

Reelers-Rangers Reporter

#2 (11-16-20)

Beth Benson: I've enjoyed scrolling through the photos and videos posted by Bob Halberstadt on the Kittatinny Rangers Facebook page from dances, holiday parties, graduations, and more. Fun to see – check it out for some great memories!

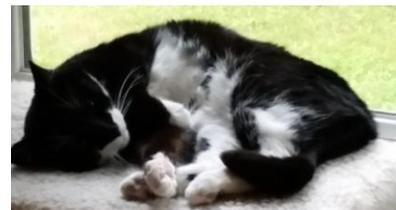
Lise's note: Last year, Bob Halberstadt became the oldest graduate of the state fire academy and his accomplishment was highlighted on PBS. This year, at age 80, he has been featured widely in the media, such as ABC News and the "Rachael Ray Show" (last segment) – [click to view him](#). Kudos to Bob for modeling how square dancers remain active and involved regardless of age!



Bob Halberstadt: While my firefighter's helmet is a lot heavier than the red Kittatinny Rangers cowboy hat worn during our raids, it is no less fun. Becoming a firefighter was not even on the horizon as we square danced. I was an EMT at the time and that was enough. Then an opportunity presented itself and I thought, "I can do that." It was hard – but learning Plus was harder. Carol and I miss our dancing friends, although we remain busy and enjoy seeing some dancers around town and while shopping.

Nancy Ihnen: Mary Olsen emailed Kittatinny members about Bob Halberstadt being on the Rachael Ray show. OMG! So I tuned in to see him. When previewing what would be on that day, they showed a fireman and he looked familiar, but I did *not* recognize him. Then when they interviewed him, with his uniform and hat on ... HE LOOKS MORE LIKE 60 THAN 80!!

Linda and Rick Murphy: We have stayed employed and quite busy despite the lockdown: Linda on March 13, Cynthia on March 18, and Rick on March 30. Spring break to Florida was rescheduled for July, then again for August, and now for August 2021. We certainly hope we do not have to reschedule again! Cynthia, our daughter, had been at her research assistant position at the Denville Library for only one week, and was able to continue working virtually creating readers' lists to be put online. She will be back to the building in June and is enjoying the job, but longing to be a full-time librarian. Rick headed back to his office at the end of June. Linda finished the academic year at Alexander Hamilton School virtually, and then took a summer class through the International Society for Technology in Education to strengthen her virtual-teaching skills. It was quite useful as she continues to teach media literacy virtually to the entire district's fifth-graders. She is also the in-building tech support during the school day and will be adding the district's third-grade Gifted and Talented enrichment program this month (live virtual meetings twice a week). Plus, she circulates books from the library to both in-person and virtual students. Her library has been transformed into two classrooms, so she is housed in the computer room and can access library books only after the school day is over to get them ready for delivery to homerooms or curbside the next day. Not much else is going on here – except cuddles with our ever-so-cute tuxedo cat, Cleo.



Bonnie Van Stone: Donna Poyer and I arranged two “maverick” square dances – one in September and one in October – at the Fairmount firehouse, with Howard Richman calling. We did not serve any refreshments or beverages, and dancers brought their own bottled water. All wore masks, some wore gloves, and everyone sanitized their hands after each tip. No word of any Covid! It was such great fun to dance again, and yes, we remembered how to!

Maureen Snellen and Gregg Nardoza: Gregg and I are doing well. Still working to convert the bus I bought to an RV, but making lots of progress. It’s keeping me busy and out of trouble. I hope to hit the road for a few weeks in February. ☺ Having the teens home has been interesting. Shane’s a senior at Sussex Tech this year. His class will have an online tricky tray in December. To participate, contact me at 201-400-7727 or maureensnellen@yahoo.com. There will be curbside pickup the day after the event at the school. Hope everyone is staying healthy and catching up with projects at home.



Helen and Bruce Haskell: We have been so busy we didn’t have a chance to compose an update for the first newsletter in time, lol. We are just fine. I am well into the computer programming project I was going to start earlier this year, working from home; it’s going well, but slower than I would like. I have enjoyed weekend golf, which is a nice break from being inside. Helen is busy with her mom (who is 87 and doing well) and occasionally babysitting the grandkids, in addition to her part-time job. She is also working on sewing the perfect face mask after donating some in the beginning of the virus outbreak, which I believe started this quest. We’ve taken advantage of the nice weather with some beautiful, peaceful walks, although we don’t cover as much ground as Carla and Steve! Hope we will see everyone in a square (you can take the president out of the club, but you can’t take the club out of the president, lol). Remember: “Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be” (attributed to Abraham Lincoln).

Mary Bowers and Mark Van Ness: We continue to be remote learning partners for our three grandsons. They arrive Wednesday evening after soccer practice. We rise early, sign on, and get ready to rumble! It has not been easy by any measure ... and that is feedback from a retired school nurse and special education teacher.

Kathy Fetch: I have been organizing things around my place. My rescue dog, Lizzie, is doing great and she’s such a joy to be around. I took her for the free rabies shots in Parsippany. She is so good about wearing her winter coat when it’s cold, and doesn’t make any kind of fuss when I put it on her. I put together a lot of my pictures from trips I have taken over the years, and I’m making Christmas ornaments for friends, like the snowman below. I wish everyone a very blessed, healthy, and safe Thanksgiving.



Karen Condon: Bill and I had a great bike experience. We drove to Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania, and parked at the train station. A bus took us and our bikes north to White Haven and dropped us off. We rode the 25 miles back to Jim Thorpe on a flat cinder rail trail that has about a 1% downgrade – only used one or two gears the whole time. Weekends are crowded and the lot fills up before 9:30. Great experience ... pack a lunch ... no food along the way. I also do line dancing, and some of those friends are missing it so much but not comfortable going to indoor facilities. So we have been meeting in one of the parking lots at Central Park of Morris and dancing for two hours twice a week. I don't know how long this will last weather-wise, but it has been fun.



Mark Bippes: I'm excited to have had a dedication of a completed two-family Habitat for Humanity home in Passaic. We are now starting on a new single-family home in Lake Shawnee for a family from Newark with six wonderful children. I am enjoying the 3½-mile commute. I took this early morning picture of Lake Hopatcong from our deck.

Lise Greene: This fall, I led two hikes for my outdoor club (TriState Ramblers), participated in other club hikes, and enjoyed private hikes with a few friends at a time. Mark and I also biked, canoed, sailed ... and finished the laborious task of going through decades of files and piles of paperwork. We organized important documents into labeled folders, recycled pounds of paper, made a list of financial accounts, and even outlined our final wishes. It might sound kind of morbid, but we want to reduce the future burden on our family by providing suggestions for obituaries, memorial services, etc. With that task behind us, we can focus fully on *living*. ☺



Leading a hike at Mount Paul

Lynn Gannet: Hi, fellow dancers! I started square dancing at a low point in my life. It brought a stress-free smile to my face and my being. I wish we could be dancing again. This is an all-around wonderful activity. I miss all of you.

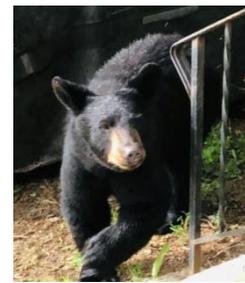
Bob Turner: In September and October, I was able to go to two square dances. Temperatures were taken upon arrival, we all wore masks, and I have not heard of any Covid issues from people who attended. It was fun to see fellow dancers, and many of us didn't miss a beat or step. It won't be long till we are all squared up again. In addition to hiking, I have continued to maintain the yard and house. In the backyard, we recently dropped a dead, 128-year-old white oak tree. I cut, split, and stacked three cords of wood for seasoning. Yes, I overdid it – and the doctor let me know. I have remained active since March with Masonic Lodge activities and the Millbrook firehouse on Route 10. This Saturday (11/21), Christmas trees arrive at the firehouse, so come down and buy one. Everybody will be home for the holidays, and we expect to sell out. As we approach the holiday season, I will miss seeing you all at my annual party. Just let me say, the tree will be up and the decorations in place. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year. Stay healthy and Yellow Rocks.

Connie and Ken Smith: We sincerely miss all our square dance friends ... even more than we miss dancing. Ken and I are staying home, with one of us making occasional but essential trips to Walmart, Home Depot, and Lowe's. I walk with family in the cemetery here in Newton and, if I am very lucky, see Connie or Fred walking their dog – love these spontaneous visits. We have learned, as I am sure you have, how to Zoom with family, friends, and doctors. Our grandnieces are going to in-person classes and showing how resilient children can be. When our kindergarten was asked about lunch at school, she responded, “We go to the cafeteria and take our masks off. We sit FAR away from each other and talk *LOUD!*” As we approach Thanksgiving, I am thankful that there is the anticipation that we will all be together again. In the meantime, have a healthy and happy holiday season. Hugs!

Donna Poyer and Mike Szekula: As a school bus driver, I'm used to a 2¼-month summer and this one lasted a full 5¾ months. I was able to get so much done during that time, including flowerbed weeding, and at one point I had the cleanest home in the county. It was great to spend a long weekend with my two college roommates at Indiana Sand Dunes State Park at the southern end of Lake Michigan. Mike and I hosted several card parties and drive-



way/lawn parties with square dance friends. My rescue dog, Cody, stole Bob Turner's muffin right out of his hand, took Mary's chicken bones (napkin and all) from the arm of her lawn chair, and licked Francine's yogurt. And we had a black bear *inside* the kitchen – it grabbed a bag of chocolate truffles when the door



was propped open, then returned for German Christmas cookies from the garage. On the third attempt, it ripped the screen door and came inside, but Mike scared it off. I did call Fish and Wildlife, but was told the workers were on furlough and “You must deal with this yourself.” The bear hasn't returned, and I believe someone killed it. Now I have returned to driving the school bus, getting up at 4:20 every morning and driving four to five hours a day – not too bad, but the routes change every few weeks. We hope to see you in a square when we are able.

Jeanne and Inars Gruntals: What a year! We'll be having Thanksgiving with just the two of us. For many years we've been going to our son-in-law's relatives for a fun-filled family gathering and bringing an assortment of appetizers. This year we'll be cooking a turkey for two. Zoom anyone? A sign of the times. Our granddaughter Julie will be home from Penn State on November 20, and the next semester starts at the end of January. “National Geographic Wild” recently ran a series on the Great Barrier Reef, which brought back memories of our trip in 2003. Having a ride in a semi-submersible vessel to see the reef in all of its wonder was something we will never forget. Stay well and safe and enjoy your happy memories.

Ann and John Lovatt: I do not know if, or when, we can return to square dancing. John had a TIA (mini-stroke) on April 7, 2020. He is fully aware and can communicate as well as ever, although he is in a wheelchair and cannot stand or walk. John is now in a nursing home, where visitation is limited due to Covid-19. We would appreciate hearing from friends in square dancing. My new contact information: aflovatt824@gmail.com, 973-997-3461. Thank you.

Irene and Hal Stoller: We don't have a lot of new and exciting activities to report, given that we are being quite conservative in going out and about. We have enjoyed all the unexpectedly mild weather and the beautiful fall foliage by hiking, walking, and a little kayaking by ourselves or with friends, both to some new sites and to some old favorite scenic places. I have been fortunate enough to be able to continue volunteering from home at United Way's Holiday Helping Hands program with several projects involving my artwork, calligraphy, and crocheting, all of which I love doing. We continue to Zoom a lot, from our tap and exercise classes to book discussion groups, family gatherings and game sessions, and a little virtual square dancing. We are hoping that the distribution of a safe, effective vaccine comes quickly!

Mary and Paul Olsen: On October 17, we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. Our children, their spouses, and our grandchildren planned an awesome surprise weekend away. Two weeks before, they let us know that they had rented a magnificent house on Halsey Island in Lake Hopatcong. Naturally, we were limited in our invitees because of Covid. Most guests were picked up by pontoon boat at the Windlass Restaurant dock and transported over to our island get-together. Some of our guests surprised us by arranging music provided by Howard Richman – so good to dance again! The food was excellent, and being together with family and friends is always the best part. Ready for the next 50! Our youngest son, Mark, and his wife, Chrissy, are expecting their first baby, a boy, on December 17 – the best Christmas present.



Nancy and Jim Anderson: Nancy and I spent February and March in Sarasota, Florida. The beaches, health club, and restaurants (except takeout) were closed up partway through March. We decided to return a little early, and the drive back was scary. I-95 was deserted, and even the beltway around DC was almost empty. We felt like we were on a different planet! Two weeks after arriving home, we both had symptoms consistent with Covid-19 and went to the emergency room. They did not have tests available, but assumed we had caught the virus because of our symptoms. It hit us harder than anything we'd ever experienced (and I had pneumonia in my youth). We slept maybe 20 hours a day and I had shooting pains in my head every five seconds. It is *real!* It took three weeks to mostly recover, but we are now experiencing "long hauler" symptoms (lower endurance, somewhat cloudy thought processes). After two months, we were tested for antibodies, and the results were negative for both of us! More recent tests came back positive. Both of us have resumed working out at our health clubs. Nancy has kept busy with gardening (it never looked better!) and weekly visits with her daughters and grandchildren. In October, I visited my daughter and two granddaughters in Washington State. Since it's good for the soul to be outside occasionally, we've biked in Morristown's parks, and Nancy walks a mile around the church cemetery. We really miss square dancing and seeing you all. Stay healthy.

