

The Algonquin Roundtable  
at  
Jake's Eatery



*Profiles In Verse*  
Dorothy H. Glessner

## THINGS TO NOTE ABOUT THE ORIGINAL ALGONQUIN ROUNDTABLE

\*Alexander Woolcott, NY Times drama critic initiated the Algonquin Roundtable – 1919 – afternoon roast – lasted about a decade

### \*Writers:

Dorothy Parker -- poet, wit, satirist, critic of theatre  
Harold Ross – founder of New Yorker magazine  
Robert Benchley – writer, humorist  
Franklin P. Adams – columnist  
Heywood Brown – columnist (Brown's wife was Ruth Hale)  
Harpo Marx – comedian  
George S. Kaufman – playwright  
Marc Connelly – playwright  
Peggy Wood – actress  
Edna Ferber – writer  
Robert Sherwood – writer  
Russell Crouse – *writer-playwright*

### \*Sometimes:

Tallulah Bankhead  
Noel Coward

\*"It didn't end; it just sort of faded." (Marc Connelly)

\*The 30's saw its end –

\*Fitzgerald and Hemingway were influenced by the opinions, the humor, etc. of the group, thru the 20's and early 30's.

\*Last meeting was in 1943

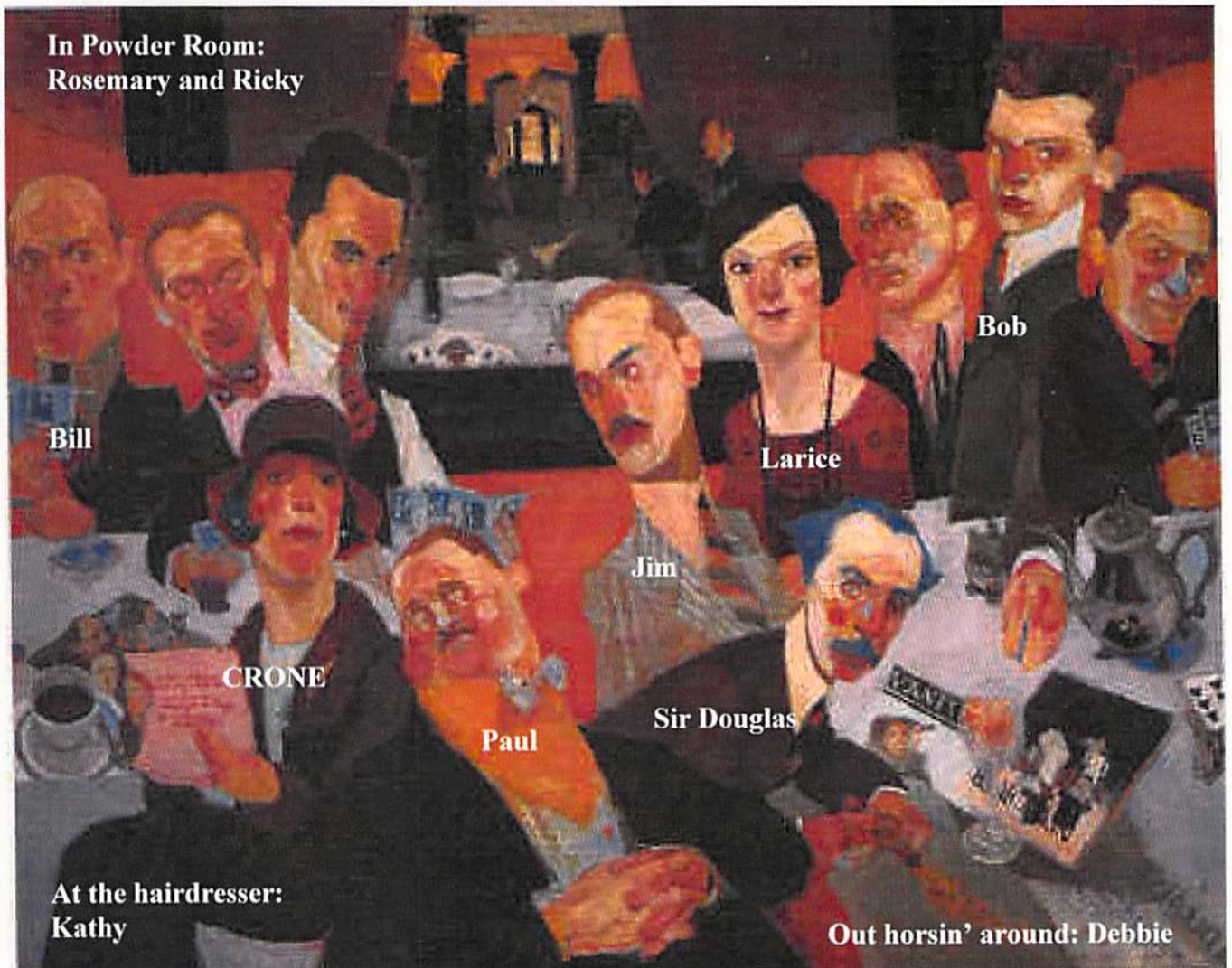
\*Set a style of wit, humor, and literary taste in the 20's and 30's.

### \*Personal connection:

When I worked for Walden Book Co., we stayed at the Algonquin Hotel in the late 30's and 40's when we had meetings with our Walden bosses.

I traveled thru the eastern US for Walden, as far west as Ohio, north to NY, Massachusetts, etc. and south to Virginia. I hired and trained people to work for Walden.

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Published by:  
Dorothy H. Glessner  
Churchville, Pennsylvania

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Book Design by Deborah I. Glessner  
Churchville, Pennsylvania

Limited Edition  
Printed February 2001

# Menu

## APPETIZERS:

- "No Reason To Be"
- "Jake's Eatery Melange"
- "Algonquin Gang photograph"

## ENTREES:

- "Jim at Lunch"
- "Jim at Work"
- "Jim and Larice Burttt photograph"
- "Woman of Rock"
- "Kyleann – Plaintive Song"
- "Douglas: Algonquin Mystery Man"
- "Sir Douglas"
- "Doug Crompton photograph"
- "And then there is Deb"
- "Debbie Glessner and Lark photograph"
- "Ricky, The Cool and Leggy"
- "Ricky and Paul McBride photograph"
- "To Paul"
- "Rosemary – Who Remembers"
- "Bill and Rosemary Pollock photograph"
- "A Man Named Bill"
- "Profile In Particular"
- "Bob Seums photograph"
- "Womanly Cathy Wills"
- "Cathy Wills photograph"

## DESSERTS:

- "Mother – Crone"
- "This Crone Cannot Be Cloned!"

## **NO REASON TO BE**

**Algonquin Round Table  
we will never be –  
None famous – infamous,  
we will never become.  
Eleven friendly folk  
of various size and shape.  
We congregate and eat,  
laughing, disagreeing –  
Yet always ready to meet  
at a rectangular  
arrangement of tables two.  
Nothing round is available  
at Jake's Eatery,  
which means we are square  
in every way.  
Our only claim to renown,  
the need to meet and eat!**

**This little book was the brainchild of my daughter, Debbie. Over the past year, I have been inspired to write vignettes about each one of you. Debbie felt that the poems should be compiled into a special Algonquin volume as a keepsake for you. My gratitude to Debbie for her time and expertise in this home publishing venture.**

**Special thanks to Doug Crompton for his technological support, advice, and assistance in this venture.**

**It is my hope that each one of you will enjoy the memories captured between these pages.**

**Dottie Glessner**

**Jake's Eatery Melange – (a mix)  
Christmas 2000**

A group like none other,  
Eleven sick souls  
Seeking surcease from hunger's pang.

Each comes to eat and drink,  
To express in flavored details  
The exciting non-events of daily lives.

Some write, some don't,  
Some volunteer, some don't,  
Some are handy, some not.  
Some read, some paint in various mode  
Some attend funerals,  
Although I will not pursue that angle.  
Some know all about potables  
A few are well organized  
They – left brainers –  
leaving nothing to say about right-brainers.  
All have much invested  
in families – sons, daughters,  
grandchildren and friends.

As a group we are seldom of one mind –  
which is part of our peculiar fascination.  
Above all, through hidden pain  
Laughter lifts all tension  
And brings us together again,  
Again and again.  
Much to the despair of Jake's waitresses  
who put up with our food foibles,  
messy tables and spills.

Finally –  
we must deserve each other  
else why do we hang together?!

**The Algonquin Gang at Jim Burt's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration**





## Jim At Lunch – Jake's Eatery

The heavy-lidded eyes,  
seldom opened in wide surmise.  
He sits quietly, chewing carefully  
on soddened food, chopped to  
accommodate his muscle's atrophy.

Someone makes a remark  
which elicits a sharp response.

Jim's wit,  
a fall of shattering irony.  
We turn to him in sudden laughter  
acknowledging our delight

in his quick riposte –  
Jim's eyelids suddenly lift –  
his gaze sharply glinting;  
he reaches for his drink

in acceptance of our pleasure –

Suddenly – we are drenched!  
A baptism of iced tea and scattering  
ice cubes.

His blessing, a less than holy water,  
nothing else would suffice!

## JIM AT WORK

The trees must be pruned,  
the hedges as well.  
The grass needs mowing;  
the mower needs gassing.  
The fallen limbs of undressed trees  
lay scattered across the tired green.  
Jim leaves his evidence behind  
as he responds to wifely demand.  
The twigs – the branches lay  
neglected for days  
Jim protesting, “I need a cart to  
tote all this detritus!”  
Off he goes – shopping at Lowe’s,  
bringing unneeded barrow  
to add character  
to his Jackson Pollock garage.  
Jim’s work is never done;  
for now the barn needs painting in  
dun,  
the color the same  
he had used years before.  
The pool must be cleaned,  
made ready for winter, with  
tidy, stretched cover, so secure.  
Then Jim will find his porch  
must be organized, his chair  
pads must be cleaned  
for long winter’s napping.  
Jim’s wood-working basement,  
redolent shavings under foot –  
needs more light, to enhance  
his carving, his shaping,  
the polishing of pieces so fine;  
used to display stone craft  
of wife’s design.

Jim is compelled to be busy,  
to ward off depression  
as dark mood of winter prevails.  
He waits eagerly for season’s change;  
to wheel out the mower to check for  
gas,  
to free the wheelbarrow  
and reclaim his lawn.  
This cycle of seasons  
a must for his sanity.  
At eighty he’s not quite ready  
to admit he is weary.  
All must be raked and awakened  
to breathe – Scott’s seed scattered,  
hose uncurled and  
sprinkling begun.  
Bare patches healed –  
Jim’s psyche as well –  
His days keep circling,  
and he keeps working.  
Bless you, dear Jim!

**Jim and Larice Burt**



## Woman of Rock

Like a ghostly priestess  
From a long ago faith,  
She culls the rocky places  
For the angled shapes she needs.

This tall woman pacing the earth  
Dreams rocks into creatures  
Waiting to be touched by warmth;  
Endangered beings that call to her  
From anguished stone,  
Crying to be brought to life  
Out of gray-brown silence  
Alive and fully found.

Friends bring offerings of stria,  
Of stratified stones;  
Asking for earthly kingdoms  
Gift of blessed release.

She asks for time to see. . .  
To feel. . . the gift within  
Then quietly draws the dark  
Into a sun-bright being.

# Woman of Rock -

Like a ghostly priestess  
From a long ago faith  
She calls the rocky places  
For the angled shapes she needs

This tall woman pacing the earth  
Dreams rocks into creatures  
Waiting to be touched, by warmth; ...  
Endangered beings who call to her  
From anguished stone;  
Crying to be brought to life  
Out of grey-brown silence.

~~Creation thought~~  
Each waiting ~~animal~~ within  
Emerges through her strong hands  
Alive ... and fully-found.

Friends bring offerings of stone,  
Of stratified stones,  
Asking for earthly kingdom's  
Gift of blessed release.

She asks for time to see ...  
To feel ... the gift within.  
Then quietly draws the dark  
Into a sun-bright being.



### **KYLEANN – PLAINTIVE SONG**

**Tall – gracefully awkward  
Dark hair in casual disarray –  
Bright eyes wide with surprise  
At this world in which she sings.**

**Her songs, self accompanied  
by nimble fingers in harmonic chords  
and floating arpeggios.**

**Plaintive calls for lost love,  
for childhood sorely remembered,  
Haunting cries  
Longings for love in minor throe –  
Laughing in ironic flow.**

**This is Kyleann  
as I am learning  
who she is  
and who she wants to be.**

Douglas,  
Algonquin Mystery Man –  
how do we define this elusive,  
dark,  
do-not-pin-me-down man?  
His reluctance to make plans in  
advance  
is a source of frustration to all.  
“Can you be there by 6 p.m.?”  
“Well, I have to see what my  
schedule  
is.”

We, who arrange the gatherings,  
have come to be pleasantly surprised  
when he does grace us,  
sometimes reluctantly,  
with his presence.  
We recognize his need to call  
these social shots  
according to his hidden agenda.

Douglas,  
the caregiver,  
to those who need immediate and  
ongoing assistance.  
He has an eye  
for those who need help  
with pipes, electrical appliances,  
computers,  
dits – bits – etc.  
All are tackled and solved efficiently.

Douglas –  
his public persona  
is one of respected citizen.  
He devotes time and talent  
to preservation of Northampton’s  
historical remnants.  
The fight to save  
The Spread Eagle  
is his hallmark.



Douglas,  
one of his endearing qualities  
is an original, quick wit  
and responsive sense of humor.  
A liberal thinker,  
although bound a bit  
by astrological charts.  
Some of us wish he would  
determine his future  
with less zodiac and star  
glimmerings,  
and use his Taurean pragmatism to  
define his daily life.

As Doug would thus intervene here,  
“May I go now?”

Sir Douglas –  
a man of pipes and wires  
who spends hours in basements,  
tracking the endless twisting of conduits  
for water and electricity.  
When praised for his knowledge,  
he responds with eyes a-twinkle,  
“I don’t know what I’m doing!”

Ham radio – instant message –  
technology of communication --  
linking to the world.  
sly wit and gaps in conversation  
while he tends to his wash,  
scanning,  
. . . and who knows what else!

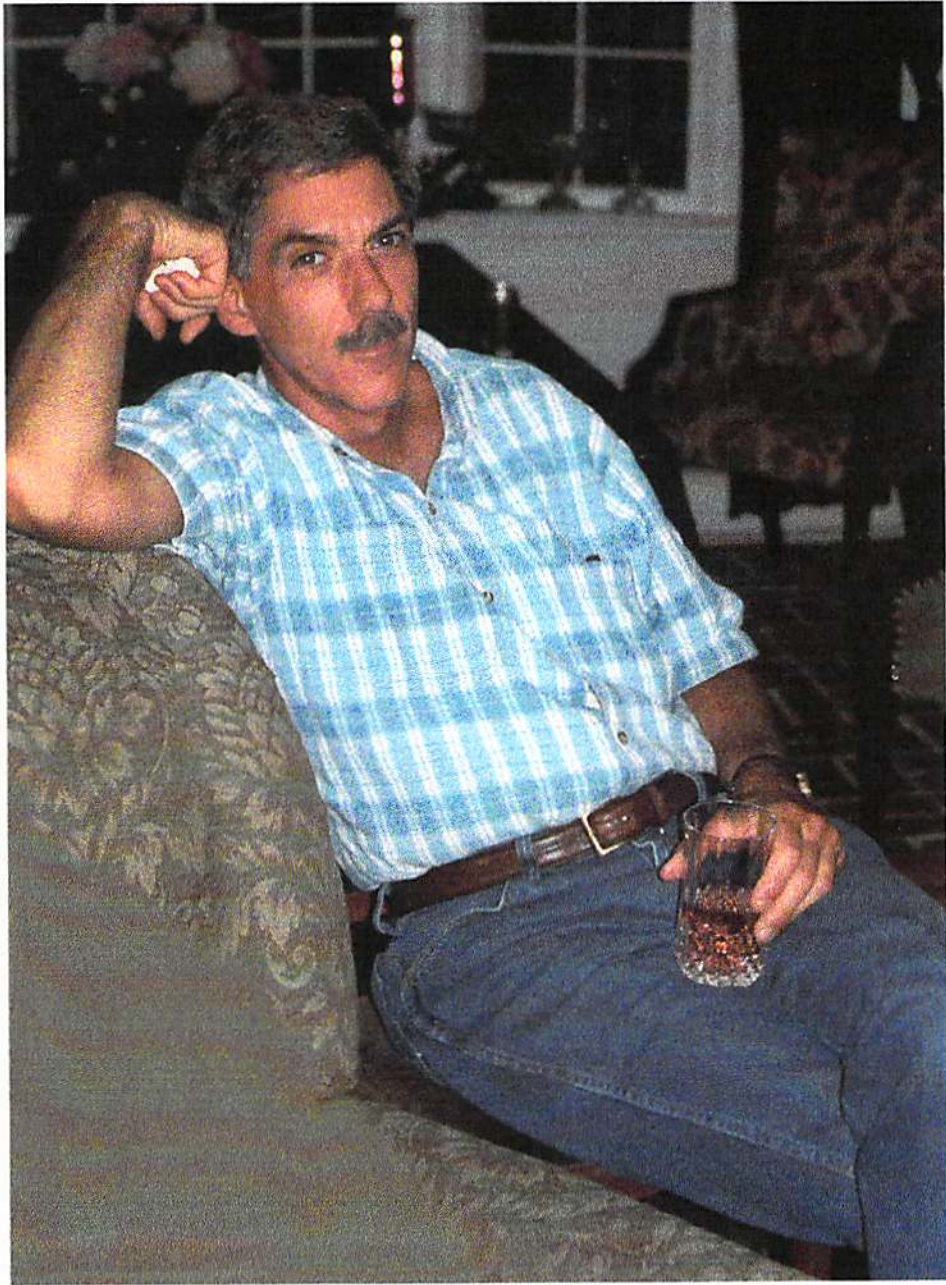
Friend to the aging –  
Wissahickon Canoe Club –  
old, really old people  
who love to eat  
and haven’t seen the inside of a canoe in fifty years! --  
ignoring the fact that too much red meat  
sets the brain on fire!  
Lover of animals:  
Geese, chickens, rabbits, dogs, and cats –  
all respond to the gentle hands and soul  
of Sir Douglas.

Northampton Historical Society –  
he is an ambassador for saving the past,  
The fight for the Spread Eagle –  
historia’s untouted champion.

A man who understands the planets and stars  
charted, but uncharted –  
a gentle bull who rages against ignorance and apathy.  
Patiently retrograde –  
but beginning to resist the rearward pull  
against moving forward into a new life.



**DOUG CROMPTON**



And then there is Deb --  
A daughter and friend so very special.  
A woman of many talents,  
Whose hands have healing strength,  
And whose whole being speaks love and kindness to all who come within her warm  
aura.

Now,  
Lest you think she is perfect -- know this;  
Deb hates to fill the ice trays --  
She hates to clean the house; will not iron or fold the clothes.  
As for making her bed -- forget it.  
"I'm going to crawl in it again tonight!"

But then;  
Her sense of humor is as perverted as her mother's,  
and together they are a source of entertainment to all their friends.  
Laughter is her saving grace as she has worked her way through a life filled with ups  
and downs of circumstance.

Any accident of fate has strengthened her will and resolve to live with a positive  
response to all that comes her way.

To anyone who knows her as a friend and confidante,  
she is a generous and trustworthy being.

But -- know this;  
If she thinks what you are doing to yourself is harmful and yes, stupid,  
she will call you "learning limited" and give you short shrift!

Being aware of others has been a special gift given her by virtue of the God who  
brought her to life.

As for an angel unaware, this is Deb, the child, the woman, the horse lover, the animal  
protector, the creative librarian, the writer who still hasn't had her say, the  
masseur who eases the pain of tense, stressed out persons, she treats with  
warm hands.

As for her daily profession: she brings to her job an orderly, yet creative approach.  
Her patience through the difficulties of fatigue brought on by attention to children's  
little voices is amazing.

And so she goes, weaving her way through each day,  
giving of herself, smiling through her struggles and knowing that the best is yet  
to come.

As her mother, I am eternally grateful for her being.  
How blessed I am as I see other mothers and daughters who have not been able to  
communicate or relate to one another on an equal basis  
of eye to eye --  
heart to heart.

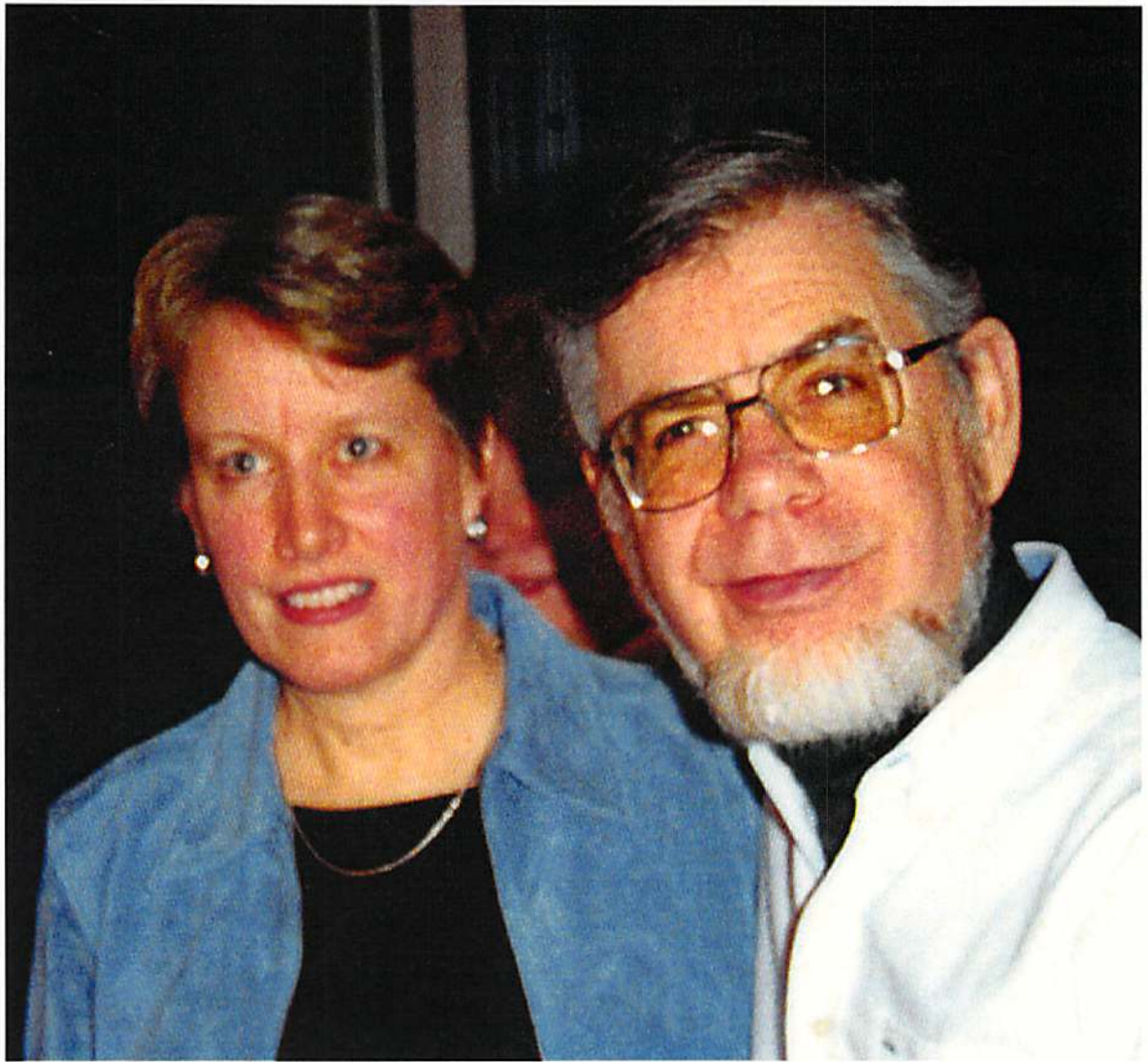
Thoughts -- random, yet true,  
about Deb, the wise and yet vulnerable one!

**Debbie Glessner and Lark**



Ricky, the cool and leggy,  
beauty in grace and quiet demeanor  
Calm and always in control,  
unless easily tickled by  
sudden giggle at spontaneous humor.  
She works expertly and faithfully  
in insurance  
Hoping for another place of assurance.  
Well organized,  
maker of a lovely home;  
wife to Paul,  
a man of orderliness as well.  
Loyalty, loving and caring  
are Ricky's banners  
carried high and with pride.  
A friend indeed –  
Ricky, the enviable –  
the McBride!

**Ricky and Paul McBride**



To Paul – the mischievous man,  
who often hides behind  
his elfin chin whiskers.

His skillful hands  
are for hire –  
painting, tiling, and . . .old lady sitting;

He generously offered –  
“Best days are Monday and Tuesday;  
Those days I’m most virile!”

To know Paul is to recognize  
his passion for trains –  
His collection done to scale --  
Pride and pleasure of ownership.

Paul has a restless spirit  
A naughty turn of phrase,  
unexpected, but delightful.

He cannot sit still for  
long hours of gab.  
His legs twitch and off he walks.

I watch his eyes for response  
to monologue or dialogue –  
raised eyebrow – shake of head –  
very little spoken aloud.  
But body language –  
loud and clear!  
Three cheers for Paul McBride

Rosemary – who remembers. . .

Aptly called – she seems  
never to forget a face or name.  
Her memory is long and lucid  
for she cares about the folk  
who come within her orbit.

I watch Rosemary as Bill  
drops words like rushing water –  
She never stops or corrects him,  
though sometimes her eyes widen  
in wonder – perhaps disbelief?!

She's a friend who accepts you  
and makes you feel at ease.  
Within her heart there lies  
a loving spirit – a motherliness,  
a pride in family and friends –

When she is not with you in body,  
her spirit lingers with you  
her kindness envelops you,  
and besides –  
she writes lovely thank you notes!

**Bill and Rosemary Pollock**





## A MAN NAMED BILL

Big, beyond belief  
bald on top –  
bold in demeanor  
(scary, if you don't know him)  
a pussy cat underneath  
(achoo!)  
purrs with humor unleashed.  
A man full of S T O R I E S  
some true, some dillies . . .  
jokes often corny,  
some old chestnuts  
some new tales,  
sometimes horny.  
As you see, he's a man  
of many parts  
who needs a hearing aid  
to start –  
so that he can enjoy  
our forays into narration –  
even though not as good  
as his creations.  
Our Bill, the treasurer  
of Algonquin Table,  
when he appears at Jake's  
all others are diminished,  
the man is just too big!  
We love his courteous ways,  
and some of his corny lays.  
A joke for every mood  
is dragged across the food.  
The waitresses always respond  
to his call  
for a roll or refill of iced tea.  
We hope his new hearing aid  
will bring him clarity of consonant  
so Rosemary doesn't have  
to repeat each detail.  
As census taker  
he was beyond reproof.  
Even as liquor store salesman,  
one hundred proof!  
Hail to you Bill!  
Long may you rule!

## PROFILE IN PARTICULAR

Do not assume you know  
too much about Bob Seums.  
His demeanor is pleasant,  
courteous and constant –  
No grumpiness or growls  
does he emit.

Bob dresses in natty sweaters  
of bright colors and wild patterns.  
His hats are hilarious, as they  
sit on his uncombed thatch.  
His caps are jaunty and worn  
with aplomb –

But let me warn you,  
watch out for his feet! –  
especially if you sit opposite him at lunch.

Let me advise you also of Bob's  
lack of time definition –  
Either he forgets, or his hearing aid  
needs a new battery.

Bob's wit and laughter are always  
in bright response.

His friendship is one you cherish  
because you know he will respond  
if you are in need of succor.

Underneath the surface  
of cheerful acceptance  
of life's trials and terrors.

There is a man of courage  
and a believer in hope. –

We at Algonquin love this gentleman  
of good taste and generosity of spirit.

How blessed we are to  
count him an eater  
at Richboro's Jake's Eatery;  
even though he may arrive  
as most of us are leaving!

**BOB SEUMS**



## WOMANLY CATHY WILLS

This willowy woman  
with reddish-brown hair  
walks towards you in welcoming step;  
she greets you with warmth  
in soft voice and grace.  
Impeccably groomed, in tasteful attire  
she gives you a feeling  
of assured self awareness.  
She speaks carefully,  
choosing words deliberately;  
her story, her message, comes  
through with delicacy --  
Although definite and sure.  
Cathy has weathered marital storms  
and physical ills  
which would leave us lost,  
drowning in self pity.  
We salute her for her courage  
and unfailing instinct --  
for a life lived with determination  
and loving insight.  
This is our friend --  
the Cathy of strong Wills.

**Cathy Wills**



## MOTHER – CRONE

She calls herself  
the Crone who cannot be cloned,  
but I see her as  
the mother who cannot be cloned.  
Her DNA string is very twisted --  
just like her sense of humor  
and ability to look at issues askance.  
Just give her a martini,  
(don't forget the olives)  
and watch the alcohol convert into  
table-pounding aphorisms.  
The only way to silence her  
is with a swift kick –  
(under the table, mind you!)  
Her daily New York Times  
and weekly New Yorker  
sate her crone-ish appetite  
and give fuel to her pen.  
She complains loudly  
that New York Times crossword  
puzzle editor,  
Will Shortz,  
has no scruples.  
This woman,  
my mother,  
and crone,  
knows everything about anything,  
and anything about everything.  
Her ceaseless appetite for the written  
word  
has left her sneezing amidst printer's  
ink!  
Dotty leaves a paper trail,  
which, she claims,  
is well organized.  
But just ask her for something,  
and she will find it . . . by accident,  
at a future moment.  
She is mechanically challenged –  
and proud of it!  
It is a crone—omedy of errors  
to watch her operate the  
microwave oven,  
her TV “clicker,”



and thermostat –  
not to mention using the car's radio  
controls to work the air conditioning.  
Her style is unique.  
As my mother,  
she liberated me at an early age,  
and has lived long enough to regret  
it!  
She frets and worries  
about  
“her only chick.”  
She is a true crone;  
a wise woman  
who has earned her berth  
by living the stages, preceding  
cronehood,  
to the ultimate.  
As my friend,  
I know she is my protector,  
supporter,  
and champion.  
Long live Crone Dotty!

by Debbie Glessner  
January 2001

## **THIS CRONE CANNOT BE CLONED!**

She is coolly resistant  
to tampering with her genomes.  
Her long and crowded life  
accepts no imposed test-tube of chance.  
Having lived with genetic lines  
given by ancestors so mixed;  
why would she need to be fixed  
in time and design?  
Acquiring a whisper of wisdom  
comes from unique experience  
given implicitly, perhaps,  
by divine interdiction  
often questioned –  
Living painfully through  
satanic interjections.  
All withstood, through trials,  
various temptations –  
many tears, frustrations –  
all with laughter entwined.  
She is who she has become,  
a bag of softening, aching bones.  
Hands full of questionable wit  
Mind clinging to thought.  
Humor saturated with  
vinegar and grit –  
or,  
if you will,  
S H I T !  
Most of all –  
who would want  
another just like her!?!