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VILLAGES TOGETHER



CHARLOTTE LINDGREN WINSLOW: RETIRED PROFESSOR AND LIFELONG STUDENT

ALSO INSIDE:

- Newton Art Association Scholarship Awards
- Coffee: The Continental Catalyst
- Young Voices

AND MORE!



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Hello fellow Newtonites.

June is upon us! It seems like there is plenty of sunshine and even more road construction in Newton. I suppose they need to fill in those potholes sometime. Looking forward to driving on nice smooth roads in the near future.

I am very excited to share this month's resident feature. I was fortunate to take my first trip to Lasell Village to meet with Charlotte Lindgren Winslow, making sure to follow all necessary precautions. At 97 years young, she had a lifetime of stories that I could not come close to fitting all in the magazine. I enjoyed my visit with her so much that at one point I stopped taking notes and just listened to her tell me stories.

I don't know if it's the pandemic or the internet age, but I cannot recall the last time I sat down with someone, face to face, and heard a genuine, edge-of-my-seat, fun story. It made me really cherish the human experience of not getting my news and content from behind a glass screen. I encourage everyone to find those people in their lives that lived a generation so different from their own, and get them to tell you a good story. When they finish, let them know that you have mentally clicked 'like' on their tale and wish to subscribe.

Cheers,

Peter

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CHARLOTTE LINDGREN WINSLOW: RETIRED PROFESSOR AND LIFELONG STUDENT



By Peter Crisano

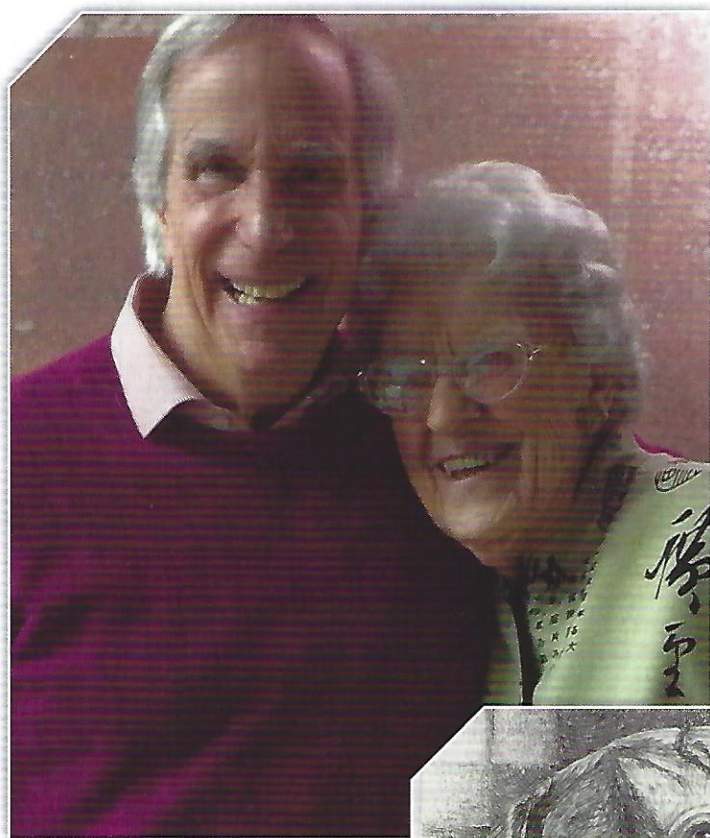
Photos courtesy of Diane Brophy
and Charlotte Lindgren Winslow

I had the honor of meeting 97-year-old Charlotte Lindgren Winslow at her home in Lasell Village, located in Auburndale. After having had both of my vaccine shots and undergoing an onsite temperature check, I was cleared to meet with Charlotte. She gave me a quick tour of Lasell Village, pointing out the dining area and bar, where residents congregated more frequently before the pandemic. A poster board resting on an easel in the entry way, boasted photos of new residents, complete with a brief bio. Each new member is designated with a class year, much like high school, but instead of graduation, this denotes the year you arrived at Lasell Village. Charlotte is class of 2018, as is proudly displayed on her resident name badge.

Charlotte was kind enough to make me a guest in her spacious corner apartment. As she showed me around, she described how she had downsized from a much larger house on Maple Street in Newton, where she lived for 30 years. Much to my surprise, she tells me that every picture on the wall of her new place was hand painted by a friend or family member and was selected to keep for that very reason.

Charlotte might just be Newton's own version of Marie Kondo. Her philosophy on downsizing was quite logical, and that was simply to only keep those things that were essential or could never be purchased in a store. A bookcase is stocked in a similar fashion, containing only those books authored by people close to her, including books she has authored as well, as this former professor is a successful writer.

As we went through her collection, she remarked that she had a friend in Hollywood with whom she was quite close, as he had been a student of hers. He had actually written a number of books and sent them to her with a loving dedication inscribed within. This man was none other than the original television cool guy, Henry Winkler, also known as Arthur Fonzarelli (aka The Fonz). Charlotte flipped through photos on her tablet, showing recent pictures that Henry sent, including him on vacation and catching bass in a lake. It seems that Henry himself had a learning disability and is now focused on writing books for elementary and middle school children, aimed at helping them with similar challenges. Charlotte beams with pride when she talks about her former



Charlotte with her former student, Henry Winkler (aka The Fonz)

student and the relationship they had built.

We chatted quite a bit about Charlotte's career, including her time teaching at both Boston University and for 30 years at Emerson College. She recalls being a Graduate Assistant and having the opportunity to teach at Boston University after WWII, when the GI Bill helped returning soldiers afford a college education. The influx of students put a strain on academic institutions, and schools were in desperate need of qualified educators. She says the classes were so big at that time, she had 100 students in Freshman Composition sections. She was grateful to have graduate students as teaching assistants, to help grade exams and read papers.

It was only when she had returned to Boston University that Charlotte became friends with her future husband the late Donald Winslow, though before WWII he had been her Freshman Composition instructor. Now due to the overcrowding, she was given the use of a single drawer in his desk, in which to keep her own supplies. Although they wouldn't come to marry until much later in life, it was this seemingly innocent event that started their connection.

Charlotte recalls how fate sent her to Boston University for the second time, having come down with scarlet fever while teaching at Medfield High School, this led to health complications and resulted in her resigning. She went to work

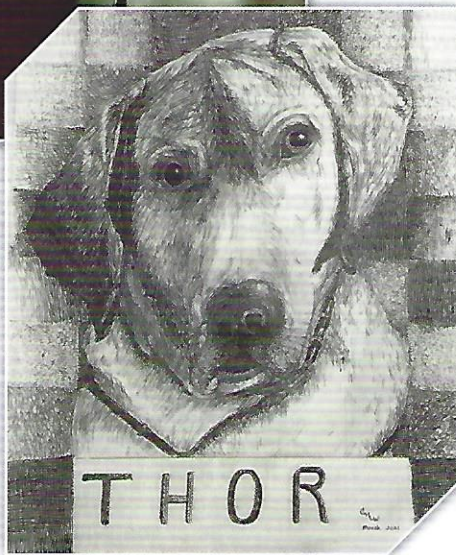
in the Administrative Office at Boston University, College of Liberal Arts. This provided her with free tuition so she could study for a Ph.D. It also gave 50% tuition to family members, so her younger brother David, would also earn his Ph.D.

It was Charlotte's experience at Boston University that also led to one of the most incredible stories I have ever heard. Charlotte was actually in two train crashes in the same day. This is a story you can easily Google, but I was fortunate enough to hear Charlotte tell it to me. She was on a commuter train and the signals had frozen. Her train was rear ended by another one. Many were injured, or worse, but she walked away unscathed. While police and medical officials were attending to the injured, Charlotte got onto another commuter train that was stopped on another track. As fate would have it, this train would later stop and end up in the exact same predicament as her original train. She survived both catastrophes. The hardest part was that her work and family had all heard on the radio about event and thought the worst. Since this was well before the invention of cell phones, Charlotte had no way to reach out to anyone until she finally arrived at work, hours later. Her family would have to wait until Charlotte could call them, to finally learn she was ok.

She tells me that she grew up in Ipswich, Massachusetts, on a poultry farm. Her father was a farmer of many things, but he primarily raised poultry. During the war he worked nights patrolling the Ipswich shipyard, at a time when America was wary of coastal spies sneaking ashore and enemy submarines. David, later wrote a novel about this, called No Ordinary Summer.

Charlotte was the eldest of three siblings; having a younger sister, Ruth, and a younger brother, David. Unfortunately, Ruth has since passed away, but left behind her three sons and two grandchildren. David is 15 years younger than Charlotte and was a professor, and then later the Dean at Dartmouth College. He also served as an Aerial Photograph Interpreter for the CIA. He is an accomplished writer, who now lives in Washington D.C. and has three sons, who have gone on to start their own families. Charlotte often gets photos from them, which she shared with me, including their family dog, Thor.

You can tell that Charlotte really values her connections



Charlotte's pen and ink drawing of her nephew's dog, Thor

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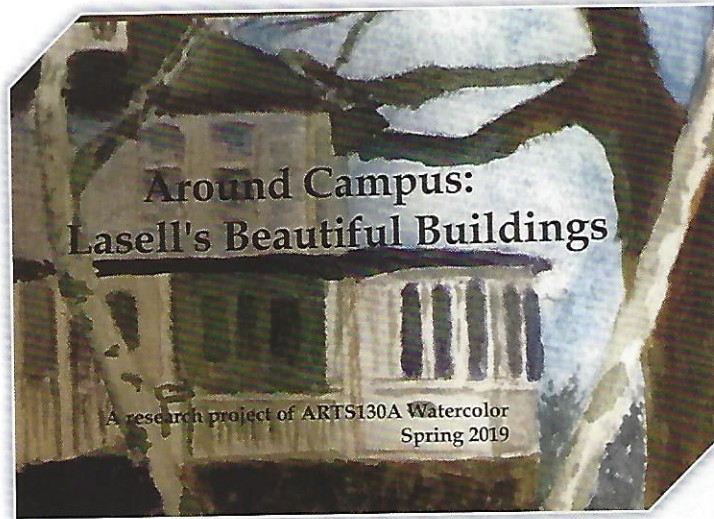
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Resident Feature

to people, be it friend or family. She loves the sense of community in Lasell Village, where the residents were allowed to form pods of four people, to allow socializing during the pandemic while limiting their exposure to too many people. She says her pod gets together each week using fancy plates and silverware, dressing up, and turning an average dinner into a festive and formal game night. She commented that the Queen of England enjoys a piece of dark chocolate after dinner and so Charlotte's friend Betsy did the same for her, jokingly saying that she deserved to be treated like a queen.

Charlotte has always enjoyed spending time with people of all ages. She taught a Summer program for students at Emerson College for ten years where she and fellow professors would take a group of students overseas for six weeks each summer to experience something completely new. It was done in conjunction with a course she and the Art professor taught on "Myth and Symbol" at the college. She remarks how it wasn't completely selfless, as it fed her own passion for travel. They visited England, Austria, France, Greece, Sicily, Egypt and Italy. She developed quite a bond with the students on these trips, and it was an incredible part of her life.

As we sat in her living room, she pulled out a small wicker basket, that could fit in your hand, and told me that her most valuable treasures resided in there. I did not know if I was to expect diamonds or some rare gems. It turns out the basket was full of special rocks that she has acquired on her travels. Her most prized possessions were these rocks



A watercolor painting of Karandon House, on Lasell campus, painted by Charlotte herself

that the average person might find no value in, but for her, they were priceless souvenirs from her travels abroad. She has many rocks to show me, including crystalized pink salt from Saltsburg's mines, fool's gold, and a piece of sulfur from volcanic Solfatara in Italy.

One of her most memorable experiences was her trip to Egypt, and in her basket was a small Nubian head that she had found in the desert sand. It certainly looked like something straight out of the Pharaoh's Tomb. She acknowledges that the head could be fake and might have been dropped by a weary tourist or a souvenir vendor. Charlotte says that she would rather never know, as she prefers to continue believing it's an ancient artifact. After all, the head is priceless to her, even if it may be a dollar trinket that someone dropped. "If it makes me happy, why ruin it," she informs me with a big smile.

Still to this day, Charlotte connects with students, by participating in a pen pal program with Newton elementary school students. She corresponds with them via email for the duration of their school year. Although the students aren't obligated to continue beyond the school year, Charlotte often continued her connections longer. Her current pen pal is in 5th grade at the Williams School and has plenty to share with Charlotte, as they correspond about every 3 weeks.



One of the two train wrecks that Charlotte survived

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The retired professor no longer drives but she is on a constant mission to learn. As Lasell Village is part of the University, the residents register for courses and participate in various programs. She tells me that if you reach 100 years of age, you get first choice of classes. You would think at 97, she should get her pick. I was lucky enough to see some of her watercolor art, and she truly has amazing technique and talent.

Charlotte has been focusing on studying the Hebrew Bible. Her mind is amazingly sharp as she never seems to stop wanting to learn and she is a natural born storyteller. She also goes to the gym three times a week, which is located in the Village, where she says she's the oldest client that the trainer has, making her an inspiration for others.

I asked Charlotte for one piece of advice to share with our readers and she told me, "Very often the things you think are most unfortunate lead to the best things in life; you just have to use them positively." ■



Charlotte at age 8 on her Ipswich farm

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