Pursuing my Parents on their Honeymoon

By Peggy Fisher

When my husband and I returned from trips out of state in the early years of our marriage, I would break into the "Maine Stein Song" as we crossed the bridge over the Pisquataqua River that separates Maine from New Hampshire. The rousing anthem was a joke between my husband and me, a reflection of how lucky we felt to be living in Maine. Officially, we knew the "Stein Song" belonged to the University of Maine and a radio crooner named Rudy Vallee from our parents' era made it famous. But soon our busy young lives intruded and as we crossed the bridge with cranky kids and a panting dog in a compact car or landed at the Portland Jetport in a crowded plane, I was too tired to burst into song.

Then 10 years ago we bought a log cabin on a mountain ridge in Lovell, a village nestled in the foothills of the Presidential Range. We purchased it as a refuge from the hubbub of the college town on the coast where we lived and worked. At the time I had a vague recollection that my parents, New Yorkers, had spent their 1930 honeymoon in Lovell, but it was too late to ask them. In any case, the past hadn't influenced us. We bought the cabin, with its cozy knotty pine interior, because we wanted to see mountains in every window and view stars in the night sky without competing artificial light. For 15 years we'd been searching for the perfect getaway: no more than two hours from home and scenic enough to draw us back again and again.

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From the President

We have reached two major achievements since our last newsletter. Our new publication, The Lovell News, is available for sale and has received rave reviews. If you don’t have a copy yet stop by to purchase one or we can mail it to you. Next, our web site now features a documents link. Transcriptions of Lovell’s vital records, early maps and the town’s updated cemetery records are currently available online. We are very grateful for your continued support which has allowed us to accomplish these things.

On September 27th we held our Fall Harvest event, which was wonderfully attended. Pat Williams demonstrated a cider press with apples donated by Pie Tree Orchard. The Charles Lusky family set up a petting zoo and Sam Ring organized pumpkin painting. There were free refreshments, a harvest bake sale and live music provided by “Birds on a Wire”—a group comprised of Jenny & Greg Huang-Dale and Jeanine Loubier. It was a busy three hours and our thanks go to all the volunteers, including the many bakers, who contributed to make the event a success.

On December 20th we hosted our Christmas Open House, attracting over 200 people. Bonnie Fox did a beautiful job decorating the interior of the Kimball-Stanford House. Timpy Warren, the last surviving editor, was on hand to sign copies of The Lovell News. Our thanks go to them and the many people who baked for this event. Additionally, thanks go to Renee Dutton for donating Christmas wreaths, Dave and Peg Mason for providing us with a beautiful Christmas tree and Rachel Kuvaja for baking the most delicious gingerbread men for cooking decorating. Last but not least, thank you to all the members who purchased raffle tickets. Your support is greatly appreciated! The lucky winners were: Richard & Lynn Lloyd ($100 gift certificate to Ebenezer’s Restaurant), Brad & Tina Littlefield ($100 gift certificate to Harvest Gold Gallery), Dr. Loren Rosenbach ($75 gift certificate to the Center Lovell Inn) and Judith Whitney ($50 gift certificate to Lovell Hardware). Thanks go to our members—Chris & Jen Lively, Bill & Lynda Rudd, Janice Sage, and Debra Cooke—for donating the great raffle items.

Once again, I want to thank all of our donors and volunteers. Over the last few years, the Society has been very fortunate to receive many contributions in the form of volunteer work, additions to our collection and your financial generosity. Please remember we depend upon all of these contributions and welcome them in whatever form. Best wishes!

Catherine Stone
The newlywed's steamship ticket.

In Lovell, the main attraction is stunning Kezar Lake where the ice goes out in April and the swimmers arrive in June. The lake extends nine miles, almost the length of the town, the west shore framed by a string of mountain peaks rising behind heavy woods. On the east shore, dotted by large resort hotels and private summer colonies, a strip of white sand forms the public beach. Every summer we made the eight minute drive down the mountain to frolic there among the loons, the ducks, and other vacationers. One summer, after a few years of blissfully swimming in the silken water, I began to recognize a few landmarks from my parents' dinner time honeymoon tales. For example, the pine-fringed property adjacent to the public beach is the Pleasant Point Inn, an elegantly rustic Victorian hotel with curved porches and a cluster of small cabins. The canoes lying on the beach and the ancient tennis courts triggered a memory of one of my parents' oft-told stories. This curious yarn features my beautiful, dark-haired mother wiling away the days paddling a canoe alone across the vast lake while my strapping father, who captained a semi-pro football team in Queens on weekends, played tennis daily with a man he met at dinner the first night at the inn.

I recalled that Mother and Dad were both 27 years old when they married and that my father made $70 a week toiling in the lower ranks of a large Madison Avenue company. His salary, however meager, was enough to draw the admiration of my mother's father because the nation was in the throes of the Great Depression. To satisfy my curiosity, I thumbed through the cache of papers stashed in my father's roll top desk, stored in our son's barn. I found a receipt for $97.72 paid in cash for a week's stay at a place called Farrington's on Lake Kezar. It was dated August 18, 1930. Expenses included supper, one night's lodging in the hotel, six nights in a camp with a water closet, and the rental of a motorboat.

At the Lovell library I confirmed that Pleasant Point Inn previously had been owned by descendants of an old family named Farrington. Now I knew I was hot on the trail of the young New Yorkers who were to become my parents. Next, I made a visit to the Lovell Historical Society. To corroborate the arrival dates on the guest bill, I got permission to pour over dozens of bound copies of old hotel registers kept in their archives. These were heavy and awkward and it was slow going because you had to press down on the pages to hold them open to survey the months and years. Then one rainy summer day I came upon my parents' signature in Farrington's register, dated August 18, 1930. It must have been one of their first signatures as husband and wife: Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Wurtz, Brooklyn, New York. When I gazed at my father's bold hand announcing their newly married state, tears formed. A volunteer slipped the bound book from my arms and made a copy of the page for me to keep.

I went to Dad's papers and found more evidence, including a ticket stub from a stateroom on the S.S. Northland, a steamship which took them from New York City to Portland where they could board a train. In 1930, the old Mountain Division Rail Line ran a regular route through western Maine to Fryeburg, 15 miles south of Lovell. Checking with the Historical Society, I learned that hotels on Kezar Lake sent a touring car or sometimes a livery carriage to pick up guests.

Having discovered the where and the when of their honeymoon, I wondered why my cosmopolitan parents chose Kezar Lake. Eventually, I mustered the courage to examine the disharmonious start of their courtship starting two years before the honeymoon. Talk about first dates! In November, 1928, my father took my mother to the movies in New York City where the recent presidential election results flashed on the screen, an inauspicious beginning because my mother had voted for Herbert Hoover and my father for Al Smith. Nevertheless a courtship ensued which culminated in multiple wedding ceremonies. Details of these events were gleaned from bits and pieces my mother disclosed in my childhood. Dad purchased the steamship ticket three days prior to their July 24th first wedding at Bonnie Brae Farm, the country house of my maternal grandparents, in New Jersey. They drove (Mother always said eloped) there with a minister and a marriage license. According to the wedding booklet Dad saved, eight witnesses, all from my mother's family, attended the ceremony including her parents.

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Fleeing the city with a minister in tow, driving to that bucolic riverside farm, always seemed so romantic to the four of us children when we were growing up. But in reality, the runaway wedding was just the beginning. My father's widowed mother, a devout Catholic, would certainly disapprove of a wedding outside the Catholic Church whereas my mother's Scottish Presbyterian parents had disapproved of a wedding inside the Catholic Church. The story gets murky here because Mother and Dad never discussed with their children what I imagine were several tense weeks of negotiation while they camped in her parents' Brooklyn brownstone. To appease my father's strong-willed mother, a second ceremony was conducted, not at the altar, but in the vestibule of St. Fideles Church in College Point, Dad's home Parish. I can find no record of who attended but most likely it was his mother and his three sisters, his sister Margaret having introduced my father to my mother. Fearful that the ceremonies in the farmhouse and in the church vestibule may not constitute a legal marriage in the eyes of the state, my father and mother were wed a third time in New York City before a Justice of the Peace. In flight from this contentious atmosphere, my beleaguered parents boarded a steamship and fled to Maine.

But why did born and bred New Yorkers decide to honeymoon in Maine instead of eastern Long Island, where they maintained summer retreats throughout my childhood and where they later retired (and are buried)? Or, even upstate New York where both had fond memories of attending scout camp? It remained a mystery until I factored in the phenomenal depression era crooner, Rudy Vallee, whose presence in Lovell is well documented. Vallee, with his band “The Connecticut Yankees”, starred in a wildly popular Thursday night radio show from New York City, “The Fleischmann Hour”. Every week the band closed the program with a stirring version of the “Maine Stein Song”, the top hit for eight weeks in 1930, the summer of my parents' roundelay wedding ceremonies. News stories everywhere featured Vallee and his band and papers in New York City carried advertisements for resorts on Kezar Lake where Vallee had acquired property.

Now here's the deal: I grew up in a household where the piano bench was stuffed with collegiate sheet music (Yale, Cornell, Columbia, etc.). As a family we could belt out “Ramblin’ Wreck” from Georgia Tech or harmonize to “Army Blue”. With friends, my parents gathered around our baby grand to sing and I’m sure they listened to Vallee's radio show. How else to explain it? A popular crooner led Mother and Dad to Maine and to the shores of Kezar Lake, where each summer I see them in my mind's eye, ever young and hopeful, swimming alongside me.

Peggy Fisher is a writer from Brunswick with a vacation home on Sabattus Mountain.

Peggy Fisher

In Memoriam

We note with sadness the passing of the following friends and neighbors, and extend our sympathy to their families and friends.

David MacIntosh Evans, 67, of Lovell passed away on October 2, 2009. Dave was a descendant of Frederick Dallinger, one of the five original owners of Rattlesnake Island on Kezar Lake. He spent thirty years teaching history at Milton Wright High School in Maryland while summering at his cabin on the Island. Upon retiring from teaching, Dave and his family moved year round to Lovell, building a house on Sabattus Road. He was a life member of this Society. He is survived by his wife Betsy and daughter Christina.
The 16th Maine Infantry Regiment at Gettysburg
By John & Liz McCann

During the summer of 1862 fourteen Lovell men joined Company D of the 16th Maine Infantry Regiment. They were Henry Franklin Andrews, Edwin Bailey, James Butters, Stephen Coffin, Sylvester Eastman, Enoch Gray, Jeremiah Gray, Alpheus Hamblen, Abel Harriman, George Harriman, Stephen Irish, Amos Kenniston, Lyman McKeen and Jonathan Warren. This is the second article to recount their exploits, the first dealing with the Battle of Fredericksburg which resulted in the deaths of Eastman and McKeen.

July 1, [1963]—Marched at 6 a.m. After proceeding a short distance, heard cannonading to the front. After reaching the battle-ground, we were ordered with the rest of the brigade forward toward the right and in rear of a large house and ridge, where we halted for a few moments. We were then ordered, with the Ninety-fourth New York Volunteers, to the left and front, and threw up a barricade of rails, &c. In fifteen minutes we were ordered to the right, to engage the enemy at the top of the ridge, and which being done we changed front, our right resting on the top of the ridge and running parallel with the fence and woods and in front of our original lines. Here we engaged the enemy, and drove him from his position, after which we were ordered to the rear in the woods, where we lay skirmishing with the enemy for a few moments. We were then ordered, alone, by Gen. Robinson, to take possession of a hill which commanded the road, and hold the same as long as there was a man left. We took the position as ordered, and held the same until, finding the enemy in such force, and rapidly advancing on us, and seeing no support coming to our aid, we fell back into the hollow, and formed again, but could not hold our position, and finally fell back into the woods, where we engaged the enemy until, finding that we were again left without support, and the enemy engaging us both front and flank, ordered a retreat, but not in time to reach the main body of the brigade. Our loss in killed, wounded, and missing for the day was: Officers killed, 1; enlisted men killed, 8; officers wounded, 5; enlisted men wounded, 47; officers missing, 11; enlisted men missing, 151; total, 223.

—Battle Report after Gettysburg by Lieut. Col. Augustus B. Bamham, 16th Maine Infantry

This report from the surviving senior officer of the 16th Maine Infantry Regiment is written in the typically sparse style of a military officer, yet it hardly does justice to the courage, fortitude, and perseverance of one of Maine's most illustrious, and infamous, regiments. As noted in the previous article about the 16th Maine, they were known as "the Blanket Regiment" for a variety of reasons, and often ridiculed by their fellow soldiers in the Army of the Potomac. They proved their mettle at Fredericksburg, and in the Battle of Gettysburg seven months later, they would show again what Maine men could do.

While the most famous Maine regiment, the 20th Infantry commanded by Colonel Joshua Chamberlain, would achieve just fame for their defense of Little Round Top on the second day of the battle, it was the relatively unknown efforts of their brothers in the 16th Maine the day before that played just as key a role in the Union success at Gettysburg. Without the 16th slowing the advance of the Confederate Army on July 1st, the battle may have played out very differently and the 20th Maine might have been a footnote in the Battle of Gettysburg.

Early in June 1863, only a month after the Battle of Chancellorsville, General Robert E. Lee devised a bold plan to bring the war to the North. Virginia had served as a battleground for two years, as the North and South fought it out between Washington and Richmond. Hoping to give his home state some rest, he devised an audacious plan to invade Pennsylvania. Once Lee left Virginia, crossed Maryland and entered Pennsylvania, he split his army into 3 smaller pieces the better to wreak havoc and to attempt to draw the North into a major battle. He was counting on his cavalry, commanded by General Jeb Stuart, to keep him apprised of the enemy's movements so he could concentrate the disparate parts of his army together in time to meet a Federal attack. Unfortunately for Lee, Stuart had not anticipated the speed with which the Federals would respond and was caught out of position. Lee was left blind. The Federals had marched quickly, they were coming for Lee and his army and that army was scattered from Harrisburg to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, a distance of over 60 miles.

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On June 30th, acting on a rumor of a supply of shoes at Gettysburg, an element of Lee's army (perpetually short of shoes and almost all other material) was sent to investigate. When they encountered a group of Federal troops, they withdrew, being mindful of General Lee’s warning not to bring on a battle until they knew the location of the Federal army and had time to bring the various elements of Lee's army together. That evening, though, General A.P. Hill decided he wanted those shoes. “The only force at Gettysburg is cavalry”, he declared, “probably a detachment of observation.” Meade’s forces were still down in Maryland, he added, “and have not struck their tents”.

General Hill’s dismissive attitude towards the Army of the Potomac was typical of the manner in which the leaders of the Army of Northern Virginia viewed their Federal counterparts. By the end of the three-day battle, it was a view they would hold no longer. But the first day of the battle affirmed the negative opinions of the Army of the Potomac. Without the efforts of some key individuals and Union regiments, the 16th Maine key among them, the entire battle may have gone very differently.

As a Confederate Division under Major General Henry Heth approached Gettysburg from the west to “get those shoes”, he quickly ran into two brigades of cavalry commanded by Brigadier General John Buford. Buford had been sent forward to secure Gettysburg due to the large number of roads which converged there. Far more than a “department of observation”, Buford’s 3,000 men boasted new Sharps carbines, which could fire rounds much faster and more accurately than the standard issue muskets. As the fight began around 8 a.m., Heth found he wasn’t able to brush these horsemen aside and had to deploy his division to make a broad attack. This was initially repulsed by Buford but the weight of the oncoming Confederate Army looked like it would soon overwhelm him.

The Union Army, however, was close at hand. General John Reynolds, commanding the 1st Corps, arrived soon after the battle started and quickly called up his infantry to join the fight. Among those on the road to Gettysburg was the 16th Maine. As they neared Gettysburg, they were able to hear cannon fire and knew they were marching towards a real fight. Lt. Francis Wiggin of the 16th wrote: “We were still a mile or more from the town when an orderly came riding back bringing to us the sad intelligence that General Reynolds had been killed by a sharpshooter, while he was superintending the placing of troops, and anxiously awaiting the arrival of the remainder of the First Corps. Events were crowding upon us too swiftly for the indulgence of grief over the untimely death of one of the ablest generals in the Union army, but he had lived long enough to make arrangements and issue orders which had a tremendous bearing on the issues of the battle, and without his foresight the result of Gettysburg might have been far different from what it was.”

The ground Buford and Reynolds had chosen to defend was the campus of a Lutheran Seminary, situated on a small hill to the west of Gettysburg. The 16th was initially put in reserve in front of the Seminary and threw up some breastworks to protect the position. Heth was meanwhile reinforced and the Confederates redoubled their attack on the Union line. At around 1 p.m., the 16th was given the order to move to the extreme right of the 1st Corps, over Seminary Ridge and going about a quarter mile down the west side of the ridge in full view of the enemy. They found themselves behind a rail fence in the woods, about 200 yards distant from a Confederate regiment, also behind a rail fence. Here they fought long and hard.

Captain Whitehouse of Company K was instantly killed. Captain Waldron of Company S was severely wounded. Colonel Charles Tilden, commander of the Regiment, had his horse shot from under him. “And the regiment suffered severely. Finally the order to charge bayonets was given, and with a ringing cheer (continued on page 7)

A monument marking the final position of the 16th Maine during the Battle of Gettysburg. It reads:

POSITION HELD JULY 1st, 1863,
AT 4:00 O’CLOCK P.M. BY THE
16TH MAINE INFANTRY,
1ST BRIGADE, 2ND DIVISION, 1ST CORPS,
WHILE THE REST OF THE DIVISION WAS
RETIRING, THE REGIMENT HAVING MOVED
FROM THE POSITION AT THE LEFT WHERE
ITS MONUMENT STANDS, UNDER ORDERS
TO HOLD THIS POSITION AT ANY COST.
IT LOST ON THIS FIELD,
KILLED 11, WOUNDED 62, CAPTURED 159
OUT OF 275 ENGAGED
the regiment leaped over the rail fence and going full tilt at the rebel line drove them pell mell into the woods”, wrote Regimental Adjutant Abner R. Small.

As if the attack from the west wasn’t enough for the Union soldiers to handle, the disparate pieces of the Confederate Army, marching towards the sound of the guns at Gettysburg, soon began to arrive on scene from the north and the east. While the 1st Corps was soon reinforced by the 11th Corps, who took position to the north and east of the 1st Corps, the Union Army on scene was on the verge of being overwhelmed. The Confederate forces outnumbered the Union soldiers by two to one.

At 3:30 p.m., the 11th Corps gave way and retreated through the town. That left the 1st Corps’ right flank exposed to the Confederates attacking from the north. That pressure, along with the continuing attacks from the west, soon forced the 1st Corps to retreat back towards the town as well. As they came back onto Seminary Ridge, they took advantage of the breastworks earlier constructed there to catch their breath and keep back the attacking rebels. However, the lines of the 1st Corps were crumbling and giving way to the tremendous waves of the oncoming rebels. A sacrifice had to be made in order to save what was left of the division and the corps.

The 16th Maine was to be the sacrifice. Under orders from General Robinson to “Hold it at any cost”, fewer than two hundred men held their position for as long as possible, while the other regiments of their brigade fell back toward the town. The 16th Maine heroically absorbed the full brunt of the Confederate attack, slowing it enough to allow the rest of the 1st Corps to retreat east through Gettysburg to Cemetery Hill where they could regroup and turn the tide of the battle on July 2nd and 3rd.

Realizing they were completely alone and surrounded by the enemy, the 16th was forced to surrender. Colonel Tilden plunged his sword in the ground and broke it off at the hilt. As a rebel officer tried to grasp the colors, the men closed around them and with permission of Colonel Tilden they broke the staffs. To prevent them from falling into Confeder ate hands, both the American and Regimental flags were torn into little pieces and distributed among the remaining members of the Regiment to be concealed and eventually brought home.

Speaking some years after the battle, General Joshua Chamberlain said: “when word came to me of (the loss of your colors) I felt a shock, but not of shame. For I knew something terrible must have befallen, and that there could have been no dishonor where you were. But when I came to know the truth of it all, I saw that instead of your colors being lost, they were eternally saved! Not laid down, but lifted up...”

Most of the Regiment’s survivors now found themselves captured. Altogether, 148 men and 11 officers were taken prisoner. Only 4 officers and 31 men escaped to Cemetery Hill. During the day’s action, the regiment lost 11 men killed, 62 wounded, and 164 missing, a total of 86% of its 275 men. Considering the carnage, the Lovell men made out fairly well. Many of them, under the leadership of the Regimental Adjutant Abner Small, were able to slip past the Confederates and get to Cemetery Hill, although Samuel Gray was killed and Jonathan Warren was taken prisoner and eventually exchanged.

Charles Augustus Garcelon

Stephen Coffin (1838-1903) and Charles Augustus Garcelon (1842-1935) served together in the 16th Maine. Charles was from Lewiston, the son of Maine’s Surgeon General. Stephen, from Lovell, served as a nurse in the field hospital. Their association resulted in the introduction of Stephen’s cousin, Esther Coffin of North Lovell, to Charles. Charles married Esther in 1872, went on to become General Manager of the Pullman Company and retired in Lovell. He built the Garcelon Mansion at the north end of Kezar Lake between 1906 and 1908.

The Garcelons at their home on Kezar Lake
Gifts and Donations

We are very grateful for the following gifts received since the last newsletter: Bev & Jack Bassett—photos & news clippings; Charlotte Hobbs Memorial Library—permission to scan 3 albums of photos and news clippings of the Arts & Artisans Fair from 1974 through 2004; John & Viola Cram (in memory of Mayo Cram)—beryl crystal with aquamarine from Howard Mt.; Renee Dutton—Christmas wreaths; Karen Erickson—35 diaries of Theodora Dallinger spanning the years 1923 through 1958; Peggy & Ray Fisher (in memory of William & Lillian Wurtz)—permission to scan photos; Brian Fox (in memory of David & John Fox)—John R. Fox’s Army coat and hat from WWII, advertisement featuring David G. Fox; Louise Hamor (in memory of Rodney & Geneva Charles)—photo of Hattie Charles; Arnold Harmon—permission to scan photos; Wayne & Meredith Harmon (in memory of Marge & Leon Harmon)—permission to scan photos; Gary & Mary Heroux—permission to scan photos; Valerie Josephson—Who Would Not Be a Soldier! by Valerie Josephson; Donald Kilgour—photographs; Ruth Knight (in memory of Cliff Knight)—child’s coffin, framed pen & ink drawing of Knight’s Olde Country Store, photos of Lovell Village, East Stoneham church ledger for 1913-1916; Linda Libby (in memory of Maxine Hewey)—information on the Kezar Lake Senior Citizens organization; Thomas Lowry—Love and Lust: Private and Amorous Letters of the Civil War by Thomas Lowry; Juanita Lusky—photo of Ray Harmon; Dave & Peg Mason—Christmas tree; Leotus Morrison—material on Anna Baker and Camp Mudjekeewis; Sheldon & Kathleen Moulton—Ott Moulton’s treadle wood lathe, blouse & skirt circa 1900, hearth pot; Margrit Newman—A Lady of the Lake by Charlotte Hartman, Crazy About Cats Poster Book and Crazy About Horses Poster Book by Dodo Knight; Frederic Sater—photos; Mary Semple—permission to scan photos, postcards; Tom Stone (in memory of Joanna Stone Benjamin)—set of Encyclopedia Britannica printed in 1890.

Cash donations have been gratefully received from: Katherine Armstrong; John & Esther Atwood; Harold & Joyce Buckingham; Ed & Audrey Clout; John & Viola Cram; Ann Diskin (in memory of David Evans); Grace Douglass; Mariann Durgin; Tom & Pam Foley; Elmer Fox; Peter & Linda Gale; Roy Gedat; Barry & Nona Gilman; Theda Gilman; Elnor Goodwin; Frank & Willie Gorke; Joel & Georgette Hardman; Arnold Harmon; Barbara Hohn; William & Alice Hollett; Dave & Becky Johnson; Ruth Knight; Bob & Paula Lawrence; Tom & Jeanie Loeb; Barbara McAllister; Robert McAllister; Bill & Anna Marie McCormick; John Mendelsohn & Judith Frediani; Carol Miller; Charles & Roberta Mosher; Dan & Marilalice Mulhern; New Suncook Real Estate; Jane Orans; Richard & Betty Pillsbury; Armand & Judith Sabourin; Anthony Sarcone (in memory of David Evans); Eleanor Conant Saunders; Kim & Janet Sheffield; Robin Siegel; Nicholas Skinner; John Smith; Todd & Sarah Smith; Al & Jacky Stearns; Bob Steller & Pat Gibson (in memory of Dr. & Mrs. Robert Booth); Stephen & Jennifer Tooley (in memory of David Evans); Lt. Gen. George & Zoe Trautman; Ed & Betty White; Judith Wilson; Irene Zeller.

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