

# THE LARK

June 2020

**Meadowhill.net**



## Meet your Neighbor – Bernice Spencer



Continuing our practice of profiling some of the interesting folks who live at Meadow Hill, the Lark is starting a new series, in which we'll introduce MH residents who have achieved the distinction of becoming nonagenarians (age 90-99). First up is a lady who claims her life hasn't been all that interesting, and then disproves that assertion with every sentence. Meadow Hill, meet Bernice Spencer, our neighbor in unit 330.

Bernice was born Rosamond Bernice Saunders on a snowy January night in 1925 in the tiny village of Ashton, located in Ottawa Valley, Canada. Though her grandparents 4 miles up the road had running water and electricity, it was several years before those amenities reached Bernice's family home. While not technically a farm, the homestead included a barn that housed a horse for pulling a buggy and a cow that provided milk, cream and butter (which Bernice churned as part of her chores), along with chickens that provided fresh eggs. Her self-sufficient family also worked a large garden that provided fresh vegetables

as well as a unique form of discipline - Bernice recalls that when she misbehaved, she was sentenced to pick bugs off the potato plants! However, as the "princess among 4 brothers," her punishments were never too harsh! Having the whole outdoors for games of hide and seek and other fun with her brothers, she describes these childhood years as a very happy time.

When Bernice was 4 she followed her older brother to school, simply because she wanted to go too. The lone teacher – who taught all subjects to grades 1-8 in the one-room schoolhouse – took pity and allowed her to stay in the back of the room. Thus was born a love of books and reading, and one of Bernice's fond memories is of reading books by oil lamp on winter nights.

When she was nine, the family moved to the town of Brockville on the St. Lawrence. Always busy, Bernice was active in her church, sang in the choir, and sewed many of her own clothes. As a young adult, she became an assistant accountant in a local bank. Eventually, she gave in to her adventurous side, and requested a transfer out of the area, just to try someplace new. She found herself in Toronto. In addition to working as an accountant, she enrolled in flight school, and recalls that part of the training was to place the plane into an intentional stall and spin, and then recover. Yikes! So, at the age of 26 Bernice earned her pilot's license before she could drive a car! Why flight school? "I wanted to do something my brothers didn't do!"

While living in Toronto, she met an equally adventurous young man named Eric, who had left his home in England to come to Toronto on his own. Eric was an engineer and played trumpet in a jazz band on many weekends. They married in 1954, built a home in Toronto and in 1959 had their first daughter, Jackie. In 1963, Eric took a job with an aviation company in Long Island. The family emigrated to the U.S. through Buffalo, NY and moved to Long Island. Two weeks later Bernice – five months pregnant – was seriously injured in a car accident. She eventually recovered, and gave birth to their second daughter Laura. Though they enjoyed Long Island, after 2 years Eric took a position with Pratt and Whitney and the family moved to South Glastonbury. Here they continued to raise their daughters, play music, and participate in sports: Eric and Jackie, badminton and tennis, Bernice tennis, and Laura, swimming and tennis. Bernice was a stay at home mom for many years, raising her daughters and pursuing an active life of her own, including gardening, the joy of cooking, sewing clothes for her and her daughters, playing tennis, volunteering at the library and the children's schools, helping out at her church, and learning to paint.

In 1975, the family endured a terrible shock, when Eric lost his life in an auto accident while on his way to play badminton. Bernice describes it as a very difficult time but says that with two daughters to raise “you have to handle it.” She credits her faith and her supportive friends for helping her get through.

Travel has always been an important part of Bernice’s life. She has visited many parts of the US and the globe, among them Alaska, Peru, the Galapagos, Greece, the San Juan Islands. A highlight that she fondly recalls is a balloon trip in Africa. Even recently she has continued to travel to England, Canada, and Martha’s Vineyard, where both of her daughters own homes.

Six years ago, her daughters convinced her that after 39 years of caring for her home in Glastonbury, it might be time to find a place that requires a little less work. Looking for a place with a view and where she wouldn’t feel crowded, Bernice found what she was looking for in Meadow Hill. Here, she enjoys tending her gardens, watching the birds, reading her books, painting occasionally, enjoying visits with her five grandchildren, and basking in a river view that she says “feeds my soul.”

Bernice acknowledges that the coronavirus makes this a scary time and she is hoping for a vaccine soon. But, she says, “I’m a survivor with a positive attitude about things. A sense of humor helps, and I’m actually very blessed.” She rejoices in her past that brought her to this point, and revels in the possibilities that are present. “I still have a great interest and see everything with a picture in mind. People have to close their eyes once in a while and be in a quiet place.”

Good advice from someone who’s been around a bit!

## **ANNUAL MEETING & BOARD ELECTION UPDATE**



Due to the coronavirus, the annual meeting will not be held.  
Elections of new board members will take place by mail-in vote.  
Watch for details and a ballot in a letter from Imagineers.

## **TIPS FOR MANAGING UNCERTAINTY**

The following tips on Managing Acute and Chronic Uncertainty, by Giuseppe Raviola MD MPH of the Massachusetts General Hospital Benson-Henry Mind Body Medical Center, can help us stay positive during this uncertain time.

1. Social distancing does not mean emotional distancing: use technology to connect widely.
2. Clear routines and schedule, 7 days a week, at home- don't go overboard.
3. Exercise and physical activity, daily if possible.
4. Learning and intellectual engagement, books, reading, limited internet.
5. Positive family time- working to counter negativity.
6. Alone time outside if possible but inside too; but remember, don't isolate.
7. Focused meditation and relaxation.
8. Remember the things that you really enjoy doing, that you can do in this situation and find a way to do them.
9. Limit exposure to television/internet news: choose small windows and then find ways to cleanse yourself of it.
10. Bathe daily to reinforce the feeling of cleanliness.

### **REMEMBER**

- Things will get better eventually and back to normal; the world is not collapsing (don't go “catastrophic”).
- Most people are good, and people are going to persevere and help each other.
- You're tough, you've overcome challenges before; this is a new one.
- This is a particularly strange and unprecedented situation; humor helps once in a while.
- If having obsessive or compulsive thought related to the virus, or the broader uncertainty, wash your hands once, and then remind yourself that anxiety is normal in this scenario. But the mind can also play tricks on us. Try to breathe and move the internal discussion on.

## **How Are You Getting Your Groceries?**

For older adults trying to avoid going to public places, the Senior and Social Services departments are encouraging these individuals to seek help from family and friends to obtain groceries, or to use home delivery or pick-up services. They have compiled a few delivery and pickup resources at this link:

<https://www.glastonbury-ct.gov/Home/Components/News/News/6928/25?backlist=%2fhome>

## Using Technology to Fight the Lockdown Blues

Technology. Sometimes it seems more curse than blessing. But for many people, it has proven to be a social lifeline during the coronavirus pandemic. Even as the state begins to slowly re-open some businesses, many of us will continue to live in some degree of isolation for the foreseeable future. Online video-meeting platforms like Zoom, Facetime, and Google Meet, which allow you to see and talk with others in real time, have made it possible for home-bound folks to keep up some kind of social contact with friends and family. Many such tools are available at no cost for personal use. Without going into any technical how-to's, here are some of the creative ways I've encountered that people are using these tools to stay in touch with the outside world through virtual gatherings:



- Club meetings – Book clubs, garden clubs and other such groups can continue to hold regular discussions in live time
- Virtual game nights – Groups that normally get together physically to play board and dice games now regularly “meet” through video conferencing to play and socialize
- Family gatherings – someone we know has had group video chats with family members participating from as many as eight different locations
- Virtual happy hours – grab a cocktail and a munchie and video-chat with friends. A great way to wind down at the end of a day!
- Shared movie experiences – Apps such as Airtime, Zoom, Netflix Party, and many others allow you to watch a streaming movie with friends and chat live with them at the same time. Enjoy movie night with your friends (and you don't have to share your popcorn!)
- Broaden your horizons by enjoying virtual video tours of museums and art galleries
- Continue to attend religious services – many churches are streaming their services via Zoom or Google Meet; the pastor at our church hosts weekly story hours that our grandchildren love (even the teenager!)
- Distance learning – While schools are using video meetings to facilitate distance learning, it doesn't have to stop there. I know of a grandmother who uses the technology to help her granddaughter with her schoolwork on a regular basis.

Of course, these ideas just scratch the surface of what is possible. With a wide range of free, easy to use apps and services available for creating social contact from a distance, sheltering at home may never be enjoyable, but it can become somewhat more endurable. By the way, some of the old technologies still work pretty well too. If you have grandchildren, try writing them letters. Kids still love to get mail! By Mike Proulx

## RIVERFRONT COMMUNITY CENTER

Community Center is CLOSED to public for all Senior and Social Services programming.

- Dial-A-Ride – All rides SUSPENDED until further notice. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis.
- Food Bank - Operating on a reduced schedule. Please call (860) 652-7634 for more information or visit [www.glastonbury-ct.gov/glastonburygives](http://www.glastonbury-ct.gov/glastonburygives) to learn more about monetary donation opportunities.
- Senior Services – (860) 652-7638
- Social Services - Available by phone - (860) 652-7638 - or email at [socialservices@glastonbury-ct.gov](mailto:socialservices@glastonbury-ct.gov) only.



In addition, the town is posting information and updates about the phased re-opening of businesses and other services at this site:

<https://www.glastonbury-ct.gov/departments/department-directory-a-k/health/public-health-in-the-news>

## FROM THE MAINTENANCE STAFF



Residents should call Imagineers for all requests, work orders and emergencies.  
They will be forwarded to Darien as deemed necessary.  
Residents should not approach landscapers or other vendors directly with requests.  
Thanks!

## Recycling Reminders

We appreciate residents' efforts to recycle and remind everyone to please

- break down cardboard boxes before putting them into the recycle bins. Otherwise, they take up a lot of space and make it difficult for others to fit their recycled materials into the bins.
- remove recycled items from plastic bags when placing them in the recycle bins and dispose of the plastic bags in the regular trash bins.



## KEY DATES

6 – D Day Anniversary

14 – Flag Day

17 – Board Meeting

19 – Juneteenth

20 – Summer solstice

21 – Father's Day

## MEADOW HILL RESIDENT NOTES

**Clubhouse and Hollister House** – Closed until further notice due to the coronavirus.

**Clubhouse and Hollister House Rentals** - Rentals discontinued until further notice due to the coronavirus.

**Lark Submissions** Please contact Gene Flynn at 860-212-7347 for more information on submitting articles and notices.

**Free to a good home** - Unused inkjet printer ink cartridges, 1 black and 1 color, model HP 62 XL. If interested, contact Sandy O'Leary, 860-781-8026.

**Game Day – Cancelled.** Usually held on the first Wednesday of the month from 1-3pm at Hollister House is cancelled until further notice due to coronavirus.

**Book Club – Cancelled.** Usually held on the first Tuesday of the month at 1:00 at the Clubhouse is cancelled until further notice due to coronavirus. The following titles will be discussed whenever we resume:

The Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck.

Ordinary Grace by William Kent Kruger.

**Bingo – Cancelled.**

## MANAGEMENT COMPANY

**IMAGINEERS, LLC**  
635 Farmington Ave.  
Hartford, CT 06105

Property Manager: Sheila Duncan

860-768-3419

Asst: Property Manager: Lauren Figge

860-768-3313

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **PRESIDENT**

Luther Weeks  
860-918-2115

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

Ed Litke  
860-430-9611

### **SECRETARY**

Connie Liscomb  
860-659-7819

### **TREASURER**

Larry Abbott  
860-682-2543

### **DIRECTOR**

Tom Lombardo  
860-652-0090

### **DIRECTOR**

unfilled

To Email Management staff or Board Member click on <https://tinyurl.com/MHillContacts>

## BOARD MEETINGS

### THE NEXT MEETING

Monthly Board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 1:30pm. June meeting will be electronic. Information on how to connect will be forthcoming from Imagineers.

June 17th

1:30 PM

**Meeting will be  
electronic**

Current and previous meeting minutes can be found at [www.meadowhill.net](http://www.meadowhill.net)

Hard copy minutes are no longer available at the clubhouse due to the coronavirus.

Committees and Residents should submit agenda requests and reports to Imagineers 10 days before the monthly Board meeting.

To email Board Members or submit work orders refer to the MeadowHill.net.