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# Congregational Meeting Called for April 16th to Vote on Allocation of Monies for Masonry Repair of Church Tower

On December 30, 2022 Trustees Josie Zanfordino and Bill Fry met with Carl Wharton, a highly recommended local mason. Both were impressed with his knowledge and willingness to work with us. He reported that the tower was in need of repair as was the south wall of the church. At their January 9th Trustee meeting the Trustees approved \$10,000 to move forward on this project and to secure the services of Carl Wharton to do the masonry. Josie Zanfordino, in cooperation with Bill Fry, will be the point person for the work. Now \$5,000 additional funding is needed to procure the lift to reach the sites on the tower that need to be repaired. The congregation will be asked to approved this extra expenditure at this specially-called April 16th congregational meeting.

At their February 6th, 2023 meeting, the Trustees also discussed Church maintenance priorities. Anne Farrell informed that projects already accomplished include renovation of the women's restroom, replacement of the floors in the basement and upstairs, painting of community room and the nursery, and the men's bathroom upgrade.

Priorities that folks have expressed interest in happening include: repair of sanctuary St. Cecelia window, reupholster chairs and new rug in the sanctuary, creation of temporary living quarters for a refugee family, and repair and repainting of the interior of the church.

# What's Happening with Our Proposed FBC Bylaws?

Bylaws Bylaws bylaws..... From Bill Fry, Convener of Bylaw Committee

February 2023 was the month that we began to consider a proposed new set of bylaws. On February 12, 2023, 30+ friends and members of First Baptist Church, joined by the Bylaws Committee (Susan Eymann, Anne Farrell, Bill Fry, and Judy Kennison, with Pastor Debbie as ex officio), met to consider the proposed bylaws for our church. It was clear that many of us thought the bylaws are important, because there was a lot of interest in the proposed bylaws. Andrea Mooney captured the discussion in minutes that were helpful to the Bylaws Committee. After that meeting the committee also received some individual comments about the proposed bylaws. We met again as a congregation on February 26 to address issues raised on February 12 and to consider new comments/questions. Biz Pia-Miller captured these additional comments in the minutes. In summary, the comments/suggestions/guestions identified areas of ambiguity, an unintentional "top-down" tone, and topics/issues that the Committee had failed to consider.

The Bylaws Committee met several times in March to consider the suggestions/comments/questions from the congregation. As result, the Bylaws Committee made changes to sections 7 (Membership), 9 (Elected church officers: moderator), 10 (Council), 11 (Council Committees: Resources; Welcome and Outreach), 12 (Other Committees and Positions: Nominating; Pastoral Relations; Communications; Mission, Activity Groups and Affiliations), and section 14 (Record keeping). We've added a 17th clause: Transition.

The revised proposed bylaws will be available electronically just after Easter. There will be an information session during the education hour on April 16 to discuss these revised proposed bylaws. Paper copies will be available prior to that session.

If the revised proposed bylaws are adopted, we expect a smooth transition. We expect that most of the church leadership will remain the same, because we anticipate that members of the Council Committees in these 2023 bylaws will primarily be drawn from persons currently functioning on teams and boards. For example: members of Green Team will be invited to join the new Ecological Justice committee; members of the Education Team will be invited to join the new Education Committee; members of the Hospitality Team will be invited to join the new Hospitality and Nurture Committee; members of the Board of Trustees, personnel, and finance Committees will be invited to join the new Resource Committee; members of the Christian Concern Team will be invited to join the new Service and Social Justice Committee; and members of the Worship Team will be invited to join the new Worship, Music and Spiritual Life Committee. The one exception is the Welcome and Outreach Committee, which is a new committee and will be populated by a new chair and new members.

# Sarah Zipfel Named Native Garden Specialist



Sarah Zipfel

After a most successful year of designing and planting FBC's Pollinator Garden in the front of the church, the Green Team,

under the capable and inspired leadership of Louise Mudrak and Lisa Kilgore, identified a need to hire a "native garden specialist" to ensure that the mission of the Pollinator Garden would continue into the future. The 2023 budget included \$1,000 for the position which was then advertised.

On April 2nd, Pastor Debbie announced that Sarah Zipfel had applied for and was hired for the position. Many of us already know Sarah as our Sunday School aide and aunt to Sam. Sarah comes to her new position with a degree from Cornell where she also works and considerable gardening experience and expertise. Congratulations Sarah!



Nonogenarian Jud Kilgore celebrates his upcoming April 4th birthday with a cake made by Carolyn Young and held by daughter Lisa at the meeting of the FBC Book Group that he hosts at his house each month. The group chooses a book of fiction to read each month. Anyone is invited to join the group which has been meeting for over 40 years. If interested, contact Jud Kilgore at 607-272-3390.

# From Your Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

Dear Friends.

Once again, we come to Holy Week as spring stirs around us. Holy Week comes and we enter again into the stories of the final days of Jesus' life on earth. We remember and reflect on his living and his dying and his rising again. We're invited to move with the story, to let it speak to our lives as the events unfold. Not sure what words to write to you here, I found myself thinking of some of Wendell Berry's poetry. May his words speak to us as we enter into this sacred time.



Rev. Debbie Bennett Reynolds

#### To Know the Dark

To go into the dark with the light is to know the light. To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight, and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings, and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.

#### **Excerpts from Prayers and Sayings of the Mad Farmer**

II. At night make me one with the darkness.

In the morning make me one with the light.

VIII When I rise up
let me rise up
joyful like a bird.
When I fall
let me fall without regret
like a leaf.

Let us go into this holy time, open and receptive for what will come to us.

Love and blessings,

Debbie



**Messy Church:** In March FBC children and youth were invited to participate in "Messy Church," a creative endeavor for children to participate in fun activities at church. It was a lot of fun. There are plans in the works for an "Messy Church" event once a month with fun, food and games..

# Vitamin L Songs by Jan Nigro WALK A MILE © 1987

I want to walk a mile in your shoes, I want to walk a mile in your shoes, I want to know what you think and what you feel,

So I really want to walk-a mile in your shoes!

Remember that fight that we had? Why did we both have to lose? It's because we both walked away mad, Instead of walking a mile in each other's shoes!

You hear how the world is a mess Whenever you turn on the news, But all countries could have happiness, If they'd be walking a mile in each others shoes!

Tempers start to cool down, A frown turns into a smile. Anger cannot be found When you're wearing their shoes And you're walking that mile!

## SO MUCH TO SHARE © 1987 We know an old lady, she tells great

She's seen things you've only read about in books.

She gets such joy, from filling us up With her love and with the great food she cooks.

And after we've eaten, we sit by the fire, She hums a song that's from a far-off land.

I notice a photo of her as a child, Imagine all that's happened since then!

#### CHORUS.

Older people have so much to share, Look in their hearts for the treasure waits there.

The key to unlock it is show them you care...

Older people have so much to share, So much to share, they have so much to share.

The old man next door, he lives all alone,

He's traveled through life many a mile. It feels so good, when we visit him, To see his face light up with a smile.

#### **CHORUS**

The hands of the young, the hands of the old,

Reaching out for hands to hold. Love is a feeling between two hearts, Age can't keep us apart.

# Janice Nigro - FBC's New Office Manager By Susan Eymann

"It's a blessing to be able to do work that aligns with one's values." Janice Nigro

This past month a new person is staffing the First Baptist office four days a week (Tuesday through Friday) from 9 am to 1 pm. She is Janice Nigro, who has replaced our longtime office manager Shella Chace, who retired at the end of January.

Janice is a delight. She comes to First Baptist with a deep-seated commitment and dedication to social justice and impressive organizational expertise gleaned from being the executive director and co-founder, with her musician husband Jan, of the Vitamin L Project. Vitamin L encouraged positive character development in children through music for over three decades, with Jan's songs that highlighted universal human values of love truth, peace, right action and non-violence.



Janice Nigro: FBC Office Manager

Jan and Janice met in Manhattan when she, as a teenager, serendipitously encountered and wowed Jan's grandfather who decided that she was the right person for his favorite grandson. They have been together close to 50 years and have a 27-year-old son Anthony who recently graduated from the oldest acting school in England and has now embarked on his own professional journey in London.

Janice comes by her advocacy for human rights honestly. When her family moved to Atlanta when she was one, her parents were appalled by the bigotry they encountered. They got involved in the civil rights movement and her father began working with Dr. Martin Luther King, focusing on fair employment. After Vitamin L was presented with a special certificate of recognition from Governor Elliot Spitzer in 2007 "for being in the forefront of helping to promote the ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by promoting peace in our schools and communities," Janice wrote in the Vitamin L fall newsletter, "Personally, the wording on the certificate is deeply meaningful for me because Dr. King played a huge role in my development, and I love him. I first met him when I was five years old, and growing up I was highly influenced by his teachings and his great love. I had the blessing of this influence because my parents, Gerald and Elizabeth Reed, were heavily involved in the civil rights movement in Atlanta during my youth."

Janice and Jan's own musical journey with the Vitamin L Project began in 1989, which over the next 32 years grew into a musical group that performed throughout the year. Vitamin L's youth chorus (ages 10–21), directed by Janice, performed 1,195 concerts at schools, festivals, community events, and conferences, reaching approximately 369,000 children and adults in central New York and beyond. Vitamin L's recordings and videos with meaningful messages have further touched the hearts of countless more children around the world through their use in schools and homes.

However, when the Covid pandemic hit in March 2020, things changed for Vitamin L. They were no longer able to perform in schools. After COVID forced cancellation of concerts, rehearsals, and auditions, Janice produced 15 new music videos to add to the other videos on their YouTube channel. Vitamin L closed as an active organization in December 2021. The Project continues to get their music and messages out via their YouTube channel: (https://www.youtube.com/@vitaminlproject/videos).

Janice says that she is now grateful to be at First Baptist where everyone has been warm and welcoming. Anne Farrell has spent hours with her introducing her to the multi-faceted job of office manager. Janice said that she was drawn to the First Baptist position because it is a progressive, nurturing, inclusive church that is striving for social and ecological justice. She can walk to work and then, after finishing at First Baptist, can walk over to the commons to her second job with the Cornell's Center for Transformative Action (CTA) that supports change makers such as Vitamin L in creating communities that are ecologically sound, socially just and work for everyone.

A meet-and-greet coffee hour for Janice is being planned in the near future. See Janice's photos on the next page.





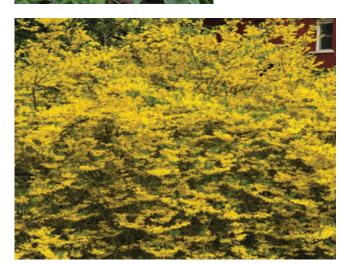




**Spring Blooms** 

Photos by Janice Nigro











Cherry Blossoms: Washington, D.C.
Photo by Judy Kennison



Light on the Hill is an ecumenical retreat center for those seeking peace and quiet removed from the distractions of their everyday life. Its mountain-top site encompasses 236 acres of woods, streams, gorges, ponds, walking paths and breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding hills reaching as far as Pennsylvania. See http://lightonthehill.org

# 2022 FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH WOMEN'S RETREAT "Simply Be!"

5: 00 pm Friday - Noon Sunday May 12 -14, 2022 at Light on the Hill

We invite you to the 2023 First Baptist Women's Retreat At this annual retreat we deepen our friendships by sharing with our faith sisters, learn, laugh, and have lots of fun.

This year our theme is *Simply Be* in order to foster better connections with God, the earth, and with each other. Fun activities (art projects, singing, walking, Qi-Gong, Regi's storytelling etc.) are being planned along with an array of other optional group activities.

Cost: \$90 (one night); \$180 (two nights); \$45 (day fee)
Any contribution beyond these base fees enable
financial assistance for others.

To register, please complete the green registration form below and send, with your check, to Marlene Sack, 222 Tareyton Drive, Ithaca, NY by May 1st. Make out your check to First Baptist Church and note on the check memo line "FBC 2023 Women's Retreat." Because space is limited, your registration will not guarantee your space until your payment is received. Please speak to Marlene Sack if you would appreciate financial assistance for 1/2 day (\$45) or one day (\$90).

# **REGISTRATION:**

#### FBC 2022 Women's Retreat

Light on the Hill Retreat Center May 12 - 14, 2023

5:00 pm Friday — Noon Sunday

Name ————
Phone # Email
Registration: I plan to attend for ONE night: Friday OR Saturday
(please underline which one); for TWO nights: Friday AND
Saturday.  Sleep Accommodations: I request the following: (1st floor; near bathroom etc.)
Car Pooling: I need a ride; I can help with rides;
Aid: I would appreciate financial assistance: one day; 1/2 day;
Note: Space is limited! First come, first served. Please return registration form and payment by May 20 to Marlene Sack at 222 Tareyton Drive, Ithaca, NY/ Make your check payable to First Baptist Church, Note Women's Retreat on the memo line.

# Highlights of March Cabinet Meeting

- Treasurer David Caughey reported that the church was in good shape financially with an unusually large end-of-the month budget surplus of \$91,123.72.This is because more than \$122,700 of 2023's pledge income was already paid by the end of February 5.
- Pastor Debbie reported that the first Messy Church event was a lot of fun; a second one is scheduled to take place the Saturday before Palm Sunday.
- Three Memorial services are being planned: April 15th for David Evans; one in May for Helen Freeman; one for Hans Bump in Rhode Island on June 24th. FBC folks are invited to attend.
- Pastor Debbie also said that she and Bill will be going to Lebanon from April 16

   April 27th to meet her daughter Anna, her husband and her husband's parents.
- After Marlene Sack expressed interest in having a silent auction fundraiser for the Parable of Talents line item in the budget (\$200 this year) there was a discussion and then consensus that there is no longer a financial need for a Parable of Talents budget line item. Andrea Mooney cautioned about asking folks to pledge and then continuing to ask them for other donations.
- Bequest Allocation: Margie Latham reported that the ad hoc committee is making good progress on the bequest allocation resolution, but they are not ready to present a proposal.
- As head of the Nominations Committee
   Leslie Schultz said that she has been
   giving a lot of thought about how we
   will be able to replace David Caughey as
   Treasurer when he steps down in June.
   She suggested three possibilities:
- 1. Hire the position out
- 2. Dig in and find a volunteer
- 3. Hiring and then train a volunteer for the job. David explained that he sees the job as twofold: paying the bills and handling the payroll. The payroll part is the most burdensome and time-consuming part of the job. It takes him one and one-half days each month. There was discussion about hiring out part or all the job under the oversight of the Treasurer. The Finance Committee will be asked to explore various options. Andrea Mooney suggested contacting other not-for-profit agencies to find out how they do it.
- Technical Expertise: Leslie Schultz noted that there is a need for additional technical expertise as we continue with the hybrid church.

# Rainbow Is Theme Chosen for Shella Chace's Retirement Party

By Anne Farrell

One of Shella Chace's defining traits is that she is quick to share a laugh! So it's no surprise that the sounds of laughter and the happy buzz of conversation filled the community room on the afternoon of Sunday, March 5th, as friends, family, and colleagues gathered in person and virtually to celebrate Shella's "second retirement" after nearly eleven years of dedicated service as First Baptist's Office Manager. Given Shella's bright and colorful personality, the colors of the rainbow was the perfect theme for the day! Tina Hilsdorf and company brought the idea to life with a dramatic statement piece—a giant rainbow of balloons—as well as beautiful rainbow roses for centerpieces. Mark Lawrence added a surprise and fitting



Shella Chace: Queen for the Day

touch to the festivities by serenading Shella with a heartfelt rendition of the classic "Over the Rainbow" (Arlen and Harburg). In keeping with Shella's fondness for Kaffee und Kuchen (German Coffee Hour), refreshments included a variety of cakes, cookies, and tarts, beautiful fruit platters prepared by Mai Phelan, several kinds of tea, and coffee, of course.

Shella loved being crowned Queen for a Day and was regaled with musical selections by the group formally known as the Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus (IGMC), now known as Transpose: Ithaca Queer Singers Alliance. The songs included "Love Is Love" by Abbie Betinis, "Common Thread," by Pat Humphries, and "How Could Anyone Ever Tell You?" by Libby Roderick. Pastor Debbie Bennet Reynolds, Moderator Margie Latham, Hospitality Team Convener Anne Farrell, and IGMC President Steve Nunley spoke about what Shella's work has meant to the church over the years. In a show of appreciation, Shella was presented with a monetary gift to which many friends had contributed. It was suggested that she might use it to visit her sisters in Texas or on a trip to New York City to take in a Broadway show. Whatever she chooses, may it bring her joy! And another surprise is on its way—a book filled with tributes and well wishes that will be presented to Shella as a keepsake.

The gift of time and talent by the following people made this lovely event possible. Thanks to the members of the planning committee—Lou Carlucci, Anne and Steve Farrell, Meg Gillard, Alice Grow, Tina Hilsdorf, Andrea Mooney, Craig Riecke, and Amanda Ufford; to Bruce Chandler and Bill Phelan, bakers extraordinaire; and to unofficial members of the set up/clean up crew Steve Hilsdorf and Amy Doyle. As they say, "A good time was had by all (especially Shella)."











# In Memoriam Norman Whittier Rollins



October 30, 1920 - March 24, 2023 Norm and Mary Rollins cheering on Tae Hemsath in her Cayuga Lake Polar Plunge March 22, 2014.

## Rev. David M. Evans



Aug. 31, 1928 - Feb. 20, 2023 Watch for the special *Visitor* tribute to Pastor Evans coming soon.

First Baptist Church in Ithaca is a nurturing and inclusive community. Guided by Jesus' Teachings, we strive for Social & Ecological Justice and embrace the Baptist tradition of Bible, Soul, Church and Religious Freedoms.



**VOICES**, a 40-member multicultural chorus performed at First Baptist on March 19th. Now under the artistic direction of Ross Mizrahi, VOICES began in the fall of 2002 as a choral project of the Affiliated Choruses of Ithaca to create a multicultural group of singers interested in learning, sharing and singing songs from diverse ethnic choral traditions. Our hope is that this group serves to broaden your musical understanding and promote racial and cultural harmony through the experience of singing world music with other members of the Ithaca community.

# 'Spring'. By Christina Rossetti,

Frost-locked all the winter,
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
What shall make their sap ascend
That they may put forth shoots?
Tips of tender green,
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;
Telling of the hidden life
That breaks forth underneath,
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

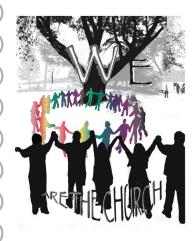
Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,
Drips the soaking rain,
By fits looks down the waking sun:
Young grass springs on the plain;
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
Swollen with sap put forth their shoots;
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;
Birds sing and pair again.

There is no time like Spring,
When life's alive in everything,
Before new nestlings sing,
Before cleft swallows speed their journey back
Along the trackless track –
God guides their wing,
He spreads their table that they nothing lack, –
Before the daisy grows a common flower
Before the sun has power
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour.

There is no time like Spring,
Like Spring that passes by;
There is no life like Spring-life born to die, –
Piercing the sod,
Clothing the uncouth clod,
Hatched in the nest,
Fledged on the windy bough,
Strong on the wing:
There is no time like Spring that passes by,
Now newly born, and now
Hastening to die.



Snow drops: Photo by Tony Lister



What does the Lord require of you?
To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8



Please keep in your prayers:

- The Norm Rollins family
- The David Evans family
- Kris and Danny Scott & Zeta Pederson
- Biz Pia-Miller, Dan Goodman
- Suzanne Kilgore
- John Gross
- George Damp
- Kendrick Kemp
- Ron Drummond
- Marge Hansel
- The Phelan family
- Anthony Halman & family

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace, and a soul generated by love.

CORETTA SCOTT KING

Justice is what love looks like in public.

CORNEL WEST

When suffering constricts the heart, awe stretches it back out, making us more compassionate, more loving, more present.

VALARIE KAUR



Spring Crocuses from Tony Lister

#### The Visitor - April 2023

Editor/publisher: Susan Eymann Proofers: Judy Kennison, Tony Lister, Shella Chace

Contributors: Debbie Bennett Reynolds, Anne Farrell

Photos: Tony Lister, Judy Kennison, David Caughey, Janice Nigro



Lenten Communion Table Arrangement by Worship Committee

# How We Are Involved (updated April, 2023)

#### First Baptist Staff

Pastor: Rev. Debbie Bennett Reynolds Office Manager: Janice Nigro Organist: Christopher Morgan Loy Choir Director: Belinda Adams Youth and Children's Ministries Coordinator: Laura Ward Nursery Caregiver: Carol Fleming Sunday School Aide: Sarah Zipfel Custodian: David Hopkins Native Garden Specialist: Sarah Zipfel

#### **Elected Leaders**

Moderator: Margie Latham Vice Moderator: Andrea Mooney Membership Clerk: Tina Hilsdorf Recording Clerks: Rich Barron/Susan Eymann

Treasurer: David Caughey Assistant Treasurer: Bill Fry Financial Secretary: Marlene Sack

#### **Board of Trustees**

Bill Fry, chair (2024); Baruch Whitehead, (2023); Bill Phelan (2023); Josie Zanfordino, secretary (2023); Elizabeth Pia-Miller (2024); Steve Hilsdorf (2024); Kris Scott (2025); Marlene Sack (2025); Carolyn Young (2025); David Caughey, (ex officio)

#### Trustees' Subgroups Finance & Endowment

David Caughey, chair; Bill Fry; Marlene Sack; Curt Ufford; Janet Hansel

Interior Decoration: Barbara Fry; Julie Dean; Tina Hilsdorf; Bill Abeles; Anne Farrell; Andrea Staffeld; Susan Eymann

Church Archivist: Linda Caughey

#### **Affiliate Organizations**

Two Delegates each for Rochester Genesee Region & ABC-USA Rich and Lil

Barron, co-chairs; Anne & Steve Farrell. AWAB: Shella Chace

Baptist Peace Fellowship: Meg Gillard, Cornell Campus Ministry: Linda Nicholson; Anne Farrell; Brian Baker Kitchen Cupboard: Amanda Ufford;

Sue Hemsath Tompkins County Workers Center: Bill Abeles

#### Sanctuary Alliance:

Bill Abeles; Bill Fry; Leslie Schultz

#### **Pastoral Relations**

Tony Lister; Regi Carpenter (2023); Mark Lawrence (2024); Amanda Ufford (2024); Judy Kennison (2025

#### **Nominating Committee**

Leslie Schultz; Meg Gillard; Tina Hilsdorf; Susan Eymann

#### Personnel Committee

Bruce Chandler (2023); Lou Carlucci (2024); Judy Kennison (2024)

# Constitution/By-Law Committee

Bill Fry; Susan Eymann; Anne Farrell; Judy Kennison; Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds

### Ministry Teams Worship& Spiritual Life:

Barbara Fry, Amy Chaffee,co-chairs; Biz Pia-Miller; Tony Lister; Kris Scott; Edie Reagan; Alice Grow; Regi Carpenter; Debbie Allen

Worship/Spiritual Life Subgroups Flower Committee: Barbara Fry; Tina Hilsdorf; Andrea Staffeld

Labyrinth: Kris Scott

Sound/Audio Ministry: David Caughey; Curt Ufford; Bill Fry; Bill Phelan; Leslie Schultz

Education Children's and Youth: Leslie Schultz, chair; Carol Fleming. Christian Ed Teachers: Baruch Whitehead; Sarah Zipfel; Meg Gillard

#### **Christian Concern**

Baruch Whitehead, chair; Bill Phelan; Bill Abeles; Amanda Ufford, Marge Hansel, and others

# Christian Concern Subgroups

**Circle of Care:** Coordinators: Linda Caughey, chair; Amanda Ufford; Sue Hemsath

#### **Hospitality Ministry:**

Anne Farrell, chair; Shella Chace; Meg Gillard; Tina Hilsdorf; Adrienne McNair; Andrea Staffeld; Steve Farrell; Bay Ward/ Aittama; Alice Grow

Communications Ministry: Shella Chace (convener); David Caughey; Mark Lawrence; Craig Riecke; Susan Eymann; Amy Bean Stowell; Lisa Kilgore

#### **Green Team**

Louise Mudrak (convener); and others

## Ad Hoc Reopening Committee

Pastor Debbie Bennett Reynolds; David Caughey; Amy Bean Stowell; Barbara Pease; Barbara Fry