

Brevoort Lake -- photo by Margaret Constan

## Editor's Note

These "United States" seem less united than we could wish these days. Our society is hurting from stress fractures along generational, religious,

political, ethnic, and economic lines. One of the biggest sources of division, perhaps explaining several of the others, lies in the contrasting perspectives of urban and rural Americans. Having lived both a small-town life in the Eastern Kentucky town of Carlisle (population 1500), a metropolitan life here in Louisville, and transitional experiences in intermediate-sized cities along the way, I have come to believe population density where we live explains a lot of the mismatch in the way we define ourselves. Priorities, skill sets, values, and even ethics will naturally vary between the Wyoming rancher and the Wall Street broker. The key to strengthening our country as a whole is the recognition that "it takes all kinds" to make a functioning modern society. A wheat farmer needs information from urban economists and climatologists to make sound land use decisions, just as a diner in an upscale city restaurant relies on farmers, ranchers, and fishers to put food on the table.

In the belief that harmony begins with listening, this issue asks for an empathetic examination of the urban/rural interface. We include Steve Sargent's account of growing up in a small Montana town near the Canadian border that is hundreds of miles from the nearest city, Margaret Constan's description of her annual pilgrimage to the Great North Woods, and Debby Sublett and Vernon Cook's account of their efforts to create a pocket wilderness within an increasingly developed urban landscape. Whether you are a "country mouse" or a "city mouse," we hope you enjoy considering their points of view.

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# Together on the Journey

by Rev. Bruce Beisner
Minister, All Peoples UU Congregation



I am sure you have noticed that over the past year, our All Peoples congregation has been growing like crazy. Each and every Sunday, we are welcoming visitors of all ages and since the spring of 2024 over 25 new people have officially become members of our church.

Some folks I talk with say that this is a result of the challenging political and cultural times we are all experiencing. They attribute this influx of newcomers to the fact that people are feeling the need to find a progressive community that can offer them support and reassurance in a world that feels scary, oppressive, and out of control. While I think there is truth to this, I also believe there is more going on.

The new families, couples and individuals who are arriving at our front doors and on our Zoom screens each Sunday may be in search of safety and support, but the fact that so many are not only attending a service or two but are also sticking around and getting involved in church life speaks to a larger sense of connection that we are cultivating here at All Peoples.

On the first Sunday of each month, Congregational Life Coordinator Janet Taylor

and I have been presenting a time for informal conversation and exploration specifically intended to engage with newcomers to our congregation. In these monthly gatherings, I have heard over and over again from people how incredibly inviting and engaging they are finding our community to be. They are excited to be able to take part in social justice rallies and actions with others and report that just coming to a place where they can hear the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion celebrated is meaningful to them. But it is the "warm and welcoming spirit" of our All Peoples community that keeps them coming back.

In recent months, our staff and leaders have been initiating some intentional changes that we hope will encourage this "warm and welcoming spirit" to grow and glow even brighter. These have included doing more outreach to newcomers, including personal phone calls from me and personal invitations to participate in church events from our volunteers. We are working to expand the number of greeters we have on Sunday mornings and better train them in engaging with families and those with special needs. We have also begun to change the ways we promote our activities. To more explicitly communicate that all church programs and events are open to everyone, we have begun to remove words like "group" and "club" from descriptions and are encouraging our leaders to remember that every gathering is intended not only for those who have regularly attended in the past, but for anyone who wants to participate.

In the coming months, we are hoping to be able to begin to offer some new "identity" based activities which will strengthen our church as a multi-cultural community where people experience not only respect and affirmation for who they are, but also find support and camaraderie with folks who share similar life experiences and expressions. These will include activities for LGBTQ+ identified folks, those who practice Earth-based spiritualties, and our growing number of parents with young children.

These days, it is a joy to see people here actively breaking down barriers which can unintentionally make our community feel insular and exclusive. One of those barriers for some of us has been the very idea of encountering "new" people. At times, that label has been applied to visitors on Sunday mornings and people who have recently begun to find a home in our congregation. But the reality is that in a community of our size, there are also folks who have been members and friends here for years who do not know each other well. During fellowship time after our Sunday services and at other social and educational events, more and more of us are taking the opportunity to seek out conversation and connection to someone who is "new to us" be they a longtime member or a fresh face in our midst.

Recently someone shared with me some opening words used at another Unitarian Universalist congregation and suggested that we read them on a Sunday morning. I was struck by the fact that this text said "we welcome you regardless of your race, gender, culture, background or orientation." I was compelled to change these words because they felt strange to me. I edited them to instead read "We welcome you because of who you love. where you come from, how



you speak, and all the identities, theologies and histories you bring. Thank you for blessing us with your presence." To me, that felt more in line with the welcoming spirit we share here.

It has now been over four years since we officially voted to change our name from "Thomas Jefferson" to "All Peoples" and that action has spurred a lot of transformation. It is so gratifying to witness all the ways we are growing into our new name and identity together. A key part of this has been expanding our understandings of who "we" are as a church community. This involves moving beyond old stereotypes and outdated ideas of UU culture, and allowing the affirmation that "we" are a diverse, multicultural beloved community which is a home for all kinds of wonderfully different people to guide us.

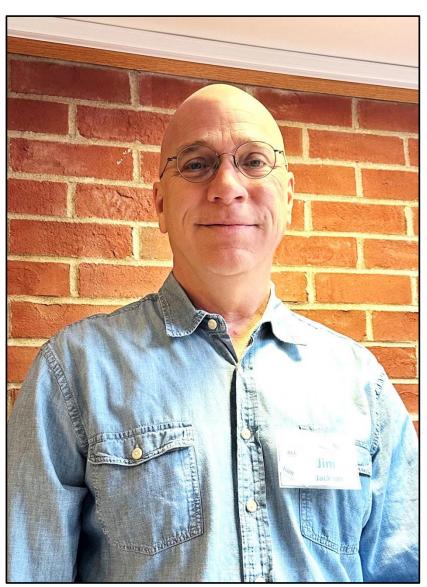
Blessings!



### New Member Focus

from Janet Taylor,
Congregational Life Coordinator

#### Jim Jackson



I was born and raised in Florence,
Alabama. I attended college at Rhodes
College in Memphis, Tennessee, and
then studied medicine at the
University of South Alabama in
Mobile.

In 1987 I came to Louisville to attend an internal medicine residency. It was here that I met and married the love of my life and best friend, Mary. We have two adult sons, John ("Jack") and Luke, both of whom live in Louisville.

I have been a Presbyterian most of my life, but my beliefs have gradually changed over time and it no longer made sense for me to continue attending. When I came to visit All Peoples a few months ago, I found a welcoming congregation where my beliefs and values fit right in.

I spent most of my career practicing medicine at Family Health Centers in the Portland neighborhood. In 2023, I retired after 30 years there, first serving as staff internist, and later as

Medical Director. Recently, I returned to FHC in a (very) part time capacity, seeing patients one day a week.

I enjoy traveling and working around the house with Mary, walking in the park with my dog, and helping build houses with Habitat for Humanity.



### POET'S CORNER

#### Missing a Vow(el)

by Adam Watson

The difference between god and good is the difference between "ah" and "ooo!"

Between the outward sigh of contentment and the inward surge of insight.

Inside

a country crown sits on top of city brow. In the difference between soft grass and hard concrete in the contrast between comfort and pain the O

reigns.

Rain

falls on equine shoulders
hooves make homes of sodden turf
in the race, pushing into the back stretch
on the track of church hills and downs.
The O of tears and stubbornly
neighs.

Nay

to the belief in the alpha, in the omega in the golden ring of more dread we wear as penance. Nay to any O that wears us down.

Down

feathers, the former coat of heavenbound creatures makes a pillow for heads or supplicant knees. Synthetic supplants sneezes and suppresses eureekas.

For what is not the best O
than the uplifted mouth of surprise
When faced with the unexpected
good or god?

Editor's Note: Last month, we lost our dear friend and congregant Ann Dorzback at the tender age of 103. Many of our congregation knew Ann as a teacher, an organizer, a wedding planner, and as an enthusiastic volunteer wherever and whenever help was needed at All Peoples. You might not know Ann was also a poet with a gift for comic verse.

Ann's son Bob adds context: "Mom wanted me to email the attached poem to you, which she wrote in honor of Laura and Harry Scales' wedding anniversary. Thomas Jefferson Unitarian Church [now All Peoples UU Congregation] honored them in 1970 with a get-together at the church. My understanding from mom is that Laura Scales was the church administrator at the time and was always swamped with work to do. Consequently, she was never ready to go when her husband Harry arrived at church at 5:00 pm to pick her up. Therefore, until Laura was ready to go, Harry made himself busy and began to fix things around the church. And that is how he got started working as the T.J. Handyman".

#### For Harry and Laura Scales' 23rd Wedding Anniversary, 1970

--by Ann Dorzback

We see around us with delight A happy group came out tonight

To honor together this great couple Who never shy away from trouble

Let me describe the wondrous tales Of our Harry and Laura Scales

If there's a lock that does not turn, If there's a furnace that does not burn--Call Harry!

A pipe, a drain that overflows, A tree or shrub unsightly grows--Call Harry!

The pre-school needs a table top, The kitchen sink needs a new stop--Call Harry!

The Sunday school needs extra room, To cope with the enrollment boom--Call Harry!

"The maintenance costs are much too high," The Trustees tell us with a sigh--Call Harry!

The snow piles up on Sunday morn' And everyone runs to the phone to--Call Harry!

Electric cords are frayed and shot, Some toys and cribs do fall apart--Call Harry!



The farmhouse challenged him galore, Repairs, repairs for evermore--Call Harry!

A broken stove, a roof that leaks, A dripping faucet, a door that creaks--Call Harry!

He also fixes septic tanks, For which we owe him many thanks--Thanks Harry!

The Art Fair was a huge success 'Cause Harry straightened out each mess.

He stapled the frames, and painted them too. 'Cause volunteers are all too few.

He directed traffic and held back the rain, As a meteorologist he wracked his brain.

He brings his hammer and his wrench, The tape, the screws, the whole work bench.

He shares with us his tools, his life, He even shares with us his wife!

And there is Laura by his side Who does her work with so much pride

For all of us she does the typing, While listening to all our griping.

She dittoes here, she dittoes there, She dittoes almost everywhere.

She's busy on the telephone, And evenings takes the stapling home.

Takes not of each address correction, Her office skills are sheer perfection.

But tonight, we also celebrate What happened June 7th in '48.

Twenty-three years of marital bliss, They're also good at doing this!

Their daughter Janet too, works ample Her parents set a good example.

We wish to show our appreciation For her tremendous dedication.

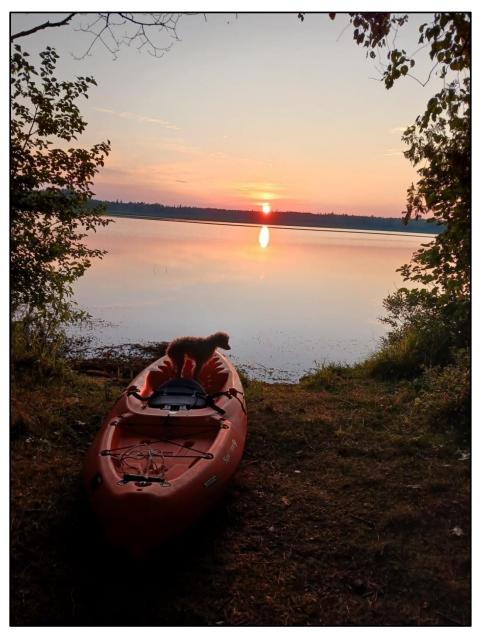




## Exploring Brevoort Lake, Hiawatha National Forest, Upper Peninsula of Michigan Story and photo by Margaret Constan

I am getting in the habit of escaping the summer heat by travelling to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to not only escape the heat, which is usually 10 degrees cooler, but to see the beautiful warblers on their nesting grounds. Every Spring for 5 or 6 weeks these birds pass through our area migrating from their wintering grounds down south to their nesting grounds in the North. Some settling down to raise their brood in the UP, others flying much further north into areas of Canada. It's always a little bit of a let down when they finish passing through.

They do come back through Louisville in the Fall, but in their nonbreeding plumage they are not nearly as spectacular as in the Spring, and are harder to identify. Needless to say, birders much prefer Spring and look forward every year to that short period of time when we are allowed to witness these beauties of nature.



Brevoort Lake is located a short ten mile drive from the end of the bridge leading to the UP. Route 2 follows the coast of Lake Michigan and the lake is located a mile or two from the highway. Its proximity to Lake Michigan ensures the cool temperatures and pleasant breezes. The predominant species of warblers is the American Redstart and the Black Throated Green Warbler. Of course if you have the Merlin app on your phone, "he" (the birdcall identification software) hears several more species. "He" has superhuman hearing! But there is more birding to be had than just the warblers. I love the bald eagles, the sea birds and the common loons with their mournful call.

I so love to camp outdoors. It's as close to nature as I can get. As a National Forest campground, Brevoort affords half off the camping fees if you have a senior pass. I took my kayak and paddled around the lake. It was peaceful, quiet and the sunsets were fabulous!



Lori Sargent is a photographer with a knack for finding miniature landscapes in nature as she and husband Steve walk through local parks. In this series featuring fungi, Lori demonstrates that the camera can help us perceive the beauty all around us, as well as helping us share those perceptions with others.

(Photos by Lori Sargent)



















### All Peoples' People

#### Debbie Sublett and Vernon Cook

Interview and photo by Paula Kingsolver

Debby Sublett, a member of All Peoples since the 1990's, has been instrumental in the volunteer endeavors of the church, especially in regard to Social, International and Environmental Justice. Just listing the awards she has won and programs she has helped form and guide can't begin to encompass the love, care and effort she has given to help establish our congregation's justice work. We will list them, though.

She and Vernon Cook met in 2012, introduced by congregation member Sheila Ward (who has also been vital to All Peoples justice work and just about every aspect of volunteering). Debby and Vernon had each known Sheila for many years, so they trusted her recommendation. Debby and Vernon quickly found that they share many values, including compassion, a commitment to service, and a deep love of nature. The couple married a year later.

Debby chose Unitarian Universalism because of a famous women's rights activist. "I had heard that when Susan B. Anthony was here in town, nobody would let her speak, except for the UU church downtown," she explains. "They let her speak on the front steps of the church and a crowd was out there that she spoke to. I thought, that's the kind of place I want to go to. I'm not a religious person. If I go to a church, I go for the social justice part of it."

Debby first joined a women's group at church, and then the Social Justice Committee. She helped found KEAP (Kenyan Education and AIDS Program), to care for poor and orphaned children in Kenya. Debby led several church trips to Kenya to visit the children sponsored by KEAP. The KEAP program eventually caused Debby, along with Deborah Novgorodoff (another champion volunteer and justice worker) to form the International Justice Committee:" We realized that that was really needed - to think globally, not just locally, and see how our actions affect everybody." Debby also joined the Green Sanctuary Committee. She volunteered with the auction, the book sale, and the art fairs - Winter Fair and Art in the Arbor (an outdoor spring event which was discontinued after several years of poor weather). She volunteered in the kitchen, coordinated the yard sale for KEAP, the Jambo, and the "Valentine Fling, which turned into a Mardi Gras party when I realized that a lot of people didn't like Valentine's Day." She started the Equal Exchange coffee sale back in the 90s, which continues to this day: "I think we've done that longer than anybody; we won some recognition for that." She was chairperson for UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee); there are banners around church displaying some of the awards they won. "We got the highest percentage of members relative to other congregations." She also helped with the first refugee families the church helped settle here in Louisville.

Debby won the Social Action Leadership Award in 2005. "That was a big honor, a national award. They had me go to the convention in Fort Worth, and I took Martha with me, so we had a lot of fun." (Martha Flack is another formative justice worker and volunteer, and the first subject of the *All Peoples People* interviews). Debby also won a Distinguished Service Award from the Board President.

Vernon, a music lover, was familiar with the church, having attended the Hootenanny music gatherings in the 1990's. He also participated in the contradance group. Vernon attended a United Church of Christ while living in Chicago for his medical residency, where he was drawn to their social action, volunteering with a shelter for unhoused people. He says, "I think theologically, I've been a Unitarian for a long time." Vernon had attended services at First Church Unitarian in Louisville in the 1990's and joined All Peoples soon after he and Debby married. He has sung in the choir and also volunteered in the kitchen, where he got pointers for dishwasher use

Vernon: When Debby and I were getting acquainted, these things sort of clicked. So it's just dovetailed and she's a great partner.

from Minister Emeritus Elwood Sturtevant (tip the dishes forward, because the water goes up).

Vernon has volunteered for Sierra Club projects since his college days, participating in a letter writing campaign to successfully prevent damming the Niobrara River in northern Nebraska ("I still have the letters I wrote"), and participating in on-site service projects; Vernon is a national leader for their Service subcommittee. "People volunteer for these service trips all over the United States. It's a lot of fun."

Debby: I always liked animals, and
I am a certified wildlife rehabber.

Debby grew up in an urban environment, in the south end of Louisville, while Vernon grew up in a rural setting, on a farm in Nebraska. (He still returns yearly to help his brother harvest corn and soybeans on 4000 acres of farmland). Debby and her [now deceased] husband Danny (a science and biology teacher who also volunteered for KEAP, and who died in 2008) lived in an

old farmhouse in a neighborhood near Iroquois Park. As land around them was sold off to be developed, they found themselves among subdivisions, trying to garden in a small yard. "So we started looking for a piece of land, and when [daughter] Megan was six or seven, we finally found our place out here in 1984," a beautiful historic home on 8 acres of land with abundant wildlife, diverse varieties of trees, and native plants.

Vernon is a lifelong gardener: "Ever since I was a little kid, I was working in the garden. Not only being on the farm, but raising seasonal vegetables. And so that's just kind of in my blood. Every place I've lived, I've had a garden - in Omaha, going to med school, in Chicago for my residency, in Old Louisville where I had just a postage stamp garden in the backyard. When Debby took me out here the first time and I saw the acreage, I said, *Wow*. It was pretty overgrown at the time so we cleared it out and made a nice, productive garden. I just feel if I'm not out there with my hands in the soil, I'm not with the seasons of the earth. Summer, you grow things and in the fall you harvest to bring it in. It's the cycle of seasons. I just participate in that." Debby and Vernon also used the garden produce to benefit KEAP, raising about \$15,000 over several years by selling vegetables in the gathering space after Sunday services.

Over the last several years of caring for their beautiful property however, Debby and Vernon were dismayed to find land encroachment history repeating itself - just as in Debby's former farmhouse home, the land around them was being sold off and subdivided - mature trees, vernal ponds full of spring peepers, and fragile ecosystems giving way to bulldozed tracts of nothing but buildings and grass. (They report their 40245 zip code is the most rapidly developing one in Louisville.) That's when they decided to pursue conservation easement status for their property, an arduous eight year process which is now nearing completion.

Debby: "I called River Fields because I had heard they protect the land; they are a great organization! They told me I would have a better chance for a conservation easement if the house is on the National Historic Register. So I started doing that with [daughter] Addie's help, and did a lot of it while I was sick." Debby recently completed treatment for recurrence of a life threatening cancer, so recovering her health has followed a lengthy timeline alongside the conservation easement process.

Debby, who had experience with genealogy research, had been collecting the history of the property since she moved there, about Judge Samuel Bonner Kirby, who built their house in 1906. She found that, "It's difficult to find anybody to do the National Historic Register work, so I learned how to do it myself. It's like being a lawyer, and you have to make your case as to why it qualifies." One criterion for which the property was approved is its historic association with the nearby Interurban transportation system. Judge Kirby and his family would walk to the railroad line a few hundred yards away, and commute downtown for school and work. Debby explains that such behavior was very unusual then, "because back in the 1900s, transportation was very rudimentary. You couldn't have lived 15 miles away from downtown; it wouldn't work." The Interurban railroad system was demolished in the 1930s.

After the home and land was approved for the National Historic Register, Debby called River Fields to report, "I've got it done. Now I want to move on to the easement." The Executive Director was floored, because Debby was the first person who ever actually got a property on the National Registration as suggested. After a property survey, officials from Frankfort (the Kentucky Heritage Council) came to look at the property and were impressed with the diversity of species. "There's no

room left for wildlife around here, so the property is an island. It's a refuge."

River Fields and the Kentucky Heritage Council will split the easement costs 50/50 and the house deed will reflect that it has to be preserved. Also, it will be inspected periodically by the Heritage Council to ensure compliance.



Says Debby, "There's lots of requirements for the people who buy this property, what they can and can't do. And River Fields has lawyers that will defend it." Thanks to Debby and Vernon for this benefit to their neighborhood and to Louisville, and for all their contributions to All Peoples.



A newly-formed adult periodical cicada has just emerged from its shell-like juvenile exoskeleton. *Photo by Paula Kingsolver*.

### Nature in Our Neighborhood

by Rob Kingsolver
Photos by Paula Kingsolver

## PERIODICAL CICADAS-AGAIN ALREADY?

Many All Peoples congregants will remember the remarkable appearance of periodical cicadas that emerged in the summer of 2021. But wait-- if periodical cicadas return every 17 years, why is the eastern edge of Jefferson County seeing them now, only four years later? The reason is that this year's cicadas belong to a different breeding population, with its own reproductive calendar. The two cicada broods are adjacent, but non-overlapping, and Jefferson County happens to straddle their boundary line.

The year 2021 was my last working at Bellarmine University, and I will never forget how these amazing creatures sang their goodbyes at the farewell picnic my colleagues threw for me in a shady grove near the campus. That cicada emergence, called Brood X, (or Brood Ten) was a cohort of similarly adapted insects with a synchronized17-year life cycle. Brood X began when their eggs were laid in the year 2004 by a prior generation in the twigs of trees and shrubs in the Louisville area, and across 15 states from Georgia to New York. The tiny nymphs hatched and lived in the trees for only a couple of weeks, then dropped to the ground, dug into the soil, and attached themselves to a tree root. There they stayed for 17 years, sucking sap from the tree's roots for nourishment, and growing up alone, underground and out of sight. Finally, after their 17-year term of solitude ended in the summer of 2021, Brood X cicadas dug their way to the surface, climbed as high as they could on a tree trunk, shrub, or fencepost, and shed their juvenile skins to become mature adults with black bodies, tomato-red eyes, and transparent wings. Can you imagine going into exile when George W. Bush was considered an arch conservative, Motorola's flip phones were cutting edge technology, and Myspace was the coolest media site, and then coming out to face adulthood in a post-COVID hyper-technical world?

Adult periodical cicadas are specialized for only one purpose: to mate and produce offspring. They have no functional mouthparts or digestive tract. What they do have is an amazing capacity to call out to one another. Entomologists consider them the world's loudest insects. Male cicadas do most of the actual singing. Vibrating membranes below each wing boom like the skin stretched over the face of a drum, and the nearly hollow abdomen acts as a resonator. Since local cicada broods are

actually composed of three similar periodical species, each producing a differently pitched humming sound, the effect is not a single tone, but a multi-frequency whirring noise that reminds me of the unearthly sound that flying saucers made in 1950s sci-fi movies. The females make more down-to earth clicking noises with their wings, so the combined efforts of all the bugs in this outdoor concert produce an ear-bending symphony.

Soon after mating and depositing hundreds of eggs in and on vegetation, the cicadas begin running out of stored energy and falling, exhausted, to the ground. Their massive transfer of nutrients from below ground to the above-ground ecosystem supports our UU respect for the interconnected web of life. Many species of songbirds, for example, are able to rear extra-large clutches of baby birds when this new menu item becomes so abundant and easy to catch. Community ecologists Zoe Getman-Pickering and colleagues have shown that when birds ignore their normal prey to feast on a banquet of cicadas, caterpillars feeding on oak leaves are left alone to munch, mature, and multiply. As a result of a population boom in leaf pests, the oaks suffer reduced vitality, and tend to produce fewer acorns in the following fall. Forest wildflowers like the American Bellflower, however, grow faster and produce more seeds following a cicada emergence because the forest soil is fertilized by all those decomposing cicada bodies, as documented by ecologist Louie Yang in 2004.

Why does this insect delay maturity for so many years before reproducing? Understanding lies in the answer to this question: How would you survive if you had no food to eat for 17 years, and then received a delivery of 17 years' worth of perishable groceries all at once in one gigantic to-go order? This is the dilemma periodical cicadas present to any would-be cicada predator. By saturating the ecosystem with cicada bodies every 17 years, cicadas overwhelm any insect predators in the neighborhood, so many cicadas escape to survive and reproduce. Then, by not emerging again for a long time, the cicadas starve out their potential predators before coming back again. Note that this survival strategy only works if all cicadas in a locality synchronize their reproductive calendars. We do not really understand how they do this, but it's pretty clear why it is such an effective defense.

Although cicadas must remain synchronized within a particular locality for their predator-satiating strategy to succeed, there is no evolutionary advantage for cicadas in different localities to remain in



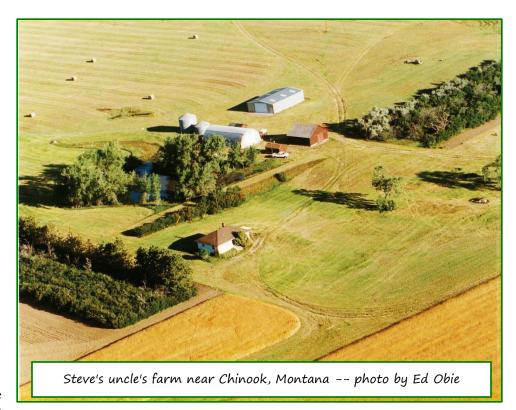
lock-step across the continent. Over evolutionary time, cicada populations in different places have drifted into a patchwork of emergence schedules. It turns out, for example, that my home near Peewee Valley is far enough away from most of Louisville to support a different brood of cicadas, called Brood XIV. This brood has a 17-year life cycle just like Brood X, but it peaks four years later. We did not see any cicadas here at home in 2021, but now, they're everywhere! Since Louisville is a border town on the cicada map, I have had the joy of watching two miraculous cicada broods come to prominence without having to wait an entire 17-year generation in between.

#### Reflections on Rural America

#### by Steve Sargent

For the first 18 years of my life I lived in Chinook, located in rural northcentral Montana. Chinook is centrally isolated with no major cities located within 230 miles in four directions. Over the years I have frequently reflected on my experience as a young person raised in this rural community, how it impacted my life and how this town and many other small towns have changed and survived in a dramatically changing world.

There is a quote that occasionally comes to mind—"I thought I missed my childhood home, but then I realized that I missed my childhood." I had a wonderful childhood, especially during the 1950s. It was close to idyllic. However, the above quote misses the mark. My childhood did not exist in a vacuum. It was experienced in a rural culture that lives in me to this day. My purpose in writing this essay is to reflect on



my early years in Chinook and to discuss the challenges and benefits of living in rural America.

The environment we live in matters. The symbiotic relationship between humans and their environment over a lifespan is a continuous process of changing interactions between the individual and the various systems within the environment. This idea is one theme in a delightful book entitled *If You Lived Here You'd Be Home By Now: Why We Traded the Commuting Life for a Little House on the Praire* by Christopher Ingraham.

Ingraham is a reporter for the Washington Post. His wife, Brianna, was a manager with the Social Security Administration in Washington D.C. In 2015 he wrote an article about a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that quantified and ranked every county in the U.S. based on the physical characteristics (natural amenities) people would agree make a place pleasant to live in. The Department devised six measures of climate, topography and water areas.

Ingraham reported that of 3,111 counties, Red Lake County in northwest Minnesota (60 miles east of Grand Forks, North Dakota) ranked dead last. Within 15 minutes he received emails from, you guessed it, residents of Red River Falls, the county seat of Red Lake County. The comments were not mean or angry but were, to his surprise, "Minnesota nice." They respectfully disagreed with the article and invited Ingraham to visit their town so he could experience the small town first hand. He accepted the invitation!

I will not write a detailed review of his experiences, but within a month after his visit, he and his wife decided to move to Red River Falls. Why? Lifestyle! Both had professional positions in Washington, D.C. Due to the cost of living in the greater D.C. area they had to live in a distant suburb that required about 15 hours of commuting per week. They lived in an apartment complex and knew few of their neighbors. They have twin boys requiring child care and with work, commuting, and a stressed budget they had little time for leisure or a normal family life.

Ingraham's employer agreed to let him work remotely. The low cost of living in Red River Falls allowed Brianna to suspend her career for a few years to focus on raising the twins. They purchased an affordable home within walking distance of parks and the town center. The book goes into detail about interacting with neighbors, hunting for the first time, becoming involved in civic affairs, and the support of the community and school for one son who was diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum.

Ingraham reports that on the urban-rural happiness gradient, surveys show that city-dwellers are the least satisfied members of society whereas "those who live in the countryside and small towns are the happiest." One thing he notes is that, in contrast to his life in Washington D.C., in this small town in Minnesota there was an atmosphere of familiarity and trust. You know your neighbors and recognize almost every citizen of the town. Ingraham summarizes his experience as follows: "Here there is space for families to play, grow, expand. Space that doesn't exist where life is circumscribed by commutes and high costs and the presence of thousands, of millions of other people. If you keep a fish in a small crowded tank it will grow up stunted and tiny, never attaining its true natural size. Part of me believes that people are the same way, that we need space, room to explore and grow, a certain distance from our neighbors. . . In that respect, at least, the Midwest has quite literally broadened our horizons." (p. 262)

Ingraham's description of Red River Falls reflects the intrinsic nature of many rural towns in America. In a small town there are opportunities for closer and more familiar connections. Friends, schools and neighbors are often within walking distance. Schools and extracurricular activities not only keep the students involved but serve as a social hub and source of pride and identity for both parents and citizens. Children are more likely to know where their parents work and, in all likelihood, frequently cross paths with business owners, retirees and teachers in informal settings.

As I read Ingraham's book, memories of my childhood in Chinook kept surfacing. Unlike Ingraham, I did not move to rural America, I was born into it. I was not at all instrumental in developing the "system" that I lived in. It was provided for me.



Thinking back, the rural environment offered what seemed to be unlimited opportunities:

- A sense of freedom and protection—some days, most often with friends, we had unsupervised freedom between breakfast and supper to roam and play in and around Chinook.
- Messing around in my father's welding shop, observing him work and interacting with other adults.
- Celebrating Christmas and Easter at relative's home—the Obie and Sargent families frequently socialized together.
- Frequently visiting or staying at my uncle's farm south of Chinook, shadowing him, pulling cheatgrass, weeds and rocks in his fields and target practicing using a gun of my choice from his cache of more than 50 rifles.
- During summers working for Schellin Construction, and the Davies and Kuhr ranches.
- Being involved in numerous structured and unstructured activities: Cub scouts and boy scouts; NRA small bore rifle club; ice skating; swimming; 4<sup>th</sup> of July races; church choir and youth activities; sandlot basketball, football and baseball; deer and antelope hunting with my brother, father and uncle; high school band, choir, football, basketball, and track.

As I think back on my youth one thing I now realize, but was not aware of and therefore didn't appreciate, was that almost all of the above activities were planned and coordinated by adults for the benefit of the youth of the town. And by extension, these activities contributed to the quality of life for both adults and children. Family, peers, church, school and other influences shaped my early life, but it was the adults in the community who created an environment that had a major impact on my life. Like most children, I internalized the beliefs and values, including political ideologies, of the adults I most respected.

My uncle, who was like a second father, was a bachelor farmer who generously shared his conservative Republican beliefs with me. I didn't know how conservative my uncle was until I visited him in the mid 80s. He only owned John Deere farm equipment. On the day of my visit I noticed a new grain auger next to his granary. It was not a John Deere—it was a Farmer's Co-Op auger! I said, "Uncle Gerhard, why did you purchase a Co-Op auger?" All he said was, "Those radical socialists!" This was the man who was most influential in the formation of my political values.

I'm quite sure that today's youth in Chinook are involved in activities not unlike those I experienced in the 1950s and 60s. They are probably experiencing many of the same developmental challenges and changes that I experienced. And I have no doubt that adults are still providing necessary guidance and involvement. But the youth and adults today, compared to 60 years ago, are living in a radically different society, especially in rural America.

Society has definitely changed, and while many of the changes may have improved individual lives, the changes have not necessarily improved the economic conditions of rural America. I do not claim to have the expertise or the insights of a sociologist or economist. However, there is general consensus that rural America is being left behind as a result of major transformations our nation has experienced over the past half century. Changes that have had limited, if any, benefit to rural economies, include: 1) deregulation, facilitating mergers and consolidation of corporations and financial institutions; 2) globalization, resulting in exporting industrial and manufacturing jobs overseas; 3) technology and automation, decreasing the need for jobs previously performed by humans; 4) the evolution of an on-line economy that revolutionized commercial activity.

The above factors, primarily globalization, have turned our nation into a technology and services economy rather than one driven by manufacturing. Due primarily to technology, automation and consolidation, both the agriculture and the extraction sectors (mining) of our economy have experienced a decline in employment opportunities. Many of these changes have resulted in population and economic growth in metropolitan areas at the expense of rural America. Like many rural communities, Chinook experienced a decrease in population. In 2020 its population of 1,150 was half that of 1960. The question I ask is: Does this small, isolated rural town located 30 miles south of the Canadian border have a future? I believe it does.

A study conducted by researchers at Iowa State University found that towns they labeled "shrinking smart" are building social capital—connections between people, the relationships in the town, and developing a core of multi-generational leaders. While these "smart shrinking" towns may be losing population they, at the same time, have made gains in indicators that measure quality of life. These towns have created social networks that make residents feel connected and are, importantly, making long term commitments to maintaining and improving the quality of life in their communities. A strong social infrastructure, along with economic or physical structures, determines whether residents report greater quality of life (ruralshrinksmart.org).

It seems to me that the above paragraph describes Chinook. Blaine County has a strong agricultural economy, anchored by cattle ranches and wheat farms. Chinook High School basketball was recently reclassified to Class B from Class C, indicating an increase in student enrollment <sup>1</sup>. There is a core of committed leaders who have nurtured a strong sense of community with a focus on enhancing the quality of life for its residents. Their commitment and leadership was evident when 70% of voters recently approved a 1.2 million dollar bond issue to renovate the swimming pool and expand the city park. The bond issue was supplemented by nearly one million dollars in donations from businesses and current and former residents. Given the commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of life for its residents, I am optimistic about Chinook's future.

So the question is: Would I being willing to reside in Chinook? I will answer that question with two questions: 1) Would I move to Chinook? No, not at my age. Why? See the second question. 2) Could I live in Chinook? Yes, especially if I were younger and with the awareness that I would have to adapt to an environment much different than that of Louisville. There is no commercial transportation within 120 miles of Chinook. There are limited art and music venues. There are no medical specialists within 230 miles of Chinook. Harsh winters last from November to March with temperatures as low as 30 below. I could adapt because of the caring, committed and resilient folks who live in Chinook. That is what makes a community.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In 1925 the Utah Idaho Sugar Company built a sugar beet processing factory east of Chinook. In 1928 the company donated new uniforms, emblazoned with a sugar beet on the front, to the high school basketball team. Soon after, the high school changed its mascot from the "Tigers" to the "Sugarbeeters." The name has received national recognition as one of the best (most novel?) high school mascot names.

### Heard from the Pulpit

"If we think of the whole of the people of the United States, many years ago, someone in your family arrived here as the last ones to this place. And God used someone to treat that ancestor as the ones who were here first."

Elmer Zavata from "Showing up for Immigrant Justice," March 23, 2025

"As a creative -- whether you are a writer or singer, poet, cook, teacher -- you have to use your gifts for the Movement. We were given these gifts for a reason, and even if you don't totally understand it, hopefully the story of Coretta Scott King will get you a little closer."

Jecorey Arthur from "We the People," April 27, 2025

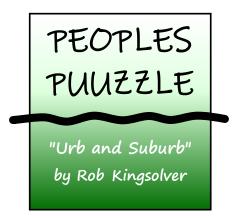
#### March 2025 PUUZZLE ANSWERS

Crossword Acrostic

	S	0	S		С	L	Α	R	Α			S	L	0
	Α	Z	0	Р	Ι	Ε	L	Ε	S		F	L	-	Р
Α	Ν	Е	8	ш	Ε	Α	S	Ε	0	Z	L	1	F	Ε
М	D	C		Α	Μ		0	L	D	Р	Α	Р	Е	R
Ι	W	Α	S	Υ	0	כ			Α	R		S	R	Α
D	1	R	Т	Υ		S	Α	Υ		R	В		S	S
S	С		Α	0	Α		С	0	М	Е	0	Z		
Т	Н	Е	Т	כ	R	Z	-	Ν	G	Ρ	0	1	Z	Т
		>	Ε	R	Μ	_	Ν		R	0	В		_	0
В	Ι		S	Р		ш	G	Е		R	0	0	Т	S
Ι	С	כ		Α	Κ			Н	Ι	Т	0	Ν	Т	0
G	Ε	Z	Ε	R	Α	ш	S		S	Е		Ζ	Α	Μ
В	Α	С	K	T	0	S	Q	J	Α	R	Ε	0	Ν	Ε
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N	Ε	Ε			Α	T	T	I	С		В	М	S	

There is no better teacher than adversity. Every defeat, every heartbreak, every loss contains its own seed, its own lesson on how to improve your performance next time.

--Malcolm X



#### **ACROSS**

- 1. Unsociable
- 6. Pocket watch attachment
- 9. Music degree (abbr)
- 12. Ere
- 14. Period of Falls of the Ohio fossils
- 16. Where local country mice live
- 18. One, in Paris
- 19. With a stiff upper lip
- 20. "Rocky Top" state (abbr)
- 21. Dorothy's Auntie
- 22. Air a second time
- 24. Date on grocery items (2 wds)
- 26. School north of Pittsburgh (abbr)
- 27. Redacts (2 wds)
- 29. About, on a memo (abbr)
- 30. Turner, Danson, and Cruz
- 31. What an agreeable Russian says
- 32. Worn to a Scottish luau? (2 wds)
- 35. The 5 o'clock rat race (2 wds)
- 38. "There will never be \_\_\_\_."
- 39. 1960s record (abbr)
- 40. What we might have to settle for
- 41. Health care professional (abbr)
- 42. Politeness
- 46. Winter hours in Owensboro (abbr)
- 47. Pro footballer \_\_\_\_\_-Ekotto
- 49. Star-shaped spice
- 50. School with orange uniforms (abbr)
- 51. Covid caused a panic over it (abbr)
- 52. Bell sound
- 54. Nickname sounding like 52 across
- 55. Where local city mice live (2 wds)
- 59. Like sketchy behavior
- 60. Virgil's classic tale
- 61. Understand
- 62. "\_\_\_ vous plait"
- 63. Actor McDowall

1	2	3	4	5				6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13		14				15			
16						17								
18				19						20			21	
22			23			24			25			26		
27					28			29			30			
		31			32		33			34				
35	36			37										
38											39			
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46				47			48			49				
50			51			52			53			54		
55		56			57						58			
59									60					
61				62						63				

#### **DOWN**

- 1. Renounce
- 2. Add "K" to spell a tissue
- 3. Outbid (2 wds)
- 4. Sound made when gut-punched
- 5. City in the San Joaquin Valley
- 6. What "En garde!" signals (3 wds)
- 7. Morehead State's conference (abbr)
- 8. Dancers shake it and pirates take it.
- 9. Receptacle
- 10. Mary's Latin honorific (2 wds)
- 11. Unspecified tunes (2 wds)
- 13. Suffix for "introv" or "extrov"
- 14. Must, in Cannes
- 15. Sister
- 17. Frying chicken, for example (2 wds)
- 23. Appalachians or Sierras (abbr)
- 25. "To thine own self \_\_\_\_."
- 26. Like a homemade book (2 wds)
- 28. Comes out with
- 30. Easily scrubbed surface
- 35. Required course for physics majors
- 36. Fourteen pounds (2 wds)
- 37. Filler word in speeches
- 43. More serene

- 44. Log-in requirement
- 45. Sopranos usually sing it.
- 47. Vaulted church spaces
- 48. "The one and \_\_\_\_\_"
- 51. Link
- 53. Meadow
- 56. Employ
- 57. USA's 1st military college (abbr)
- 58. Wine-related prefix

### ACROSTIC PUUZZLE

#### by Rob Kingsolver

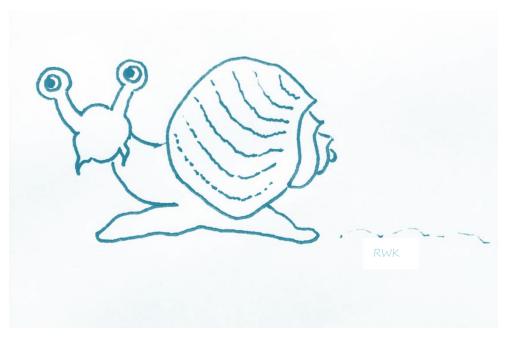
Follow the clues and fill in the blanks to complete each word. Then copy letters into the matching numbered squares to complete a quotation. The first letters of each of the words, read from top to bottom, spell out the author's name and topic.

1 R	2 G	3 T	41		5 F	6 Y	7 U		8 N	9 X	10 K	11 Q	12 S	13 N	14 K		15 D	16 R	17 H
18 T		19 A	20 S	21 J		22 B	23 G	24 G		25 S	26 I	27 Y		28 O	29 E	30 J	31 V	32 G	33 L
	34 O	35 V	36 B		37 E	38 J	39 Z		40 N	41 R	42 L		43 H	44 I	45 P	46 X		47 F	48 U
49 M	50 P	51 Y	52 C	53 T	54 Q	55 C		56 H	57 V	58 N	59 A	60 Q	61 E	62 M		63 S	64 J	65 U	66 Z
67 I	68 P	69 Y	70 S	71 V	72 M		73 D	74 O	75 P	76 L	77 U	78 H	79 F	80 D		81 R	82 T		83 M
84 G	85 Y	86 K	87 F		88 H	89 J	90 F	91 E	92 Z		93 N	94 V	95 B		96 P	97 S		98 Z	99 W
100 U	101 R	102 C	103 W	104 V	105 K	106 I	107 L	108 T		109 X	110 N	111 G		112 J	113 A	114 0	115 M	116 Y	117 N
	118 Q	119 W	120 A		121 X	122 Q		123 X	124 G	125 Q	126 F	127 D	128 U	129 T	130 M	131 U	132 M	133 R	
134 C	135 Z	136 W	137 N	138 M	139 X	140 R		141 A	142 E		143 C	144 R	145 O		146 Q	147 P	148 I		149 I
150 G	151 S	152 L	153 Z	154 S	155 I		156 J	157 B	158 V	159 G	160 O	161 E		162 X	163 F	164 B	165 E	166 Q	167 W
168 H	169 E	170 T	171 U	172 D	173 F	174 D	175 A												<u> </u>

A. Equine exclamation	59         19         113         141         120         175	N. Masked critters
B. Alphabetical listing	22         95         36         164         157	O. Positive 74 160 28 145 34 114
C. Front desk location	<u>102</u> <u>143</u> <u>52</u> <u>134</u> <u>55</u>	P. Judaic teachers 50 147 68 96 45 75
D. Brand identifiers	127     172     73     15     174     80	Q. Mishap
E. Unfairly charged	37         169         61         142         165         29         91         161	R. Aphid predator
F that ends well	5 126 173 79 90 47 163 87	S. Amusing story 20 151 97 154 70 25 12 63
G. Protestant denom.	84 159 32 124 150 111 2 24 23	T. Zero
H. Kangaroo feature	43 168 17 56 78 88	U. Departure
I. Boring situation?	4     44     26     148     149     106     155     67	V. Hard to explain
J. Musical intervals	89     112     38     30     64     156     21	W. Attain $\frac{167}{103} \frac{103}{119} \frac{136}{136} \frac{99}{99}$
K. Like a storied duckling	B 10 105 86 14	X. Lighthouses, eg. <u>121 162 109 123 9 46 139</u>
L. Silly goose	107 76 152 42 33	Y. Nobody special
M. Estimating	130 138 49 83 72 115 132 62	Z. Welcome break 66 153 98 135 39 92

### Slowing it Down

Life seems to come at us faster and faster, doesn't it? The drivers behind you on the expressway seem determined to risk their own lives and everyone else's, just to jockey into the space one car length ahead. Your physician barely has time to recall who you are before trotting down the hall to the next patient. News is delivered in shorter and shorter snippets, with less and less meaningful content. Loved ones zip you a brief text or social media post in lieu of a thoughtful personal letter. Restaurants are seeing fewer and fewer clients



sitting down to dinner, and more folks grabbing orders to go as they rush out the door to get to another event. We live in an age of instant gratification, over-scheduling, hurried encounters, abbreviated pleasures, and a careening demolition of norms on the national scene that can evoke emotional whiplash.

Although we can all appreciate the efficiency and convenience of modern life, our bodies, minds, and spirits are not really designed to run at top speed all the time. For our sanity, our health, and our spiritual balance, we all occasionally need to step off the fast track to tomorrow, so that we can fully appreciate where we are right now. In our next issue, The Tapestry will examine ways to focus on the present, take ownership of our time, and enjoy life at a slower and more intentional pace. If you have a story, a strategy, or an experience with taming the hectic tumult of modern life, let us know. We patiently await your calls, your emails, or even a hand-written letter in the mailbox!



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