

10964

APRIL 1987

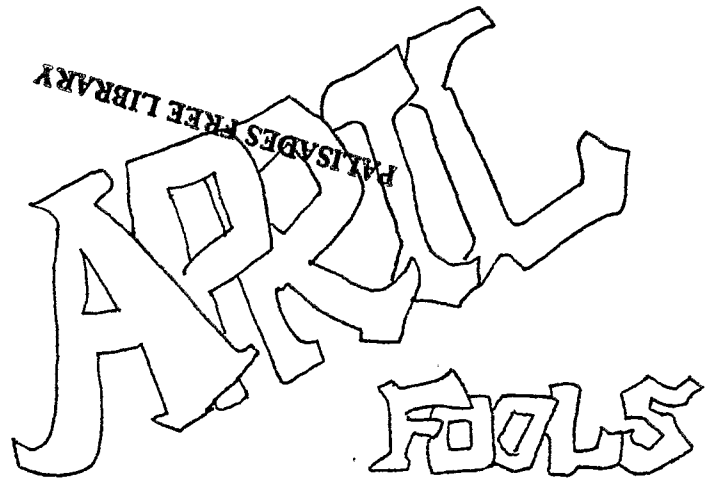
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FROM THE EDITOR

Each month we try to select a theme with which to begin our issue. This month we feature April Fool's Day. Inside the newsletter you will also find a lovely article on the Palisades Presbyterian Church written by its Pastor, Laurie Ferguson; interesting school news about some outstanding Palisades students; and some charming and poignant verse by Boyce Leni and Joey Tonetti.

Our May issue will start off with the joys of Spring, and feature some gardening and planting pieces. And of course we will have other special articles inside the newsletter. If you have pieces for our May issue, please send them in to us.

LPH



WHEN YOU'RE A JET YOU'RE A JET ALL THE WAY

Eden-Lee Jellinek's account of a particularly memorable April First.

Picture if you will a *West Side Story* cast, all twenty-five of us, 9 1/2 weeks into a 10-week rehearsal period for a production at the Loeb Drama Center in Cambridge, Mass., overseen by The Man himself - Leonard Bernstein - then a visiting Norton Professor at Harvard. I was in the part of "Anybody's," the little tomboy Jet.

This company was far from your ordinary college show: we had actors up from New York, students from theatre training centers in the Boston area (for example, our "Rosalia," Jossie de Guzman, went on to play "Maria" in the Broadway revival, and our "Tony," Bill Mabel, was in the original company of *Chorus Line*). At the time I was a disgruntled Wellesley sophomore (whose experience in this production prompted my transferring to Harvard where I did 40 shows in two years and had the time of my life).

So here is this group of 25 exhausted, dedicated *West Side Story* folk, sliding into the final stretch, thrilled about the show, pleased with ourselves, and worn to our eyebrows when we are called into a meeting with the producer after a particularly grueling rehearsal. Singers drank warm honeyed tea, dancers rubbed sore muscles, actors gave each other back rubs.

(Cont'd p. 2)

TIME ON MY HANDS

Or: how a lowly private secretary put one over on the big machine. Leslie Hayes describes her coup d'etat.

In 1985 I was secretary to the Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Gimbels Department Store chain. The man's name was Tom Brown. Really. He and I had a "good working relationship" as they say, comfortable mostly, adversarial and wary some of the time. Mr. Brown had the reputation within the corporation for being real tough, and employees of all ranks quaked in their boots whenever he was in their vicinity or they in his. To be called into his office warranted great prior shivering and shaking on the part of even his top executives. And occasionally me as well. But Mr. Brown had a great and sarcastic sense of humor and appreciated the fact that his secretary had one, too.

Anyway, a few years back I had a milestone birthday for which occasion my parents presented me with a Rolex Oyster Perpetual, which I had always wanted and which I have never taken off since. For some reason it bugged Mr. Brown that his secretary would own a Rolex. If I were to remind him of a meeting at 10:00, he would ask me the time and then pretend to doubt the accuracy of my answer, saying something like, "I don't know how you ever can tell the correct time with that phony

(Cont'd p. 2)

JELLINEK (Cont'd from p. 1)

The producer spoke: "We have received some ugly phone calls from the Puerto Rican Liberation Organization. They maintain that *West Side Story* is degrading to Puerto Rico, and they say that if we persist in this production we can expect violence from them. Although they weren't specific, I think we can reasonably assume they're talking bombs in the theatre on opening night. I don't say this to frighten you, but I think we all need to know what's at stake, and if anyone wants to pull out, we cannot force him or her to perform at the risk of his or her life. What do you all think?"

There was - understandably - a long moment of silence. The first to speak was our "Officer Krupke" (a good Boston cop in real life). "They're just bluffing!" he said. "Dese animals just wanna scare us. I say we go and show 'em dey can't bully us!"

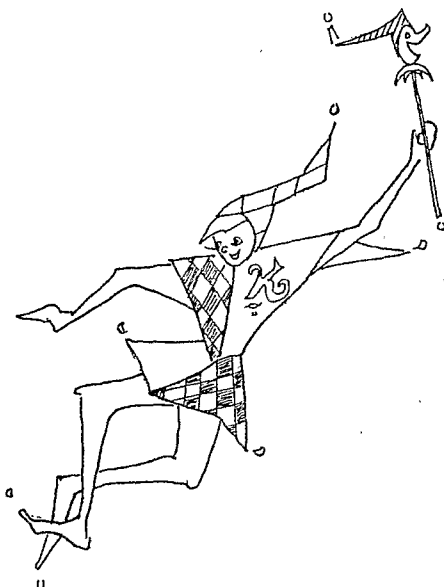
Jossie de Guzman, herself a Puerto Rican, spoke up: "No! I know my people! If they say they will kill for their honor, they *will* kill!"

Annie de Salvo (later to appear in *Gemini* on Broadway and in the film, *Arthur*) talked about actors having rights and said we could not be expected to risk our lives for a show.

I was silent, mentally drafting my letter to my parents, telling them that I loved them very much but that I loved theatre, too, enough to risk my life for this production, and that if we were in fact bombed and I was killed, I died doing the thing I loved best in the world and they were not to mourn for me.

The debate dragged on until it appeared that the solution was to postpone opening night and try to reason with the Puerto Rican Liberation group. Whereupon the producer stood up and said, "Very well. If this is the solution you have hit upon, I think I had better warn you: if you put off opening night, you'll be even bigger April Fools than you are now!"

How he lived past that moment I'll *never* know.



HAYES (Cont'd from p. 1)

Rolex you wear." Or he'd say, "Who are you trying to kid with that fake watch of yours." He would go through this exercise with me several times during the course of the week, questioning the authenticity of my Rolex. I would just laugh, grinning and bearing it.

Mr. Brown, who appreciated very fine clothes, cars (he had a fleet of them), jewelry, hotels, restaurants, homes (he had several), was truly impressed that I had this Rolex. Funny thing was, sometimes he bought fake watches as a joke for his kids and their friends, at a place a couple of blocks from Gimbels. (Might have been called Fabulous Forgeries, but I don't quite remember.) He would send his daughter, who was away at college, a fake Cartier watch, or a Porsche watch, or a Rolex.

On April 1st, 1985, a date which will go down in infamy in the life of Thomas A. Brown, I took a walk to Fabulous Forgeries on my lunch hour and bought myself a fake Rolex for \$15, went back to Gimbels, took off my real Rolex, put it safely away in my desk, and donned the fake watch. Then I waited, and like Brer Rabbit, I lay low.

Before long Mr. Brown called me into his office to give me some papers and, checking his own watch, asked me what time I had. I answered, "It's 3:15, Sir." He then added, with his usual sarcasm, "Are you sure about that, Les? Why don't you buy yourself a Swatch? It's more reliable than that phony thing you wear."

That was the speech for which I had been waiting. With great distress and anguish in my voice, I said, "Mr. Brown, you are my boss and I want to please you. You've been berating my Rolex for a long time and it upsets me very much and if you really don't like me to have this watch, then I don't want it either!" And with that, I ripped the fake off my wrist, threw it to the ground in front of Mr. Brown's desk, and began jumping up and down on it. Pieces of glass and metal flew around. Mr. Brown leaped from his desk, ran over to me, yelling, "Stop! Stop! Are you crazy?!"

Then the Vice-Chairman of Gimbels, head of 21 department stores throughout the north and south, dropped to his pin-striped knees and tried to gather up the tiny fragments of the watch. He hoarsely cried, "I was only kidding you when I kidded you! Are you nuts?" It was a most pitiful and delightful sight.

I paused for one glorious and dramatic moment, then calmly and quietly said, "Get up, Mr. Brown. Get up. It was just a joke. April Fool! My real Rolex is tucked away in my desk drawer. This watch was a fake, Mr. Brown. A fake!"

He *said* it was the best trick ever played on him. But as far as I know he has never told a living soul about it. Nor did he ever again ask me for the time.

THERE AUTO BE A LAW

Greg Olsen relates a dastardly trick played on him by his older brother, Keith.

Perhaps the most important thing to a 17 year old boy (along with school, girls and mom) is his car. A small brightly colored convertible for the summer is the dream of many guys my age. Thus it follows that when I was told about a car (a 1970 Karman Ghia convertible) by my brother, Keith - and he made it sound absolutely irresistible - I was very interested.

He said that the car was fully restored, in mint condition, and only \$800. I needed to hear no more. I asked for the location and I was off. Upon arrival at the car site, there it was. I saw it. It was gorgeous! Just as Keith had explained. The owner came out, saw my excitement, smiled. I told him that this was my dream vehicle and how interested I was.

I asked the usual questions and was growing more and more attached to the car, already imagining myself its proud owner. Then I asked the guy, "How's it run?" The man looked at me in a very strange manner. I rephrased the question, thinking that perhaps he had not heard me correctly.

"I said, how's it drive?"

After an uncomfortable few seconds the man said, "Well, son, it *doesn't!* No engine!"

The vision of myself driving along on a bright summer day with the top down was instantly shattered. I explained to the man that a car that didn't move didn't appeal to me. He understood, sort of giggled, and I left.

As I made my way home I realized that it was April Fool's day and that my brother probably knew all the time the car didn't have an engine. Any suspicion that that was not the case was removed when I arrived home and saw my brother sitting on our porch, laughing.

CARFOOL

Karen Jefferies fondly recaptures an appalling moment for husband, Jack.

A few years ago my husband was the proud owner of an elderly yet elegant Mercedes. How he doted on that car! One evening he came home to announce that the window on the driver's side was stuck half way down. He did not want to park the car in the city, therefore, for fear of theft.

I, being the wonderful and considerate wife I am, volunteered the use of my ordinary compact and told him I would take his Mercedes to the mechanic.

Bright and early the next morning, off I drove to the mechanic, prepared to wait hours as is usually the case. To my delight, however, with a simple adjustment the window was fixed within minutes! It was a fine spring morning. I rolled the window down and headed home. The radio announcer was talking about April Fool pranks.

As I pulled into the driveway, Jack was getting into my car to go into the city. Suddenly I was inspired. Did I dare?

"The window's fixed," he asked. "So soon?"

"But oh, dear, you won't believe it. While they were trying to fix the window, it just broke! Right before my eyes! They have ordered a replacement." I continued as I opened the car door, "Might take weeks. Look at it!"

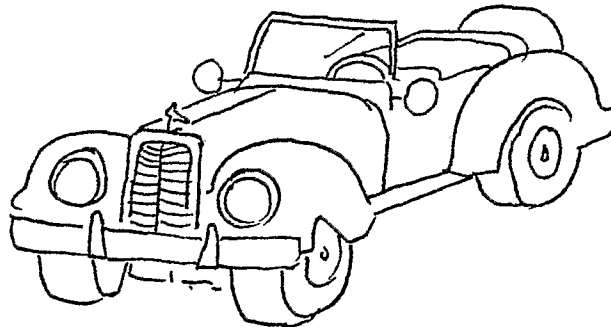
"What!" groaned Jack. "How could that happen?" He moaned, groping at the empty space.

I just couldn't go on and reached back into the car and pushed the window lever. The window rolled up.

"April Fool!" I said.

"I can't believe you did that, Karen," said Jack.

"I just couldn't resist," said I.



WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR?

Diane Langmuir and a good friend of hers have been playing April Fool pranks on one another for years. Here Diane recounts a few of them.

My husband is notorious for forgetting to tell me important things until the last minute, a characteristic my friend knows about him very well. I called my friend one fine April Fool's day, sounding panicked, saying, "You have to help me! The Smiths are coming tonight for a big reunion dinner! My oven's broken! I need to use yours! I'm cooking a big turkey!" My friend said it was fine with her.

Then I said, "I might have to store a few things in your refrigerator, too!" Again she said fine. She was all concerned, said she would leave a key with her neighbor.

"And perhaps I could use a cooler," I added. She agreed to that. I thanked her and then said, "I might have to take over your entire kitchen for the whole day, if you wouldn't mind!"

She finally caught on.

"Just you wait until next year!" my friend roared.

The following year my friend called me this time, disguising her voice, and in a slight Bronx accent said she was from the Spring Valley Water Company. A water main had broken and they would have to turn off all the water on our street. She was notifying all the residents. I asked how long the water would be off. She replied, "I'm not certain, perhaps a week, maybe a month."

Then I caught on!

"Gotcha!" she cried.

The next year I had a male friend of mine call and ask to speak to my girlfriend. He said, "This is the FBI, ma'am, hold on one minute please."

Then I got on the phone, disguising my voice. I said, "I am investigating a claim that you are in the habit of impersonating a person from an official company. This is a Federal offense, subject to tremendous penalties. A serious crime!" I went on and on, getting more elaborate and ridiculous.

My friend finally replied, "Diane! I know it's you!"



VERSE ON A YOUNG MAN'S VISIT - 1977

A reminiscence by Boyce Leni.

When we moved to Palisades ten years ago, children played along the Lane and in the woods near our house. The old stone retaining wall on our property, we learned, had been their fort. And after the house went up, they were curious about the changes to their playground and its new inhabitants. So they came - sometimes singly, sometimes in groups.

I loved meeting our new neighbors this way and after each visit would send a verse to the caller. Here's one I wrote to Joey Tonetti, printed here with his permission.

For Joey:

When knight on shining Honda
Spun gravel in the drive,
I hurried to the window
To see who would arrive.

He doffed his helmet,
Paused a bit,
Came cautious to the door.
Drank one tall glass of apple juice
But said he'd have no more.

Returning to his trusty steed,
He gave a flick so light,
That scarce was time for wave and nod
As he putted out of sight.

VERSE BY THE YOUNG MAN - 1987

Joseph L. Tonetti (Joey), a sophomore at Boston University, has contributed this poem to 10964.

Copacetic Mode


Many Meadows of Peace
A Happy Child Running in Open Space
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Time Lingers with the Tranquil Afternoon
Fractured only by Memories of still-born Dreams
Piercing Notes Fill the Opaque Sky as
Sparrows Slice through the Falling Leaves
As with the Opening of Champagne
Visions Bubble Frantically
Exploding Ideas that Splatter
Like Water Upon a Helmsman
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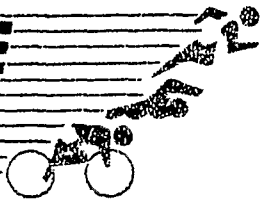


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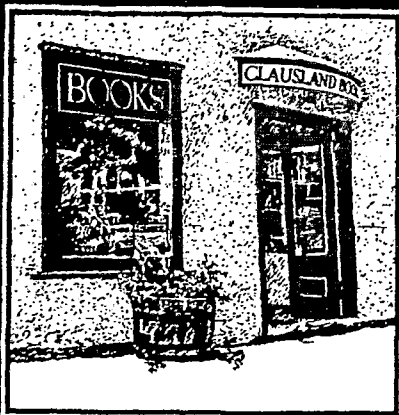


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THE PALISADES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

10964 asked Laurie Ferguson, Pastor of this church, to write an article for our newsletter about the church, and she has graciously contributed this piece.

The Palisades Presbyterian Church has been part of Palisades since 1863, after Winthrop S. Gilman returned from a trip to Switzerland with an idea for the present structure. By God's providence, and due to Mr. Gilman's efforts and those of other stalwarts, the congregation has maintained itself ever since. These almost 125 years have seen many changes -- a new shingle roof cost \$145 in 1889 -- and many issues, such as opposition to the oil tanks in what is now Tallman Park, where church members shared the community's concern. The church currently has about 200 active members, plus a good number of friends who attend services and participate in various programs.

The church serves residents of Palisades and those in surrounding communities. The congregation seeks to serve the larger community of humankind through contributions to Church World Service and other overseas projects through the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the National and World Councils of Churches. Locally, the Church helps efforts to rebuild Yonkers, to shelter battered women and the homeless, to counsel alcoholics, to minister to victims of AIDS, to work for international peace, etc. The Pastor's Community Fund is used to help people in the immediate area who are in need of assistance.

The Church's main program areas include its choir -- which invites more community participation especially around Christmas; the Sunday School; spiritual life groups; and fellowship events which include recitals, community meals, and experiences like the Talent Show. In each area, friends as well as members are active -- with our great appreciation. And to those of you who have helped renew the church roof and parish house, we re-state our gratitude here.

In all of these activities, the goal is to deepen faith and enrich the lives of our members and friends. Whether through the excellent music program, the Sunday School stories that shape belief and character, or the sense of belonging in the meals and celebrations, we hope that people will know life in all its fullness. This goal is perhaps clearest in the adult education and sharing groups, where we try to teach each other the "second language" of faith and "habits of the heart" that will sustain us on our individual and common spiritual journeys.

SCHOOL NEWS

PSAT/NMSQT

No, the title is not a typographical error. PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. For most high school juniors the prospect of taking this examination conjures up nightmares and anxiety attacks. The PSAT is a preview of the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) which is given during the senior year. The test measures basic math and verbal skills and is used by colleges to see how students across the country fare in these areas. A student can take the test in his junior or senior year. If he wishes, he can take it in both the junior and senior years. The higher score achieved is the one used.

Katherine McIntyre took the PSAT/NMSQT in her junior year at Tappan Zee High School. Of all the juniors in the country taking the test only 1/2% score highly enough to be considered semi-finalists for a National Merit scholarship. Katherine became one of those select few. After submitting an essay and a transcript of her record, she became a finalist. There are only 13,500 other students in this category. She now awaits the next part of the competition which will narrow the number down to 6,000. Good luck, Katherine.

Based on their SAT scores, Elizabeth D. Hayes and Gregory Olsen, also seniors at Tappan Zee High School, have been awarded New York State Regents scholarships. Elizabeth, known as Libby, took the PSAT in her junior year; Gregory in his senior year.

A total of 25,000 college scholarships are awarded by the state. Each scholarship entitles the recipient to an award of \$250 a year for up to 5 years of study in an approved New York State college.

Bravo, Katherine, Libby and Greg! And congratulations to their families.

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NEWS FROM ROCKLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Sat., April 4: Rainbow Auction

A fine spectrum of quality art, unusual objects and golden opportunities will be offered at this gala benefit. At 6:00pm is a preview and silent auction, cocktails and buffet. At 8:00pm the live auction begins. Bidders will find a wide array of items on the auction block: works of art, sculpture, fine crafts, festive and exotic items and services for every taste. Reservations are required.

Sun., April 5: Yaroslava Mills will hold a Ukrainian Easter Egg Workshop.

The art of creating these eggs is known as "pysanka." These miniatures depict symbols of health, happiness, love and prosperity and students will bring an unboiled egg to work on. In addition, Ms. Mills will show slides, a film and give a demonstration to illustrate this delicate folk art. Fee: \$12.

Sat., April 11 and Sun., April 12: Calligraphy Seminar

Peter Thornton, Scribe to the Queen of England, will provide a special weekend workshop on April 11 and 12 from 10:00am to 4:00pm. Mr. Thornton, known for his humor, enthusiasm and brilliant commentary, will teach "Foundations of Craftsmanship," the essence of the craft of calligraphy. Students also will be treated to a special presentation entitled, "Layout in Design for the Terrified," with a surprising ending. Choosing suitable letterforms, nib sharpening, pen exercises, paper/ink combinations and a very unique and simple method of bookbinding, will be addressed as well.

Fri., April 24: "Kafkaesque; Hunting for Kafka." Lecture by Ernst Pawel.**Sat., April 25 and Sun., May 3: "Sculpture: Clay Is Not Just Pots."**

Sculptress Margaret Cherubin to teach workshops. The workshops will allow students to explore the outside world and one's own inner world in what she calls "the most forgiving of mediums. . . clay." The workshop is appropriate for all levels.

Sun., April 26 and Sun., May 3: Drawing & Watercolor Workshop

Andrea Callard will spend an afternoon with students who will drive to a specially chosen place to draw together, then return to the Center to translate their work into the medium of watercolor. Ms. Callard will demonstrate various watercolor techniques and work with students from their sketches. There is no fee for this workshop except \$8 for materials.

On 3 Sundays - April 26, May 31 and June 21: Raku Workshop

Rosemary Aiello, Raku artist specialising in large earthenware vessels, will continue her Sunday workshops. Fee per workshop: \$35.

IMAGES OF POWER**Exhibit Features Cristina Biaggi**

In celebration of Women's History Month, the Rockland Center for the Arts mounted an important exhibition, "Images of Power," visual statements by 10 major women artists from the post-war to the contemporary period. Women's issues as well as the humanistic issues which touch us all were explored in this exhibit: youth, marriage, motherhood, work, sexuality, creativity and aging.

Included among beautiful and powerful works of art was Cristina Biaggi's massive, suspended outdoor web collage of rope and canvas depicting the history of the feminist movement as it touched the lives of all races and nationalities. During the exhibit, videos of the process of making and installing Ms. Biaggi's "web" piece were shown in the gallery.

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NEWS FROM PALISADES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

On Palm Sunday, April 12, the Church School children will participate in a Seder, having a meal similar to the Last Supper with bread and grape juice.

Tenebrae will be observed on Maunday Thursday, April 16, at 8:00pm, with A.M.E. Zion Church of Sparkill, at Palisades Presbyterian Church.

The annual Easter egg hunt for children will be on Saturday, April 18, from 1:00 to 3:00pm.

Easter Sunrise service will be at Mr. Bentz Plagemann's at 6:30am, and Easter Services will take place at 11:00am at the church.



NEWS FROM THE PALISADES FREE LIBRARY

Library Referendum

South Orangetown School District residents overwhelmingly approved operating budgets for their 5 public libraries next year.

By a vote of 361 to 8, residents agreed to have an additional sum of \$77,000 allocated to the libraries through the school tax. Palisades, therefore, will receive an additional \$16,000 bringing its total school tax support to \$30,000.

The results from the 4 polling places were Tappan 59 to 1, Orangeburg 42 to 2, Palisades 181 to 4, and Blauvelt 79 to 1.

Video-Cassettes

The Ramapo-Catskill Library System has changed its video tape borrowing system. We are now allotted a number of videos that will be in our collection for a specified period of time. Every 60 days or so, a new batch will be available to our patrons on a first come, first served basis.

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10964 DEADLINE

The deadline for copy for the May issue of 10964 is April 25. The May issue will appear in your mail as close to the first of the month as possible.

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Thank you!

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