

# Leas Lit



ORIGINAL WRITING AND ART  
BY RESIDENTS OF MEDFORD LEAS

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## CONTENTS

Dedication to Maggie Heineman		1
Three Haikus	<i>Bobbie Del Prete</i>	2
The Baltimore Brownstone	<i>Nancy Cressman</i>	3
Film Noir	<i>Bob Edelson</i>	5
Living in a Construction Zone	<i>Joyce Linda Sichel</i>	8
Alice in Otherland	<i>Catherine Langmuir</i>	10
The Sun is There Somewhere	<i>Cindy Page</i>	15
You Can Go Home Again	<i>George Rubin</i>	17
The Wedding that Almost Wasn't	<i>Stacy Moore</i>	20
A Philadelphia Story	<i>Charles Perrone</i>	23
Ephemeral	<i>Bob Edelson</i>	27
"Unusual"	<i>Edwin Hann</i>	28
Travel on the Subway NYC 1961	<i>Alvin Migdal</i>	31
Mother Nature's Paint Box	<i>Pat Williams</i>	34
Life Can be a Circle	<i>Joyce Linda Sichel</i>	36
Little Old Lady	<i>Marge Rodney</i>	39
The Death of Timothy	<i>Tom Roberts</i>	42
Regenbergers	<i>Deedy Roberts</i>	46
A Trail and a Tail	<i>John Sommi</i>	49



## DEDICATION TO MAGGIE HEINEMAN

This is the first issue of *Leas Lit* in many, many years that lacks Maggie's guiding hand and judgment. With her passing this year, we lost her presence, but *Leas Lit* will continue to feel her imprint. Maggie and her husband Herb managed its publication for close to twenty years. Maggie received the submissions, passed them along to the editors with authorship removed, set the calendar for steps until publication, worked with the illustration coordinator on layout, dealt with the printing company, the proofing, the distribution, and the invoices. We greatly benefited from her skill with technology, which she was learning as she went along. We will all miss her guidance, encouragement, and friendship. As Herb said soon after her death, "How can you replace the irreplaceable!" We hope this and future issues will live up to the standards she set.

## **THREE HAIKUS**

### **Autumn Leaves**

Fall, swirl, float, descend  
Leaves seem momentarily  
To dance in the air.

### **A Cold Winter Night**

White gold orb aglow  
Casting shadows on the path  
Far-flung diamonds wink.

### **Spring**

Each bud contains a  
Perfectly folded petal  
God's origami.

*Bobbie Del Prete*



## THE BALTIMORE BROWNSTONE — MAGIC AND MYSTERY

What was it about that house, that Baltimore brownstone, that was magical and mysterious to a four-year-old girl in 1948? Was it the enormous brown brick edifice, flanked by even bigger and more grand houses all with two levels of black-railing-trimmed-steps climbing from a special sidewalk that was wide enough for a good game of hopscotch and, better yet, a sidewalk with a playground directly across the street... a playground with real swings!

Maybe it was the fairies. My Aunt Estelle said her house fairies were playing under the dining room table again last night. “Could you please clean the chair legs where they played?” she asked, as she handed me a dust cloth. “Sometimes those fairies carelessly leave shiny pennies around the chair legs. Could you please pick them up and if you do find any, they are yours to keep,” she said as she was peeling potatoes for dinner that night.

Or could it have been that polished upright mahogany piano? My Aunt Estelle taught piano to neighborhood students. They came to the front door clutching their tattered music books and then nervously waited for their piano lesson with my Aunt Estelle.

“You must be quiet now, dear, because my students are very serious,” she said to me as she directed me to the couch, magically piled with storybooks, paper dolls, coloring books, and a brand new box of crayons.

Or could it have been Uncle Lou, an Austrian immigrant, coming home after a hard day at the factory to greet me

with a big smile as he got down close to my level to tell me how beautiful my dolls were and ask about their names. His bushy mustache would tickle my cheek.

“Did you know I can butter my corn with this mustache?” he asked in his mysterious accent. “I’ll show you the next time we have corn.”

For certain, the most magic was when Uncle Lou reverently brought out his precious German violin, and Aunt Estelle returned to her seat at the piano. Oh, how suddenly the air filled with music! Live violin music—a completely new experience! How could anything be so beautiful? Their rich, emotional music filled my whole being.



Uncle Lou’s old-world style and skill, and the way the two of them leaned toward each other to express the vibrancy and emotion of the music! I was filled with awe and astonishment.

Yes, magic and mystery were alive in that house. The house itself, the fairies, the sofa full of books, the music. Yes, there was magic in that old brownstone in Baltimore in 1948... and now I know: the magic was my Aunt Estelle and my Uncle Lou.

*Nancy Cressman*

## FILM NOIR

**I**t was a dark and stormy night when Snoopy, he was called Snoopy, although he bore no resemblance to the cartoon beagle and indeed was hardboiled, rather nasty and brutish, stepped out of his door, his hand clenched around the butt of the Sig Sauer P220 Elite Full-Size he always carried though a Glock G17 Gen 5 would have been a better choice, and left to perform the dastardly deed for which he had been hired by his unknown master, whose features had been obscured by the hoodie, a gray L'Estrange one, that he wore, if it were a he at all, for it could have been a woman, when they made the deal.

It was a woman he would kill. A big blonde with curves like a glass coke bottle. Her hair was like silk, and her eyes were blue pools that a man could drown in. Her legs wouldn't quit. But it didn't matter; she was a dead duck. Snoopy always got his man—or woman, in this case. Why would anyone want to kill this looker? The green-eyed monster, probably, but at the end of the day, it didn't matter. There were plenty of fish in the sea.

Snoopy grinned, showing teeth like a 1950 Buick's grill. Her name was Honey, she was sweet, but everyone called her Sweet Pea. "Stupid names," Snoopy thought. He'd been following her for a couple weeks and, no question, she was low-hanging fruit, but with an abundance of caution, he wanted to be sure of his target. She was as consistent in her habits as the clock in Grand Central Station. No need to think out of the box on this one.

Snoopy walked to the corner of Broadway and 42nd Street, and there she was, right on time. The Patagonia

Torrentshell 3L City Coat she wore protected her from the weather, but it wouldn't stop a bullet, that he was sure of. He picked up her trail, happy as a kid in a candy store. Now all he had to do was wait until she turned into the alley that led to the stage door. This time of night, it would be dark and empty. The pouring rain would reduce visibility and with a stroke of lightning he could time the shot to be covered by the thunder. The alley was coming up. "If these walls could talk," Snoopy thought, "how many tales of murder and rapine could they tell about the Great White Way?"

Honey turned into the alley and Snoopy followed, pulling out his Sig and snapping the slide to put the heavy .45 caliber cartridge into the firing chamber. "This baby will knock her into next week," he thought. He lifted the gun as he made the turn. "I'll plug her till she's as dead as a doornail." A giant spark filled the sky, but before the crash of thunder that he was counting on to muffle his shot could sound, he was blinded by the muzzle flash from the Glock G19 compact in Honey's hand. He felt the 9 mm slug tear into his body like the slam of a hammer, and as his lights winked out, his last thought was, "I guess I grabbed the tiger by the tail."

Honey stood there still holding the smoking gun and shaking like a leaf. From deeper in the alley, she heard a man's voice. "Well done, Sweet Pea," he said stepping into the light of the bare bulb at the stage door's steps. He was tall and dark, with an iron jaw. Even through his open Dolce & Gabbana overcoat that covered his Armani suit she could see his muscles ripple. "I was covering you, but you were as quick as a striking cobra," he said. "But don't relax, this is just the tip of the iceberg. He was a clumsy tail and you

marked him, but he wasn't acting on his own. We've got to find the guy that hired him, and these people are as thick as thieves. It won't be easy, but you can bet your life he'll just hire another gunny. Maybe one smarter than big boy there. Let me get rid of the trash and then we'll palaver."

Honey smiled and shot him in the gut. "I tried to avoid you like the plague, gave you the brush off, the old heave-ho, and then you show up and warn me about the schmuck there? You thought I'd jump into your arms? You're the one who hired him! So he's trash? That's the pot calling the kettle black for sure." She kicked his gun away and watched him die, the blood pumping out of the wound, mixing with the rain and streaming into the gutter until the flow stopped. His eyes glazed over and went blank. "Shame I had to ruin the suit," she thought. Then she went to call the cops and her legal eagle.

*Bob Edelson*

## LIVING IN A CONSTRUCTION ZONE

If your home is due for some updating,  
stay away from where they're decorating.

Or you may rue the day you started,  
since the date they'll finish is a moving target.

Living in one room or two  
means serious life displacement for you.

It's hard to go on with your routine  
with sub-contractors on and off the scene.

When they sand or they paint or they spray,  
make certain that you're far away.  
And "HVAC" workmen leave you boilin' or shiverin'  
for days on end til one part comes in.



Some spread their presence all throughout,  
leaving scaffolds, barriers, debris about.

The noise is sometimes deafening;  
crashes and collapses feel threatening.

You think how nice home used to be,  
though minor changes were needed, you see.  
Inconvenience continues, incompletions disappoint.  
So you might just decide to blow the joint.

Since monthly expenses continue for home,  
You could go on the cheap to parts lesser-known.

You'll keep in touch with the architects,  
and no one will be tempted to add on projects.

*Joyce Linda Sichel*

## ALICE IN OTHERLAND

Alice MacBean's head nodded and she awoke with a jerk. Blinking, she looked around at the MLRA meeting and realized that she had dozed off. She blinked several times, more purposefully, and rolled her head around a bit to try to wake herself up. She clutched a large binder she had brought, expecting to take notes, and concentrated on the woman with short white hair who was speaking about an issue in one of the courts. She had trouble figuring out exactly what the woman's complaint was.

As she tried to pay attention, a door opened at the back of the room, and there was Danielle, the music director, looking especially peppy and cheerful in a scarlet majorette outfit with gold braid across her chest, white boots, and a tall busby. She twirled her baton and strutted into the room followed by the Medford Leas Singers, all in lusty voice. Alice realized that she was supposed to be singing with them, and got up to join the parade down the aisle toward the stage, singing happily.

“Pick up your heels; follow your nose,  
Stick with the crowd; see where it goes.  
Everybody plays the Medford Leas tag.”

Danielle led the procession up onto the large stage, where the men began to tap-dance on either side. Alice joined the other women, who locked arms in a chorus line in front. They kept the song going as they effortlessly kicked high into the air on all the downbeats.

“Cooler than cool, badder than bad;  
Come join the fun; don't make us sad



Get yourself up out of your sleeping bag!”

As they danced and sang, a heavy red velvet curtain behind them slowly opened and there was Ken, the fitness instructor. The chorines did their last kicks and turned toward him. Not at all tired despite the strenuous dancing, Alice was happy to think that he might lead some invigorating exercises. Ken tapped the microphone and called out cheerfully, “Good morning, Medford Leas! And welcome to the poetry recitation contest!”

The poetry contest! Alice’s mood went from elation to horror. How could she have forgotten? She’d neglected to go to any of the practice sessions, and had never even picked out a poem to recite. She found herself in a queue of contestants and searched her mind frantically, trying to recall a poem that would do for the occasion. There was that lovely Houseman poem about venison cookery: “With roux my hart is ... my hart is ...” Alice tried to grasp the right word, ... “gravy-ed”... surely that was it. But try as she might, she could not recollect the next line. Some other poem would have to do. A tall man began to recite a Shakespeare sonnet, and Alice was relieved to remember another one for herself.

“Shall I compare thee to a bad toupee?  
Thou art more lovely, and less apt to shed.  
Rough winds do snatch the nasty rug away,  
Leaving exposed a pink and naked head.”

...But Alice could remember no more than the first quatrain. The queue grew shorter; her anxiety mounted. Robert Frost? Yes! Surely one of his poems would suffice.

“Two rogues divorced in the neighborhood  
And sorry I could not side with both,  
And be one person, long I stood,  
And hoped Gestalt analysis would  
Assist me in my personal growth.”

Something seemed wrong with one of those lines, but Alice couldn't put her finger on exactly what. Maybe a different Frost poem?

“Whose wine this is I think I know;  
She's gone off to the ladies' though;  
She will not see me lift her flask  
And fill my glass with fragrant flow.  
She is not here, no need to ask,  
If I might pour from her wee cask.  
I'll raise my glass and drink her health  
Then put back on my covid mask.”

Something was still very wrong! Despair swept over her; there was now only one person in the queue in front of her. The second Frost poem would have to do.

A snuffling sound and a gentle bark behind her made her turn, and she was happy to see three of her dearest canine friends, Miggs, Rosie, and Josette. They were all in evening dress, standing on hind legs and nearly as tall as she was. Miggs was in the center, his impressive girth stuffed into a tuxedo. On one of his arms was Josette in a tasteful fawn gown, or was it *écru*? Camel? Taupe? Alice felt keenly her inadequacy in the matter of fashionable colors. On the other arm was Rosie, in a rather fetching black and white outfit that seemed to be all scarves and feathers.

Although she was used to greeting these friends with a pat on the head and a bit of scratching under the chin and on the chest, such gestures suddenly seemed entirely inappropriate—not at all the way she greeted most friends—and she wondered if her forwardness had in the past been interpreted as harassment. If this was the case, the trio seemed to have forgiven her. They whisked her away from the dispiriting poetry contest, and she found herself moving west away from the parking lot on the newly paved path.

All three dogs expressed scorn for the poetry being recited at the contest: “...so shallow and anthropocentric!” Miggs asserted that his favorite poem was the Joyce Kilmer ode to dogs.

“I think no man can conjure up  
A poem as lovely as a pup.  
What’s that? Why so? How come? What’s up?  
...”Tis God, not man, who makes a pup.”

Rosie and Josette agreed that such a pithy nugget of verse got right to the heart of things. Josette then mentioned that her favorite poem was a Wordsworth classic.

“I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o’er hills and bogs  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of hearty, hairy dogs,  
Beside the lake, and nigh the falls,  
Barking and chasing tennis balls.”

All three dogs acknowledged that Wordsworth had captured a particularly charming scene. Not to be outdone, Rosie recited a bit of her favorite poem by T.S. Eliot.

“Let us go then, you and me,  
When the evening is spread out upon the lea  
Like a well-loved, dog-fragrant blanket.  
Give us an endless game of chase-the-stick  
And a hand to lick.  
We may bay at the rising moon in wolf-like song,  
And romp where scents are strong.”

The dogs mused over these profoundly moving lines as they crossed over Estaugh Way and joined the paved path heading north across Katzell Grove. They all agreed on the superiority of their favorite lyrics to the more pedestrian poems being recited at the contest. It seemed to Alice that her friends’ poems were somewhat canine-centric, but she was so glad to have been rescued from the poetry recitation that she said nothing.

Suddenly Rosie alerted them to the fact that they still had a fair way to go—through Katzell Grove, up the road past the Bridlington houses, and through the mown path to Wilkins Station Road—and were going to be late for their dinner reservation at Ginger. She dropped to all four paws and broke into a swift trot. Josette did the same. Miggs dropped to four paws, but trotting was beyond him. He snuffled and moved as fast as he could, but the girls were drawing far ahead. Alice bent her head to encourage him and forgot to look out for the low-hanging branches of the catalpa tree near the path!!!

Falling forward and knocking her head on the binder she was holding, Alice was jolted awake and took a moment to realize where she was. Mortified, she looked around to see who had noticed. Those near her kindly averted their eyes.

*Catherine Langmuir*

## THE SUN IS THERE, SOMEWHERE

The sun was out today  
I saw it as it struggled  
Through the thuggish clouds  
A bright disk  
Barely visible,  
But it was there  
And I saw it.  
I even took a picture of it  
For reference in case  
No one believed me.  
Because the clouds  
Seem so close now  
And heavy and menacing.  
But the sun was there  
Above all that.  
Light breaking through  
The darkness.  
Hope coming through the  
Night of clouds of  
Rancor and dissipation.  
And I choose to believe  
That light wins out over  
Darkness, no matter how  
Pervasive and real and  
Threatening it seems.  
And I cannot answer for those  
Who do not believe  
In Light and Hope.  
I can only look to what I  
Believe and know.

And tomorrow is another  
Day to watch for the light.  
And I will be there  
Watching the sky  
And knowing that  
It is there, even when  
We can't see it.

*Cindy Page*

## YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

**T**he trip to Brooklyn on the #4 subway train had been hot and stuffy. It came to a noisy stop at Utica Avenue, and I stepped out and climbed the stairs. In front of me was Eastern Parkway. Cars moved speedily along the tree lined avenue. A bus slowly crawled with the traffic along Utica Avenue. It was hard to believe that this was the neighborhood where I had grown, that for 18 years this had been my world. Now I was back, back to a bit of nostalgia. I walked down Utica Ave. past the site of the old East New York Savings Bank, now a high-rise condominium. St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Church still sat at a corner of Lincoln Place. Walking onto St. John's Place, I saw the two-story building, 240 Utica Avenue, was still there. My home still looked the same, though there was a Room For Rent sign in the window. I stood there looking and suddenly felt transported back in time.

Marty, his hair blowing around his face said, "The guys are waiting for us. How about a stick ball game?" I nodded yes. It was Saturday. If it had been raining, it would mean an afternoon at the local movie house. As we left the stoop of my apartment, the Reid Avenue trolley halted in front of us. We both ran out to help the motorman pull down the pole to the overhead electric line. Then a quick run to the other end of the trolley and we helped to pull up the pole, watching it spark as it engaged the electric line. With a smile, the motorman gave us each a few pennies. We would use them to buy licorice stick candy. With our new found wealth, we walked past St. Matthew's, throwing our Spalding ball



against the wall of the rectory mostly to see if any of the priests would come out and yell at us.

There were very few cars on Lincoln Place, so it was always a good place to play street games. Arty, Herman, and Eddie were waiting for us. The stick ball game ended as the sun sank behind the apartment houses.

I followed Marty back to his house, where his mother was cooking. Seeing us, she wiped her hands on her apron and gave us each a cold drink. Marty's father came up from the basement where he was making coats for young children. The national depression closed the clothing manufacturer where he had worked as a tailor. On some weekends, Marty



and I would put his finished coats on a small wagon and sell them in and around the neighborhood.

I knew that by now they would want me home, so I said goodbye and, “See you at school on Monday, Marty.” I walked back to Utica past Jaffe’s Clothing Store, where all my “knickers” came from, Waltham’s Jewelry Store with its big lighted clock hanging outside, and at the corner Miller’s Luncheonette and Newsstand, where our family bought all the daily and Sunday papers. Then I climbed the stairs at 240 and walked down the long hallway, past Mom and Dad’s bedroom, our living room, my room, the bathroom, and kitchen. Beyond these rooms were my father’s waiting room and dental office.

Rose, our housekeeper, met me at the kitchen, saying “I poured a glass of milk for you,” with her Jamaican accent. Back in my own room, the school books on my desk meant homework lay ahead. Instead, I dropped on to my bed. Outside a noisy trolley went by. I closed my eyes.

When I opened them, I was still standing outside 240 Utica Ave. All the stores I knew below our apartment were now gone and the voices around me mostly Spanish. The faces were Latino and Asian. I smiled to myself as I walked back to the subway. I stopped one last time and said a quiet goodbye to my home, my street, my youth.

*George Rubin*

## THE WEDDING THAT ALMOST WASN'T

**I**t was 1968. I was a senior at The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. It was a very difficult time for our country and people—the war in Vietnam had raged on endlessly.

Anne Graney and I both lived in Mount Holly, New Jersey, around the block from each other. We attended Mount Holly Regional Catholic School (now Sacred Heart School), and we were in the same class (1964) at Rancocas Valley Regional High School together. We did not date in high school. Anne was over 5'2" and did not want to date anyone shorter than she was. I was shorter.

Anne attended Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York. By sheer chance we both went to a Christmas party in 1965 in Mount Holly. By my sophomore year in college, I had grown to well over 5'2," and Anne saw me and liked what she saw. We talked together at length that evening and began dating. Our relationship gradually got serious.

However, my draft deferment would end upon my graduation from college in May 1968. Prior to graduation I was called for my draft physical exam. I passed with flying colors and the Army was in my future, and Anne's.

In March 1968, Anne and I met at my roommate's home in West Hartford, Connecticut. At that meeting, I told Anne that I was going to be drafted, sent to Vietnam, and might not survive. I then asked her to marry me. Of course, she accepted. That was the nature of things in 1968.

We chose August 24, some five months later, as our wedding date. That would allow Anne and our mothers

enough time to plan for all the complexities of a marriage ceremony: church, priest, invitations to approximately 200 relatives and friends, dresses for the wedding party, arrangements for the reception, food and entertainment.

Anne and I graduated at the end of May and were on the verge of ordering the invitations when a question occurred to us. What if I was not around on August 24, 1968? That might present a problem for our wedding.

There was an obvious solution, however. I would call the Burlington County Draft Board and ask if I was to be drafted on or before August 24, 1968. I made the call and asked that simple question. I was informed that pursuant to government regulations the Draft Board could not advise anyone concerning if or when they would be drafted. Naturally, I panicked and elaborated on our complicated wedding plans: trying to schedule Sacred Heart Church, someone to perform the service, finding a place for our reception, invitations, bridal dresses and tuxedos, and so on.

Her reply was simply, “Sorry, I cannot disclose that information.” She was about to hang up when a bright light filled the room where I was making the call. Out of nowhere, I calmly asked her “Ma’am, on August 24, 1968, is my hair going to be long, as it is now, or will my hair be short?”

Quiet ensued on the other line, followed by rustling of files and papers. Finally she stated, “Young man, on August 24, 1968, your hair is going to be very, very short. Goodbye.” And she hung up.

A miracle! Anne and our mothers would have a period of time, albeit short, to schedule, plan, and pull off the

wedding. Our wedding was moved up to June 29th, giving them five weeks to make all the arrangements. And they succeeded!

The wedding was wonderful. Thereafter, we had about five weeks of married life because shortly after the wedding, a draft notice arrived ordering me to report to Ft. Dix in New Jersey for basic training on August 7, 1968. Additional training at Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indiana concluded on February 1, 1969, and I was ordered to report immediately to Chu Lai, Vietnam. Thankfully, my duties consisted of a safe administrative job for 13 months on a large military base.



Our married life, for all practical purposes, actually commenced with my return from Vietnam and discharge from active duty on March 7, 1970. Both Anne and I had matured, and we had changed in some respects as a result of our experiences during our long separation. However, our underlying love for each other quickly resurfaced and has endured.

Finally, let me say thank you to the woman at the Draft Board for the gift of “The Wedding That Was,” and the marriage and partnership which has thrived for some 56 years, with two wonderful children to show for it.

*Stacy Moore*

## A PHILADELPHIA STORY

On that December day 1960, if you had arrived late for Margie's and my wedding in Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, Wynnewood, you would have had no difficulty choosing where to sit. The Protestants sat on one side of the aisle, the Catholics on the other. The Anglo-Americans sat on one side, the Italian-Americans on the other. The Republicans sat on one side, the Democrats on the other.

I waited at the altar for my bride. The doors opened, and Margie appeared on her cousin Johnny's arm. She approached slowly, glowing with the innocence that defined her and turned her head from side to side, conferring her benediction on the smiling faces on both sides of the aisle.

"Will you love her, comfort her, honor her?" asked the rector. "I love her. I love her," my mind shouted. "I will," I said quietly. That she had chosen me was the miracle of my life. Our courtship was precipitous and revelatory, and the rightness of our fit caused us to leave our jobs in New York, returning to Philadelphia with scant savings. We were in love and wanted to be back near our families in Philadelphia.

Although there was little fraternization between the two camps after the wedding ceremony, everyone had a good time. As we stood in the receiving line, I reminded Margie of our conversation some weeks before. "We can't afford a honeymoon," she had said sadly.

Margie's family and her friends had responded generously to our gift registries: a China service for eight, silver serving utensils, an electric coffee pot, trivets, salad bowls. My relatives had largely ignored the registries.

“Don’t worry, Margie,” I said, “Just bring a large handbag to the receiving line.” My relatives and my friends embraced us, they kissed us, and they slipped envelopes into our hands.

We opened the envelopes that evening at the hotel in Greenwich, our first stop on the way to our honeymoon in Vermont. “Save the cards,” said Margie. I made three piles of money on the bed: twenties, fifties and two C-notes, just under fifteen hundred dollars. The honeymoon plus!

Annie Steinert, Margie’s former roommate, had lent us her family’s cottage in Vermont. Her Aunt Betty in Brookline, Massachusetts, had invited us to spend a few days in her son’s vacant apartment that was secluded over her large garage. In Boston when we called on Mrs. Steinert to thank her for the cottage, she gave us tickets to the symphony. These generous acts, like the registry gifts, were customary among Margie’s family and friends and very different from my South Philadelphia upbringing.

Margie was the only child of Helen Headley Ridge, who was born in 1892. She graduated from college in 1912, taught school, and then married Margie’s father and settled in Wynnewood. She continued to work outside the home as well as caring for her family. Her husband died in 1956, two years before I met Margie. Helen’s much younger brother Ed had called his sister Huna when he was a child, and she adopted the nickname, particularly after our children were born. Huna suited Helen. The appellation nicely sidestepped the taint of grandmother.

The letters Margie wrote to Huna from New York served to ease her remorse for having moved away. They

describe a post-debutante life, though Margie had not been: Gilbert and Sullivan, a formal ball, Chautauqua, Martha's Vineyard. There were Manhattan treasure hunts involving the Plaza Hotel fountain, dining with a flamenco dancer, and drives to Connecticut with Peter Pruyn in his Austin Healy. Those trips stopped after she met me during a commute from Philadelphia back to New York on a Sunday afternoon. In a letter dated 1958, she tells Huna, "I have arranged a ride to Philadelphia with Joe's attractive friend. The problem now is to avoid Joe and have this paragon to myself for two and a half hours."

After the honeymoon, we moved in with my parents in South Philadelphia: "pensione completa." Margie found a job with a publisher in West Philadelphia while I attended graduate school. Margie got on well with my parents, even teasing me in front of them. She and my mother would exchange mock complaints about their husbands and laugh together.

After our second child was born, we moved into a large, affordable house in a leafy West Philadelphia neighborhood. We took Huna with us. Some friends lived nearby, and they had assured us that the neighborhood was stable. The local public school was good. It had been "adopted" by the University of Pennsylvania, whose School of Education had designed an innovative curriculum for it. We all got on together as a family just as we had with my parents. However, the neighborhood changed after a time and the University quit the elementary school. I found a new job at a community college in New Jersey, and we departed. We moved to Moorestown because it had good public schools and because it was close enough to Philadelphia for Margie to keep her job in Center City.

“I won’t find anybody my age in Moorestown,” Huna had said before we moved. She was wrong. Within a month she had joined a bridge foursome. The garden in our back yard became her obsession, and in it she recreated the garden she had had in Chester Springs, Pennsylvania. I would drive her to Ray’s Garden Center, where she became a fixture. She once asked, “Ray, do you have something that will kill everything?”

I did the heavy work for her. Margie would wring her hands: “You’re working too hard. You shouldn’t have to do this.” In turn, Margie claimed the big deck attached to the back of the house where she installed a mini-garden in large planters and urns. Her flowers made a bright contrast to the shrubbery in Huna’s lower garden.

Huna adapted to Moorestown, making friends and enjoying her grandchildren. When she turned ninety-two, however, she stopped having her before-dinner highball: “It no longer gives me a lift,” she said wistfully. She lost her taste for gardening, too. The next three years were sad as she grew more and more dependent, but we were all still a close family. We managed to keep her at home where she was comfortable and loved until she died at age ninety-five.

Margie and I grew both grew up in the Philadelphia area, but our paths never crossed until we were working in New York City, where the stars aligned. Our different backgrounds were no obstacle to our loving each other’s families and valuing their customs and traditions. Our lives were the richer for it.

*Charles Perrone*



## EPHEMERAL

Drop a pebble in a pool;  
Watch the perfect rings fan out.  
Glimpse their circularity,  
Then they're gone.

First light breaks the sable night.  
The sun appears,  
An intolerable streak of light,  
A night is done.

The bird drops to her nest  
To feed her complaining chicks  
Who are fully fledged now.  
Their home will be abandoned. Soon.

The movement ends.  
The conductor drops her arms.  
Applause grows, peaks, and dies.  
No encore?

For the first time she smiles at you.  
You feel warmth you've never felt before.  
She turns and waves, off to class.  
She will return.

*Bob Edelson*

## “UNUSUAL”

**M**rs. W was an unusual teacher. Now granted, to a rambunctious fifth-grade boy, all teachers could be seen as “unusual.” Classroom discipline was “oppressive.” How reading and math and social studies were taught was different than in previous years. Even how we were individually treated and how we individually treated the teacher was unique. Fifth grade was unusual.

But Mrs. W was unusual in her own specific way. She loved art, all forms of art. And she wanted every one of us to love art too. In fact, she believed that each of us could learn to love at least some form of art during the course of our year with her. To that end, on Fridays, at the end of every school week, the last portion of the day was set apart for art projects by every student. We could choose our own and she would provide the materials and the guidance for each individual project. Some chose pencil drawing. Others selected coloring, with paint or crayons. Still others worked with paper, cutting or folding or shaping as they felt moved. Some even tried to sculpt with clay or plaster of Paris, even using real flowers or leaves. Some projects were large, such as full-body drawings or scenes. Others were much smaller and could fit on our desks and be very personalized. Unusual Mrs. W would help each student in her class choose a project he or she could enjoy and complete.

Except me. I disliked art and had decided at the beginning of the year that there was nothing I was interested in creating or completing. Upon reflection in later years, I came to understand that my rejection of art had nothing to do with the experience itself. I had always had bad eyesight

and different depth perception in each eye. That meant it was hard for me to transfer what I could see or wanted to see to some external setting like paper or material. Whenever I tried to do something with my hands I fumbled and made mistakes. I was clumsy, I believed, and couldn't be good at any art form. So I disliked it all.

Today there is probably some medical or emotional name for my condition, but Mrs.W didn't know that and didn't care to know. Week after week, she just tried to share with me some option of an art project that I would attempt. Early attempts were ugly, literally and emotionally. I began to believe that I was the one student in all her teaching career who could not come to love art.

She, however, did not give up. At the end of another week she placed on my desk one of those old bottles that apothecaries had used to hold medications on their shelves. It was heavy and thick and had various shapes and forms —triangles, flowers, circles — around the outside. And she handed me a set of paints of varying colors and suggested that I fill in the different shapes with whatever color I chose. I was as tired as she was trying to find a project for me, and putting colors on shapes already present seemed like something even I could do. I chose my favorite colors and began to brighten up that old bottle with an array of forms that fit in the shapes and seemed to be balanced and, might even I say? pretty. It took a while, but even I finished my art project.

Thus one Friday afternoon, I was ready to present what I had done to this unusual teacher. With some pride I picked up my bottle and carried it forward to her desk. Along the way, however, my eyes again betrayed me, and I bumped into

another one of the student desks. I staggered and stumbled and dropped my bottle. It shattered into what I saw was a million/billion pieces. I just stood there and looked at what was another art project that failed and all the old rejection began to rise up within me. Then I looked up at my teacher. She was standing there with the same stunned silence I had. But in her eyes I did not see anger or frustration or one more expression of disappointment in me. Instead, I saw sorrow, sadness, even pain, for me. She was feeling even worse for me than I was.

She helped me clean up the broken pieces of glass and place them in the trash can. Then, saying nothing, she patted me on the shoulder and sent me back to my desk. I sat there feeling nothing about what had happened but awe at what I had seen in that unusual teacher's eyes. I am still "clumsy." I still don't like art or try any of its forms. But I have come to appreciate an unusual person whose own personal passion could move her to share deeply in the feelings of another. It is my hope that I have done and can do that for others.

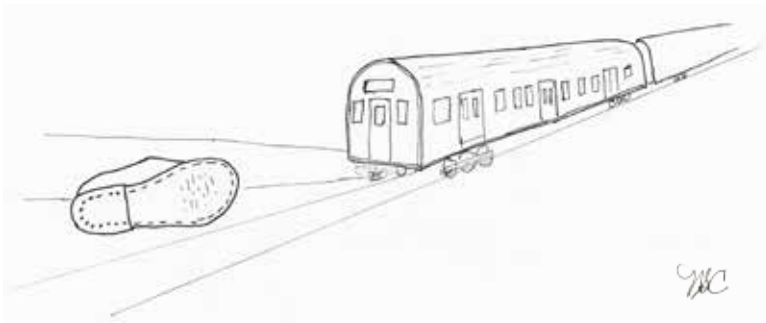
*Edwin Hann*

## TRAVEL ON THE SUBWAY NYC 1961

I was 22 years old and was taking my seventh grade science class to the Planetarium at the Museum of Natural History in New York City. My pupils were mostly Chinese-Americans, some recently arrived from Macao. Our school was located near Chinatown in Manhattan. I was the only adult on this “field trip.” Some of the pupils had never been north of 14th Street and this was an opportunity to also visit Central Park after lunch at the Museum.

We got on the northbound train at the East Broadway station. Our goal was to reach the 59th Street station (where we would disembark and cross the platform to wait for the local train that would take us to 79th Street). The Museum was on Central Park and would be on the street above us as we left the subway. The pupils were cheerful as we rode. When we reached 59th Street, I was concerned that I might lose someone. We left the train and I counted heads to make sure we were all together on the platform waiting for the short ride on the local train to the Museum.

A bunch of pupils surrounded me and told me that Mimi, one class member, had lost a shoe in the gap as she left the train. She had hurried in fear of being left on



the train. So, there we were! What to do now? Mimi was hopping on one foot and was supported by two larger girls. I asked everyone in the class whether they had a plastic bag they could spare so that Mimi could cover her shoeless foot. That accomplished, we crossed the platform and got on the local train. Mimi was doing her best with a plastic bag and help from her classmates.

Fortunately, we were successful in leaving the train at 79th Street without another mishap. The class walked up the stairs to the outdoors and we stepped out on the sidewalk. The entrance to the Museum which would lead to the Planetarium was 100 yards away. Central Park was across the street. The group entered the Planetarium and took their seats. There were other classes present and all waited for the sky show to begin. Mimi was holding up well, for which I was very thankful.

I had to take some action and I had an idea. I asked Mimi for her remaining shoe and I left the class (not something a teacher should ever do, and I loved my job). I raced down the stairs and out of the Museum. I had about 15 minutes, maybe 20, to succeed. I had to get back before the lights went on and the class realized that I was not there. I ran to Amsterdam Avenue, one block away, remembering a shoe store on that street. It turned out to be a children's shoe store. Hurray!

I ran into the store and told the man that I wanted a pair of shoes just like Mimi's shoe that I was carrying. I also told him that I was in a major hurry. (I skipped the part about leaving my class.) Fortunately, it was morning and the store was not busy. I bought a near-duplicate pair to match

the shoe I was carrying and started running back to the Museum.

I ran up the stairs to the Planetarium and was scared as I saw the lights were already on and the other classes were talking and moving about. I found my class which was seated where I had left them. I heard from one of the other teachers in the auditorium that she thought I had gone to the restroom and told my class to just sit and wait.

I presented the shoe box to Mimi and asked her to put the shoes on. They fit. She was happy. I was saved disgrace and possible unemployment. There were no adventures on the return trip to school after we had lunch and I let the whole class run around in the park.

*Alvin Migdal*



## MOTHER NATURE'S PAINT BOX

**F**rom the allcolor Black, Red escaped and moved swiftly away. Seeing this, Yellow thought, "If he can do that, so can I," and she turned up the heat and launched herself out of the dense prison. Blue, taking advantage of the hole Yellow had created before Black could close it, sped out and joined Red and Yellow a good distance away. Yellow was so proud of herself that she enlarged the sphere of her light and warmth. Blue expanded her realm to cover Red and Yellow and act as a shield against Black, who wanted his colors back.

Red was happy to have friends nearby, and he reached out and touched Yellow gently. To the surprise of them both, a new color showed up where Red had dabbed a little of his color on Yellow. They decided to call it Orange. Curious now, Red daubed a little of his color on Blue, and they called this new color Purple. Then Blue daubed a little color on Yellow, and they called that new color Green.

Seeing the possibilities, all the colors began daubing each other, creating new colors—Magenta, Lime, Puce, a whole spectrum of new colors. Then they discovered that they could control hues of color, and so they created shades and tints, both opaque and translucent. Soon there was a myriad of colors.

Proud of themselves, they decided to create a monument to their accomplishment. They decided that Red would be the first color because he had broken out of the Black prison. Then they voted on the next colors and limited the total to seven. Orange won the next most votes and was



placed between Red and Yellow, the latter having won the next most votes. Next came Green, between its parents, Yellow and Blue. Blue was fifth, followed by Indigo and Violet. But now that they had created this monument, they didn't know what form it should take or where to display it.

Mother Nature had been watching all this activity and decided that what all those colors needed was a job. Reaching into the middle of the monument, she plucked a bit of Green and created trees and plants, using that color and all its many shades. Next, she created flowers for all the others to color, and she attached them to the trees and plants. Then she saw other places where colors could be used, and she created sunrises, sunsets, and clouds. The dark colors promptly daubed bits of white clouds on themselves to lighten up and create other shades.

Then Mother Nature installed the monument between the Blue sky and the Green grass and shaped it into an arc. It can be seen at anytime from anywhere when conditions are right.

And so, thanks to the courage and innovations of Red, Yellow, and Blue, Mother Nature's world is continuously painted and repainted in the colors in her paint box.

*Pat Williams*

## LIFE CAN BE A CIRCLE

I was an artistic child, brought up going happily to the art museums in midtown Manhattan. With no brothers or sisters, I had a lot of alone-time for coloring (at first) and later drawing and painting. I remember always having a fairly new 48-count box of Crayola crayons. My mother seemed pleased with my nascent talent and I did well with oil painting at a local art school run by a classmate's parents. After I grew a little older, my mother helped me to enroll at the Art Students League of New York, a famous art school with mostly adult students, founded in the nineteenth century. My teachers were professional artists; some were probably well known. I attended on Saturdays, assembling a portfolio of my creations during my junior high school years. I loved being part of this wonderful environment!

I was accepted at the High School of Music and Art, a magnet school, based on my portfolio, and I begged my mother to let me attend. She and I compromised on my attending the Bronx High School of Science, another special public school. It is worth noting that I took all the drafting and mechanical drawing courses that the school offered—taking some more than once.

For college, I was accepted by several schools of architecture (which was my career goal then). I picked Cornell University, where I lasted one year because the professors were misogynistic. We started with three women in my class and ended the first year with none. It was not because we lacked talent. I transferred to the Arts and Sciences school at Cornell and fortunately found

social psychology, a field that I could also love and where I was appreciated by the professors. I became a research psychologist in the criminal justice system and later trained to practice clinical psychology with both adults and children. My graduate degrees multiplied and I was successively affiliated with three hospitals. Finally, I retired at age 70 thoroughly burned out from carrying my patients' pain and need for help, though I was previously satisfied with the work and with improvements I could help people make.

I have now been retired ten years and increasingly involved with art again. First, with the help of my artist friends at Medford Leas, I began to learn and practice watercolor painting, which was new to me. We worked in a wonderful, dedicated art studio on the lower level of the main building, and we held shows of residents' art twice each year in the corridors around our downstairs studio. In a 2016 show, I was chosen the "featured artist" by my peers.

I took a number of watercolor classes at the Medford Arts Center and the Perkins Center for the Arts in Moorestown for several years, continuing with watercolor painting. It was challenging, but very enjoyable to be creating things again. My son and daughter-in-law's big home holds most of the products from my years of watercolor painting. Also, a visiting artist helped us experiment with wax-based pencils for artists, which I liked very much. I also won two prizes for small collages made at home during Covid confinement, in an exhibition run by the National Collage Society. Twice each year I coordinate the illustrations for *Leas Lit*, a twice-yearly literary journal. Also, in keeping with my revived art interests, I am the "official" columnist

about art shows going on at the Leas. I take photos of the artists' pictures and write commentary for the two monthly newspapers here.

Meanwhile, I have started painting with acrylic paints, a different medium that I use these days. A grandson is starting to fill up his young businessman's apartment with this new artwork because the rest of the family called a halt to housing more of my paintings. This thick-bodied artists' paint has beautiful colors and is satisfying to use. It is much like oil paint, but less messy and smelly. I'm very happy using this mode of expression and even sold a couple of paintings to fellow Medford Leas residents. I exhibited in the Burlington County Senior Artists Show this year too. Now a professional art teacher coaches us on a weekly basis in our temporary art studio during building construction.

In the ten years I have lived at the Leas, the residents who paint and make art had their first opportunity to have work shown on the upper level of the main building in autumn of 2024. We were excited and proud of the talent shown. So, life can actually come back around and let you return to something very like your first love. I'm no Grandma Moses, but I think I hold my own and it is very fulfilling.

*Joyce Linda Sichel*

## LITTLE OLD LADY

Once upon a time, in a quaint little town, there lived an elderly woman and her loyal companion, a little white dog. They were inseparable, the best of friends, and shared a deep understanding that seemed almost magical. The old woman believed her furry friend could comprehend every word she spoke, and perhaps the little dog truly did.

As the days passed, the little white dog started to show signs of aging. Her once boundless energy began to wane, and the woman knew that their time together was limited. She felt the weight of each passing day, knowing that the inevitable farewell was drawing nearer. When the end came, the old woman was sure she would never have another dog.

But as winter and loneliness held her in its grip, the woman's heart yearned for the arrival of spring and the promise of new life. She knew she had love to share and wanted to give another deserving dog a home. With hopeful enthusiasm, she started filling out shelter applications, outlining her specific requirements for a new companion. However, to her dismay, she received no responses. It turned out that some shelters considered her age as a barrier, crushing her dreams of giving love and care to another furry friend.

Angry and determined to prove that age was not a limitation for love, she decided to take matters into her own hands. She compiled a list of local shelters and made visits, determined to find her new companion. Despite the hustle and bustle of the shelters, luck was on her side. While waiting to speak with the shelter manager, she joined his

daughter who was playing with a little dog. Although he was not the little white companion she had envisioned, she couldn't help but feel a connection with him.

It was almost closing time when the manager approached the old woman and listened to her touching story. Although they didn't have any little white female dogs available, the manager explained that the dog she had been playing with was scheduled to be adopted that day, but the prospective owners never showed up. The manager asked if she would be willing to give this bigger, male dog a loving home. Without hesitation, the woman agreed, and thus began the tale of her and the shedding dog.

Adjusting to life with the bigger, male dog wasn't always easy. His shedding posed a new challenge, leaving trails of long fur all around the house. But as time passed, their bond grew deeper. She named him Max, and he proved to be a loyal and loving companion. Max filled her life with joy, and she, in turn, provided him with a warm and caring home. Their journey together wasn't always smooth, and they faced their fair share of challenges.

But through patience, understanding, and unconditional love, they overcame each obstacle, growing stronger as a pair.



As the years rolled by, their story became one of inspiration and happiness. The old woman and the young dog proved that age should never be a hindrance to love and companionship. They shared a beautiful and enduring connection, reminding everyone who knew them that sometimes the most unexpected friendships lead to the happiest endings. And so, the tale of the old woman and the young dog continues, a testament to the magic of love and the incredible bond between humans and their canine companions.

*Marge Rodney*

## THE DEATH OF TIMOTHY

In Warren County, where I grew up, the first day of deer season was a “holy day of obligation.” Every male over 16 was in the woods with a gun hunting. Schools closed, and a lot of the local businesses shut down as well. The county intended to keep the deer population under control. It mostly worked. Additional activities to do this included bow hunting, black powder hunting, and doe season. Timothy’s death was during doe season.

When the number of deer tags (indicators of deer kills) turned in to the licensing bureau indicated that the three annual seasons had not reduced the deer herd enough, a doe season was scheduled. Because they were infrequent occurrences, they were special. During doe season, many people who did not normally hunt got a license and went hunting. Because of their inexperience and/or stupidity, it was a tough time to be on four feet, brown, and in the woods. When it occurred, a local dairy farmer who had a herd of Jersey cows routinely would go out and paint COW on the side of his entire herd. (Jersey cows have four legs and are brown.)

As a fawn, Timothy had been lying quietly in high hay, hiding as his mother taught him to do. Unfortunately, a local farmer chose that day for haying in that field. The farmer discovered Timothy with one leg cut off behind the mower. He used his belt as a tourniquet and brought the fawn to my aunt. She was locally known as the person who helped wounded birds, rabbits, and other animals in distress. They took him to the local vet, who cleaned up the break and



sewed up his leg. My aunt took him home and nursed him through his recovery.

As he was getting better, Timothy became a family pet. This was and is illegal, but in this time and place, the powers that be would consider the circumstances and wink if it was appropriate. My grandfather fenced the wood lot above the chicken coop with an eight-foot high “deer proof fence.” He then went around the outside of the fence and “posted” his land. He alternated No Trespassing and No Hunting signs, one for every fence post. As the area enclosed was about four acres, this was a considerable expense and a lot of work.

Six years later, the hunting licensing bureau announced a doe season. Great activity ensued in the licensing bureau. The cows were painted; large brown dogs were brought indoors. People took to wearing jackets other than brown around the woods. Many shots were heard from the excited hunters participating in this special event.

It was a clear, crisp morning in November toward the end of doe season. Timothy was up on the side of the hill in his fenced pasture. A stranger from “down around the city” was not having any luck getting his deer tag filled. He was in despair. While wandering around the fringes of some farmland a ways from the road, he spotted a brown animal in the woods. The fact that to get to him he would have to climb a high fence that was posted didn’t matter to him. He had spotted his deer. He went over the fence and crept toward the deer. It only took one shot, and Timothy was dead. Now he had to “field dress” the animal. At this point he noticed a house and garage down the hill from where he was. He carried Timothy down the hill to the garage and

hung him up to bleed out. Then he removed the intestines and the rest of the organs.

My aunt, working in the kitchen preparing lunch, happened to look out the window. She saw Timothy hung up outside the garage with a stranger working on cutting him open. She started to cry. Then she got angry. She called the local game warden and sobbed out her story to him. As an old friend, he was sympathetic and told her he would come right over.

At this point, my aunt decided to take direct action. She went upstairs, got out her father's 12-gauge pump shot gun, and loaded it with bird shot. She calculated that if she hit the stranger with birdshot, she wouldn't kill him, but it would serve him right in any case. She came downstairs, went out the back door, and shouted as loudly as she could, "Stop what you are doing!" The stranger turned toward her, realized that she had the drop on him, and started to run. She fired one round over his head and one at his feet. She said very quietly, "The next round goes into your middle." At which time he lost control of his bowels. UGH! She then told him, "Assume the position on the garage side." He waddled over to the garage and did as he was told.

They waited for about thirty minutes for the game warden to arrive. This worthy informed the prisoner that he had committed multiple crimes. 1. He had gone hunting in posted land. 2 He had trespassed on posted land. 3. He had killed a deer within 75 feet of an occupied dwelling. 4. He had shot a buck, not a doe, during doe season. 5. Further, he had caused great distress to a friend of his (the most severe charge).

The game warden loaded the stranger into his car and deposited him in the county jail to await arrival of a judge the following Monday, this being Thursday. Then the warden came back, returned to the farm, picked up the remains of Timothy, and delivered them to the local game butcher. He turned Timothy into steaks and roast which were donated to the local orphanage.

My aunt had to appear at court the next Monday. She told her story, and the judge threw the book at the stranger. He lost his gun, he lost his car, he lost his hunting license, and he was ordered to serve 80 hours of community service in Warren County. My aunt paid a \$20.00 fine for keeping a wild animal in captivity. She was satisfied, but not happy, about the result.

The Moral: When you go hunting, you should use common sense. To paraphrase the old song, “Don’t go into the woods today, or you will get a big surprise.” Nope, it wasn’t a picnic, was it?

*Tom Roberts*

## REGENSBERGS

An important part of part of my childhood landscape was Regensbergs' grocery store. Mr. Regensberg, an immigrant from Germany, owned it. I still remember his musical voice, "Regensbergs'" when he answered the phone. We made almost daily trips there as I was growing up.

Mr. Regensberg and my mother were pals. She must have practiced her German on him, to the mutual satisfaction of both. As the families got to know each other better, the Regensbergs would take my mother and father off on explorations of the Pine Barrens in their car. My parents had the local knowledge, but no car. It was a fine treat for everyone.

The store was so welcoming. It was long, narrow, and high-ceilinged. Shelves went up the two long walls, and a counter stood in front of the wall to the left. Goods covered each wall from floor to ceiling. Mr. Regensberg would grab boxes from the top shelves using a long pole with pincers. In my child's eye, those shelves went up for twenty feet.

Not many people went to Regensbergs'. Even my mother would buy in bulk from the A & P, which was further down Kings Highway. I remember her complaining about the astronomical prices there, forty dollars to feed a family of six for a week! The small amounts she spent daily at Regensbergs' she seemed not to notice.

I remember one conversation which came early on in my female education. My mother and several neighbors were discussing another customer in hushed voices. One said, "Do you see that lady talking to Mr. Regensberg? She's pregnant."

“How do you know?” I asked.

“Look, she’s just barely holding her skirt together with a safety pin.” For me, this was heady stuff, real women’s gossip.

Next to Regensbergs’ was the Esso gas station owned by Mr. Clement, father of my friend Betty. Somehow that whole little area was a place where we teenagers felt very safe, perhaps because we knew the people in it so well. We would cut behind the gas station when going around the corner. Still, in my dreams, I remember that shortcut that only we felt privileged to take.

Where are they now? The Esso gas station became briefly an Exxon station, and now it is Fanny Mae Candies. Do those people buying their fine chocolates know they are standing where once stood handsome young men, their hands all covered with grease? And dear Mr. Regensberg’s store? He has passed away, and so, too, has his store. It has been flattened by the nameless road which leads into the Haddonfield PATCO station.



I walked down Kings Highway with one of my friends the other day. I kept exclaiming, “That was the Finney Woodsmen’s Shop. That was the Five and Ten. That other store, that’s where all by myself I first bought a dress.” These are now all gone, replaced by “boutiques” for the very rich.

But repetition does bring back some of the early friendliness I once knew. A few times a month, I go to the “Bistro.” Get that for a posh name. They now know me and once even gave me a table at the window. I know bits and pieces of their lives and feel a pleasant sense of warmth. But do they know their fancy “Bistro” was once a Sunray Drugs, where I had my first Cherry Coke? We move on. Cherry Coke is mass produced now and comes in cans. So much has changed, but I’m not sure if it’s for the better.

*Deedy Roberts*

## A TRAIL AND A TAIL

**A**s a Pioneer in the early days of Lumberton Leas, I worked on the trails through our woods. Lumberton is bordered by the southwest branch of Rancocas Creek, which flows from Medford Lakes along the area beyond the clubhouse to the sharp curve near what was then the garden area. We created a canoe launch site and built bridges over areas that regularly flooded. We marked and named the paths and kept them clear of debris from the Rancocas. And we enjoyed showing off our handiwork to visitors, especially grandchildren.

I have 23 grandchildren, and we had many adventures in the Leas in those early days. One wonderful memory of such a walk is the one on which some of them became true believers in the Easter Rabbit. One Easter Sunday, a bunch of them came to visit, and in anticipation of their arrival, I had gone along the trail below the pool and hidden a number of plastic Easter eggs filled with a treat, either candy or coins. A few had dollar bills and one a 'five' as the grand prize.

After we had finished Easter dinner, I told them that there was a bunny trail in the woods that we should check to see if the Easter Rabbit had left any Easter eggs along it. One eight-year-old gave me a questioning look, his expression saying, "Come on, Grandpa—a bunny trail." "Oh yes! I'll show you."

Needless to say, they did not need further encouragement. Off we went. Much excitement again as we dashed past the clubhouse, down the path, and made a left at the drawing of a bunny adorning the Kaydee Trail marker. "See?" I said to my skeptic as I pointed to the drawing.

Shouts of delight echoed through the trees as they began discovering the Easter eggs. The bunny trail was living up to expectations. After we gathered at the end of the trail and received a count of the findings from each searcher, we turned as a group to head down the Rancocas Trail and home. We had only taken a few steps, when there, bigger than life, an adult cottontail rabbit sat in the middle of our path. The rabbit turned and hopped a few feet ahead, flashing his bright white tail with each bounce.

The Easter egg hunters froze, then pointed ahead and shouted, virtually in unison, “THE EASTER BUNNY!” The rearguard raced forward not to miss anything while the leaders flew forward as fast as their little legs could take them. The rabbit scampered forward to keep his distance, amid loud cries of “We found the Easter Rabbit!”



Since rabbits are faster than children, he easily escaped. Could we have choreographed a more exciting end to an Easter egg hunt? We rested on our laurels and triumphantly led the grandchildren home, having convinced them there really is an Easter Bunny. They had seen him with their own eyes.

*John Sommi*



## WRITING FOR LEAS LIT

We encourage residents of both campuses to submit original, unpublished manuscripts for possible inclusion in *Leas Lit*, Medford Leas' literary journal, which is published in June and December each year. We distribute flyers inviting submissions, with details about how to do so. There are deadlines of March 31st and September 30th for the two issues. Manuscripts received after a deadline will be considered for the next issue.

The Editorial Committee (blind as to authorship) judges which of the submitted pieces will be accepted for publication. Each resident may submit one story and one poem for each issue. Neither book reviews nor scholarly papers will be accepted. All submissions must be in English and not exceed 1600 words.

All stories and poems that have appeared in issues of *Leas Lit* since 2005 are available in the "Literary Journal" section of [mlra.org](http://mlra.org) (public website) by author and titles. This is updated for each new issue. You can use it for research or to find examples of accepted writing.

If you have a story or a poem to tell—true or fictional—or feelings to share, let us hear from you. We will be reaching out in the coming months.

