and Poe, authors whose work I cannot even begin to compare myself to, nor am I trying.

So why do I bring this up? Well, as you all know, I'm new around here, so to speak. In last month's *Otis Observer*, I was introduced to the community. In that article was a small list of the books, authors and genres that I enjoy reading. However, the list that I read is overshadowed by the list that the patrons of the Otis Library read, and upon this, our library's collection is developed.

It takes awhile to learn a collection. Indeed, many of you are likely far more familiar with the titles on the shelves than I am. I will be learning what is on the shelves and looking for new items to fill the gaps in our collections. I do not do this alone. I require the help of our staff, book reviews, other librarians and most importantly, you – our patrons, to help build this collection.

It has been almost five weeks since I started at the Otis Library as the Director. It has gone by so quickly that it boggles my mind. I would like to thank all of the library patrons who have come to the library since I started as the director of the library. The reception has been very warm and welcoming.

I would also like to thank Lois Hall for keeping the library going since the retirement of our former director, Kathy Bort. I would like to thank Kerry Bean

for being here every Saturday, keeping the doors open and the books flowing. I would like to thank the trustees of the library for having faith in these two wonderful women knowing that they could (and did) hold the line.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome back our summer residents. I know I don't know you yet, but I look forward to meeting you all. Many of you have come in and introduced yourselves, shared stories and borrowed items. For this, we are all grateful, it helps us all.



I would also like to welcome Molly Kelmelis to our team. Molly brings to the library a huge amount of energy and enthusiasm. She is an avid reader, and I know that she will help our users to be able to find that gem of a title that they didn't know they were looking for.

By the time this article comes out in print, we will be gearing up for the **library's annual craft fair on July 8th**. This is your day to come and help us keep things going. It is for

you, by you, and you all have always delivered! We ask that you do it again. We, the library staff and the board of trustees, have been working very hard to make sure that there is something for everyone. It is our pleasure to put this event on, and we hope that it is a joy for you all to attend.

This event is followed on **Friday July 14th with My Alchemy Laboratory with Ed the Wizard**. I'm hoping to see you all there. I know when I was younger, I loved seeing what happens when chemistry and alchemy meet, and I think every child will agree when they see what Ed the Wizard has in store for us.

Thank you all! I am looking forward to a great library summer! ☺



LIBRARY SURVEY

We want to hear from you! The Otis Library is revising its strategic plan. We have a new Director of the Library and we're excited by the opportunity to better serve the community. Please take two minutes to let us know what you're thinking. The library would like to hear from you regardless of whether you're a member of the library or not. **Please respond by July 15th**. Thank you for your participation!

—Trustees and Staff of the Otis Library

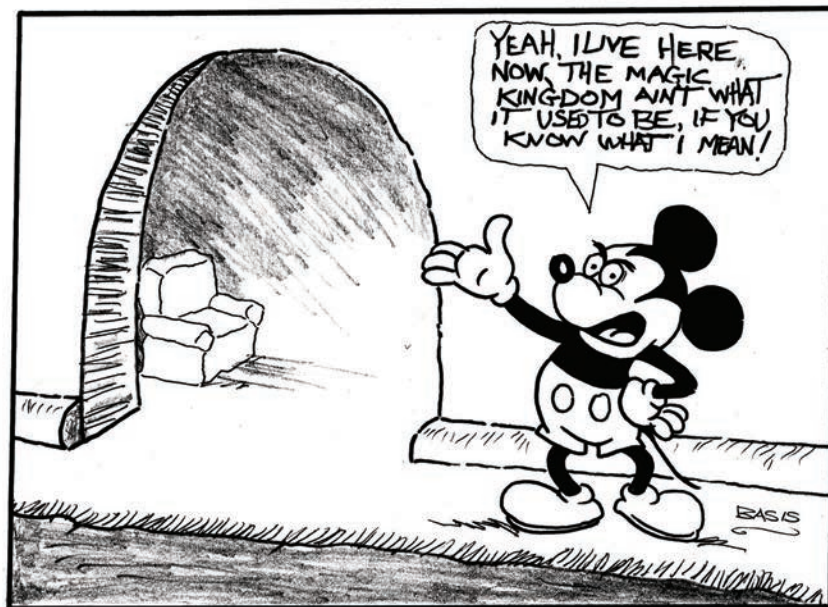
Otis Library Adult Survey 2 (For adults age 19 and older)
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z9WBFYF>

Otis Library Children's Survey 2 (For children aged birth through age 12. Parents can help) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YF2JRLV>

Laugh with Carolyn

Our resident joke teller, Carolyn Lawry, shares another one of her gems with us this month. Long known for sharing whatever tickles her funny bone with family and friends, Carolyn is a delight to talk to and loves to share her great sense of humor with the readers of the Otis Observer.

While reading the newspaper, a man saw an article about a beautiful actress and model who married a boxer known for his aggression. "I will never understand how the biggest jerks get the most attractive wives," he said. "Thank you dear," his wife replied.



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Otis Historical Commission

Otis Historical Commission Takes a Giant Leap!

By Diane Provenz, Co-chair OHC

The Otis Historical Commission (OHC) is thrilled to announce that it has been awarded a \$200,000 grant to be used towards the renovation and repurposing of the former St Paul's Church as The Otis Cultural Center.

Ours was the top award that the Massachusetts Cultural Council Facilities Fund announced for 2023. It will be matched with funds raised by the Otis Preservation Trust (OPT). To date, OHC has raised almost \$700,000 from grants and individual donors like our readers.

Thanks to the hard work and tremendous ability of Gail Gelburd, Co-chair of the Otis Historical Commission, and Lynne Geane, President of the OPT, we are now closer to reaching our goal. Putting together a grant submission like this takes hours of work dusted with a great deal of wordsmithing. Next step will be the posting of an RFP

(Request for Proposals) in early fall. Once the winning contractor has been engaged, work will begin on the church foundation, remediating the powder post beetle infestation and completing phase one of the renovation. This work is projected to begin in fall, 2023 or early spring, 2024.

The OHC promised the town that we would look to fund this project by raising the funds via grants and donations and not unduly relying on the Town. Our track record shows that we have kept that promise. Unfortunately our goal post keeps moving and the estimated costs for completion have increased. We ask that for those of you who can, contribute as much as you can when you receive our annual fundraising appeal this summer.

Both the OHC and the OPT are always seeking volunteers to join in our efforts to enhance the buildings and history of Otis for



Members of the Otis Historical Commission left to right: Hal Kobrin, Gail Gelburd (Co-chair), Diane Provenz (Co-chair) and Joel Meyers. Photo: Arthur Provenz

its residents, and we have fun doing so. Please visit the OPT website to see what we've accomplished so far, **OtisPreservationTrust.org**. Of course, if you can donate, that would be most appreciated. We are so close to meeting our goal, please consider being part of that effort. ☺

★ DINE IN OR TAKEOUT

New Summer Menu!

*HOUSE SPECIAL PRIME RIB
(thursday-saturday)

FISH & CHIPS
FIRE-GRILLED SALMON
GREAT SALADS
THE BEST BURGERS

*Weekly
Specials*

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PRIME TOP SIRLOIN STEAK
LOBSTER MAC & CHEESE

Great appetizers & more!

★
*Book a
private
party
with us!*



Executive Chef Jess Gannon

Check out our full menu & event info at:

knoxtrailinn.com

Like us on Facebook

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★ UPCOMING EVENTS ★

- July 1st The Conspiracy Band
 - July 7th The 413's Band
 - July 8th Smile Like Jack Walk/Run
 - July 8th Otis Reservoir Fireworks
 - July 14th Scott Silvia
 - July 15th Mr. Doubtfire
 - July 16th The Hilltown Blues Jam
 - July 22nd Hotshot Hillbillies
 - July 29th The Gist
- NO COVER CHARGE!**
Every Thursday Night @7pm
Knox Trail Trivia

OPEN WED & THUR 5-9PM ★ FRI & SAT 12-9PM ★ SUN 12-8PM ★ 413-269-4400 ★ 1898 EAST OTIS RD (RT 23) EAST OTIS, MA

NAME THAT OTISITE

Can you solve this month's contest mystery? If you are the first to identify the family name of the man in this photo, you will be the winner of the contest and win a prize!

Try your luck with this picture. Remember, if there is more than one winner, first in gets the prize. Good luck!

Please send your name, phone and email address to lynnegane@gmail.com. Open to Otis residents only. Members of the *Otis Observer* staff are not eligible to enter.

If you have a picture you'd like featured in a future contest, please email the above address.

There was no winner in last month's contest. The correct answer was: Ada Haggarty Warren Maxwell. ☹



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By Sandy Balayan

There aren't many people in Otis who don't have some sort of memories of the J & D Marina. Although it closed in 2006 after thirty-six years of business, the property retains the structures that once made up this local landmark. It has been stuck in time since it was first sold by Jim Fink and his brother, but you can still envision the many facets of the marina. The boat ramp and slips remain, but the 27 acres no longer house the

Gathering Place restaurant and bar, the gift shop, the campsites and the mini-golf!

That's right, mini-golf! For about five years in the early 1980s crowds would come to try their luck at this fun game. Jim and friends built the course with its loop-dee-loos and angled fairways. There were windmills and obstructions to maneuver around. It closed because new lighting that needed to be installed was too expensive. Anyone remember it, or better yet, have a photo of the mini-golf course? Send them to us at otismemories@gmail.com. ☺

"Otis Memories" is an ongoing way to share your Otis memories with the community. If you have an idea for an article or think one of these memories would be a good feature, let us know. We also welcome old photographs. Send memories and ideas to otismemories@gmail.com. Looking forward to hearing from you!



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Bike Safety Tips

Navigating Roads and Paths with Confidence

By Bob Rosen

Whether you are an experienced cyclist or just starting out, practicing bike safety is essential when riding on highways, roads, or bike paths.

To be safe you NEED to be seen:



Helmet:

There is no excuse not to wear one - none! It does for your head when you crash what an air bag does for your body. Buy the best you can afford, not some cheap one from a dollar store.

Get one in an illuminated color to be seen, such as neon, orange or white.

Red and White Bike Illumination Lights:

When riding on highways or roads, it is crucial to have proper lighting on your bike to ensure visibility to motorists and other cyclists. A white light attached to the front of the bike and a red light attached to the back makes it easier for the driver or another cyclist to spot you in any light condition, day or night.

Side View Mirror:

As important as your driver side mirror is on your car, having one on the left handlebar side of your bike is just as important to see the traffic behind you without having to turn your head around. Don't leave home without one.

Appropriate Clothing for Illumination:

Wearing the right clothing can significantly enhance your visibility to motorists and other cyclists. Opt for bright, fluorescent clothes, or reflective clothing to catch their attention. Reflective vests, jackets, ankle bands, socks and shoes are excellent choices for adding extra layers of visibility, particularly during darker or low light hours.

Your legs pumping up and down with illuminated visible socks are most visible to other cyclists or motorists.

Making yourself and your bike more visible and illuminated reduces the

risk of accidents caused by motorists or other cyclists not seeing you in time.

The Rules of the Road:

Cyclists must follow the same rules of the road as cars to ensure a safe journey. When you come to a stop sign, stop, don't ride through.

- Signal turns in advance to the motorist or cyclist behind you.
- If you are passing a cyclist or a pedestrian on a bike path or road, **say "passing on your left,"** so the cyclist will know that you're coming on the left side of them. If you have a bell on your bike, ring that as well.
- If you are biking on a road with motor vehicle traffic travelling behind and you are the last cyclist in line, if you see a vehicle coming up behind you in your rear-view mirror, **yell to the cyclists in front "CAR BACK"** as a warning for them to move closer to the shoulder.

Bike Tuning:

Your bike is like a fine machine.

Go to your local bike store at least once every other year to have your bike tuned. Have your bike refitted for your body so you get the best performance on a ride. Check the chain to make sure its tension is sufficient, the sidewalls on your tires, your brake pads, or hydraulic brake pads. Regular maintenance is crucial to riding safely on your bicycle.

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Safety Tips for Riding:

- Be vigilant, anticipate potential hazards, scan the road ahead and watch for turning vehicles, pedestrians and other cyclists. Avoid distractions, like using your phone.
- Don't wear headphones, as they shut out the essential traffic noise you need to hear.
- Ride single file, maintain a straight line, signal your intentions by using hand signals; ride close to the shoulder.
- Be cautious at intersections and yield appropriately. Be aware of parked cars. Watch for opening doors and leave enough space to avoid potential collisions.

Bike Path Safety:

They are multi-use, so be very aware of pedestrians and other cyclists. Follow any rules or regulations specific to bike paths.

By incorporating these bike safety tips into your routine, you can significantly reduce the risk of accidents while riding on highways, roads or bike paths. Have a happy ride, stay safe and enjoy your cycling.

The idea for this article, the concepts and topics to be covered, were my thoughts dictated to the Chatbot GPT app on my iPhone. Ninety percent of this article is what came back and 10% are my edits. ☺

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OTIS COMMUNITY GARDEN

By Joan Katter

After a frosty start, the community garden is looking pretty robust! Blooming marigolds stand as sentinels at the ends of each row. And it is easy to recognize the lettuce, beans, spinach and garlic that are starting to fill the beds. We've tried a couple of new items this year — sweet potatoes and delicata squash— which will really round out the food pantry donation baskets.



Pretty lettuce
Photo: Val Coleman

The May frost decimated the zucchini seedlings, cucumbers, some squash and marigolds. Luckily Ellen Dilts chipped

in to buy and deliver replacements in addition to the herbs and sunflowers she donated. Jamie, our good friend at the Otis Garden Center, generously donated seedling six-packs of slicing cucumbers and zucchini, which helped get the garden back on track.

Dave Rice has made sure the Rube Goldberg-like watering system is behaving, so we can ensure the plants will not go dry. And watch out weeds, as dedicated gardeners are mulching and weeding!

The herbs in pots are off to a good start, and the purple blossoms on the chives surrounding them are making some big bees very happy.



Bee in chives
Photo: Val Coleman

With the addition of five new garden members to our experienced team, we're confident the garden will be well looked after this summer! ☺



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Favorite Things

By Stephanie Skinner

Sometimes when I take the three minute drive into town I get a small heart squeeze. This is *my town now*, my brain says, and that is good. It feels like I belong. Maybe I'm even needed here, I think, which, if you listen to the pundits, is what creates a sense of well-being. What is it that makes me feel this way? After all, I started out coming only on summer weekends and didn't envision moving here full time.

Until COVID ... which scrambled my plans, and luckily smoothed out my brain, although that took a while.

What is it that makes Otis my home? I've lived in a smallish hamlet in Connecticut as well as a university town there, a Boston suburb that allowed me to get in and out of the city by train, bus or car. I've lived in a house in Adelaide, South Australia, complete with a rose garden, and right next door to grandparents I loved that truly "got me." I've wandered the Midwest through towns that proudly listed their population on welcome signs; Rolfe, Iowa, Population 509.

So, what is it about Otis?

Lately, I've been making note of things that make Otis feel like home. Here are a few of those favorite things.

- Yoga at town hall with the best ever instructor, Connie Wilson, that's simply an Otis town treasure; a 75-minute vacation every Saturday morning.
- The only loud honking I hear is the lead goose calling its gaggle to formation, or fending off a curious pup. I do not miss the Commonwealth Ave. musical.
- Easy morning and evening walks right out my back door onto the dirt road. I might see a car, possibly two, but every one of them now knows me and my slightly blind, mostly deaf, and completely willful dog, and they carefully creep by as he trots his road unleashed.

- Seeing tracks in the snow in the winter is a great reminder that we live where wildlife can still flourish. Even the bobcat that staked out my house a few years back was welcome, as long as she stuck to the chipmunk and rabbit collections.



A gift from OPT Friday Club organizer, Celeste Watman; the East Otis Schoolhouse
Photo: Stephanie Skinner

- Neighbors who greet each other and share the latest news ... on the weather, deer and moose sightings, and family milestones, are such a welcome change from city interactions.
- Instead of jackhammers on the Tobin Bridge, I am greeted every morning starting in spring by incessant calls of the Chipping Sparrow.
- Sometime in late June or early July a raucous "ear-full" of Cedar Waxwings (yes, that is what a flock of them are called) arrive in time to clean out the berries from our Japanese Honeysuckles which were planted 50 years ago to detract them from the blueberries. How about that for old timers' smarts!
- My garden makes every effort I put into it deliciously worthwhile, even though a frost took out the very beginnings of the collards, chard and lettuce two nights ago (yes, a frost mid-May for those nodding wisely and covering their smirks about how I ended my last month article.)
- I am so lucky to cruise on the Reservoir with my book club (my "bookies") and get to know a remarkable group of people.

- The changing greens of spring and summer, and startling fall splendor at my beaver pond, are a constant reminder that the only thing that's permanent is change itself. In fact, these changing seasons feel like a perfect ME metaphor. I am, if nothing else, mercurial.
- Ramps, and rhubarb, maple syrup and music at the Farmer's Market ... and asparagus! These are a few things we should not take for granted. In season, which is NOW folks, we rarely have a meal without fresh picked asparagus.
- And finally, I love the *Otis Observer!* I am a longtime media professional as well as an obsessive consumer of media in all forms. I believe in the importance of local media and its responsibility to a community. The Observer makes me take note of interesting people and places here and nearby. It drives me to sniff out stuff to do and eat. And then they let me write about all of it. I love that. ☺

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ASTROLOGY

Play Like You Mean It!

By Hilary Harley

The party atmosphere stirred up by Venus and Mars in festive Leo continues well into July. Accept invitations to play heading into the Full Moon over the July 4th holiday weekend. Can you spell F-U-N? It may take a day or two to recover; but we have help as the moon shifts into practical Capricorn as she turns full on Monday, July 3rd. Aligning to Jupiter in earthy Taurus, reality reigns with this Full Moon. Opposite the Sun-Mercury, this moon fosters warm memories with family or friends.

Radical Uranus in Taurus challenges Venus-Mars during the holiday weekend, encouraging us to lean into new patterns which are more financially sound and long-term rather than fleeting fixes. There is a maturity about this Full Moon. It is grown up and says you can have a really great time right in your own back yard, without spending a ton of money.

Reality-based energy rises further when Motivating Mars shifts into hardworking Virgo on Monday, July 10th. For the next six weeks, Mars gives us fertile soil to plant our dreams and the ambitious muscle to get the job done. If you have a large task to accomplish, *this is your window* from mid-July through August.

The next day, Tuesday, July 11th, Messenger Mercury turns into festive Leo, challenging the lunar nodes. Watch for impatience, *whining*, or others testing or questioning you. As life pushes your buttons, avoid drama and remain focused on your goals. Fortunately, this energy dissolves heading into the New Moon in nurturing Cancer on Monday, July 17th. The comforting Cancerian Sun-Moon aligns helpfully to spiritual Neptune. Bend toward what feels most loving. *Embrace what feels right for you.*



The day after the New Moon, the Lunar North Node shifts into Aries the Ram, on Tuesday, July 18th. Notice a difference in energetic quality, from a moral values and money focus to action-oriented, warrior and trail blazing

energy. Aries *RUNS*. By the end of July you will feel an urge to get a move on.

Many will push back on this energy shift, especially when the sun enters Leo on Sunday, July 23rd. If you feel stuck in a rut or confused about which direction to go, hit the pause button. Avoid digging your heels in about anything that is not budging. Instead surrender to life's current, because Venus turns retrograde that very same day. From July 23rd to September 4th, Venus cycles in reverse gear, inviting us to review our relationships, talents and financial situation.

During Venus' six-week retrograde cycle follow these basic tips: DO relax; review your relationship to yourself and others; reflect on how you earn a living and manage money; reunite with old friends and people from your past.

Avoid: starting a new job, financial venture, or romantic relationship; buying expensive items, especially luxury goods, real estate, cars, or boats. Venus retrograde cycles are notorious for *temptation ... over spending and returning to unhealthy relationships*. With Venus in Leo for an exceptionally long stretch, June 6th to October 8th, carefully guard your wallet as well as your heart as Leo is known for its extravagant nature.

Fortunately, Messenger Mercury steps in several days later when it enters practical Virgo on Saturday, July 29th. It asks: if you splurge, how will you pay your utility bills? So before you reply to an old lover, or press the buy button on line, ask yourself if this is a useful remedy for the temporary hole you are attempting to fill. ☯



Otis resident Hilary Harley is a counseling astrologer and hosts *Mystical Messages* podcast. She is an art aficionado, a community volunteer, the mother of two daughters and owner of an elderly Tibetan Terrier.



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What are the Chances?

By Lynne Geane

Our local restaurant, the Grouse House, has Thursday night lobster rolls. Who can resist? My father's favorite food was lobster. Many summers our family, Dad, Mom and me, drove to Prince Edward Island, Canada, to visit friends who owned a dairy farm and to consume as much lobster as possible. Dad made friends with the lobster fishermen and occasionally our home in Montreal would receive a crate of live lobsters. Luckily, they travel well, packed in seaweed and straw. Dad would open the crate and, in our finished basement, with a tile floor, we'd hold lobster races. Too bad for all the participants, it didn't matter who won, they would be cooked the next day.

So to get back to a delicious dinner at the Grouse House ... Arlene Tolopko and company and my friends took advantage of Lobster Night at the Grouse House last Thursday (highly recommended) ...

As I mentioned, lobster was a major part of my life. Arlene mentioned that she, in Sweden, Maine, ate her fair share. Sweden, Maine! That is where my oldest daughter, Katryn, attended

music camp! Not many people know a place named Sweden, Maine, (not sure why you shouldn't, it is geographically situated by Denmark & Norway).

I looked at Arlene with surprise and said music camp "Encore Coda"? Yes, that is our common denominator. Arlene's daughter and my daughter attended this iconic music camp, at different time periods. Youngsters who attend a summer camp create a unit, a group of kids who learn to fend for themselves and in the end experience a unique bonding. For some, it's the first time away from home, which is an experience in itself. Camp Encore Coda was a safe and nurturing environment. The kids were connected by a love of music and music education and the music educators were top notch.

Arlene and I shared that our daughters have friends to this day they met at Camp Encore Coda. But what are the chances that Arlene and I, two mothers in Otis, MA, have this common experience? Can't wait for our daughters to meet and share their camp shenanigans! Go Otis, MA, who else in town can discover an unfound common



experience? Share your memories and travels with everyone you meet, what other common experiences do we as neighbors share? ☺

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In Case of a Drought . . .

By Jackie Gentile

With the exception of that major snowstorm in mid-March, it was a pretty quiet, dry winter. Then came the rain in April and May with a fairly dry close. It is the month of early June that felt familiar – 90% chance of rain slowly dropping to 30% and then a light drizzle. I was reminded of last summer. Are we going to see the same weather pattern? Just in case, it bears repeating a portion of last summer’s article to be mindful to conserve water.

Here we go ...

Most (if not all) of Otis residents rely on well water. Wells are drilled down to the aquifer (an underground layer of permeable rock containing water), which could be near the surface to 9,000 feet below. While rainfall is important for the immediate needs to water our lawns, flowers and replenish our lakes and ponds, it also seeps into the soil, purifying the water that very, very slowly reaches the aquifer. The main source for aquifers, however, are rivers, creeks, streams and reservoirs. Navigating the map on mass.gov I found Otis’ aquifer source of water. It is a very thin aquifer. If this current drought continues aquifers will suffer if there is

no recharge. I explain this process for an understanding of our water source and the importance to not only conserve for us, but also for our neighbors. A private well takes from the aquifer of which we all share!



Here are some tips to conserve water:

INDOORS:

- Never let the water run! Turn off water when brushing your teeth, shaving and washing dishes by hand.
- Take shorter showers – 5 minutes at the most – and if possible don’t shower every day and consider “navy” showers (get wet, turn off water, soap up, turn on water for rinse).
- As you wait for the shower water to get hot, place a bucket to collect the water for cooking, watering plants, etc.
- Fix leaks – dripping faucets, toilets, pipes and appliances can add up to

hundreds of gallons of water lost per week.

- Wash only full loads of laundry and dishes

OUTDOORS:

- Limit watering lawns to one day a week – after 5 p.m. or before 9 a.m. (or let it go brown).
- Use mulch to reduce evaporation.
- Choose native plants that need less water.
- Wash vehicles using a bucket and sponge. Use the hose (with a shut-off nozzle) to rinse only.
- If you live on one of Otis’s many lakes or ponds, fill up your watering can for your thirsty flowers and plants.

Wishing us late evening rains to keep our flowers in bloom and vegetables hardy, followed by sunny summer days to enjoy our beautiful surroundings! ☺



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I have been a real-estate agent since 1986, specializing in residential real estate and land in southeastern Berkshire County and adjacent Hampden and Hampshire Counties. We reside in beautiful Becket, MA where I am a long time member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and just finished serving on the Town Administrator search committee.

Prior to entering real estate sales, my profession was building, a profession I continued for many years in conjunction with being a real-estate agent. Many clients have found that background very helpful, whether preparing a house for sale, or discussing the possibilities of a potential purchase or repairs that might be needed.

It is my philosophy that the path to success is through helping clients to the best of my ability. In doing so, I have made many wonderful friends over the years. If you have questions about buying or selling real-estate, please feel free to call anytime to discuss them.



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Never Say Never

By Sandy Balayan

One of my mother's favorite activities was playing games. Lots of cards, especially Bridge, and she loved crossword puzzles. She could spot the placement of a jigsaw puzzle piece from across a room and there was always a puzzle spread on a table in our basement. She wasn't one to loll away the hours inactively. Her mind was sharp and her need to exercise it was paramount in her daily life. Thinking back on it, I can't remember her sitting around much. She even ironed while watching her soap operas when she could. In fact, she ironed everything down to our underwear!

My mom was also a very good cook and often did not leave the house in the morning without doing all her prep for that evening's meal. When my father came in at six we were seated at the table and ready for dinner. A protein, starch and a vegetable filled our plate and other than the occasional liver and onions, I enjoyed the menu. On a rushed night, if she couldn't cook a full complement from the food pyramid, we had a hotdog and bean casserole. This was clearly a favorite for me and though rarely served, I remember always pretending I was on

the range moving cattle and about to bunk for the night. Often my brother and I played cowboys and we would use the den couch back as our horses and ride into the sunset after moving the beans around on our tin plates.

As we got older, we were expected to participate in game playing and the evening saltine, peanut butter and milk parties at the kitchen table. There were all kinds of games on our basement shelves and they got used. Weekend parties included charades and other games, and I remember laughing and loving these times with my family.

Mah Jongg was one game I watched and heard my mother play that I said I would never ever play. This game originated in China but it evolved over time to a slightly different American version. My mother loved this game almost as much as her beloved Bridge. Bridge was a quieter game than Mah Jongg and a bit more cerebral. She played Bridge at a very high level and was respected for her expertise. Mah Jongg was a much more carefree game for her. She would get together with some friends, set up the racks and tiles and the fun would begin. The clicking of tiles, the laughter and the discussions after each hand perplexed me. I didn't understand why they had so much fun. It looked stupid to me and I couldn't figure out why there was so much discussion about everyone's hand after each game. It's over! Move on! I decided at that moment that I

would never be that person. I was not playing Mah Jongg. It seemed dumb to my young mind.

Enter adulthood. Still loving games, I married a guy willing to partake and we often play games with our children and friends. We enjoy it and are happy we have passed this on to our now adult children.

My mother always wanted to teach me Mah Jongg and I begrudgingly finally said okay. She came up to Otis in August of 2008. I assembled a few interested friends and she taught us. I was really bad, but my dear friend, who my mother loved, was even worse! My mom said she saw some potential in me, but my friend, none at all. I am happy to report that my friend is a fantastic Mah Jongg player and I have taught hundreds of people to play. I am pretty good at the game I made fun of over the years.

My mother took sick in October 2008 and died in January 2009 never knowing that my friend and I would become experts. I hope wherever she is, she is looking down at us and smiling.

What's the lesson I learned? Never say never. You don't know where life will lead you and it is important to stay open to new things. Learning is never over. Not all things will be your cup of tea, but try it. Maybe you'll like it. ☺

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OTIS FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

By Terry Gould

Happy summer everyone! We wait longer than many for summer weather here in Otis, but it is so worth it when it finally arrives.

By the time you are reading this the Otis Food Pantry will be in full summer mode. With good weather we move our tables outside for our fruit, vegetables and baked goods. We encourage our families to bring insulated bags for the refrigerated dairy items and frozen meat and patrons take turns shopping inside for non-perishables. **The pantry is open every Wednesday from 9 to 11 a.m.** and we see between 35 and 45 households each week.

The Otis Community Garden delivers truly local produce to us on Wednesday

mornings as well so we can brag a bit about some of our fresh items being "Otis Grown." We are so grateful to the volunteers from the Community Garden for sharing their bounty with our neighbors here.



There are many residents who raise chickens and they share the wonderful overflow of eggs that their chickens produce in the warmer weather. Eggs are an amazing source of protein and can supplement or stand alone as a meal.

As I write this little missive, our safe box has been whisked away for a "makeover" and should be shiny and new, back in place at the back door of the Otis Town Hall.

Some things that we often need for the pantry are clean paper or reusable

bags, so if you have extra bags, we hope you will drop them in the safe box with our thanks. Food staples like peanut butter and jelly, cold cereal, canned goods and toilet paper are always welcome. If you are cleaning out your pantry and find unexpired extras, we hope you will think of us. We cannot distribute food that is expired. Folks ask us what we need, and my answer is often, "Something that you enjoy yourself, that you would eat or prepare for yourself and your families, something that you would miss if it was not on your shelf."

The food pantry is grateful for the support and donations from all of you. We could not exist and continue without your care. Thank you to everyone who keeps our shelves stocked week after week. You can follow us on Facebook at Otis Food Pantry, contact us via email at otisfoodpantry@gmail.com, or stop in on a Wednesday morning and say hello. Happy summer! ☺



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Note: Information for honor roll students was unavailable at press time for Monument Mountain Regional HS. It will be published in the August issue.

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Lee High School data was unavailable. It will be published in the August issue.

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FRRSD PTA News

By Cecily Goulange

The school year wrapped at Farmington River Regional Elementary School, and PTA members celebrated alongside students, teachers and administrators!

On June 8th we celebrated our most highly-anticipated event of the year (at least for students), Field Day. A combination of rain and smoke had everyone scrambling to adjust plans at the last minute, delivering a day no one could have anticipated but everyone enjoyed. Field Day moved indoors, filling the halls and classrooms with events such as the three-legged race, long jump, obstacle course and soccer relay. Intrepid sixth graders braved the outdoors on the cold, drizzly day, giving every student an opportunity to toss the ball and splash the oldest students in the building into the dunk tank. Maybe most exciting of all, however, was the bounce castle, inflated inside the gym! One parent volunteer referred to it as a “core memory-making experience!”

On Thursday, June 15th, sixth grader Maggie Murray was awarded the 2023 Citizenship Award during the Sixth Grade Recognition night. Recognized for her character and contributions to our communities, Maggie was honored by the PTA with this prestigious award. Members of the FRRES community called out her willingness to help younger students in the school, her participation and leadership in

such groups as Girls on the Run and the Select Chorus and her patient perseverance. Maggie’s community activities were also highlighted; she participates in keeping her community clean, singing at the Sandisfield Nursing Home and helping her father with a local Boy Scout troop. Maggie’s impact on the FRRES community is large, and she will be missed! Congratulations, Maggie!

On Friday, June 16th, during the final Awards Ceremony of the 2022-23 school year, the PTA and FRRES Principal Laurie Flower awarded Linda Curtiss with the Volunteer of the Year award. Linda’s long years of service to the Farmington River community have influenced programs such as Screen Free Week, during which she has lead programming that gets kids outside and in touch with nature, as well as her commitment to ensuring the school’s telescope was in working order to be used by generations of FRRES students. The PTA owes a debt of gratitude to Linda for all she has done while a member. We thank you, Linda! ☺



Photo: FRRSD Field Day bounce castle



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Otis

SOAP & SUDS LAUNDRY

Summer's Here – Save These Dates!

By Lynne Geane

The Otis Historical Commission and the Otis Preservation Trust (OPT) volunteers work closely together to plan events for our residents. Some events highlight our town's history and others are just for fun. Here is our July 2023 line up:

July 8th 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Antiques appraiser and native of Otis, Charles Flint, will be on hand at the library fair on the town hall lawn to evaluate your items. \$25 for three appraisals or \$10 each item, proceeds to benefit the OPT. Antiques, paintings, silver and jewelry, search your attic now, you could have a treasure! (Just like someone found out last summer!) Go to <https://optin.today/july8> to pick your time slot today!

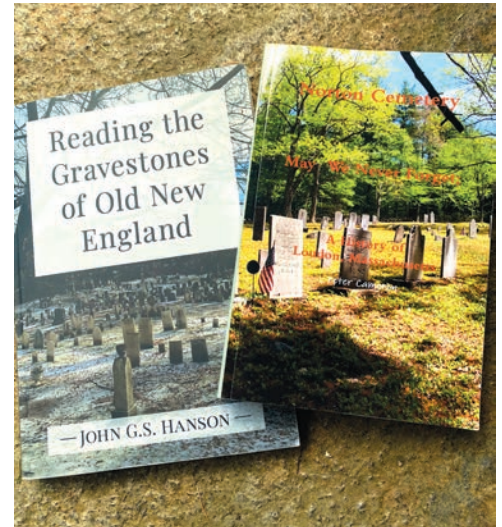
July 22nd 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Walk through History in Norton Cemetery tour with authors Peter Cameron and John Hanson as they come together to expound on the history of Norton Cemetery. Peter has written about the families which include the longstanding Otis names of Kibbe, Flint, Haskell, Benton and of course, Norton, in his book, *Norton Cemetery, May We never Forget; A history of Loudon, Massachusetts*. John's book, *Reading the Gravestones of Old New England*, explains the meaning of the epitaphs and what the designs of the headstone can tell us. Their books will be available for purchase, by cash or check. Wear sturdy walking shoes. Directions from Town Hall to Norton Cemetery; head east on Rt. 23, 2.9 miles to Norton Road, turn right. The cemetery will be on your left. Park on the road. Rain date: TBD.

July 29th By popular demand! **Robbins-Zust Family Marionettes Company** returns to the Otis Town Hall lawn to perform two classic fairy tales.

- Bring a blanket or a chair to watch these stories come to life, and buy an ice cream treat! Rain date: July 30th.

This program is funded in part by the Otis Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Donations are welcome.

Meet all of our volunteers at the L & M Farmer's Market every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Learn about our volunteer opportunities and what's going on in Otis to save our historic landmarks. ☺



Hanson and Cameron book covers

Photo: Lynne Geane



Dion Robbins-Zust with children from Otis, July 2022

Photo: Gail Gelburd

- 11 a.m. enjoy the story of *The Three Little Pigs*.
- There will be a break at noon.
- 1 p.m. for the second show. *Rumplestiltskin* will be performed which has never before been performed in the world with Marionettes!





IN MEMORIAM



Frederick W. Martsen, age 83 of Ridgefield, CT, passed away on February 3, 2023, at Danbury Hospital after a courageous battle with lung cancer. He was born in Ware, MA on May 26, 1939, to Alfred Martsen and Lillian (Wiitala) Martsen. He was the loving husband of Louise V. (Gasiorek) Martsen, who were married in 1961 and celebrated 61 years of marriage last August. Fred married his high school sweetheart and together they raised three wonderful sons: Eric (Loreto and three children Diana, Isabelle and Edward), Brion (Patricia and four children Benjamin, Ashley Poulin [Nicholas], Emily and Hannah), and Kirk (Gloria and two children Louise and Sophia).

Many wonderful experiences were had as Fred was very adventurous, traveling with Louise around North America, Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, and China. He enjoyed beautiful beaches, fine food, and of course, good wine. His

family estivated at their idyllic cottage on Big Island, Big Pond, East Otis, MA for 47 years, and Fred spent many years renovating and remodeling their island retreat. He was also a dedicated and active member of the Big Pond Association. Every summer was spent picking blueberries, playing water sports and hosting family barbecues on the pergola. These activities were accompanied by Fred's eclectic taste in music, which could often be heard resonating across the water. Fred loved animals, raising Sam, a black Labrador, in the seventies and eighties, and most recently, Bailey, his 7-year-old golden retriever. A constant and loyal companion, Bailey also loved fishing in the lake and riding in the pontoon boat. Dearly loved on the island, he passed away last August from cancer.

Fred grew up in Barre, MA and devoted much time to sports. His wicked fastball allowed him to pitch Barre High School baseball's first shutout ever. Consequently, he was scouted by the Boston Red Sox for his pitching prowess. In addition to his achievements in sports, he was awarded the Order of the Arrow by the Boy Scouts of America. Fred graduated from Barre High School in 1957. He went on to earn his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from UMass Amherst in 1963. In 1966 he earned a master's in engineering science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY.

Professionally, Fred stated that he "liked being where the action was." Though he worked initially in the space industry, most of his career was spent in the nuclear power industry, overseeing the operation and maintenance of numerous nuclear power plants throughout the United States. He worked at Hamilton Standard, Combustion Engineering, NES, Northeast Utilities, and New York Power Authority/Entergy. Some of his accomplishments included assembling a team of fifty structural engineers in less than a month for placement at the Millstone III Nuclear Power Plant, a team which went on to achieve outstanding success. In addition, as project manager, he developed and implemented a vibration and thermal expansion test program for the Shearon Harris nuclear power plant. A longstanding member of EPRI (Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, CA), Fred was often referred to as "Martsen the Maven" because of his ability to troubleshoot very complex problems.

Burial will be private, and a celebration of Fred's life will take place in Massachusetts this summer. The family respectfully requests that memorial contributions be made to the American Cancer Society, ROAR Animal Shelter at 47 South Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877, or the ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), to honor his beloved Bailey.

The *Otis Observer*, staffed by volunteers and funded by individuals and businesses, is published 11 times a year with a combined January–February issue. **Donations are needed to continue publication, and can be sent to Otis Observer, PO Box 533, Otis, MA 01253. Donations are tax-deductible as this newspaper has 501(c)(3) status.**

The *Observer* is available in **Otis** in outdoor boxes at Katie's Country Store, the Transfer Station, and the Otis Library as well as indoors at Papa's Healthy Food & Fuel, Knox Trail Inn, Bruce's Hardware, Farmington River Diner, Grouse House, the Otis Poultry Farm, Soap & Suds Laundry, Berkshire Bank and Town Hall. **Sandisfield:** Town Hall, the Library, and New Boston Inn; **Lee:** Lee Library; **Monterey:** Library. **Mailed and Gift Subscriptions**—complete form on the inside of the back cover. **All the above subject to change.**

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We invite submissions, news tips, photos, comments and suggestions including letters to the editor. For consideration they must be received by the **15th of the month prior to publication.**

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Inquiries oobserverinfo@yahoo.com

Letters to the Editor

oobserverletters@yahoo.com

Memories otismemories@gmail.com



Prepared by Sue Brofman

For inclusion in the Calendar,
please send notices to

oobservercalendar@yahoo.com

Note: Check events calendar
townofotisma.com for up-to-
date notifications/cancellations.

JULY

- 1. Otis Town Hall is open from 8 am – 3 pm, Monday - Thursday. CLOSED Tuesday, July 4**
- 2. Otis Library Summer Hours**
 - Monday – 10 am – 4 pm
 - Tuesday – 12 noon – 6 pm
 - Wednesday – 10 am – 5 pm
 - Thursday – 1 pm – 7 pm
 - Friday – 10 am – 5 pm
 - Saturday – 9 am – 1 pm
 - Closed Sunday
- 3. Rec Center - Temporarily Closed**
- 4. Smile Like Jack, Saturday, July 8, 9 am, 5k/10k Road Race/Walk to raise funds for the Smile Like Jack Memorial Fund, Race Start: 9 am at the Knox Trail Inn, 1898 East Otis Road, East Otis, MA 01029**
- 5. Otis Library Country Fair, Saturday, July 8, 10 am – 3pm, More than 20 Arts and Craft Vendors featuring a wide variety of crafts and products, Authentic Italian food, bake table, raffle baskets and raffle items, Children's entertainment including performers and artists from BTC Entertainment, the Pittsfield Police Copsicle truck will be on hand to pass out free popsicles to the kids. Otis Town Hall green**

- 6. StoryWalk, children and adults will enjoy a reading of "Henry's Big Kaboom" by Mary Ames Mitchell, while taking a walk along the Farmington River Trail, this StoryWalk will remain up through July 9. A reading of "Different, A Great Thing to Be" by Heather Avis, will follow and will remain up through August 6.**

Sat., July 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, 9:30 – 10:45 am, **Mat Yoga, Connie Wilson**, Ages 16+, Kripalu Yoga, all levels, Otis Town Hall, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**

Mon., July 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, 10 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Open**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Mon., July 3, 7 – 8 pm, **School Committee Meeting**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

**HAPPY
4TH OF JULY**



Tues., July 4, Independence Day, all Town offices are closed

Tues., July 4, 11, 18 and 25, 8:30 am, **Inspirations at <https://www.facebook.com/noticeotis>, Viktoria Seavey**, jumpstart your day with clear intention, centered inspiration and positive imagination, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**

Wed., July 5, 12, 19 and 26, 9 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Open**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Wed., July 5, 9 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Foot Nurse** will be at the

center, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Thurs., July 6, 13, 20 and 27, 8:30 am, **Inspirations ONLINE** at <https://www.facebook.com/noticeotis>, **Viktoria Seavey**, jumpstart your day with clear intention, centered inspiration and positive imagination, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541**.

Thurs July 6, 13, 20 and 27, 10 - 11 am, **Chair Yoga, Connie Wilson**, Ages 12+, Otis Town Hall, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**

Thurs., July 6, 11:30, Council on Aging, Out to Lunch at East Restaurant in Great Barrington, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Sat., July 8, 9 am, **Smile Like Jack, 5k/10k Road Race/Walk**, to raise funds for the Smile Like Jack Memorial Fund, Race Start: 9 am at the Knox Trail Inn, 1898 East Otis Road, East Otis, MA 01029

Sat., July 8, 10 am – 3 pm, **Otis Library Country Fair**, more than 20 Arts and Craft Vendors featuring a wide variety of crafts and products, Authentic Italian food, bake table, raffle baskets and raffle items, Children’s entertainment including performers and artists from BTC Entertainment, the Pittsfield Police Copsicle truck will be on hand to pass out free popsicles to the kids. Otis Town Hall green

Mon., July 10, 12:30 – 1:30 pm, **Council on Aging Fitness Class** with Michelle from Soules Fitness, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Mon., July 10, 2 - 4 pm, **Board of Assessors Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., July 10, 7 - 9 pm, **Planning Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., July 11, 18 and 25, 10 am, **Otis Play**, parent/child playgroup best for children birth – 5 years of age, this is a free program, no registration required, Otis Town Hall

Tues., July 11, 6:30 – 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., July 13, 12:30 – 1:30 pm, **Council on Aging Lake George Luncheon Cruise**, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Thurs., July 13, 4 pm, **PTA Meeting (Zoom)**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Thurs., July 13, 6 pm, **Otis Library Meeting (In person and Zoom)**, inquire at **info@otislibraryma.org** for more information

Friday, July 14, 5:00 pm, **“Ed the Wizard”** a fun-filled workshop where Harry Potter meets real science. Using common household items, learn and perform magical feats such as transfiguration, vanishes, levitation and other magic! Otis Library, Free, registration required. Register at **www.otislibraryma.org**.

Mon., July 17, 12:30 – 1:30 pm, **Council on Aging Fitness Class** with Michelle from Soules Fitness, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Tues., July 18, 6 - 9 pm, **Conservation Commission Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., July 19, 10 am, Council on Aging Summer Barbeque with performance by Sara the Fiddler at 11 am, please call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Wed., July 19, 6 – 7:30 pm, **Cultural Council Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Fri., July 21, 10 am – 12 noon, **Council on Aging Brown Bag Program** and **CHP Wellness Van**, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Mon., July 24, 12:30 – 1:30 pm, **Council on Aging Fitness Class** with Michelle from Soules Fitness, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Tues., July 25, 6:30 – 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., July 26, 10:30 – 11:30 am, **Council on Aging Blood Pressure Nurse** will be at the center, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at **eilabell2@aol.com**

Wed., July 26, 5:00 – 6:30 pm, **Laugh & Learn: Healing through Comedy & Laughter with David Maloof**, learn how (and why) jokes and comedic songs are written and discover the physical and psychological benefits of comedy and laughter. All ages welcome. Free, registration required. Register at **www.otislibraryma.org**. Otis Library

Sat., July 29, 11 am - 1 pm, **Notice Otis Events, Robbins Zust Marionette Show: The Three Little Pigs and Rumpelstiltskin** will be performed on the Otis Town Hall Green. Bring picnic, blankets and lawn chairs; ice cream will be provided. Rain date Sunday, July 30th

Mon., July 31, 9:30 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Haircuts**, call for an appointment, Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at **eilabell2@aol.com**

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