THE VOLUNTEERS

By Deb Lucke

We thought we'd send you off into 2019 with your faith in humanity reaffirmed...especially the humanity in close proximity to yourself. Read on.

Maximum Ebb at 7:30.

Woody Guthrie

To gauge distance, look at a distant landmark on shore, find a closer one, and see how the relationship changes as we sail.

I've been here continually since 1978 when the Woody Guthrie arrived. I was a novice even though I'd been in the Navy (in Electronics). I sailed every night I could--trying to see how the different captains did things. By 1983-84, I was a captain! I'm at the helm every Thursday with the same crew (during sailing season).

I came for environmental reasons. Pete Seeger started Clearwater in '68 and helped organize the Sloop Club 10 years later.

The idea of the festivals is to get people down to the river to get them interested--to help clean it up! We want to have a positive impact, teach the history of the river, figure out what can be done. The issue now is sewage coming out in floods. And runoff from parking lots. Edgewater won't help.

Since I started there's a lot more things happening on the river, more boating, more people on the riverfront enjoying themselves. The river is a lot cleaner. We still have fish warnings about how many you can eat in a week, but the birds of prey have made a comeback.

I guess you could say we've come some distance.

Tom LaBarr
Beacon Sloop Club
Fishkill Environmental Board

Glynwood is a teaching venue for aspiring farmers and a testbed for sustainable farming. Eleven or 12 years ago, I introduced myself and looked for ways to help out.

Kirby

Me

CLUCK CLUCK

We work at figuring out best practices...in irrigation, runoff, in the ways animals are processed. These mobile chicken coops are moved through the fields every few weeks as part of Glynwood's rotation grazing program. This allows manure to fertilize the field. The roofs self-drain into a water feeder.

We're doing vegetable growing in high tunnels so we can plant tomato seeds in March.

Young farmers can learn skills like driving a tractor, but we also help them develop a business plan, figure out how to raise capital investment, how to get access to land. Of the 50 apprentices who went through the program, 39 are still farming or in food systems work.

I'm secretary of the board, I do the annual pig roast for staff and funders, man the hayride on Food & Farm Day, represent Glynwood one at a time (as I'm doing with you), restore the bluebird houses which sometimes have mice or a snake hiding in them, and I weed. After you've worked 30 years at IBM getting your hands back in the dirt is healthy.

G. Kirby Brown
Secretary of the Board/
Glynwood
Yoga Instructor/
St. Christopher's
Philipstown Garden Club/
Conservation Group

I have this thing about people and hunger.

My pastor at the Tabernacle of Christ Church in Beacon came to me and said the Salvation Army was closing its doors and the homeless community relies on the food. He said, "Can we do something?" He and Pastor Ben from First Presbyterian, myself, and other concerned Beaconites had a meeting... Beacon Community Kitchen is the result.

The church gives us the space. Some of the volunteers from the Salvation Army came here. We have two professional chefs trained at CIA cooking. The food is good! We're open M-Th 10:30-12:00.

We have about 30 regulars. Mostly men. Lots of newcomers the last three years. People are displaced. Nothing's affordable anymore. One man was living in the woods. We're busier at the end of the month when the stamps run out. Some of these people have lived in Beacon their whole lives. They've been shattered.

I was a social worker in Brooklyn but I'm not a social worker here. That is not my role. We're here to feed and feed is what we're going to do. If someone is out of order, I'm firm, but with love. I let them know that I won't leave them without. If you can't change your behavior, I will make you a take-out meal.

When I see that someone wants to help, my antenna goes up. I ask for specific things that I know our guys need, like toiletries. Sometimes we get donations of blankets, hats, scarves, and haircuts. We serve them respect, dignity, and once a month, birthday cake!

Peggy Basalyga

Candi Rivera
Beacon Community Kitchen

©deblucke 2018

To Volunteer: www.beaconsloopclub.org/contacts, www.glynwood.org/volunteer or 845-265-3338, @beaconcommunitykitchen (Instagram) or http://signup.com/go/7eRFCB

I started volunteering years ago in Brooklyn as an EMT. It gave me hours toward my credentials as a physician's assistant. It was high stress in a high crime area. I went on to work at Beth Israel and then St. Francis in the area of addiction. When I retired, Gwen Nerrie recruited me to work at the Salvation Army feeding the homeless. Now we both volunteer at the Welcome Table at First Presbyterian and at Beacon Reads. It's fulfilling work, the giving, putting food out for people who are hungry.

I've had problems with depression myself. I like the interaction with people. Some of the guys at the Welcome Table recognize me from my work at the hospital. They say, "Hi, Doc." It's mostly older men, some with mental health issues. I understand what they're going through.

Michael Schoenberg
Welcome Table
Beacon Reads

To volunteer at Welcome Table
Church office: 845-831-5322
To volunteer at Beacon Reads
friends@beaconlibrary.org

Rose Quirk

We're here for ♥ the cats. ♥

We started here as newlyweds--trying to figure out where our lives were headed.

Twenty-eight years later, we're still here.

The cat sanctuary was started by two senior citizens, Ruth Valenti and Essie Dabrustin. At Essie's deathbed, I swore to take care of the shelter. We have close to 100 cats right now. We're one of the few shelters in the Hudson Valley that will take AIDS positive and Leukemia cats, as well as special needs cats.

We make sure the cats have a clean bill of health and are socialized. They're neutered or spayed. We're a throwaway society. Many cats are abandoned or abused. Some come from hoarding situations. It takes time for them to trust.

Beacon has no municipal shelter. We helped the city take care of 50 cats recently. When there's an issue--Mid-Hudson Animal Aid gets called.

We're impacting lives--people's and animals'.

Mary and Don Petruncola
President, Treasurer, Secretary
Mid Hudson Animal Aid

pat pat

Hello! This is Anesta Kwame with the Beacon Democrats. Today is Election Day...

Dr. Anesta Vanney-Kwame
Disaster Response Chaplain
NAACP (Former President Southern Dutchess)
Les Soeurs Amiables

I'm not a joiner. But I love the arts and wanted to get involved. I fell into it. I never intended for it to be my life. This has filled my later years enormously.

I've been honored many times (including Dutchess County Executives' 2001 Volunteer of the Year.) I always think, "No--I should thank you."

My job as volunteer is everything from scheduling art exhibits to washing the tablecloths. I help recruit other volunteers to help out at events. We have a pool of 20-30 who open the house and host.

I like working with the artists--and being at the openings and receptions. The joy that takes place in the room if it could only speak! We have it all: classical music, jazz, art shows, parties, weddings, poetry readings. "Cirque de la Lune" is this weekend. You should come!

Florence Northcutt
Board Member
Former President
Howland Cultural Center

My mother and grandmother had me doing this [canvassing for votes] since I was a baby. This was the '60s. We grew up marching, climbing the steps of the courthouse carrying signs. And I'm still doing it! Did it work? Yes, it did! It affected our housing, our jobs.

NAACP is voters' rights...criminal justice. I was president of the Southern Dutchess Branch. We got involved with the school system in Beacon. It was a mess! Children were discriminated against, punished more than other kids. For a long time there wasn't a teacher of color. We met with parents' groups, advocated for the children.

It's much better now.

I'm also involved in Beacon Prison Action and I'm liaison for Riverside Prison Ministry. We held candlelight vigils for Samuel Harrell, who was beaten and killed at Fishkill Correctional Facility. We also give rides to families from the train to the prison and back.

I'm a retired NYC schoolteacher on a pension. I'd go crazy if I stayed home.

Part of the reason I retired was to go into the ministry. I'm a Doctor of Ministry in Multifaith Studies and I'm looking for a position as a Disaster Response Chaplain.

One of my favorite sayings is: To whom much is given, much is expected.

Vanney-Kwame delivers pamphlets in Spanish about where to vote in Beacon.

FWISH

MHAA Volunteers: Come any day at 9:15 to help out, Howland Cultural Center: 845-831-4988, SDNAACP: Membership: 845-559-3483, beaconprisonrides@gmail.com