

Now and Then



Magazine

November – December 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	–	New Residents
3	–	Name Dropping: Van Cliburn
6	–	Christmas OOPS!
7	–	The Plumber
9	–	<i>Living</i>
10	–	Vietnam Aftermath
14	–	When the Music Stopped
19	–	<i>Epiphany</i>
20	–	2017 Memoriam

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Volume IX

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NEW RESIDENTS

July 2017	Kenneth & Corinne Glazebrook	245AL
	Don & Kitty Schober	269AL
August 2017	Ellis & Barbara Baker	411VO
	Richard & Pat Doherty	357E
September 2017	Frances Dresher	267AL
	Bonnie McNally	421VP
	Phyllis Newton	345E
	Winnie Nyce	119W
	Susan Ritger	260AL
	Ted Sheridan	248E
October 2017	Jack Ahlin	347AL
	Sally Allen	367AL
	Avis Eldert	256AL
	Beatrice Gallup	362AL
	Dot Healy	342E
	Paul & Barbara Kearney	427VP
	Dick Young	331E

NAME DROPPING: VAN CLIBURN

By Sue Day

Each fall, the City of Worcester had a magnificent “Music Festival” that lasted for an entire week. I was a member of the Volunteer Women’s Committee and it was our responsibility to make sure all of our great musicians were housed comfortably, entertained royally, and in general had all their needs well met. One guest in particular, Van Cliburn, was my responsibility. The Committee and I thought it would be great fun to have a little reception at my home in Paxton, a small suburb of Worcester, following Mr. Cliburn’s performance. One thing led to another and the little reception was turning into a major event. Invitations were sent to Worcester’s finest and Mr. Cliburn was informed that a reception was planned in his honor after the concert. An invitation was sent to him, but nobody knew at that time, that he had a mother who was also his manager, and it was she who would be traveling with him. I received an answer to the invitation; ‘Yes, Mr. Cliburn is pleased to accept the kind invitation to attend the reception in his honor at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Day in the town of Paxton on such and such an evening following the concert etc.’

The day of the concert arrived, invitations to the reception had been answered and we expected ten couples plus Mr. Cliburn, who would drive to Paxton following the concert for what now had become a “Black Tie” affair. At the Auditorium before the concert, I thought I should meet Mr. Cliburn and just make sure he had directions and that he would be joining us following the concert.

Well, “Mr. Cliburn doesn’t always know how he will be feeling after a concert,” said the woman who was managing his evening and who hadn’t received an invitation. “Very often, and depending on how his recital goes, he just wants to relax in his hotel,” she said. I had ten

couples coming to our home for a major reception and the honored guest might not show up. Yikes!! I asked if I might talk to Mr. Cliburn and was rather icily informed that “Mr. Cliburn rests before a concert and can’t be disturbed.” Somehow I finally figured out that the very statuesque woman was Mrs. Cliburn, his mother. She was his manager and she was managing very well. The concert was beginning, I was still back stage with a woman who wouldn’t say yes or no about coming to the reception and “Mr. Cliburn was resting.” During intermission I found Mrs. Cliburn again and made sure she had directions to our house. I told her how much we were all looking forward to having both of them in our home and that Worcester’s mayor and his wife (who was on my committee and was biting her nails with me) would be joining us. I didn’t know if we would be having a guest of honor or not.

I went back to my seat, but didn’t enjoy the last part of the concert. Mr. Cliburn played beautifully, of course. We hurried back to the house to greet our expected guests and to wonder if we would be honored with Mr. Cliburn’s presence. It was a lovely reception. Everyone had attended the concert and all were very excited about possibly meeting Mr. Van Cliburn and his mother, but Mr. Cliburn and his mother had yet to arrive. Had they gotten lost? Had they gone back to their hotel to change out of their concert clothes? We knew that performers usually perspired a lot during a concert, or had they simply chosen to ignore my invitation? The party was in full swing when one of the guests said, “I think someone is knocking on your front door.” The front door that nobody goes to. The front door that had a light, but it wasn’t turned on because nobody ever went to our front door. Finally, one of the elegantly attired guests undid the latch and opened the door and, surprise surprise, our anticipated guest of honor and his mother were standing there in their concert-going clothes and in total darkness. What a reception!! Apologies were issued and accepted from both sides, our guest list was now complete and the party could continue,

but first he wanted something to eat. “He always eats after a concert,” and did I have a steak he might have? Fortunately I had planned to have a steak for the next day’s dinner, so I produced and cooked him a steak. Nothing else, just a large steak. Van Cliburn sat at my kitchen table and ate a large juicy steak. Whoever would have thought? He did say he thought a steak that was eaten at the kitchen table always tasted better than one eaten in a dining room or restaurant. I was thrilled!

Later, he graciously made the rounds meeting and talking with each of the guests. I was a bit embarrassed when he went to our out-of-tune piano and played the last few bars of the concerto he had played earlier in the evening. I had a few spies among the guests who made sure Mrs. Cliburn had enough to eat and drink and made a point of telling her how wonderful her son was, and how delighted we all were that she had accompanied him to the reception. It turned out to be a very nice party. We looked at the clock as the last guest left by the well-lit side door, and it was almost two thirty am.



[Gettyimages.com/photos/van-cliburn](https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/van-cliburn)

CHRISTMAS OOPS!

There were going to be eight of us for Christmas dinner, so I decided to have a “Charles Dickens Old English” theme. Instead of our usual roast beef, I would have a goose. I checked my cookbooks for instructions as de-fatting and basting were most important! So Christmas morning I was all prepared, and into the oven went the goose before company arrived. We were having our pre-dinner drinks and nibbles when we heard a loud explosion. We checked outside and didn’t see any sign of an accident or a blown manhole cover. Excusing myself, I returned to the kitchen to continue my every half hour of de-fatting and basting my cooking goose, when to my amazement, lying on the kitchen floor was my oven door! Apparently my half hour basting with 100% Old Granddad bourbon had caused the alcohol fumes to build up – hence our explosion. We got the oven door back on, but no more basting! P.S. the goose was delicious – only bones left, but from then on, only roast beef at Christmas.

Evelyn Morris

*One evening we went to hear a Chinese Opera in Beijing, China. As we were seated, it was announced, in our honor, that the orchestra would play a quaint American folksong. We stood and never cracked a smile as “Jingle Bells” was played.

Frank and Evelyn Morris

*Excerpt from “Around The World in 28 Years.” May – June 2016 Issue.

THE PLUMBER

By Sue Day

He was about to start High School. He had been asked, “What are your interests?” so many times he had started to answer with glib remarks. “A convict, a pilot, a surgeon, a garbage man,” how should he know? He was 16 and his life revolved around cars, girls and beer, when he could find a friend to buy it for him, and pot and more girls. As far as an education was involved, he had to have a little guidance in deciding whether he wanted a traditional or a technical high school. He didn’t think he was smart enough for a traditional high school so it looked like he would try a technical school and, besides, there was one in his town. He could drive to school when he got his license, or he could take the bus, but he was not going to walk in spite of being only three blocks away. So he took the bus and entered the local technical high school in the fall. At his first meeting with his guidance counselor he was asked about his interests. Well, nothing came to mind so the shoulders went up as he answered with “daa.” Not a very good start.

Eventually he got his driver’s license, after two tries. Now the object was getting his own car. One of his friends was taking the auto mechanics class at school and volunteered to help him find a car that worked. The question of cash sent him to the local Stop and Shop for an after school job during the week and fulltime on weekends. He could then buy an old car and make it work if he took the auto mechanics class. In the fall he enrolled in the class, and bought a real “clunker” in the spring. During the summer he met a bunch of guys who also worked at the Stop and Shop, and they too liked to hang out and talk about cars, girls and beer. One of these new friends lived in a real nice house and his dad drove a new model Toyota. His dad made a real good living being a plumber. In the fall, our protagonist changed his major

from auto mechanics to plumbing and two years later graduated with a plumber's license and a job with his friend's father. He bought a new car that he had to pay for every month for many years to come.

Life as a plumber was good: he lived with his parents, could afford to buy whatever he wanted, opened a savings account at the local bank and had a great girlfriend who liked beer and fast cars. But something was missing. In the fall he enrolled at the Cape Cod Community College where his advisor asked him about his interests. This time he answered that he wanted to take a variety of classes for the next two years and perhaps he would find out. During those two years, he cut back on his time as a plumber and realized that he really wanted a better life, which required additional education, so he enrolled as a freshman at the University of Massachusetts.

He had worked as a full time plumber for three years and two years at the Community College, so when the fall semester started at the University he was five years older than the average freshman and perhaps a little wiser. During his accelerated program he worked on weekends with the best plumber he could find, got married and started a family. But something was still missing. In the fall he enrolled in Medical School. I don't know which one, but he went on to specialize as a surgeon which took another three or four years before he did his residency and became a Fellow in his field. I met him when he was about twenty years out of high school and finally beginning to earn a steady living. He paid off his car loan, had one more baby, knew a lot about automobiles and plumbing and had a huge college loan.

Next week I have an appointment with him for my third once-every-three-years colonoscopy. I don't relish the planned procedure, but I am looking forward to a short visit with him. I understand he had another baby, was driving a BMW, and he is still plumbing!

LIVING

*We are all different when it comes to how we live,
whether we are here to take or we are here to give.*

*We can run thru life and have fun with no net
or we can live in the shadows, undecided as yet.*

*We can be running when the sand runs out
or we can watch from the sidelines with only a shout.*

*We can make our mark as we pass thru
or we can idly sit by and only say adieu.*

*Some of us take the time to dance,
while others are afraid to take a chance.*

*To sum it up, we can live life for all it's worth
or we can sit back and wonder, why we are on this earth.*

*For those we knew, our memories will turn to gold
In our hearts and our minds of all those we hold.*

*As they came into our lives to stay for a while,
we think of them and ponder and smile.*

*So, when our time on this planet is through
and there is nothing left for us to do,
we will pass into that great unending place
and wonder what's left behind in our space.*

Jim Loan

VIETNAM AFTERMATH

By Jean Martin

In 1975, the war between North and South Vietnam, which had begun thirty years earlier, was concluded by a North Vietnam takeover. The southern city of Saigon, which had served as headquarters for the South Vietnamese, was seized by force, and a mass evacuation of American forces and civilians was undertaken. Helicopters from U. S. ships hovered over rooftops and government buildings, plucking people one by one to safety. Once back on the ships, they were examined and identified, then brought to the U. S. mainland.

At the time, I was an officer in the U.S. Public Health Service and in charge of rehabilitation. I, like everyone else, had seen the drama on T.V. of the rescues, but had no idea I would be so deeply involved in the assimilation of the refugees into our American culture.

The call came about five days after the loss of Saigon, that our hospital would be a major treatment center. I was put in charge of helping the refugees adapt to our way of life. I also evaluated their skills to hold a job and maintain a household. I had located an English/Vietnamese dictionary in our local library, and used it to put signs on everything – walls, floors, beds, etc. Even the hospital personnel wore bi-lingual labels. I was also able to put together a bi-lingual list of body parts, and put a list in each patient's chart to help with communication. There was a small population of Vietnamese living in Baltimore, and some were willing to help translate for both refugees and staff.

The helicopters landed across the park at Johns Hopkins University, and the refugees would walk, or be carried across to us. This happened usually three or four times a week, and involved ten to fifteen refugees at a time.

The first groups were the wealthy people of Vietnam – Military leaders, doctors, bankers, and government employees. They usually came in family groups, and carried huge amounts of gold bullion and coins sewn into the hems and linings of their clothes. They were very well prepared for the events which had occurred, and had converted their properties and investments to gold or American dollars many months before. Somehow, they knew who I was and respectful bows, and sounds of welcome, “cho ko, Madame Jean” were common. Many spoke English, and once their medical problems were dealt with, they easily found local houses to buy and businesses to start. They required little assistance from me, although many were depressed and angry over their plight. Some stayed in the Maryland/Virginia area, while many others flew to the West Coast, because of the equitable climate, similar to Vietnam.

The helicopters that came later carried a vastly different type of refugee. Most were peasant workers without anything but the clothes they wore. Sick, hurt, separated from their families, without any financial resources, they presented an enormous challenge. Several relief agencies, such as the Red Cross and Catholic Charities were contacted, and they helped with donations of clothing and housing, and assisted in locating families. I compiled a master list of the refugees, which our government agencies used to unite families. In the Baltimore area, we were able to find subsidized housing for many. I also had to teach the most basic fundamentals of American plumbing and appliances to them.

One incident comes to mind. I had a group of five Vietnamese women, who were medically fit to leave the hospital. I took them to a local market to show them how to shop. Each was given a cart, and the store owner, who had been alerted to their visit, loaned some of his

staff to help out. Most of the canned goods had pictures on them so the contents were easily identified. Also, the fresh produce required no explanation. Using the grocery cart for purchases was not a concept they could understand. I still have a mental image of one of my ladies, pushing an empty cart with one hand, produce in the other, and a frozen turkey balanced on her head!

This experience was a profound one for me. These people were brave, cheerful, polite, and grateful for the smallest favor. They were very clever and industrious, and were, in spite of the language barriers, able to find low level jobs easily. South Vietnam was a crowded country, and the refugees often slept two or three to a bed, as was their custom, while in the hospital. There were several charge nurses who had trouble with that cultural trait!

However, they were satisfied with crowded living arrangements, and I often put several families together. Everything they had, had to be given to them, and the total expenses eventually became very great. However, as they assimilated into our culture, their strong work ethic made them self-sufficient. There were, of course, the ne'ers-do-wells, but a surprisingly small number. The Baltimore Vietnamese population tripled with the arrival of these refugees, and many remained in what is called "Little Saigon."

I considered it to be both a privilege and an honor to have been involved with the South Vietnam refugee program. I still, occasionally, hear from my refugee friends, with pictures of their growing families and new life. When I was working with them, they addressed me as "Madame Jean," and many of their letters are still addressed that way.

Article in Cape Cod Times, April 30, 2000

By David McPherson, Staff Writer

“They were torn apart”

■ Cotuit’s ‘Madame Jean’ was the first contact for thousands of Vietnamese at a Baltimore Hospital.

Cotuit – Jean Earp* remembers the helicopters. One after another they delivered thousands of Vietnamese refugees to the U.S. Public Health Service hospital in Baltimore where she worked. It was the refugees’ first stop in America for medical checkups.

The first helicopter arrived in a ball field across from Johns Hopkins University Hospital soon after the Fall of Saigon and they kept coming for several months. “They just kept coming and coming,” said Earp, 72, an occupational therapist who taught the refugees the tasks of daily living in America. Now retired, she lives in Cotuit.

“I would take women into grocery stores to show them how to shop.” She said. “They would push empty carts around the store with chickens on their heads.”

The first refugees were wealthy Vietnamese: doctors, businessmen, military officers. In men’s belts and the hems of women’s dresses they carried gold. “The wealthy had knowledge. The important people in South Vietnam knew this was going to happen so they came right away.”

But soon more destitute Vietnamese refugees started arriving and needed more help. “They were torn apart,” Earp said. “They had so many physical complaints. They were the ones I really worked with.”

The refugees took to calling Earp “Madame Jean” and soon she was known to those just arriving. “They would come off the helicopter from Saigon and ask for Madame Jean.”

For years afterward. Former refugees contacted Earp and thanked her for helping them get settled in America. She called it an amazing experience that made her proud. “People were surrounded with love and money and food.”



*Captain Jean Earp Martin, Retired

WHEN THE MUSIC STOPPED

By Jean Martin

I unlocked the door to my clinic, and left it ajar, knowing my afternoon patients were due soon. Another wonderful lunch from the cafeteria dietician was causing me to feel sleepy, and I knew I'd have to keep busy to stay awake. I walked through the brightly painted room to my office. Sitting at my desk, I looked out at my favorite view – the children's carousel at the inner harbor in Baltimore.

The Brown Medical Center was only one block from the water, and so I could see the Merry-go-round full of children on this Friday afternoon. I could hear the oomph-pa-pa music of its tinny organ, and watch the flash of sea gulls against the cloudy sky. It was also the weekend before Thanksgiving, so the number of tourists had increased. This had been an extra hard week for me with many challenges in patient care vs. budget restraints, and I was looking forward to joining the waterfront strollers after work.

A thud at the clinic door brought me back to the present. Jack Price had arrived. He shoved his way past the half-opened door, his wheelchair wobbling from a loose wheel. "Can you fix it?" he asked after maneuvering his way through the clinic into my office. "I'm afraid that it's going to come off." The wheel indeed looked very unsafe, so I reached for my tool kit and went to work.

Jack was a young quadriplegic, due to a diving accident, and I had discharged him from my care several months ago. I had made him adapted equipment for self-care. He could feed himself, pick up his chair and use a reacher, but that was about all.

He was back again as a patient, this time for treatment of pressure

sores on his back. He spent most of his free time in my clinic, watching the other patients, and helping when he could. He couldn't afford an electric wheelchair, so I was regularly putting his old manual chair back together.

I fixed his chair and he helped me open the clinic by turning on the overhead lights and opening cabinet doors. Brown was a long term care facility and my occupational therapy room was kept busy with recovering stroke, accident or chronic medical patients. Some patients were treated on a one-to-one basis with exercise or range-of-motion, while others met for group activities.

My first patient of the afternoon arrived just before 1pm. He was a Parkinson disease patient who worked on coordination improvement on the floor loom. It was apparent when he appeared that his hearing aid was not functioning, so I smiled and nodded at him in welcome. He was in the middle of making a rug, knew what to do, and set to work. Jack turned the radio on with his reacher and the Beatles filled the room. All at once, the music stopped and a male voice announced "News Bulletin from Dallas, Texas: President John F. Kennedy has been shot. I repeat the President has been shot. Stay tuned for further details." I stood without moving, a pile of newspapers in my hands which I was about to cover the tables with for the ceramics class. Jack's eyes met mine. Neither of us could speak. The only sound in the room, beside some awful organ music on the radio, was the beat of the loom bar. The colors in the room seemed to become unbearably bright, and I hooded my eyes with my hands, newspapers falling to the floor. When I looked over to Jack again, he was crying silently. The other patient had seen him, and had gone to stay next to his chair.

I went to them both, finally, realizing that I would somehow have to find the strength to be their comforter. The deaf patient needed to

learn what had happened and Jack needed me to be strong for him, when Walter Cronkite's deep sad voice came on the radio to tell us that the President had been declared dead at Lakeland Hospital. It was almost anticlimactic – a stunned mind can only absorb so much. We also learned that Texas governor John Connolly had been seriously injured, but it seemed only incidental, and not important. The President was dead!

I took my patients back to their rooms and spent the rest of the afternoon consoling and sympathizing, all regular activities forgotten and dismissed. Many families had arrived, as people felt the need to be together. Everyone was talking in whispers or softly crying. The hospital chapel was full. Everywhere the sound and sight of that awful day followed me from the wall mounted televisions in the patients' rooms. The sight of Lyndon Johnson being sworn in as the next President, with the horror stricken Jackie Kennedy, in her blood spotted suit standing next to him, was repeated over and over, as I walked the corridors. It was real then. The President really had died.

Finally the evening shift arrived, and I found myself back in my office. The quiet was unearthly. Even the carousel across the street was silent, the crowds only a memory. I left for home, and the city was still and empty except for the tolling of the church bells.

My apartment looked oddly different to me when I got home. I felt like a stranger and out of place, but restless and moody. The television had shown Air Force One, bearing the President's body, as it landed in Washington, D.C. The image of that long grey plane, silently appearing out of the foggy gloom of night, was unnerving. The pilot must have cut the engines early as it came to a stop without a sound, sealed and still. There was utter silence, for even the television announcers could not describe the sight before them.

Then finally the plane doors opened and the cargo lift was raised. The dark casket appeared, followed by Bobby Kennedy hand in hand with Jackie, still in her blood stained clothes. The coffin jounced from the motion of the lift and Jackie raised her hand to it as if to comfort her husband, and then dropped it to her side as the lift steadied. The casket was borne away by the Military Color Guard to a waiting ambulance. The President was home.

I found that I could not bear to watch the television any longer, and sat by myself in the quiet of the dark room, stunned and exhausted. I also felt the beginnings of a furious anger that anyone could have killed this heroic man, who had only begun to demonstrate his value to the world, and my hands were balled into fists with my rage. What kind of world was this?

When the doorbell rang, I felt as though I had to come from a long distance to pay attention to it. As I neared it, I saw a small square white envelope appearing under it. I opened the door to see a man and a woman in the process of leaving. They were young and well dressed. He had on a dark well pressed suit and tie, while the woman had a hat and white gloves. "Hello, we thought that you weren't home. We are Miranda and Colin Andrews from the next building. We are here to extend to you our deepest sympathy on the loss of your President."

Their accents were British, and cultured, and my numbed brain hardly comprehended what they were doing on my doorstep. I stumbled over a welcome speech, invited them in, and belatedly turned on the lamps in the living room. "Please come in." They perched stiffly on my couch, backs ramrod straight, ankles crossed, gloved hands in laps. I offered tea, which was accepted, and busied myself in the kitchen hoping my guests would neither notice the tea bags I was using

or my old sweat suit and bare feet.

We talked a little, as the tea brewed and I learned he was a pre-med student at Johns Hopkins and she was a nurse. I asked Miranda about the white card which she had pushed under the door and she explained it was what she wanted to tell me about how they felt about the President's assassination, in case I was not home.

I've kept the card for many years, and still can remember her reading the words to me:



President John F. Kennedy
1917 -1963

[www.biography.com/people/
John-F-Kennedy-9362930](http://www.biography.com/people/John-F-Kennedy-9362930)

"We are so very heartbroken at the severe loss you and your country suffered today. We feel the loss with you as the entire world is diminished when a good man dies. President Kennedy represented so many things to us – grace, beauty, intelligence, caring and the courage to do the right thing. He was a man of gallantry and of action, who loved the noble art of politics. We want you to know that we share your loss with you as does our country and anywhere in the world where goodness dwells."

Colin nodded as Miranda spoke and his eyes glistened with emotion. For the first time that day I was able to cry, comforted by the kindness of two people who had cared enough to extend themselves to me in such a heartfelt way. After a warm handshake and embrace, my English neighbors left and I found that I was able to go to bed and sleep, warmed by their generous spirits. Maybe the world had some good in it after all.

EPIPHANY

*The May morning bathed us with gentle light
Dawn showers had left grasses greener
And sentinel stones whiter,
And overhead, clouds still hung
Until,
The preacher spoke.
Warming beams hesitantly touched the bowed heads,
And the bowed shoulders of the
Old man and the old woman –
The brother from forever ago
And the wife of sixty years.
Songbirds and church bell tolling
Behind the trees
Announced a glorious poem of a day.
Just clipped grass held diamonds
And droplets shone on waxed shoe leather.
Yea, though I walk through the Valley ...
Warblers' notes and voices together
Hallowed be thy Name
As hallowed as this morning hour, a time for rejoicing.
These precious moments of a May song to be laid down.
A soft time
A time to rejoin the earth.*

Jane Waters Nielsen

2017
MEMORIAM

Frank C. Morris	January 13, 2017
Jo Anne Laible	January 18, 2017
Lida Briggs	February 15, 2017
John Russell Haley	February 26, 2017
Gloria Jane Boyd	March 23, 2017
Priscilla Davis	April 13, 2017
Eleanor "Ellie" Gouger	April 16, 2017
Arlene Young	May 6, 2017
John "Jack" Sawtelle	May 30, 2017
Daniel "Dan" Healy	June 29, 2017
Richard "Dick" Woodcock	June 30, 2017
Nathalie Giorgio	August 1, 2017
Elizabeth "Betty" Draper	August 5, 2017
Simone Salle	August 8, 2017
Carroll A. "Pete" Gouger	August 21, 2017
Bernard J. Sissens	September 5, 2017
John E. Eldert	September 5, 2017
Clifton R. Ellis	September 15, 2017
John Gibson	September 17, 2017
Janice O'Keefe	October 19, 2017

