



PORT OF CALL

The newsletter that keeps Port's retirees connected and informed.

**PWTA RETIRED EDUCATORS CHAPTER
PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK
Fall 2020 Covid-19 Creativity Vol. 30 No. 2**

NYSUT NO. 19 080R Visit our website at: <http://pwretirees.org/>

Perfection - Jim Jones

When I was still teaching, the arrival of fall had just a hint of the depressing about it. Summer vacation was over, school was starting, and my time was less my own. The feeling never lasted very long, teaching always held fascinations for me, but the transition was always a bit of a downer. Once I retired however, that transition produced the opposite emotional surge, and for almost the same reason; the kids were still going back to school, but I was free. I made a promise to myself that, as the colors of the leaves began to change, I would take a week or so, travel north to Vermont, and immerse myself in the full force of the autumnal equinox. I hike or kayak every day, weather permitting, enjoy the physical exertion, and take advantage of the solitude that allows for a heightened awareness of the natural beauty that surrounds me. There is never a bad day to be found in this process, but, sometimes, there is perfection.

Gail Meadows Pond is one of my favorite places to kayak. On this Tuesday after the Columbus Day weekend, I had the place to myself. Temperatures were cool, but not cold enough to be of concern, and the air was so still that every tree on the shore cast perfect, unfolded reflections, doubling the effect of the fall colors, which were at peak. I snapped tens of photos before I even hopped into my kayak, then loaded up my meager gear, and very slowly began the paddle.

Almost immediately, time was no longer a concern. The azure sky was dotted by a few cottony cumulus clouds, and the visibility was limited only to the maximum magnification of my binoculars. I quickly morphed into my favorite persona when surrounded by nature: equal parts relaxed and attentive. I could not get lost, so I just enjoyed the wandering.

As I rounded a bend heading toward an abandoned beaver dam, there was first a sound, and then a shadow overhead. The shadow passed in the same direction I was paddling; I looked up, and saw its maker, a fully mature bald eagle.

(The bald eagle - *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* - has been making a very strong comeback across the U.S. Banning of the pesticide D.D.T. and strong federal protection offered by the Endangered Species Act supported a process of captive breeding and reintroduction by a large, and very dedicated group of wildlife workers. The return of our national symbol is one of the greatest victories of wildlife protection. Regulations do work!)

Bald eagles are not uncommon at this pond; the possibility of a sighting is one of the many attractions to this freshwater wetland. My passion for raptors kicked in immediately; I stopped paddling, and watched as the bird banked gently and casually flapped over to the opposite shore. I took out my binoculars, opened the lid on my waterproof camera case, and settled in to enjoy the moment. I never like to be what I call a 'terminal-birder': those types that think nothing of invading an animal's personal space just so they can get a better photo. I really do enjoy watching raptors be raptors, observing them as they go about naturally spending their time (Most of their time, by the way, is spent perching and intently watching everything).

The bird was perched on a solitary, long dead snag well within the view of my binoculars. Adult bald eagles do not develop their distinctive white head and tail until they reach sexual maturity at five years of age; after that point, they are 'all-field-mark.' Add in their enormous size, and you have a bird that is impossible to not notice. I was noticing and enjoying the fact that our national symbol seemed very calm. I wanted to get a little closer, relying on the bird to tell me (as I have learned from working with all of our resident raptors at Volunteers) when I was too close. I strapped my paddle to the side of the kayak, and using my hands for propulsion, moved closer. I did ten strokes at a time, and then waited: at each pause my binocularized view of the eagle slightly magnified. Another ten strokes, wait and watch; on it went. My concept of time changed to a perception of stillness or motion - and the eagle continued to allow my presence, even starting to preen rather casually. Just how long this continued, I did not know, and I did not think about it. I just kept getting closer. (continued on page 3)

We Asked to Hear From You!



Patti Reed: Not bored here in Colorado! I've got two granddaughters (6th and 9th grade) doing virtual school in my basement. I put a request on the neighborhood app Next Door for two desks and I had them within an hour! They are near my sewing area so that I can help/keep them focused when needed! No asking Alexa!



Vicki Field: This spring my watercolor titled "Comfort in Place" was in a Huntington Arts Council gallery show dedicated to essential workers!

Lenore Ilberg: Noel & I celebrated our 50th anniversary during the pandemic. My son organized a car parade with about 20 cars filled with family & friends. Then we did a Zoom champagne toast with more family & friends. I did get to see my grandchildren in person to enjoy a slice of a very delicious fattening cake!

FRIENDSHIP/REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE



Norma Ziegel

Get Well Wishes Were Sent to:

Joan Brinkhuis

Condolences Were Sent:

- To the family of Norma Delaney
- To the family of Helga Iannucci
- To the family of Eleanor Irish
- To the family of Jean Koran
- To the family of Janet Moro
- To the family of Mary Nixon

A \$100 contribution was sent to the PWRE Scholarship Fund in memory of:

- Norma Delaney
- Helga Iannucci
- Eleanor Irish
- Jean Koran
- Janet Moro
- Mary Nixon

Merry-Go-Round by Merry Gilbert
Will be back for the next issue

PORT OF CALL
Covid-19 Creativity 2020 Vol. 30 No. 2
 Published by the Retired Educators Chapter
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Perfection (cont'd)

I inched my way to within twenty feet of my pond companion, and started to take some pictures (I know, I know ...‘terminal-birder’) when I noticed that the sun shining so gloriously on this perfect day, was behind the eagle. I hesitated, my companion had been so gracious, should I risk his displeasure by seeking more? I would let him decide, and resumed my ‘ten-stroke-and-wait’ routine to the opposite side of the snag. The unbelievably patient raptor actually began to rouse, the very distinctive fluffing of body feathers that birds do as a sign of contentment. There was something of the magical happening here. The eagle was now matched against a seamless azure sky. I took numerous photos of this perfectly posed beauty. His regal presence did not flinch. I put down the camera, put the binoculars in their case, and just sat there, a single human being in the middle of Gail Meadows Pond, enjoying immensely the company of one very tolerant, stunningly majestic bald eagle.

I did not move again until the bird did. He extended those eight foot wings and casually exited toward the abandoned beaver dam. I did not pursue. That would have been unspeakably rude. The remainder of my kayak was accompanied by a relentless sense of privilege and contentment; I had been blessed by the spirits of nature.

I discovered that I had been out at the pond for almost five hours. I packed up my kayak and paddling gear, walked down to the waters edge, knelt down and spoke a prayer, once again thanking the spirits of nature for a gift that I will keep working to deserve. And, of course, a special thank you to my feathered companion, a remarkably tolerant and welcoming bald eagle. My photos were stunning, but even they paled in comparison to the experience. A perfect day.



MAKING STRIDES 2020 - Bonnie Utzig

By the time this article is published, the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer event at Jones Beach will have occurred on Sun., October 18th. Just like everything else in our lives in 2020, this year’s 5K walk had to be modified significantly to keep all participants safe and healthy. Imagine the difficulty of trying to keep 60,000 walkers socially distant! Governor Cuomo okayed exploring several options such as road rallies, scavenger hunts, tribute gardens, or some type of virtual walk. The organizers for our “walk” chose to change it to a “drive-thru” event, with participants reserving time slots for their cars (decorated in pink of course). Each car had to make a time slot reservation and display their pass on the car dashboard. All cars had to remain at 3-5 mph as they made their way through a 10-15 minute route in Jones Beach State Park.

One feature along the route was a memorial to the late Sheila Goldberg, a very active NYSUT retiree who chaired Making Strides for 20 years (just one of the many hats she wore over the years). Sheila passed away this past February. The American Cancer Society dedicated this whole event in her memory. A 30-foot long pink pinwheel garden and a photo of Sheila were made as part of the drive-thru route. Under Sheila’s guidance our region raised more than \$2,000,000 since 1999. Having met with Sheila myself on numerous occasions over the past 14 years regarding Making Strides, I can tell you that she would have been thrilled that our Port Washington Retired Educators raised \$4,020 this year, much more than was raised by the PWTA! Thank you, everyone and stay safe and healthy.

What’s Inside Port of Call Covid - 19 Creativity 2020

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My Freedom Ride of 1961 - CORE's Route 40 Project - Harriet Englander

In the early 1960s, as many African countries gained their independence from colonial rule, they sent African diplomats to the United States. These African dignitaries soon complained that when they drove from their embassies in Washington D.C. to the United Nations in New York City along the favored route, Route 40, they were turned away from restaurants and gas stations despite the diplomatic license plates on their cars.

The Kennedy administration was embarrassed by the situation and began pressuring restaurants and gas stations along Route 40 to serve African diplomats. Half the restaurants, approximately forty-seven along the route agreed. However, the Kennedy administration became more embarrassed when black Americans complained that it was unjust for restaurants to serve African diplomats, but not black American born citizens. In fact, black college students from nearby colleges dressed in African garb, pretended to be diplomats, and were served.

The Federal Government then began pressuring the Maryland legislature to desegregate Route 40 altogether. When the legislature resisted, CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, claimed a partial victory for the 47 restaurants, and intensified their campaign, recruiting volunteers for sit-ins along the route from Baltimore to Wilmington.

Northern student groups from many universities including, New York University, responded with volunteers. Bob Adelman, a friend of mine, was serving as the photographer for CORE. He invited me to join a freedom ride to a college town south of Cambridge, Maryland, and I accepted.

Our bus left from the NYU student center between four and five in the morning. It was like being on a ski trip to White Face Mountain in the Adirondacks. We talked, we tried to sleep and we sang. When the bus stopped five hours later at our destination, a black church, our bus driver, watching us get off the bus, was more scared for us than we were for ourselves. We weren't afraid because the brutal hosings and beatings hadn't begun, possibly because Bobby Kennedy was Attorney General. I believed he had scared the racists for that moment. And I didn't think we had gone very far south, where I thought the brutal confrontations would be.

The organizers of the sit-ins, college students, many from Howard University, welcomed us into a spacious recreation hall. "Hi," "Hello," "Welcome." "Thanks for coming." They were a little stiff. So were we. It was awkward but we were enthusiastic. We got our assignments and were introduced to our partners. Most of the group was going to restaurants that had not desegregated, and to those that had agreed to desegregate to make sure they really were.

I was introduced to my partner, Wayne and we got our instructions. We were going to a bowling alley to desegregate it.

Wayne did not look thrilled with the assignment nor with having me as his partner. We had strict instructions not to resist the law. Wherever we went, we had to walk away peacefully even if we failed at our goal. They didn't want a Northern white girl in jail. My partner was from Baltimore. He was still in college. I had graduated from college four years before.

When we left the church, and began walking, Wayne focused on his map. Most of the conversation was about directions, "We turn here".... "Wait for the light." It was a long walk on a cool fall day, and no one bothered us or bothered to look at us, I thought. Wayne was serious, good looking and dressed in business attire: a white shirt, tie, light jacket and slacks.

We walked on a wide boulevard, tree lined and quiet with houses set back from the road. We turned onto a side street after nearly an hour of walking and then I saw the sign for the bowling alley.

Wayne held the door for me, and we walked in as far as the entrance.

"You are not welcome here," said a burly man looking sharply at Wayne. The man was sitting on a high stool behind a counter. Past this dark corridor, I could see the bowling alleys.

"Why aren't I welcome?" asked my partner.

"Because *Neegrutz* can't come in here. There's a law against it."

I stood a little behind Wayne with my back on the door.

Wayne asked, "Would you please read that law to me."

I wasn't ready for Wayne's reply to this bully. I was honored to be standing almost next to him, only a little behind him. Now I began to see the seriousness of what we were doing. For one thing, we were confronting a bigot in a bowling alley.

"Okay," said the guy on the stool, "I'll call the state police."

He came back a few minutes later. "He's coming. He's gonna read you the law."

We stood at the door for about ten minutes. I was aware of a few glares, and some stares from the bowlers, but mostly they pretended we weren't there. The state trooper who walked in could've been in the movies. He was tall, blonde and skinny, working busily to pull out a piece of paper from his shirt pocket and unfold it. Then he read us the Jim Crow law.

As the trooper read Maryland's racist law, some bowlers stopped and watched and listened. I realized I had never understood that these segregationist laws required the separation of whites from "persons of color" in any and

My Freedom Ride (cont'd)

every situation. The law applied to schools, transportation, cemeteries and restaurants. Any business owner had the right to legally refuse service to people because of the color of their skin. I was in shock. I had never understood that the law encompassed every activity and all places. It was a vile piece of writing but as my stomach churned, I had to stop my mind from gasping at every grammatical error. It was a wretched stupid law and the least of it was that it was ungrammatically written.

When the trooper finished, he pushed the paper into his pocket and left without looking at us or at the man who had requested this presentation. We had to follow our instructions. We turned to the door and walked out after him.

“Well, what are we going to do now?” Wayne asked, a little down. It had begun to rain. I said I didn’t know. I felt so guilty. Because of me he hadn’t gone to jail.

“Okay. Let’s picket.” he said.

I was still reeling from my first introduction to the all-encompassing restrictions of the Jim Crow laws in Maryland. I was feeling a little wobbly, a little disgusted with myself for not understanding its scope before having had it read to me. I had no idea what Wayne meant about picketing since we had no placards, no signs.

“Okay,” I said.

We began walking in a circle in front of the bowling alley. Drivers stuck their heads out of their windows, to stare at us. Pedestrians gasped. The state trooper sat in his car. The rain came down on us. The pavement was covered in puddles. I put my scarf on my head and buttoned up my tweed coat. My partner had no coat and no hat. We walked in this circle silently for about twenty minutes until the trooper got out of his car and suggested we leave. So we left.

On our way to the center of town, we admitted to one another that we were starving. Neither of us had brought a snack nor had either of us eaten breakfast. We decided to try our luck at the lunch counters along the boulevard.

“Girlie, what can I do for you?” asked a man behind an open counter before he knew I was not alone. He reminded me of the guys who stood behind Nathan’s hot dog stand in Coney Island in Brooklyn.

“We would like to get a sandwich.” I said, shoulder to shoulder with Wayne.

“Oh, I can’t.” he said.

“You know you can’t,” said another.

“I’m sorry.” said a third. A fourth said the same before turning away.

Dispirited, we walked humbly into a grocery store and asked the cashier if we could buy some bread and baloney. She may have been the owner because she smiled softly and told us, “Go ahead.” We selected a package of baloney, half a loaf of white bread and some mayonnaise. We stood in the back of the store and broke open the packages, put the meat between two pieces of bread, and pushed the mayonnaise out of a tube. We ate our sandwiches standing in a back corner of the store.

Feeling less hungry, we walked along the thoroughfare, and as we got close to the church, we saw that the street was crowded with blacks and whites on opposite sides. People were shouting and throwing rocks and bottles at one another. I couldn’t help feeling that our busload of white interlopers had turned these quiet people into a raging mob. It was such a sharp contrast from the walk we had taken in the morning. No one ever told me why they were fighting and if my hunch was right.

We were not disturbed by the mob as we walked by quickly to the church, both of us totally drenched. My light brown hair dripped along my neck in clammy strings and my bangs were down over my eyes. As we walked into the church, everyone was singing, “We Shall Overcome.” Wayne and I shook hands, and smiled wholeheartedly, and said goodbye. I knew he was pleased he had made those racists read us those rules of hatred. He headed to meet his group and I headed for the hot dogs the ladies were handing out in the back of the hall. I had two hot dogs on buns and a cup of coffee, fortifying myself for the five-hour trip home.

Sitting in the bus, I thought about the young people who had been singing, “We Shall Overcome” who *weren’t* getting on a bus to New York. It wasn’t going to be a one-time event for them. These local freedom riders from Baltimore and the college towns nearby would be staying for a long fight.

I had learned a lot that day, and when I wrote about it, I thought it would be a period piece from the sixties where so much progress would follow. I didn’t realize it would be two steps forward and three steps back.

I never imagined that I would be rewriting this report fifty-nine years later in my 85th year because, despite some progress and some hope, the bloody conflict of the sixties had become a never-ending fight.

Optimistic, Looking Forward to Safe Travel? Trip Alerts by Snail Mail

No email? Want to go on future trips but lack access to notifications?

Please let Harriet Englander
10 Crescent Road
Port Washington

or Merry Gilbert put you on the list for mailed notices.
133 Reid Avenue
Port Washington,

The Hourglass - Maryann Livanos

It was expected to be a trip to remember. A belated 65th birthday gift from her son and his wife. Imagine, long awaited tickets to Hamilton on Broadway, and of course dinner in Manhattan. Her visit began as any other, relishing the all day play with her 17 month old granddaughter. Frolicking from magnetic fish to “happy the hippo sort and play” and ending with plain old running around and silly, giggling.

Saturday brought pancakes, sticky fingers and catching up with her son, Paul, while her daughter-in-law, Elisa attended an all girls party in Westchester, an hour and a half drive away. Her inner voice thought about saying something but she didn't want to pass judgement. However, Westchester had been on the news lately. There was a cluster of a new contagious coronavirus.

On Sunday, that inner voice wouldn't be quelled.

“Do you think it's safe for Elisa to be at the theater, being pregnant, with this virus going around?”

“It should be OK,” they replied.”

“Maybe she could wear a mask?”

“I guess we could bring one and see if everyone is wearing one.”

“I don't know, why don't you call the theater and see what they say,” she asked her son. They hovered nearby to hear the call.

“The theater said we could reschedule or get a refund.” A lot of people are cancelling. “What should we do?”

With punctured hearts they decided to get a refund. The tension that would press heavily down the length of their spines, began that day and remained longer than anyone would ever imagine. An unspoken sadness lingered in the air as they went about their daily activities.

“Well my mom can still babysit. Why don't to we go and have a nice dinner locally?”

“Sounds good, I'll call Dario's and set it up.”

On the day they would have gone to see Hamilton, she continued to unpack and was lucky enough to schedule a last minute massage while Elisa walked to work and Paul worked from home. The plan was that Elisa would get home around 5, pick up Daphne from daycare and then they would go to dinner.

At 4, o'clock, Elisa walked in. Her belly bulged under her black knit dress as she labored to take off her black leather boots. Her beautiful Mediterranean face looked pale and deflated.

She watched Elisa head upstairs to rest awhile before they had to leave to get Daphne. By 5 o'clock there was some concern, but her son was on a business call and couldn't be disturbed. Elisa hadn't come downstairs. Someone had to leave soon to get Daphne in time. By 5:20, she decided to grab the keys and go, hoping her name was on the authorized pickup list.

It was a joy to see her granddaughter's smiling face as she greeted her and showed her the way to the door. They proceeded to get into the back seat of the dark SUV.

“Uh that's my car.” a woman said.

“Oh I'm so sorry,” she turned and said. “They all look alike.”

Feeling like an imbecile, she spotted her son's car and opened the door and attempted to get Daphne all buckled up, not an easy task for someone unfamiliar with the latest safety paraphernalia. That prickly tension down her spine was causing her to think through a haze of worry. They sang the whole ride back. Thank god for GPS.

When they arrived home, Paul checked on Elisa and said that she was resting, but would come down when it was time to leave. Soon after, Elisa's parents were greeted by a smiling granddaughter with hugs and updates all around. But everyone's cheer grew to a screeching halt when Paul got a text from Elisa upstairs.

“Elisa has a fever”

New York was now the epicenter. The numbers were increasing daily. Feeling helpless, she decided to cut her trip short so that Paul could take over the guest room.

Dressed like a Russian spy, she disembarked from the plane from New York. The trench coat, thick gloves, wide sunglasses, and hunters cap with side flaps offered a false sense of protection. The flimsy scarf wrapped, around three times, had to be continually held up against her face. A woman two seats over had been wearing an N95 mask. Did she know something the rest of them didn't? Was she sick?

Back home she became a prisoner in her own guest room for 14 days. She had fallen down the rabbit hole. It happened so quickly that she couldn't get her bearings. It was the type of horrible thing that never happens to you, but this time it was happening to everyone. The days had no delineation. Her hyper vigilance directed her every action. The entirety of her world was now relative to the presence of the virus.

Keenly aware of a clean hand vs. a contaminated one, she ventured out to the garden and instantly noticed calmness brushing her face, finally allowing her breath to deepen and her muscles to let go of their weight. Up until now they had been in a constant state of contraction. An intrusive serenade by a magnificent mockingbird, strong and persistent, grabbed her attention. Part whistle and part soprano, his song beckoned her to a carefree place. She had never been so appreciative. (continued on page 5)

The Hourglass (cont'd)

Back inside the gripping fear reintroduced itself. She had heard people say that during a crisis time stood still but she felt the opposite. The motor of her existence revved up and never lowered to a purring respite. For 10 days her mind was assaulted with terrifying thoughts, kindled by the media and internet.

How high is the fever. Does she have a cough. Some reports said the virus doesn't permeate the placenta. Others just didn't know enough. Day five is usually when symptoms worsen. The decline can be swift. Premature birth is a possibility.

As she entered the master bedroom to retrieve fresh clothes, she was drawn to her mother's gilded, wooden icon, given to her when she and her husband had bought their dream home. It showed an endearing portrait of mother and child. She wanted to focus all her energy on her hopes for a happy birth. Feeling almost guilty that if she allowed her mind to wander, the outcome would be jeopardized, she found comfort in stopping by that icon three times a day.

She couldn't read. The world was so raw and ever changing. She had to stay vigilant and couldn't risk escaping into fiction. Oddly she started watching a lot of mysteries and detective shows, some even gruesome. A reminder that things weren't so bad. However she couldn't stand to watch any of her favorite medical dramas. They were too close to home now. The news constantly flashed masked people, the insides of emergency rooms and overworked healthcare workers alongside depleted doctors.

It had now been five days since she returned home. Elisa's fever came daily but didn't rise past 101 degrees. So far so good.

Day six brought a cough.

Her doctor wouldn't see her in person so they went to Urgent Care only to be told that they couldn't test for Covid because she didn't have enough symptoms. Three days later another doctor gave her antibiotics and said that if she didn't improve in 48 hours she would need a chest X-ray. Can they do those while you're pregnant?

On day 10 her fever broke.

A huge sigh of relief was felt by all, only to be replaced by the anxiety of the upcoming childbirth. At first New York was only allowing partners to stay for the delivery and then immediately leave. The maternity ward had been converted to a Covid ward. What an incompatible thought. After the birth the mother and child would be transported to a nearby facility and then sent home only two days after surgery. Hospitals were short staffed and struggling. As the number of virus cases declined, some maternity wards went back to being maternity wards. Policy seemed to change overnight. The end was in sight. She just wanted her family safely home.

The call came unexpectedly, in the middle of the night, three days before the C-section was scheduled, even though the day before the doctor had said that the baby wasn't ready. Of course she couldn't sleep but instead went to the porch and listened to the rhythm of her breathing as she looked out onto the expanse of greenery and multi-hued sky.

As daylight approached its apex, the news of baby Vivienne's birth made its way to the family.

It was now Mother's Day 2020 and her sweet name derived from a Latin word meaning "alive."

At that moment she felt as though she would never complain about anything ever again...The world seemed compressed and narrowed down to her beating heart and at the same time her pained and understanding heart could grasp and hug the entirety of humanity.

Hello from the SE corner of Northport



Su Ethier and Michael Koenig met a few years ago as neighbors in Northport. Their houses are a few hundred feet apart on 2 different streets. Their friendship became a new piece to the bizarre coincidence that began evolving 44 years ago. Since 1976 in their small SE corner of Northport Village 8 Sousa teachers and one Sousa student have lived or are currently living there. In their neighborhood are a Schreiber graduate and a current Schreiber teacher. In the rest of the village there are 2 current Port Washington teachers, 3 retired Sousa teachers and one retired Schreiber teacher. Michael taught at Sousa JHS from 1968-1985 when it became Sousa Elementary School. He moved to Schreiber and retired in 2000. Su Singer Ethier retired from Sousa Elementary School in 2019 and happens to be a Schreiber graduate, class of 1976.



Port Washington Retired Educators Chapter

Meetings will be held at the Port Washington Library on the dates and times listed, **unless otherwise notified.**

Please check your email or the website: <http://pwretirees.org/> for any meeting changes.

2020 Meeting Dates

Please check our website for future meeting dates.
pwretirees.org.

PLEASE NOTE: Checks for contributions to the PWRE Scholarship Fund should be made out to the PWRE. Put the name of the honoree on the memo line or in a note. Please mail to:

**Gerri Ganzekauer
51 Longview Road
Port Washington, New York 11050**

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