

Courier

November 2020

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY CIRCLE

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wow! I hoped last spring that by now we would be through the worst of the pandemic. Somehow it was too painful to even envision that we wouldn't be at a better place by this time. My best wishes to all our Circle family. Thanks to the board members who are reaching out to our members. These calls are reminding us of our connection to one another. They have revealed a resilience during this difficult time.

How have we coped? Well, like you, I grieved as activities and plans came to a sudden stop. I started cleaning all the corners of my house. Files that hadn't been looked at were sorted and updated. The news became an obsession and my escape was turning to detective mystery series where everyone was driving on the wrong side of the road. "City Homicide," based in Melbourne, despite its gruesome content, seemed a pleasant reprieve from the real world. Writing postcard after postcard to get out the vote was less numbing, I discovered, by listening to audiobooks. Tom Hanks' voice was calming as he read Ann Patchett's, *The Dutch House*. I could smile, while gardening, as I enjoyed



The Crazy Rich Asians. Walks became a joy during the day. I've maintained 125 days straight of French Duolingo. Too bad I haven't used the same will power to deal with the fruits of my excessive baking. My family was able to escape to Maine for a month in August where it was a joy to quarantine with family and feel like we were in another universe.

Look inside this issue for news about a modified version of Circle's annual Adopt-a-Family Holiday Project for Northwestern Settlement families, a report about long-time Circle members who knit for Settlement, and photos from Piecemakers' (inaugural?) outdoor quilt show. And without the chance to gather together at our traditional fall programs, we gather instead on the pages of this newsletter, sharing news from members about their lives during this unusual time.

The sunflower is from our yard. A lovely reminder of better days to come. All my best wishes to you and everyone you hold dearest.

Patricia Ulmer
pat.ulmer@gmail.com 847-682-5741



CIRCLE EXECUTIVE BOARD 2020-2021 MEETING VIA ZOOM

Top row, left to right: Diane Unger, Pat Ulmer, Jean Wilson

Middle row: Jane Dowding, Bert Mount, Margaret Schatz

Bottom row: Sally Sprowl, Elisabeth Malthouse, Linda LaBuda

Not on screen: Jean Corvine, Debbie Crimmins, Jane Dampts, Sylvia Taflove



MISSION

The mission of University Circle is to provide opportunities for Northwestern University women to participate in service, scholarship, and social activities that enhance the University community.

MEMBERSHIP

If you know of a woman who is interested in becoming part of University Circle, please bring her along to a special interest group or general membership program. You may also contact Margaret Schatz at 847-475-2365 and she will happily send membership information out by mail. You can find membership information on the University Circle web site:

www.northwestern.edu/university-circle

BOARD MEETINGS

University Circle Board meetings are held at noon on the third Thursday of most months, on the Evanston Campus. All members are welcome. Meetings typically last one hour and are always lively and fun. Please contact the president if you plan to attend and/or if you have an item for the agenda.

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| | |
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| SCHOLARSHIP | Debbie Crimmins |
| NORTHWESTERN SETTLEMENT | Jane Dowding Margaret Schatz Pat Ulmer |
| SOCIAL SERVICE | Glenda Mockros |
| INTERNATIONAL WOMEN | Joan Fragen |

For information about other interest groups, please contact the president.

HELPING SETTLEMENT FAMILIES: A CIRCLE TRADITION



— by Diane Unger

As in years past, Circle is happy to be participating in Northwestern Settlement's Adopt-a-Family holiday project. We will provide gifts in the form of gift cards to members of five families who receive services at

Settlement, in Chicago's West Town neighborhood. Each family member will receive a \$50 gift card and each family will receive a food gift card. We'll also provide books for each child and a small box of cookies or candy for the families.

Unlike in years past, Circle members will not be buying individual gifts for the families, instead making donations to fund the gift cards. To contribute, please send a check in any amount, payable to University Circle, to Bert Mount, 2323 McDaniel Avenue, Apt. 2125, Evanston, IL 60201. Please send your donation by December 1 to allow time for gift card purchases to be made.

Staff at Settlement are also collecting new, unwrapped toys for the toy room, especially for children in the 10- to 12-year-old age range: puzzles, LEGOs, L.O.L. dolls, arts and crafts, STEM kits, books, etc. If you have new toys to donate, please deliver them unwrapped to Margaret Schatz by December 1. Margaret's address is 2426 Central Park Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201.

This year, perhaps more than any in recent memory, Settlement families need our help. Following is information about the five families Circle has agreed to help this holiday season.

FAMILY 1: 22-year-old mother and her 4-year-old son

"Financially it has affected us. I live off unemployment benefits and it is not enough. I can't find a job, I am stressed out thinking about what is going to happen in the winter."

FAMILY 2: 29-year-old mother, 6-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter

"I lost my job and had to look for work, which was hard. I had to learn how to do e learning for myself and my son. I'm not able to visit family members as much as I would like to. Now I'm struggling with the youngest being home since the school had to close for two weeks because of COVID."

FAMILY 3: 36-year-old mother, 12-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son

Mom is single, was recently laid off and is worried for herself and her kids. She wants the holidays to be nice for her kids. She wants to protect them from the reality of the current situation.

FAMILY 4: 32-year-old mother and two sons, aged 12 and 3

"COVID had affected my work hours. Work hours have been reduced drastically to less than 20 hours a week. Extended family has been diagnosed with COVID."

FAMILY 5: 32-year-old mother, three daughters aged 15, 13 and 5, and one son aged 8

Mom said that she is struggling with trying to comfort her kids through these last couple months. She has a very optimistic outlook and relies on her faith in God to help them through this time. Her hours at work were cut in half at first and now she only works once a week. She feels that life is hard but she knows she will help her kids through anything. She is grateful for the opportunity to be considered for Adopt-a-Family so that she can bring some smiles to her kids.

For more information about Northwestern Settlement, visit tinyurl.com/y37zp4jc.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS BENEFIT FOOD PANTRY

This year Circle membership dues will be donated to Northwestern Settlement's food pantry. So far, membership renewals for 2020-2021 have yielded \$1,025. To those who have already renewed, thank you!

If you haven't already done so, it's not too late to renew your Circle membership. Please send your check for \$25 payable to University Circle to Bert Mount, 2323 McDaniel Avenue, Apt 2125, Evanston, IL 60201. Feel free to add your Adopt-a-Family Holiday Project donation (see article above) to your membership dues check. That's one check for both made payable to University Circle. Thank you!

KNITTING FOR SETTLEMENT

—by Glenda Mockros

For over 20 years NU Circle members have been knitting a scarf and mitten set for each young child participating in Northwestern Settlement's preschool program. This has now become a tradition, with the little ones—the next sibling, in addition to the new children—getting his/her own set. No two sets are alike.



We are especially blessed to have our dear friend Fern Anderson, who has made about 90% of our sets, which Glenda Mockros picks up from her, all packaged and ready to take. Fern was first connected with Northwestern in 1952 when her husband, Ed, began his career at NU as the Director of Student Finance/Student Loan and then Director of Budget. After moving away in retirement, Fern returned to us and joined our NU Social Service luncheon group. For years she has been the mainstay of our being able to deliver so many beautiful sets. She is now residing in Covenant Village in Northbrook. We couldn't have continued this project without her.

Although we can no longer send 80 sets, we are thankful for a few of us "old" members who have been able to continue this project: Fern Anderson, Pat Mathis, Glenda Mockros, Pat Gaul, and Margareta Brown.



CIRCLE NEWS & NOTES

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The annual election of Circle officers was held in spring 2020. Because there was no annual meeting, the vote was held by electronic survey of the members. Elected to two-year terms were Linda LaBuda and Margaret Schatz, vice-presidents for membership; Jean Wilson, recording secretary; and Bert Mount, treasurer. Thank you to these members for agreeing to serve.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Have you moved? New phone number? New email address? Don't forget to send your updated



information to Directory and Labels chair, Jane Dowding, at dowdingjane@gmail.com or circle@northwestern.edu.

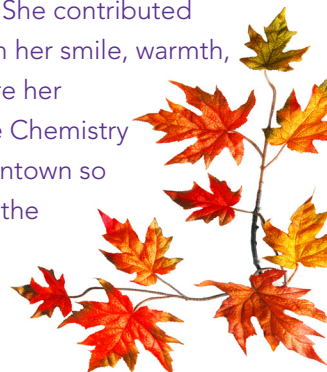
ELECTRONIC DELIVERY OF THE COURIER



As was done last spring, this issue of the *Courier* is being sent as a pdf file to your email address. This all-electronic version makes contactless preparation and delivery possible. If you have questions, please contact Diane Unger at d.h.unger@comcast.net or 847-446-0196.

Remembering Our Circle Friends

NU Circle was saddened to learn of the death of Joyce Ibers early this summer. Joyce had been a long-standing member of NU Circle, and was very active for many years, including a term as president. She contributed to NU Circle in many ways with her smile, warmth, and grace. Several years before her husband, Jim, retired from the Chemistry Department, they moved downtown so they could more easily attend the cultural events they enjoyed. An obituary can be found at tinyurl.com/y5yenxcy.



PIECEMAKERS IN THE TIME OF COVID

— by Diane Unger



Carol Booth, Margaret Schatz and Maria Poeppelmeier tie quilts for Settlement's seniors.



Pat Ulmer gets cozy under one of the quilts.



Quilt exhibit visitors include, left to right, Pat Ulmer, Margaret Schatz (hostess), Elisabeth Malthouse, Jane Dampfs (seated) and Bert Mount.

COVID-19 has not stopped, nor hardly even slowed, the work of Circle's Piecemakers quilt group. What Lonnie Dunlap reported in the May 2020 issue of the *Courier*—that the group was working on assembling 30 quilts for Northwestern Settlement's Golden Ages Club—has happened. The work, which continued over the summer, both individually and in small groups in members' backyards (and garages on rainy days), culminated in a gorgeous outdoor quilt exhibit on an equally gorgeous October day. Margaret Schatz's leafy backyard proved to be a perfect gallery, where the quilts were hung on clotheslines strung between tall trees and displayed on lawn chairs, fences and a vintage drying rack. Circle members and guests enjoyed the display, along with light refreshments, but especially the opportunity to visit (masked and 6 feet apart) with friends they had not necessarily seen in person for a while. The quilts have been delivered to Settlement where they will be distributed to members of their Golden Ages Club in the coming weeks.

No sooner than the Settlement project ended, Piecemakers began working on quilts for Sarah's Circle, an agency that provides services to homeless and recently rehoused women. Piecemakers is one of four groups that will provide a lap-size quilt for each of the 38 women who will move into a brand-new apartment building that Sarah's Circle is opening in December. Visit tinyurl.com/y2uy8myo.

Special thanks to Margaret Schatz and Carol Nielsen for facilitating the quilt donations to these groups, and to all the members of Piecemakers who made it happen!



Linda LaBuda shows off some of the quilts on display.

CIRCLE MEMBERS SEND GREETINGS

With no opportunities to meet at fall programs this year, Circle board members nevertheless wanted to stay in touch with all of our members. So board members made phone calls to the members and invited them to submit updates, greetings and news to share in this issue of the Courier. Thank you to all who contributed. Circle has been around for more than 100 years—including during the influenza pandemic of 1918—so it's no surprise that our members are finding ways to be resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Enjoy catching up!



LINDA LaBUDA

I'm delighted to be in the NU Circle! Thanks for the warm welcome. I look forward to seeing you all in person in the near future. Until then, I have been keeping occupied. Most exciting is the birth of my first grandchild—a boy—who was born at the end of March in Baltimore. We FaceTime and I got to visit with him and his parents for three weeks at the end of summer. His nickname is Sunny, which fits him perfectly.

Here at home I continue taking yoga classes (now virtual) and take non-virtual walks with Gracie, the Wonder Dog. Journaling and reading help keep me centered. Venturing out of my comfort zone, I have taken a writing seminar, nature journaling classes, bird identification courses and even tried drawing classes. I discovered a wonderful, gentle TV series available through Netflix and Acorn. *Detectorists* is set in the English countryside and features a marvelous ensemble of eccentrics. If you're wondering what a "detectorist" is, it is a person whose hobby is metal detecting. Sounds crazy, but I loved it. I also loved PBS' Great Performances three-part series called "Now Hear This." *The Storied Life of AJ Fikry*, *Overstory* and *American Spy* are good books I've read. The Art Institute offers some lovely, rejuvenating art with virtual tours.

Also enjoyed getting updates from two Circle members. **Myrnice Ravitch** is keeping busy and happy in these strange times. She loves square dancing (which has gone virtual), walking outdoors, and cooking with her friend, Ed. Favorite dishes to cook and share are chili and cauliflower cheddar soup. For books, she suggests *Killers of the Flower Moon* by David Grann and *She Said* by Pulitzer Prize winners Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey, who is also an ETHS grad! She keeps up with her girls in Eugene, Oregon, and her four grandsons via FaceTime.

Mary Alayne Schwartz is involved in researching her family history, after a cousin "found" her. She's coping with COVID by calling old friends and watching sit-coms to lift the spirits.



ANN MACK

I became a great-grandmother in September! Needless to say, he is beautiful beyond belief.

TAMARA FOSTER

I retired from a demanding IT job at Northwestern in August, and am enjoying catching my breath before moving on to the next chapter. I look forward to my son's graduation from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, and my daughter's upcoming marriage

BARBARA KEER

As the publisher and editor-in-chief of Splash Magazines Worldwide, I keep busy managing and writing for this collection of online lifestyle magazines. This work keeps me informed about more things than I might otherwise know about in Chicago and other cities around the globe. You can take a look at tinyurl.com/y3g6ah9r.



MARGARET SCHATZ

Although the pandemic prevented us from doing so many of our usual activities, we have never enjoyed our backyard so much, walking in neighborhoods, near and farther away and meeting with small groups of friends and family outside. Our granddaughters live close by so we did not feel the isolation many families have suffered. I think that we have all learned that Zoom offers many advantages for re-connecting and I now enjoy virtual meetings regularly, with sisters, friends and college roommates.

Of course, the phone is our old standby and it was fun hearing the voices of Circle members whom I have not seen recently. **Nancy Bishop** attends her book group virtually and recommends the thriller, *The Silent Patient*, as a book that you just want to keep reading. **Margareta Brown** and **Brigitta Gasper** also are well, and continue knitting as a part of their old and new normal. **Eileen McGowan** said that she never thought she would be so thankful for errands which get her out of the house. **Dorothy Sissors**, who has moved in with her daughter in Arlington Heights, looks forward to a luncheon and chatting with friends. **Janet Hoffman** is working from home and even hosted an outside musical gathering. Every conversation brought me new inspiration!

JANE KNIGHT DAMPTS

Finally I am putting pen to paper. . .er, fingers to keyboard. . .to send greetings to all our Circle friends and some Covid survival tidbits to amuse and inspire:

1. SOMETHING TO PONDER

- Until further notice the days of the week are now called thisday, thatday, otherday, someday, yesterday, today and nextday!
- Can we uninstall 2020 and reinstall it again? I think it has a virus...
- Just asked a six-year-old if he understands why there is no school. He said, yes, because they are out of toilet paper.
- On the bright side, I am no longer calling this shelter-in-place. I am an artist-in-residence.
- Where is your next travel destination?

Las Kitchenas

Los Lounges

Santa Bedroomies

Porto Gardenas

Los Bed

Costa del Balconia

St. Bathroom

La Rotonda de Sofa

- Coronavirus has turned us all into dogs. We roam the house all day looking for food. We're told "No" if we get too close to strangers and we get really excited about car rides.
- 2020 is a unique Leap Year. It has 29 days in February, 300 days in March and 5 years in April.
- Wearing a mask inside your home is now highly recommended. Not so much to prevent COVID-19, but to stop eating.
- I'm kinda' starting to understand why pets try to run out of the house when the door opens.
- You think it's bad now? In 20 years our country will be run by people home-schooled by day drinkers.
- Day 7 at home and the dog is looking at me like, "See? This is why I chew the furniture."
- I miss the days when we were terrified of Romaine lettuce. Aah, the good times...



2. BIRDWATCHING WITH THE KIDS NEXT DOOR

Two delightful boys who live next door to me have discovered the delights of sitting out on their patio looking for birds, identifying unusual birds and posting their sightings online, building bird feeders that are squirrel-proof, and, best of all, teaching that nice old lady next door who used to be a teacher (me!) all about ornithology! They even draw me bird pictures to post on my refrigerator door!

3. NEW VENTURE INTO ONLINE CLASSES FROM THE ALUMNAE OF NORTHWESTERN

The pilot classes have been a resounding success this fall! And the wonderful thing is that the tuition money from the classes will fully fund our student scholarship programs this year. The final enrollment number for this fall is 910 registrations! The classes are "Turbulent '60s" and "Chinese Politics."

4. PREVIEW OF WINTER 2021 ONLINE COURSES SPONSORED BY THE ALUMNAE OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY:

Tuesdays (9 weeks), January 12 – March 9:

- A. Millennium Movies: Cinema and Culture from 1999 to 9/11, Nick Davis, Associate Professor, English
- B. Musical Voyages, Stephen Alltop, Senior Lecturer, Conducting & Ensembles

Thursdays (9 weeks), January 14 – March 11:

- C. The History of Heaven, David Shyovitz, Associate Professor, History
- D. Crime and Consequences, Mark Iris, Lecturer, MMSS (Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences)

To register or for more information, go to nualumnae.org.

continued >

5. PIECEMAKERS QUILT SHOW

A highlight of this fall was the Piecemakers Quilt Show to benefit Northwestern Settlement, held outdoors at Margaret Schatz's house. The experience of being together after so many months of absence was simply wonderful, and the beautiful fall day and radiant purples of the quilts against the soft golden leaves gave us all such a lift and assurance that we will indeed return to normal and to being together in person soon! Thank you, Margaret!



BERT MOUNT

I regularly meet **Anita Yamada** in her backyard for lunch and conversation. She reports that she has used the time to fix up her yard and clean out closets and other storage spaces in her house. She feels lucky to have grandchildren nearby whom she can meet in the yard. She is also taking an NU-based class once a week on China, a country where she lived until she was 12.

For me, I have been sewing a lot. My challenges have been keeping my sewing machines in repair and finding thread and sewing machine needles, which are frequently out of stock with so many people sewing these days.

SYLVIA TAFLOVE

Before the 2020 Covid, I was enjoying my retirement by teaching the games of mahjong and Modern Canasta at two park districts (Wilmette and Glenview), a country club in Glenview, and private homes to groups of people.

I miss teaching soooo much. If anyone would like to learn the fascinating game of Mahjong, I would love to attempt to teach you online. I would set up a Zoom meeting and, using the teaching tools I have developed and a visualizer camera, I think we can do this. To play the game we would use the website called MyJongg. We could be on the phone together as we play so that I may coach you throughout the game. Contact free, no fee, just fun. Anyone interested or know someone who is interested? Let me know by email taflove1@comcast.net or phone 224-935-2801.





TRISH NEWMAN

HI ALL! — All is well here. Hope you all are too!

JANE DOWDING

Chuck and I have kept our sanity through this pandemic through driving trips. We have two daughters with families in Massachusetts, so since the pandemic has started, we have driven there three times to see them. We take all of our food and drive it in a day, stopping only for gas, bathrooms, and to switch drivers. Time with kids and grandkids makes the drive worthwhile. I am also thankful to the NU Circle Board for coming up with the idea to call members of NU Circle to see how they are doing. I have had SOOO MUCH FUN reconnecting and catching up with old (oops...I mean "longstanding"!) Circle friends through these phone calls!

MARIA POEPPELMEIER

We edited our belongings during "Shelter in Place" and, per our five-year plan, we put our house on the market and moved in late spring (617 Green Bay Road, Apt. 313, Wilmette, IL 60091). It was challenging parting with our 35+ years of household items, but an NU colleague with a young family was delighted to take our piano and other furniture. It was a "win/win" when a "neighborhood daughter" bought a house and happily took our dining room set plus a U-Haul-full of additional small pieces.

With Tetris-type planning we turned a large closet into Ken's WFH office and another into my sewing room. It works! We are settled and look forward to the time when we can resume our travels to visit family and friends around the world. Stay positive. Be healthy.



JEAN WILSON

Our days are not busy. My husband and I enjoy walking in our neighborhood, sitting on our patio when the weather allows, and going on brief excursions to the grocery store, library or gas station. Occasionally we have a real outing and drive to NU's campus to walk along the lakefront, or drive into west Glenview and walk the trails around Lake Glenview. We are so fortunate that our legs still support us.

We try not to watch too much cable news as it tends to be bad for our health. Some books I've enjoyed recently: *The Murmur of Bees* by Sofia Segovia, *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson and Louise Penny's latest, *All the Devils are Here*.

Better times are definitely in our future.



MELANIE ANDERSON

My year of COVID: As I am still working full time, and in fact, am busiest when financial markets are roiling, this has been a very chaotic year. That said, I've spent my free time sewing masks in the spring, then taking a mask break and returning to my primary leisure activities: reading and quilting. With all the rhetoric floating around, I've been reading up on racism, white fragility, despotism, and most importantly, How to be an Anti-Racist. I'm planning on this being my crusade and activism when I eventually retire. For the moment, I'm just trying to be a little more aware. Regarding quilting, I've finished up a few projects that were hanging around, and am working on more. Shown above are a few examples. Left and center are from Illinois Quilters Inc. classes I took, and the one on the right is the IQI Challenge for 2020, "It's Elemental: Air, Earth, Fire and Water."



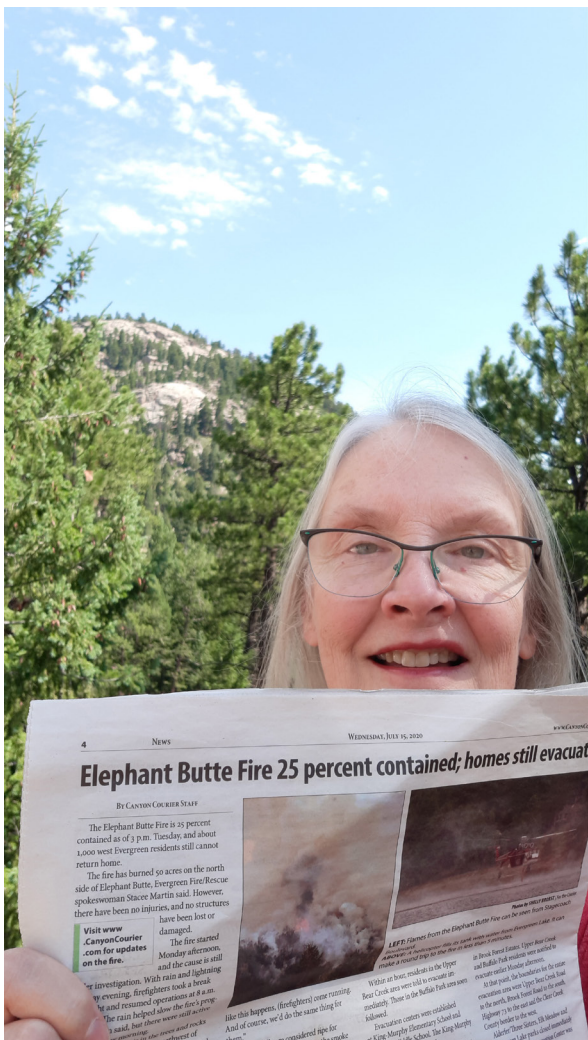
DIANE UNGER

I had delightful phone visits with a number of Circle members: neighbor **Ruth Lucchesi** and fellow Piecemakers **Lonnie Dunlap**, **Carol Booth** and **Lonna Horwitz**. They are all doing well and send their hellos.

I've finally begun digging into a box of letters that my parents wrote during World War II, scanning the originals and making copies. Some of them are from my father, who was building airstrips and bridges in New Guinea, Dutch East Indies, the Philippines and occupied Japan. Most of them, however, were written by my mother who was at home with my sister in a small coal-mining town in Central Illinois. She kept my dad informed with almost daily reports of my sister's first three years of life. They contain wonderful details of everyday life in small-town Illinois during the War: substitute teaching in a two-room schoolhouse, deliveries of coal for the furnace, sewing clothes and curtains, sharing meals and visits with my grandparents who lived nearby, and washing clothes and scrubbing floors. I've found the letters especially meaningful now during these uncertain times, knowing that I come from strong stock, people who endured in their own uncertain times and who ultimately thrived. Also good to pass on to my daughter and son who have families of their own now and who are meeting their own challenges and thriving during the pandemic.

MELISSA SHARP LEASIA

Hello from beautiful Evergreen, Colorado! Todd and I are doing well. At least if we have to be safer at home and socially distant it helps to live in a beautiful place. My plans to learn Spanish, learn a new musical instrument, and organize my office, closets, the basement crawl space and the garage haven't been realized but I'm thinking that doesn't really matter in the scheme of things, does it? We keep busy with fun crafts projects, jigsaw puzzles, Sudoku (me) and word puzzles (Todd), crochet (me), cooking (both of us) and photography (Todd). Todd built a raised vegetable garden and harvested three tomatoes and a few pea pods before the first freeze. I managed to harvest enough rhubarb to make a 6-inch pie. We have plenty of good hiking trails nearby and we can order anything we want or need online. We're glad to have Wildcat football back on TV even though we really don't think it's a good idea to be having games this fall. I'm still on the board of our local nature center, where many programs continue online. A recent presentation was "Corvids, Not Covid," which covered the Corvid family of birds, including jays, crows, ravens, and magpies. They are considered by many to be the most intelligent birds, with ten different Corvid species found in Colorado.



The hot, dry summer of 2020 wasn't kind to Colorado but it seems that the cold weather and snow, which arrived October 24 and 25, tamped down the worst of the wildfires. On October 29 while I was baking a birthday cake for Todd, he went on a short hike and found both bear and mountain lion tracks in the soft snow in our woods, just yards from the house, and a huge mule deer buck stepped right up onto the front porch to eat one of our pumpkins. What a thrill!

Thanksgiving and Christmas won't be much fun without family this year, but we will cut down one of our own pines for a Christmas tree and I will bake and decorate way too many cookies as I always do. Without all the usual holiday hub bub, maybe it will be easier to find peace on earth. I hope all of you are well and I wish I could give you all a hug!



CAROL NIELSEN

Fortunately we can still do social justice work even in a pandemic. Since March, I have been busy writing three grants requesting funds from our church endowment fund to support activities at Connections for the Homeless. During the pandemic they have done a terrific job of housing homeless people, feeding people and working toward finding stable housing. I also have coordinated with NU Circle's Piecemakers and other quilting groups to donate 38 quilts to Sarah's Circle—a new permanent housing apartment building in Chicago for previously homeless women. We have also provided quilts and extras for the Rice Center and Lydia Home—two residential housing facilities for children who are wards of the state. I have also cleaned things out of my house, read lots of books, done some sewing projects, watched various movies and TV series, cooked better food because I have the time, taken walks and visited by Zoom with many people. It is not so bad and allows for focusing on what really matters and enjoying the simplification of our life.

SALLY SPROWL

I hope everyone is well and sending my best wishes to you all for the holiday season.

ELISABETH MALTHOUSE

I feel lucky to have my family around me. Right now it is just the three of us here at home—Ed, Ellen (15) and I. But we were joined in March by my middle son Niklas who finished his college freshman year remotely and went back to his dorm at the end of August. And my oldest, Thomas, came back home for almost three months after his virtual college graduation before he traveled to Freiburg, Germany, at the end of October where he will spend the next two years studying economics. I kept busy cooking for everyone—mainly vegan food since Ellen has been strictly vegan for over a year. I even learned how to make tofu and seitan from scratch! I have also spent time gardening, raising monarch butterflies in summer, going for daily walks in the neighborhood parks or the lakefront, knitting and reading.

One of my favorite recent books is *The Windward Shore: A Winter on the Great Lakes* by Jerry Dennis. Its quiet reflections on nature and life have provided some welcome comfort reading. Earlier this summer I finished his book *The Living Great Lakes: Searching for the Heart of the Inland Sea*, a book about the history, nature and science of the Great Lakes.

I love crossword puzzles and really enjoyed reading *Thinking Inside the Box: Adventures with Crosswords and the Puzzling People Who Cannot Live Without Them* by Adrienne Raphael.

