

Moe

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Earthy, Tactile, and Immediate: *A Potter's Meditation*

By JULIE CUNNINGHAM

LEVERETT – Joy Friedman has been renting a studio at the Leverett Crafts & Arts for thirty years, all the while quietly and creatively working on the pottery she fell in love with years ago in college.

“I really loved it; I thought it was magical,” said Friedman about her first experience working with clay. While her parents may have been a little worried about her career path, it was her love of the art that drove her to persevere and learn to make a living.

“I was not a quick learner. It took me awhile to learn how to throw on the wheel,” Friedman admitted.

Initially, Friedman began mak-

ing cylinder mugs, and eventually branched out and became more skillful. Today, she is known for her lace bowls, which are more time consuming and advanced. She also makes her own glazes, and spends quite a bit of time working to make each one perfect.

“I spend a lot of time looking for the right color and the right glossiness,” said Friedman.

Her work has evolved from simple, painted pieces to layered work that looks more like a landscape. Her chip platters, however, are a popular item and have stayed substantially the same.

Most of her work sells as wedding gifts, and can be found in see **FRIEDMAN** page B3



CUNNINGHAM PHOTO

Joy Friedman at her studio at the Leverett Crafts and Arts. To the right of Friedman are her famous lace bowls which can be found in stores around western Massachusetts. Friedman has been working as a potter for thirty years, and teaches classes in a separate space at the LCA.

Inside the Farren Care Center

By ANNE HARDING

MONTAGUE CITY – Residents at Farren Care Center benefit from care plans that combine skilled nursing and long-term rehabilitative services with expert psychiatric care. This enables them to thrive in the least restrictive environment possible, according to Judi Fonsh, director of social services and admissions. Fonsh has been with FCC for 17 years, starting as a social worker, and is very familiar with their umbrella approach to treatment.

Sister Madeleine Joy, SP, BSN has been the chaplain at Farren Care Center since 1993. She specializes in cancer care, grief support, long-term care with the mentally ill, and addiction services. Hers is the department of spiritual care. As a faith-based organization, she is particularly proud of the practice that “no one dies alone.” The sisters have a “reverence for the individual” and believe there is a “spark of divine in each of their patients.”

Sister Madeleine says they have buried 34 patients in the past 25 years; 30 are buried at St Anne’s cemetery and four at Temple Israel. There is a separate memorial service for every patient who dies, and there is a memorial garden on the premises for the residents’ families and loved ones to visit.

Debbie Bazzani, LPN charge nurse on the 3-to-11 shift, echoes this sentiment and says her staff will come in on their days off, or give up their breaks, to sit with a patient they



MARY ORR PHOTO

Farren Care Center administrator Jim Clifford downs around with Maggie the Clown at last month’s annual Farren Fair.

know to be failing. Because many of the patients do not have close ties with their families, the FCC staff becomes their family by proxy.

Each year there is a memorial service that honors all the patients who have died. Employees take turns reading names of patients who have died in a particular time period, and as the dates approach the present, the readings become more involved and include photos and/or anecdotes. Bazzani believes that this philosophy makes FCC unique.

On the other hand, Bazzani acknowledges this type of work can be challenging and demanding. Either you love it or hate it, and she notes staff turnover is not uncommon, but she feels there is plenty of longevity as well. Bazzani finds that new employees who get through the first few months often stay for many years.

There was a steep learning curve

in the beginning months at FCC, especially in the early days when many patients had been released from the state mental hospitals, but were not able to live on their own. It took a long time to gain the trust of patients who were often fearful of such basic activities as taking a shower. Bazzani says it is incredibly rewarding each time a patient makes a small forward step.

Over and over, I heard from staff members that FCC offers a comprehensive program with an eye toward assessing the complex mix of medical and mental illness in order to provide individualized treatment. Patients are often ostracized from their families, so appointed guardians often provide clues to better understanding the patient’s medical history and emotional life. FCC works closely with other agencies as

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Warm Hands, and Warm Hearts

By JOE KWIECINSKI

WENDELL – Area residents will have two opportunities to assist in making wool mittens for homeless people. Volunteers may gather from 9 a.m. to noon at the Wendell Free Library on Saturday, October 10, and then at Mary Lane Hospital in Ware on Saturday October 17 as well.

The activities are part of an outreach ministry to homeless shelters known as Moe’s Mittens.

Homeless for many years in Amherst, Maurice (Moe) St. Onge died on October 6, 2013 at the age of 44 as the result of complications related to alcohol and drug abuse.

Founded by his sisters Camille and Suzanne, Moe’s Mittens is a special project to bring a message of hope and compassion to those who wear the mittens.

“If you’d like to help out with this worthwhile effort,” said Camille St. Onge Magin, who is also a social worker at Mary Lane Hospital,

“please join us. We’ll be cutting out, pinning, and sewing mittens with recycled wool sweaters and fleece. We will provide written instructions and a pattern for those who would like to continue to make mittens. If you sew, feel free to bring your machine and fabric scissors.

“If you do not sew, you can help us cut out patterns, match colors, and pin mittens for those who are doing the sewing. Donations of wool sweaters (at least 70%) washed in hot water and dried on high heat are appreciated. However, we will have sweaters on hand to work with. Sweaters with holes are also acceptable.”

St. Onge Magin notes that Moe, despite being a likable, kind person, had a very difficult life. “As Moe’s family,” she said, “we saw firsthand what a life of substance abuse can do to a person. We saw the many people along the way that tried to help him: his friends, his service providers, local officials, towns-

people, and a host of many others he met along his path.

“We were always grateful to all the people that tried to help Moe. He was described as someone who, if he had a dollar, would share it with you. In Moe’s spirit, we founded Moe’s Mittens to carry on Moe’s legacy of sharing with others less fortunate than him.”

During the ministry’s first year, Camille bought 25 pairs of mittens and delivered them to the Amherst Homeless Shelter. In 2014, the project’s second year, mittens were made at Mary Lane Hospital and by friends in Greenfield. They were given to shelters in Northampton and Easthampton, while 10 pairs were sent to sister Suzanne to distribute where she lives in Colorado, and eight pairs went to Wendell Community Center to be given to people in need.

A laminated card is attached to the pair of mittens, containing a verse from the Bible. The detachable card also explains the story of how Moe’s Mittens came to be. The brief verse emphasizes that there is help and hope out there for all who struggle.

“One of the things my sister and I decided,” said St. Onge Magin, “was that, whether my brother stopped abusing drugs or not, we would keep on loving him, no matter what.”

For more information about the Moe’s Mittens event at the Wendell Free Library this Saturday, please call Rosie Heidkamp at (978) 544-3559 or contact moesmittens@gmail.com.



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

Peaceful Assembly

By LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY – I recently read Roland Merullo’s *Dinner with Buddha*, the travel saga of the Mongolian monk, Volya Rinpoche, and his son-in-“waw,” Otto Ringling. During the road trip from the monk’s meditation center in North Dakota to Las Vegas, Rinpoche illuminates Ringling’s emotional pain and spiritual suffering with the thoughts of the Buddha.

Although Merullo insists that his books are not meant as a guide to the tenets of Buddhism, it is these conversational exchanges that most engaged this reader.

With all of Rinpoche’s hype about Las Vegas and the promise that all is to be revealed there, the reader is left feeling teased along when a new leg of travel, this time to Italy, is to become the promised land of the revelation.

While a fine lead-in for a new book, it was a disappointment to this reader, unless one is to come to the realization that all will never

be revealed and that life is just one ongoing spiritual journey. I suppose so, but I wanted more, if only a peek.

Several days later we park on the main road and walk up, past filled parking spaces and many vehicles crowding the verge. About halfway up the dirt road we can hear chanting and the deep pulsation of drums.

We emerge from the woods to the meadow. The shining white of the pagoda steps out from a bright blue sky.

It is decorated with flowers: yellow and orange mums in front of the first Buddha and arcing branches of crepe paper flowers in yellow and orange around the seating area for the monks and nuns. We are here to be a part of the celebration of the Peace Pagoda’s thirtieth anniversary.

Even surrounded by over a hundred people, we are wrapped in the peace and serenity of this spot which is enhanced by the chanting, the drum and the

see **GARDEN** page B6



COURTESY CAMILLE ST. ONGE MAGIN

Maurice (Moe) St. Onge