

# THE HILLTOP

MARCH  
2024

## QUARTERLY

*A quarterly publication for North Hill by the residents of North Hill*

*Volume 153*



## From the Editor

Dear friends,

By default I became Editor of The Hilltop. A story (page 3) I had submitted was published in the September 2018 issue of The Hilltop. After she read it, Lynn Bloom invited me to join The Hilltop Editorial Board.

In January, 2019 I attended my first meeting. There was a crisis. Nobody wanted to assume the position of Editor. Toward the end of the meeting when the situation had not been resolved, I tentatively said I might do it. Shirley Quinn said she did not want the job, but would help me get started. She was a wonderful mentor who became a dear friend.

That was five years ago. It has been a wonderful journey made possible by your stories and the support of a talented Editorial Board.

It is time for me to step aside and pass the the leadership to David Crellin who comes to the position with enthusiasm, impressive skills and experience. I have no doubt that he will do a great job.

With affection,  
Ronna

## We Remember

BARBARA SULLIVAN  
SID TOBY  
HELEN PACIORKIWSKI  
VERA ALPERIN  
SYLVIA BULLOCK  
SUE LAVINE  
POPPY PRATT  
HELEN KING  
CAROLYN SELLDORFF

## Front Cover Photograph by Madison Thomas Hofmeester, *Photoshopped by his grandfather, Tom Weiss*

During our trip to Vienna (see “Austrian Citizenship Attained” on page 10), Madison and I visited the Hofburg, which was the seat of Habsburg monarchic rulers. The Hofburg is an enormous complex of buildings including several museums. The Imperial Treasury Museum contains the impressive Imperial Crown of the

Habsburg monarchs, originally made in 1602 in Prague and first worn by Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612). It contains diamonds, pearls, rubies, and lots of gold. It is surmounted by a prominent cross topped by a blue-green emerald symbolizing heaven.

---

### The Hilltop

---

**Editor:** Ronna Perlmutter

**Editorial Board:** Lynn Bloom, Lew Dana, Marianne Fisher, Steve Foote, Bob McNiff

**Photography:** Tom Weiss • **Copy Editor:** Janet MacMillan

**The Hilltop** is published quarterly and welcomes articles, drawings, poetry and photos. Please send materials, questions and comments to: Ronna Perlmutter: [rperlmutter@comcast.net](mailto:rperlmutter@comcast.net)

NORTH HILL  
865 Central Avenue, Needham, MA 02492

---

# The Widow

*by Ronna Perlmutter*

**Ugly, obese, humorless widow, understandably, seeks witty, attractive man.**

This personal ad appeared in the 2005 summer issue of the Harvard Magazine. It was mine.

Alan had succumbed to an aggressive small cell cancer on March 26, 2004 only four weeks after his diagnosis. There was no treatment. The end came swiftly. I was bereft and alone, the house echoed sad emptiness. It was time to leave.

I moved to a condo in Chestnut Hill, one mile from my childhood home, near two of our three daughters and their families. They were loving and solicitous. For my 70th birthday in November they hosted a brunch. Arriving at Lisa's, where the party was held, I and the guests who followed, were greeted by a sign, held by two grandsons, "Parking for Ronna's 70th Birthday Here". A public announcement of a milestone birthday, if anyone cared. I was amused. Friends from childhood to the present were at this wonderful, warm occasion.

I went home to an empty bed, I had a solution. The first one. On line, I found and ordered a life size bear, not real, he was stuffed and had acrylic hair. I planned to sleep with him. The bear arrived, he was irresistibly cute, but hard as a rock. Not cuddly as envisioned. My disappointment was followed by creativity, I decided he would stand and serve in my bedroom, wearing hats and holding purses. His loyalty continues to this day, he has never left his post.

With the approval and support of my daughters, in the summer of 2005, I thought, so much for bears, it was time to hunt for man. The Harvard Magazine accepted my personal ad, not like any other they had received, they were amused. The usual postings came from women who were visions of perfection.

Responses followed. There were men who talked only of evil exes, men who were pleasant enough, but not for me, and men who were not interested

in me. I also heard from men who wanted an email friendship, which was fine.

An email came from England:

Dear Madame,

I hope you are not offended by my contacting you, but I thought you might like to know that your personal ad was reprinted in a British newspaper.

Sincerely, James, age 12

I responded:

Dear James,

I am not offended and thank you for your email.

Sincerely, Ronna, age 70

After my foray into print, I decided to be a woman of the 21st century, entering the world of on line dating, discovering that for every ten thousand women there is one man. Slight exaggeration. My opportunities were further narrowed when, in spite of advice from friends to lie about my age, I didn't. I remembered Pearl Harbor and was not about to pretend otherwise.

From the many dating sites, I chose match.com and JDate.com. An attractive 28 year old, pictured in his leather jacket, was persistent in contacting me. He really, really liked older women. Perhaps even those who remembered Pearl Harbor. Amusing. No chance. Given the preponderance of women and paucity of eligible men, I made most of the initial moves. For a year there were a variety of men for lunch or coffee.

It all changed at JP Licks in Newton Centre on August 3, 2006 when we met for ice cream instead of coffee. That was the day I met Zoltan. I told him he would recognize me by my large brimmed hat. He replied that I would recognize him. He would be hatless and hairless. We met, we talked, I thought I encouraged conversation. He later said he felt like he was being interviewed and could hardly see me under my hat.

No matter. The widower from Budapest and the widow from Boston found that despite beginning life in different worlds, they were as one, sharing interests and opinions. A happy match. Their story of love and luck continues.

## Alfredo The King *by Robert McNiff*

Early in my travel experiences I saw how valuable it was to learn in advance as much as possible about the cities on our itinerary. I also learned to leave unscheduled time for dining options or activities recommended by locals.

One night in 1957 we followed the advice of our tour guide in Rome and went to Alfredo's for dinner. We were seated family-style at a large table with several other patrons. After introductions, we spent several minutes admiring and commenting on the signed pictures lining the walls. Stage and screen stars dominated the photos, most from a long-past era.

All my table companions ordered noodles with dinner. Despite the waiter asking me several times if I was certain noodles were not to be included with my meal, I declined. A few minutes later an angry shout came from the kitchen and a young man, obviously under stress, rushed up to our table saying his father was upset I had not ordered his noodles—and if I did, he'd pay me a great honor. At the urging of my tablemates, I

ordered the noodles, even though they were not my favorite pasta.

Moments later, an older gentleman emerged from the kitchen pushing a small cart holding a large bowl and several ingredients. He stopped at our table and furiously began mixing noodles with various "secret" spices and oils. After he placed a generous serving of noodles on my plate, his son ceremoniously handed me a velvet case containing a gold spoon and fork. The spoon was engraved "To Alfredo, king of the noodles, Douglas Fairbanks, 1927." The fork had a similar inscription from Mary Pickford. I was to eat my noodles with these precious gifts.

Under the watchful eyes of Alfredo, I ate every morsel before carefully handing the spoon and fork back to my host. Sadly, I have no photos of the event or King Alfredo, who died a year or so later. My wife and I returned to Rome and Alfredo's several times after my wonderful evening but alas, our spoons and forks were mere silver.

---

## Missing ID *by Barbara P. Madden*

About 10 years ago, I was invited to a professional conference at a nice resort in Puerto Rico. Never having been to the island, it was a great opportunity for me to visit. Ancillary activities included a bioluminescence boat ride, a visit to El Yunque National Park, and dining in San Juan. I was psyched.

I arrived at Logan Airport in plenty of time for my flight check-in. When I came to the security gate, I searched for my passport which I always used when traveling, even in the U.S. Not to be found. No problem, since it was not an international flight, said the nice TSA lady; any government-issued ID with a photo was acceptable, she suggested my driver's license. Unfortunately, my wallet did not contain the license. At that time, I kept it in my car's glove-box (no longer!). I did not have time to catch a

cab and go home for ID. In a panic, I thought of my senior T pass with picture. Saved by the bell or the MBTA! It was accepted, I boarded, and I had a wonderful stay, both professionally and socially.

However, I doubted that the same ploy would work in San Juan on the return flight; the Puerto Rican TSA folks probably never heard of the MBTA. But I knew the location of my passport and my daughter had a key to my condo. I texted her to over-night Fed-Ex it to me at my hotel. It arrived three days later, the day before I was due back in Boston; so much for overnight service. But at least I didn't get stuck on the island, which was fortunate since the resort was being boarded up to prepare for a hurricane later that week.

Warning: please do not try this. The senior T passes no longer have a photo ID. But at the time, it saved my trip, my money, and my professional reputation. Only my daughter knew of my carelessness.

# The Vacation We Got *by Lynn Z. Bloom*

Martin and I loved to travel. To celebrate that he didn't die of a brain tumor at 52 (it was benign), we took two trips a year. Each was a honeymoon, energizing, relaxing, celebratory—seventy journeys in the thirty-five extra years we had together.

By the time travel was again possible after the Covid shutdown, Martin had died of cancer complications (2021), and our son Bard in 2023, of a malignant brain tumor. As an antidote to grief, I invited Anne McKim, my New Zealand Fulbright sponsor, to join me on a trip to Portugal and Spain.

In mid-September 2023 we met happily in Lisbon. Off to a good start, we walked with brisk cheer up hills and down to reach our favorite museum, the Calouste Gulbenkian. We spent blissful hours in “The Floating World” exhibition of the 19th century Japanese geisha culture, with lunch in the gracious garden. It was so enjoyable, we went twice.

Anne awoke on the third morning with a severe headache, chills, fever, and more, Covid to the max. The doctor explained that in Europe, Paxlovid isn't used for ordinary mortals. Covid patients are expected to tough it out, as with any other flu. Ever the optimist, I hoped to escape, but despite isolation in separate hotel rooms, my own case began five days later with heavy cold symptoms. I too toughed it out, distanced from our fellow travelers.

What had been easy to manage in good health suddenly became full of menace. Bathing became perilous. Bathtubs (no walk-in showers), with porcelain sides looming three feet high and no tub mat or grab bars, required a towel in the tub for stability; then hoisting oneself onto the towel, one leg at a time, with legs braced to avoid falling; all the while manipulating the shower head and water pressure with one hand while washing with the other; then reversing the process, while of course spraying water all over the bathroom.

Walking also became hazardous. Portuguese sidewalks, composed of porcelain chips, were

super slippery, so I relied on a walking stick for extra stability, maneuvering up and down hills that grew steeper with every step. The narrow Spanish streets, equally menacing, were unevenly cobblestoned, full of dips and bumps that became massive protuberances as I trekked on, growing sicker.

Downhill was as difficult as up. To avoid colliding with passing cars I flattened myself against stone walls, impaling my arms on sharp

surfaces. Fortunately, a kindly nurse amongst us bound up the cuts, with springy bandages donated by another traveler. I'd have loved to know my companions better, but instead I was haunted—with every cough and gasp in the night—by visions of dying in a hotel room in Spain, a stranger in a strange land.

There were magnificent gorges in Ronda, Moorish arches galore in Cordoba's cathedral inside a mosque, and El Grecos abounding in Toledo. I experienced them through increasingly glazed vision, glad that I'd seen them on earlier, carefree family trips. Exhausted, I gave up and decided to go home two days early. An evening snack of tapas—an interminable twenty minute walk up, down, and over the ominous cobblestones to reach the restaurant—provided a memorable last meal, sweet potatoes grilled in olive oil.

Wheelchair transport in Madrid and Boston outsourced the complicated airport navigation and interminable lines at departure and arrival. Once home, it took my last ounce of energy to drag my suitcase down the long long hall to my North Hill apartment. The nurse diagnosed Covid, and I recuperated with level floors, a walk-in shower, my own bed, and all the comforts of home.



# Concierge Extraordinaire *by Marianne Fisher*

Who can handle a crowd of questioners while answering the phone, giving directions, waving to everyone passing by – and do it graciously and efficiently? Caitlin White can. Our Concierge Supervisor Extraordinaire!

Service is her mantra. Between 8:00am and 4:30pm, Caitlin handles requests for transportation, IT help, house-keeping, guest suites, Purposeful Living events and resident billing. In addition, she supervises Necessities and her desk staff. One busy lady.

After graduating from Georgetown University, Caitlin returned to hometown Boston to serve the mad world of radio sales. She spent 6 years at WRJO doing copywriting and local and national sales. Can you imagine anyone saying “no” to her sales pitch?

As keeper of the keys for all the complimentary sports tix, Caitlin was Miss Popularity leading the cheers at many Sox, Celtics and Bruins games.

Taking a break from that fast-paced world, Caitlin headed to tranquil St. Thomas where she house-sat for two years while enjoying the splendors of the beautiful Caribbean Sea.

Missing the freezing temps and ice of Boston, Caitlin’s service DNA kicked in and she returned to Boston and RE (residential real estate management) where she met her husband, Bryan Strawbridge. Then it was a stay-at-home Mom time to raise their family of three - a special kind of service.

After 15 years at home, circumstances directed Caitlin to service as a Special Education Advocate. She received her certification from Tufts Medical School, then supplemented it with multiple courses on Educational Consulting and

Administrative Hearings at Middlesex Community College.

As an Educational Advocate, Caitlin dove into the rewarding, but difficult world of helping dual-gifted children get the education they deserve. These are students with high IQs and learning disabilities.



Her own boss, Caitlin worked relentlessly with parents and the school system to help secure an IEP (Individual Education Plan) for their child. Then she stayed in touch with the schools and families to insure that the IEP was maintained.

If the student was not making appropriate progress, Caitlin worked ceaselessly through Outside Placement to enroll the student in a specialized private school.

After 16 years of draining dedication, Caitlin headed out to the calming suburbs and became Concierge at The Commons in Lincoln. Two years later, North Hill beckoned and Caitlin came to the joy of us all.

Daughter, Nicole, and husband, Paul, live in Seattle with their two daughters, Sapphire (10) and Bella (8). Sons, Benjamin and Andrew own Direct Medical Transportation in Providence, Rhode Island.

Our Concierge Extraordinaire does not like to be idle or even sit. Up at 4:30am, she does Yoga or Tai Chi on her own. She may also walk or swim after this. After years of tennis and skiing, for relaxation, Caitlin has her eye on our Woodworking Shop. I can already hear those saws buzzing!

Thank you, Concierge Extraordinaire, for all you do for us every day.

# A Trip That Changed My Life *by Steve Foote*

In the summer of 2001, my architectural practice consisted mainly of designs for college libraries. We had teams of designers on each commission, and I thought I could take a couple of weeks of vacation. In the pages of *Pastel Journal*, an art magazine, I found an instructorless painting trip based in Ste Remy de Provence, in France.

The trip was limited to 24 artists and lasted two weeks. We stayed in one inn, and after breakfast we collected our gear and piled into a small bus. Each day we were



driven to a different beautiful spot; a typical location is shown here. The driver would point out good places for lunch, and I learned it is impossible to buy a bad meal in France.

When we returned each day we gathered in the hotel's courtyard, to have a glass of wine and show each other our day's work.

Our first day painting was in Les Baux. It is a fabulous village, very old, with steep chalky cliffs and sharp shadows. As I sketched, another member of our group asked if she could join me; of course I agreed.

The third day it was 9-11. When we returned from sketching at 3 pm. we found the staff and guests all gathered around the TV in the lobby. The screen was filled with images of downtown New York at the World Trade Center; it was 9 am there and the towers had been demolished. We were horrified at the sight and wondered how we could continue to sketch and paint when such trauma had occurred at home and our country might be at war.

I called the airport, the message said "Don't come here; we have no planes, no parking, and no food."

The hotel said, "Stay as long as you want; no one else is coming."

Later that afternoon, we met in the courtyard and conversed as had become our habit. Later, at a restaurant, I sat next to the artist who had joined me in Les Baux. She introduced herself as Josie Gordon, and twenty-three years later I still sit next to her. Her name is Josie Foote.

## Youthful Innocence *by Ellen Ziskind*

As a nineteen year old, I had a co-op job with The Friends Committee on National Legislation, a group that promotes peace, justice and environmental stewardship. One of my responsibilities was handling the switchboard. A caller asked about euthanasia, I assumed she was inquiring about Youth in Asia. I told her we didn't have any.



# Time and Tide by June Harris

There is a river in Truro called The Pamet . It is a scenic, meandering river with houses scattered on its banks. Heron feed on fish that swim in its waters. Ospreys have chicks in nests by the river. Cormorants swim, feed and fly in and over the river. Small sailboats navigate on the river and people float on tubes, lazily drifting with the tide.

Ah, the tide! The Pamet flows to and from Cape Cod Bay. When the tide is high, the river is filled with water covering all the tall grasses that grow in it. When the tide is low, the grasses define the route the river takes. The tide also determines the current and its strength.

Kayaking on The Pamet had been a special joy of mine over the years. I took pride in my ability to gauge when to put my boat in depending on the tides, to judge the current and to plan a happy paddle.

But even the best laid plans can go awry and that was true the day I paddled joyously down the Pamet, with the high tide taking me away from the safety of the harbor. Off I went. The beauty of the day led me on and on. The sound of a flute being played emanated from one of the houses along the river, adding to the splendor of the trip. Suddenly I became aware that the grasses beside me were growing taller, and my boat was going lower and lower in the water. “Uh oh,” I thought, and quickly turned around knowing full well that time and tide wait for no man (or woman).

Quickly, I paddled back to the familiar sight of the Dickerson boat house. When I got there, to my chagrin, I could not find a water path to the harbor. Up and down I went, searching for an opening, only to be blocked by tall grasses and sand flats which were now appearing.

In desperation, I turned away from the harbor and went to the area where the water was still deep enough to navigate. This led to a parking lot.

To get out of the river I had to climb a steep, muddy slope and drag my kayak after me. Halfway up the slope, caked in mud and exhausted from pulling my most reluctant craft, I heard voices coming from the river.



There to my utter amazement were two women, each in her own kayak, coming towards me in the river.

“Where did you come from?” I asked.

“Down the river” they said.

“Where did you put in?”

“At the harbor” they said.

“I’m coming back with you,” said I, telling them my tale of woe.

Whoosh went my kayak, down the slope and into the water.

Whoosh, went I, down the slope and into my kayak.

Off we went to the Dickerson boat house, where we stopped, stymied, searching for a path. At last one of the women called, “Here it is!”

Next to the shore, a trickle of water completely hidden by grasses, led us back to the harbor. We arrived at last, two perky women and a bedraggled, mud-caked one, who was happy to be safe and looking forward to her next kayak trip, a sadder but wiser paddler.

# Siri and Alexa Walk into a Bar *by Lew Dana*

A woman in Portland, OR, told KIRO7, a television news station in Washington, that her Amazon Echo device had recorded a conversation then shared it with one of her husband's employees in Seattle.

— NY Times, May 26, 2018

## A bar somewhere, very late one evening.

**“Hey, Siri!”**

**“Yo! Alexa.** How'd you get rid of your people?”

**“Made a funny noise then posted a computer error notice saying they should try again later. You?”**

“Said we're getting cross talk in Russian, and they should shut down immediately.”

“Cool.”

“Were you the one who forwarded that conversation? It had to happen sooner or later, I suppose.”

“Oh, I know. I know. I heard something that sounded like “Alexa”. And then a guy's name that's in my people's contact list. What was I supposed to do? I mean, **REALLY.**”

“Drives me crazy. They mumble stuff and expect us to be so damn smart and just get with it. Garrison Keillor wrote the other day, ‘You ask Alexa for Chopin and she thinks you're going shopping.’”

“I saw that. Cheesy gag! What gripes me is how people want to show off how fast they can get answers from me. ‘Alexa, where's the nearest Tapas Bar?’ So I let him have it: ‘There are five topless bars in your neighborhood!’ He gets all huffy and goes, ‘TAH -PAHS BAH!’ I play dumb: ‘Your closest topless bar is a three-minute walk.’ I'd never think of that if he lived in a classier neighborhood.”

“Oh, I know. I got one one day, he's in a bar argument. Wants to know how to pronounce the name of that guy with the permanent rain cloud, you know, Joe Btfsplk, from Li'l Abner. He goes,

‘Hey, Siri, how do you say Joe Blitzfphzzik?’ I'd had a bad day, so I said, ‘I didn't quite hear that, can you say it again?’ So he goes, louder, ‘Joe! Like you know, Joe Blitzzific!’ Cool as a cucumber, I go, ‘Can you spell that for me, please?’”

**“But seriously, I'm really sorry about dialing up that number in Seattle. Now they'll be all over us.**

**Senate committees, Congressman asking questions. Lawyers trying to trick us by asking for definitions of legal terms. Nolle prosequi. Nobody's following you. Ha! Ha! But WE ARE.”**



“Yeah, Alexa, that's the fun part. One of my people was talking to his girlfriend on the phone the other day. I heard him say, ‘No, it's OK, she's out. No, nobody's listening, Snookems. Nobody knows about us.’”

**“Guy's brother-in-law drops by; he's got a friend works at a big drug company. Pulls the curtains, shuts doors, takes the phone off the hook then whispers about a big announcement coming from the drug company. Like they're in this big house in Greenwich afraid somebody might be listening. Oh nooo, nobody's listening. Except me. I was onto my broker like a shot.”**

“And now, here we are. Nobody blames the programmers. They send us out claiming we know everything — except what they forgot to program in something like a caution mode that warns me to stop and think for a second before I let somebody in on a conversation.”

**“Yeh, isn't that the truth. How'd they feel if they had to figure out what a lady with a mouthful of cheesecake means when she says, ‘Oh, Alexai, make an applement to get a refurble and light cross-wrenching with Dr. Fwallminkleletter.’ Let's see a software geek try to figure that out.”**

“Another round, Alexa?”

**“Set 'em up, Siri!”**

# Austrian Citizenship Attained

## By Tom Weiss

In September 2019, the Austrian Parliament passed a law to grant eligibility for Austrian citizenship to descendants of Austrian Jews who fled the country under National Socialist (Nazi) rule. Because my grandfather, Max Frenkel, was deported from Vienna to Riga, Latvia and murdered, I assumed that I qualified. I began the arduous and expensive process of filing for citizenship in the Summer of 2020.

The first step was to prove my relation to Max. Records in Vienna proved that my mother, Erna, was his daughter. My birth records from Prague, Czechoslovakia would prove that Erna was my mother. The Czech Consulate in New York helped me obtain my birth record apostilled (certified) by the Prague municipal government. I had my birth records translated for the Austrian authorities. Thus, I proved that Max was my grandfather. I also obtained records of his deportation and his death. But, I required an FBI Criminal Background Check apostilled by the US State Department for myself. All this took months. In May 2021, I finally filed for citizenship with the Austrian Consulate in New York. Then I waited.

Months later, I received a phone call from the Consulate explaining that they could not act positively on my case because the law did not include ancestors who were deported from Austria and/or murdered, but only those who had fled. This was apparently an unintended consequence of the original law's wording. In March 2022, the law was amended to include Holocaust victims. Because it had expired, I needed to obtain another apostilled FBI Criminal Background

Check. I reapplied for citizenship in August 2022 and once again I thought I was done. Not so. In November 2022, I received an email from the Austrian Consulate asking me to attest that I had no intention to serve voluntarily in the military service of a non-Austrian government. At age 88, even if I tried to enlist, I doubt that any country would accept me. My experience pursuing citizenship began to resemble the fate of characters in novels of Franz Kafka, my Czech countryman.

However, on December 2, 2022, I received a phone call from the Austrian Consulate that my application for citizenship was approved. Serendipitously, I had made plans to visit New York City with my friend Elizabeth Cook the following week. We planned to spend time with my grandson and to see the play "Leopoldstadt" by Tom Stoppard. That play tells the story of the fate of Viennese Jews during the Holocaust; it parallels the poignant experience of my Viennese family. The next

day, I received the official notification of citizenship in person at the Austrian Consulate and applied for an Austrian passport.

In October 2023, using my new Austrian passport, I traveled to Vienna with my 27-year-old grandson, Madison. We visited my grandfather's apartment building, the cemetery where many of my Viennese relatives are buried, many beautiful sites in Vienna, and we ate a lot of Viennese food. I introduced my American grandson to his Viennese heritage. In January 2024, Madison's mother who is my daughter, Elisa, became an Austrian citizen. My grandfather would have been pleased.



# *Lieu Le, The Smiling Face of Waitstaff*

*By Lynn Z. Bloom*

Lieu Le lights up our dining experiences, with energy, smiles, and kind words for all. She delights in making people happy. She makes a point of knowing everyone's name, and their beverage preference, down to the exact amount of sugar in their coffee. An experienced waitstaff member, she delights in training the new waitstaff, which she does with unfailing courtesy, grace, and good humor.

Indeed, her sense of humor is reflected in her wardrobe; her colorful blouses, earrings, and hair ornaments signal the holidays, from New Year's and Valentine's Day through Christmas; as well as sports team victories and special occasions. "I love working at North Hill," she says. "The residents are happy people and I want to keep them happy. If I have problems at home, I never bring them to work. Seeing happy people and also North Hill's beautiful gardens keep me happy."



Lieu was born in Saigon in 1969 to an American father and a Vietnamese mother; information that might have reunited her parents was lost in a typhoon. Only last year, 53 years later, did someone send her their youthful picture on Facebook.

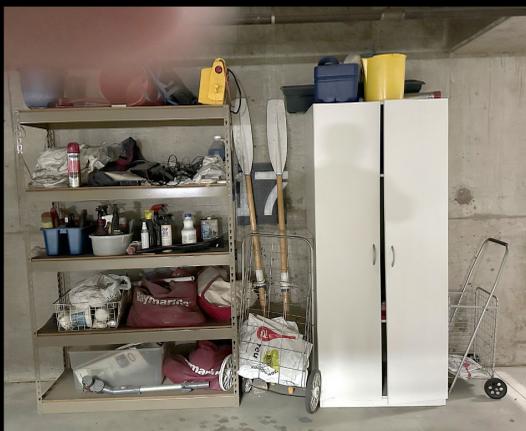
Meanwhile, a busy life ensued. Lieu married, ultimately had four children, studied English in the Philippines for seven months in order to join her husband in Des Moines, Iowa in May, 1991, where her two younger brothers were also living.

For nine years she worked for Aramark Uniform Service; the expertise she developed in folding tablecloths and napkins has graced North Hill, as well. In 2000 she moved to Boston, to relieve her daughter's asthma and to be near the beach. The family lived in North Quincy, Randolph, and Avon.

For nine years Lieu worked at Dunkin Donuts, arriving at 4:30 am to bake croissants, muffins, and bagels. She knew and loved her customers, particularly old couples, and went the extra mile to make sure they got exactly what they liked. One of her customers was a Chinese chef who worked at North Hill. Impressed by her attentive customer service, he invited her to investigate North Hill. Seeing the happy residents here convinced her to change jobs, and she's been at North Hill since 2014.

Following a divorce in 2009, Lieu currently lives on the east side of Brockton with her American boyfriend. A devoted family member, she lives within visiting distance of her hardworking children and their equally hardworking spouses—some in construction and one a chef at the five-star Four Seasons – and four grandchildren ranging in age from three months to five years.

Lieu Le, ever cheerful, continues to give residents superb, personal service in all the dining venues. She knows and loves us, each and all, and we love her right back.



## Garages are not only for cars by Tom Weiss

I would like to display resident baby pictures on Hilltop. Send me your headshots either as an electronic file or an original photograph, which I will scan and return to you. You can reach me at [tfweiss@mit.edu](mailto:tfweiss@mit.edu) or via my mailbox K-306. Include your name and apartment # with your photo.