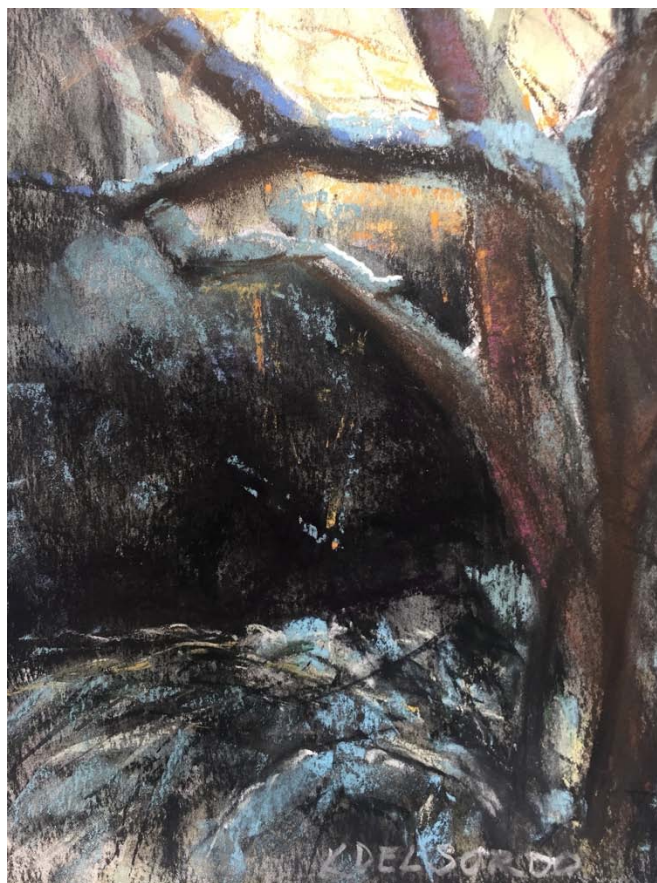


The Second  
Half Magazine  
Volume 3 Issue 2  
**December**  
**2022**

# Perspectives...

from later life learning

*Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.*  
**Albert Einstein**



*Winter Lights*  
Original oil painting by Kathleen Del Sorto

## 50 Words or Less...

I am a widow.

My nosedive was fast, without time to process or discuss. In six weeks, my husband slipped away, and I found myself alone.

Time heals, and I have grown in ways I never expected.

Believe in the gift of time. You will survive.

--Vicki Bancroft

Mother Teresa said: "do small things with great love."

The Young at Heart group sang: "You can't always get what you want, but you can get what you need." Thank you to The Second Half for giving us what we need!

--Nancy Jordan

In fourth grade I took the only Field Trip ever sponsored by my rural town, to Tufts Dental School for a free teeth cleaning. Carrying a sandwich with real meat [Spam], instead of the usual mustard on bread, to me it was like going to view the pyramids of Egypt, or the Eiffel Tower.

--Russ Carey

One Christmas when my brother and I were five and three, my aunt took us to see Santa at the local department store where the show was broadcast on the radio. I had practiced how to say "baby doll" when asked what I wanted. My brother asked for a red toy car and a blue truck. When my turn came, I answered "me, too." My mother, listening at home, was so embarrassed!

--Sheila Koot

Yesterday I went to visit Maria from my parish who is 102 years old! She was putting up her Christmas decorations, a few at a time, and resting in between. She said "You know, I wasn't supposed to be here this year because I had Covid last year. Because I survived, I decided to decorate so I can celebrate! No one is as old as I am, and I don't know why I'm still here, but I am, so I'm going to make the best of it!"

May we all have such a beautiful and positive attitude toward life!

--Norma Olivier

## Maybe It Was...

The walk in the woods,  
    Beeches and Oaks,  
        Maples and Pines.

The drive in the countryside,  
    postcardesque  
        yellows and reds.

The pumpkins and mums  
    on the doorsteps,  
        oranges and purples.

The stroll through the farmers' market,  
    plaids and flannels,  
        sweaters and scarves.

The smell of  
    hot apple cider and  
        pumpkin spice coffee.

The birdwatch along the shore,  
    cormorants and ducks,  
        plovers and gulls.

The blood-red sunset and  
    the lone seal spotted  
        at East Beach.

The wine and cheese,  
    gazing with you  
        under a million stars.



Photo by Sheila Koot

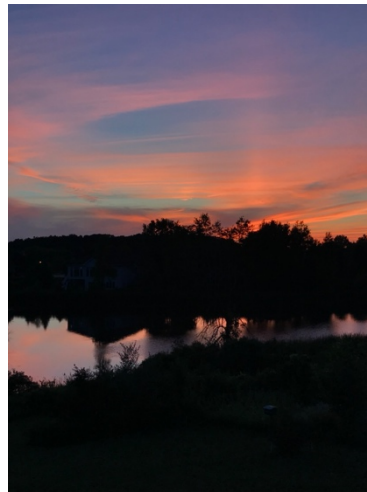


Photo by Sheila Koot

Paul Mercier  
October 12, 2022

## Interview with Susan Rabinowitz

### 1) How did you hear about The Second Half and when did you join?

I had been a member of Osher Lifelong Learning at Tufts so, when I moved to Lakeville in 2019 I asked a more computer adept friend to search for something similar. I believe she found Second Half on the internet.

### 2) What is the best part about being a Second Half member?

I hope I will continue to meet people taking the courses since I do not know people in this neck of the woods. Secondly, I recently retired and I am eager for the mental stimulation.



### 3) What are your favorite type of courses to take? Why?

I like courses in which we travel to different places such as Historical Kaleidoscope and Birding. My nickname is the Great Adventuress. Of course you can have adventures of the mind as well, so I also enjoy topics that are new to me such as “Women Artists” and “Music Documentaries.” My new quest is to find more performance venues for dance, theater, or music.

### 4) What do you like to do in your spare time when you are not taking classes?

I take myself to new towns to explore either nature or places to shop or tour. Sometimes, to give myself an “incentive,” I look for special foods such as artisanal bread or butchers. I would have said ice cream but I immediately found Peaceful Meadows and Giffords. What a mecca this area is for ice cream!

### 5) Is there anything else you would like to share with the membership?

For forty years I worked in human services mostly in administration but sometimes in direct work with clients. The issues of poverty and racism are of deep concern and as a result of that I was also very active in liberal politics even serving as a commissioner for city government. I also worked at the state level and in Washington.

You will chuckle when you hear my story of how I married my high school boyfriend 55 years after we were an item.

My love of travel has taken me to India and to Europe (where I purchased a little English Sportscar and drove from London to the Greek islands and back.)

### 6) Is there an area in which you would like to see a course offered through The Second Half?

Being a Foodie (and not living in Cambridge anymore), I would like to see a course that is related to FOOD. It could be cooking, cookbooks, swapping recipes, forming a club that eats at unknown or known restaurants, arranging dinners at peoples’ houses... I’m open!



## CAT ELEVATOR

We were newlyweds.  
We chose a shelter cat for fifty cents  
Named her Sputnik, after the Russian rocket.  
We lowered and raised her in a fruit basket  
from our second floor apartment.  
Sadly, she suffered a broken leg  
after one of her adventures.  
She recovered after a pin in the leg and a cast.

Later, she had two kittens, Henry and Jedidiah.  
The landlady complained of the noise from their running;  
said they sounded like elephants.  
We took them to a pet store to be adopted.  
I cried all the way home

Joan McKinley  
November, 2022

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Online photo



Photo by Richard Dow

## Human Heart

When we visited  
our grandparents,  
we loved to go to the  
Franklin Institute  
in Philadelphia.  
At the Franklin Institute,  
we looked forward most  
to taking the blood's path  
through a human heart  
built to scale  
for a 220-foot giant.  
Made of cement and plaster,  
the heart lurked off a hall  
on the second floor  
toward the back of  
a darkened room.  
You could ascend into  
twisted passageways  
lit in garish red light,  
resounding with  
an amplified heartbeat.  
Groups of school children  
would eagerly race  
through the veins,  
arteries, and ventricles,  
shouting and doubling back  
to create blockages.  
High up in the aorta,  
there was a rupture  
from which you  
could peer out  
into that dim room.

Clem Brown

## Interview with Barry Steinberg

### **How did you hear about The Second Half and when did you join?**

When I retired in 2017, I looked for classes and found The Second Half on the web.

### **What is the best part about being a Second Half member?**

There's always something interesting for me given the variety of classes. Combined with the quality of the instructors, the Live/Learn/Connect motto fits well.

### **What are your favorite type of courses to take? Why?**

I don't have a particular favorite type, but I've taken a variety of classes, all of which I've enjoyed.



Gary Brown's music classes bring back so many memories and they give an appreciation for the creative process for music that's been so important to all of us.

Dennis Tweed's Music Documentaries has been a wonderful exposure to music in film.

Roger Menard's Stargazing and his photography is absolutely awe-inspiring.

Mark Mello's Civil War brings every battle and troop movement alive.

Bob Miller's Politics/Mid-term class was informative and inspiring, albeit aggravating.

### **What do you like to do in your spare time when you are not taking classes?**

What takes up the most time are grandchildren, sailing, and travel. In the winter I continue my sailing fix with boat projects. I am also the handicapper for the Marion racing fleet, a member of the Beverly Yacht Club race committee, and a board member of the New Bedford Symphony.

### **Is there anything else you would like to share with the membership?**

**(Such as past careers, favorite travel destinations, a favorite book or movie.....)**

Travel-wise we enjoy the adventurous side. Museums and architecture are wonderful and inspiring, but whether it's the Galapagos, Costa Rica, the Grand Canyon, or Yosemite, nothing beats Nature's Wow Factor.

Career-wise, I ran an industrial packaging business for nearly 30 years. Having been an avid sailor for many years, I entered the marine composites industry, building carbon fiber rudders and structures for large custom racing sailboats. Many of our customers participated in the races to Bermuda, the Americas Cup and around-the-world races. This led to a position as a project manager for a custom yacht builder in Rhode Island to round out my career.

## The Enigma

For fans who know no puzzle is too hard,  
Elgar's Enigma defies every rule.  
"Notation is key" the posh stringers chant;  
a "dark saying" leads to what we desire.

Clues—a "well known tune," its counterpoint barred  
"by not being played"—simply serve to fool  
those in the musical know. The truant  
just feel detained like a "bird on a wire."

Elgar took his riddle's answer to the grave.  
Life's puzzles, like the good we do, at times  
are simply interred. What seemed so remote

is now near. A time-worn theme, an octave  
beyond all variation sounds. Dark chimes  
call the chorus in black, "That's all she wrote."

James Cronin



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## Office

Clem Brown

One day, when I was about eight and out of school sick with a cold, my father took me to the office with him. He was the City Editor of the *Portland Press Herald* and had his own narrow office just off the crowded City Newsroom on an upper floor in the old Press Herald Building. Looking out his window, you could just see Portland's docks and the stone ramparts of Fort Gorges out in the harbor. Everyone in the City Newsroom incessantly smoked cigarettes. My father smoked a pipe. Everyone in the City Newsroom wore a straight tie, loose at the collar. My father wore a bowtie, tied impeccably. It was obvious that the reporters who worked under my father all liked and respected him. I think it helped that he was a combat veteran with a Yale degree who treated each of them with unfeigned warmth but made sure he worked harder than any of them. I stayed in my father's office most of that day. I sat in the chair beside his desk and read a Landmark Book. I blew my nose into Kleenex, feasted on Pine Brothers cherry cough drops, and took long drags from a Vicks VapoRub inhaler, as my father diligently carried on the business of the world. I was proud of him.



from Douro

3. Pinhão  
(for Terry)  
There is a little girl  
in every woman,  
just as there is  
that well-known little boy  
in every man.

A long way  
up the Douro Valley  
in wine country,  
we visit Pinhão,  
just south of  
Theresa's hometown  
Francelos.

Pinhão is now a tourist spot  
with boat rides, souvenir shops, and  
gussied-up hotels and restaurants.  
But you can imagine  
how far from the wide world  
it once seemed to  
a young girl,  
one of nine siblings  
up in the vineyards  
and eager to escape.

Clem Brown



Pinhão  
Online photo

## **Interview with Kathleen Del Sordo**

### **1) How did you hear about The Second Half and when did you join?**

I learned about the Second Half many years ago when the group was associated with University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. After retiring and sailing the Atlantic I looked locally for a group that would continue to challenge my mind and help me continue to develop new interests. The best part of being a member of The Second Half is that it does just that.



### **2) What are your favorite courses to take? Why?**

The classes I've enjoyed included tennis, philosophy, art history, and many political science courses. In participating with The Second Half, I have met many retired professionals and have enjoyed their company throughout the lectures. After taking an art history class with The Second Half on Greece, I traveled with them on a tour of Greece.

### **3) What do you like to do in your spare time when you are not taking classes?**

When I am not taking Second Half classes, I am an artist. I do pastels and watercolors and love to work with other South Coast artists in developing my skills further. I have shown my art and have taken many art workshops in the South Shore and Plymouth areas.

### **4) Is there anything else you would like to share with the membership?**

I worked with the town of Dartmouth to save the old Southworth library from private ownership because I saw an opportunity to use the building for art. I organized a group to raise money. We founded the Dartmouth Cultural Center, which continues to be utilized as an art center for the town. I have enjoyed a long career in geriatric healthcare and, as part of my service, proudly developed the first adult day health care program in Massachusetts.

I enjoy creative adventures and that's what attracts me to the programming at The Second Half!

### **5) Is there an area in which you would like to see a course offered through The Second Half?**

What about a course in creating and maintaining a website?

## Vietnam 1970



I hear the choppers  
*Whomp, whomp, whomp.*  
Bring him in on a gurney.  
My staff, child soldiers, are milling  
Afraid to go near.  
Not me.  
I touch him  
And lift the sheet  
He looks down too.  
He holds my hand and says  
“Looks pretty bad Doc”.  
I understand what we look at.  
And then he’s gone.  
I see his spirit rise, I see it  
Like smoke from a fire.  
A heavy weight falls  
And pins me to that story.  
For years.

John Sorrentino

## AUTUMN RHYTHM

The graceful plumes of grasses gone to seed  
keep alive the joy of beautiful plants  
When vibrant flowers have bloomed their last  
the grasses appear in plentiful mass  
Autumn Joy displays its muted red  
Breezes sway the fluffy beach grass  
Leafless twigs make lovely shapes  
Evergreens now take center stage.

When colors no longer put on a show  
The grasses, understudies, are ready to shine  
And, quietly, softly, flowers are preparing  
to burst forth again with urgent blossoms  
There's a world of activity under the soil  
Ready to dazzle when earth gives the call.

Joan McKinley  
November, 2018



Photo by Sheila Koot

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## Million Dollar Moment

I won the lottery but not the one that  
pays a million dollars which amounts  
to about a quarter million less present  
value discounting and taxes.

No, my prize was buried on my cell phone  
months after your funeral with your navy  
blue grippy socks I had purchased on Amazon  
and the free black diabetic shoes; each one,  
lace-free, with two Velcro fasteners and  
your comfortable black cotton sweatpants  
complemented by two curved appendages:

your left shoe on your right foot,  
your right shoe on your left foot.

I must have been asleep that morning  
when I helped you dress and the red-faced  
laughter that erupted melting into our  
priceless million-dollar moment.

Paul Mercier  
October 3, 2018



Photo by Paul Mercier



## Talking to the Dead

Lots of people talk to the dead

in the graveyard by the headstone,  
but often in other places too—  
in church, walking through the woods,  
sitting on the toilet, in bed at night.

It's usually a parent or a good friend  
who has passed on to the other side.  
The dead invite these talks,  
discreetly beckoning from beyond  
to impart some hard-earned advice.

They don't care about our daily sins.  
The dead are well aware  
of our selfish pleasure-seeking.  
They've seen it all before.  
They just don't give a crap about that.

They want to give us some advice  
while we still have the time.  
They want us to appreciate  
the life we've got  
while we've still got it.

Clem Brown



Photo by Richard Dow



## Signs

stop  
when deer  
cross the road

go  
stargaze on a  
winter night

yield  
to the spicy scent of  
douglas fir

slow down  
with a sip of  
chamomile tea

dead end  
trying to lower  
the cable bill

do not enter  
walmart on  
black friday

buckle up  
when you receive the  
dentist and fuel bill

one way  
the sign I missed  
on my road test



Online photo

Paul Mercier  
December 8, 2021

## Bird Sightings with the Birding Class

Mary Martha Murphy

The first field trip for the **Slightly More Advanced Beginning Birding Class** was held at Fort Phoenix, Fairhaven. It was very windy, blowing from the Northeast. We caught Ring-billed and Herring Gulls sleeping on the parking lot. Double-crested Cormorants were still roosting on the rock in the water in preparation for their migratory flight south. Land birds gave us a surprise visit by Red-bellied and Downy Woodpeckers. The disappointment: no ducks yet. Pictured are Mary Martha Murphy, Mary Noble, Anne-Marie Grillo with Ron Marsh and John Brindisi standing. Jackie Maida was our worthy photographer.



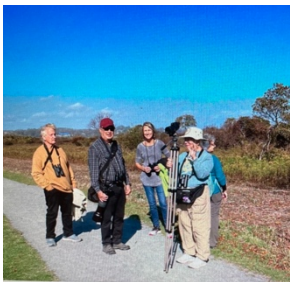
The second field trip was to the Munn Preserve of the Mattapoissett Land Trust. It was a high tide and sunny with a slight breeze off the water. The Hunter Moon made it a bad day for shore birds, but we did log four Great Egrets and a Great Blue Heron. Highlight was a flyover by a female Northern Harrier. Pictured are Mary Noble, Linda Schwartz, John Brindisi, Janette DiSalvo (behind), Anne-Marie Grillo, Ron Marsh, and Jackie Maida.



Our third field trip was rained out, but yesterday we were able to visit Gooseberry Neck for our fourth field trip. It was a perfect birding day: overcast, warm, no wind, and with an in-coming tide. Many flocks of Scoters, especially White-winged, both swimming and flying. The highlight was a Common Loon. He even called to us! The photo shows our intrepid leader (yours truly) manning the scope for a better look at the Loon.



For the fifth field trip we went to Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge in Middletown, RI. We had a gorgeous day and maybe the last good day of autumn with (unfortunately) an outgoing tide. A flock of some 50 Sanderlings landed on the offshore rock. Surf was at a minimum with only 8 Harlequin Ducks making an appearance. Small numbers of Common Eiders gave us only



one very sleepy male on a seaweed-covered rock--not a great photo opportunity. Janette DiSalvo had the honor of spotting a Northern Harrier flying over us as we exited the trail. We logged 16 species, with the Harrier and two Black-capped Chickadees being the only land birds. We did not find the Yellow-breasted Chat that was seen here earlier in the weekend. Pictured are Ron Marsh, John Brindisi, Janette, myself, and Anne-Marie Grillo. Jackie Maida was the photographer. Linda Schwarz had to leave early and was not included in the photo.

The sixth field trip was to Colt State Park in Bristol, RI, for a close-up and personal view of the migrating Brant Geese. Alas! no Brant to be seen. But in the woodland at the curve near the end of the park, a plethora of migrating songbirds were feasting of blackberries and bittersweet: 15 Robins, 8 Cedar Waxwings, 2 Flickers, a small flock of 10 White-throated Sparrows, and one lone Catbird. Pictured is Jackie Maida's photo of one of the Cedar Waxwings.

Our last field trip was not a field trip at all but a Birding-By-Car experience, the senior citizen way! We met at the Tidal Flats Recreation Area in Bourne. (It was an unseasonably warm day, so we actually got out of our vehicles.) This area is the south entrance to the Cape Cod Canal Bikeway on the Cape side. In the fall the entrance to the canal itself is a tidal flat which “traps” migrating ducks and geese. But, alas! All we found were a few Black Ducks, Eiders, and a solitary Canada Goose! And no Brant at all. Last year at this time the canal was chock full with flocks of birds. Where have all the birds gone? Hopefully, global warming has delayed the migration with unfrozen inland ponds and lakes.

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## AZORES ADVENTURE

Escape to the Azores with The Second Half in July 2023 and visit four islands of this volcanic archipelago. With stunning scenery, a rich cultural heritage, and a varied cuisine, this excursion in conjunction with Sagres Vacations of Fall River is sure to please. More information will follow via email. Be sure to look for our spring class offering on the Azores in preparation for this trip.



Liz Lafleur

Azores  
Online photo

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# AN IRISH SOJOURN

Russ Carey

SAVE THE DATE!! **Friday, February 24, 2023**, The Second Half Lifelong Learning Institute will sponsor what is to be the first of annual international gala fundraising events, open to its members and the general public.

The upcoming event, **AN IRISH SOJOURN**, will feature the rich history of Ireland in story and song, presented by three talented musicians: **Mary King** on the cláirseach (Irish Harp), bodhrán (Irish drum), and glórtha (vocals); **Paul Dube** on the bosca ceoil (accordion) and orgán béil (harmonica); and **Kevin Fllon** on the giotár (guitar), fidil (fiddle), and glórtha (vocals). The trio currently performs extensively in the Providence and northern RI areas, and Southern MA.

Celebrating Ireland in  
Story and Song





The event will kick off at 12:00 noon with a cocktail hour accompanied by Mary on the Irish Harp. A gourmet buffet consisting of salad greens, baked scrod, pasta marina, chicken, vegetables, potato, desserts, coffee and tea will follow. During this time, attendees can review and bid on a host of silent auction offerings, as well as seek out the elusive Irish Pot of Gold.

Tickets will go on sale in the new year at \$60.00 per person.

So...keep your eyes open and ears to the ground for further information on the gala event. Come with friends to enjoy a great meal, great camaraderie and great entertainment. Sit back, listen, sing along, tap your toes, and have a grand old time.

## Céad míle fáilte (A hundred thousand welcomes).

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Ireland is the only country in Europe that has a musical instrument as its national symbol – the Irish Harp.
- Ireland has more natural red-heads than any other country (10% of its population).
- Saint Patrick was actually born in Roman Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and brought to Ireland as a slave. He is credited with bringing Christianity to much of Ireland, as well as converting large portions of the Pictish and Anglo-Saxon populations of the British Isles.
- The last great European glacier of 10,000 years ago, and not Saint Patrick, eliminated Ireland's population of wild snakes. The Irish Sea, created when the glaciers melted, prevented the repopulation of snakes onto the island.
- The world's oldest lighthouse still in operation can be found in County Wexford Ireland (800 years old).
- Halloween was "invented" in Ireland.
- The average Irish person drinks 100 liters (26.5 gallons) of beer each year. Dublin boasts one pub for every 100 residents.
- Most of Ireland's major cities, including Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Galway, and Limerick, were founded by the Vikings.
- Ireland's Prime Minister is called the Taoiseach and its parliament the Dáil Éireann.
- More than 35 million Americans can trace their ancestry back to Ireland. About one third of all Australians have Irish ancestors.
- Irish monks are often credited with saving learning and literacy during Europe's Dark Ages, establishing dozens of monasteries across Europe as far west as Germany and as far south as Italy.



Richard Dow with friend

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Thank you to the following contributors of this edition of *Perspectives*...

Vicki Bancroft, Clem Brown, Russ Carey, James Cronin, Kathleen Del Sordo, Richard Dow, Nancy Jordan, Sheila C. Koot, Elizabeth Lafleur, Joan McKinley, Paul Mercier, Mary Martha Murphy, Norma Olivier, Susan Rabinowitz, John Sorrentino, Barry Steinberg

Editors: Sheila C. Koot, Eileen Sorrentino and B.J. Nooth

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*Happy Holidays*



Padanarum Harbor  
Photo by Sheila Koot