

# ***THE GAZETTE***

**Sandwich Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends**

***OCTOBER 2025***



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## **Special Section on Earl Mills Sr.'s Visit**

### **Gail Melix:**

What a treat it was to listen to Earl Mills Sr., Chief Flying Eagle, Mashpee Wampanoag Elder at our annual potluck gathering on September 7 at the East Sandwich Meetinghouse. Generally we call this annual potluck in the fall a picnic, but an enthusiastic downpour kept us indoors. The celebration began with Earl's great gift of storytelling. His memory for dates and details is still sharp. His sensitivity to the joys and sorrows of his life that he shared was palpable and observable on the faces of his audience. His humor is unrivaled. Earl has lived in Mashpee since birth (1929), with the exception of time spent in the army and at Arnold College in Connecticut. He became Chief of the Mashpee Wampanoags in 1956. His son, Earl Mills Jr. is the current chief.

Earl was the founder and traditional chef of the Flume restaurant in Mashpee. He is an historian, educator, author, retired teacher of physical education and devoted father of five. His daughter, Roxanne, accompanied him, and sat near to him (photo below). He consulted her at times during his presentation. Earl organized many pow wows, and was instrumental in the renovation of the Old Indian Meetinghouse, a significant historic landmark on Cape Cod. He is an expert on all things Wampanoag. His spoken memories of his long and eventful life in Mashpee were fascinating and inspiring. He spoke without



pause for over two hours and one could see the joy he took from speaking of his life.

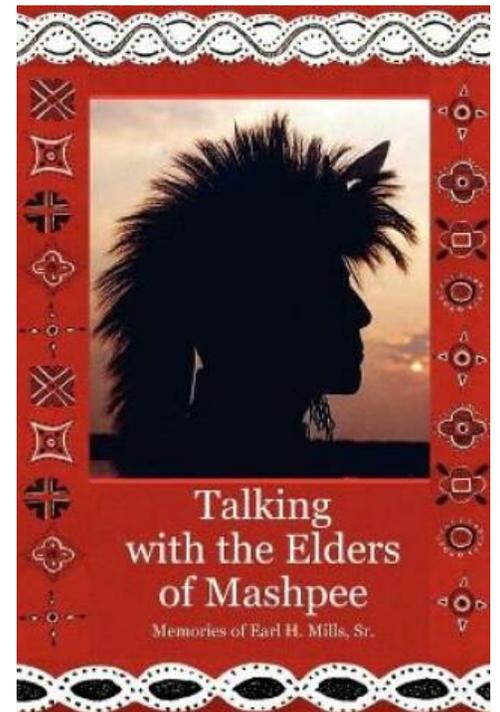
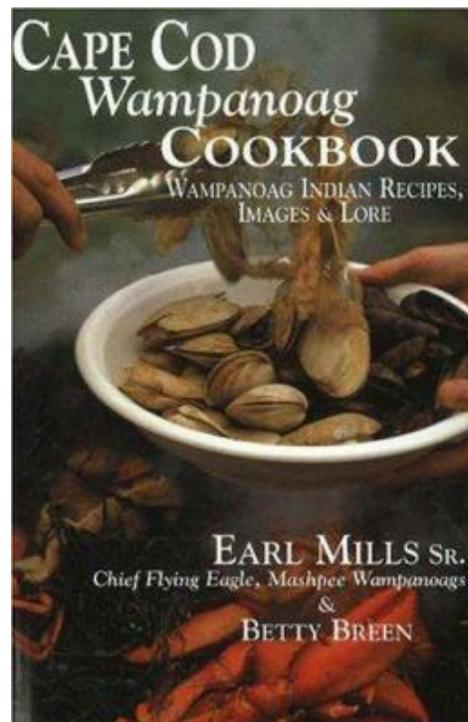
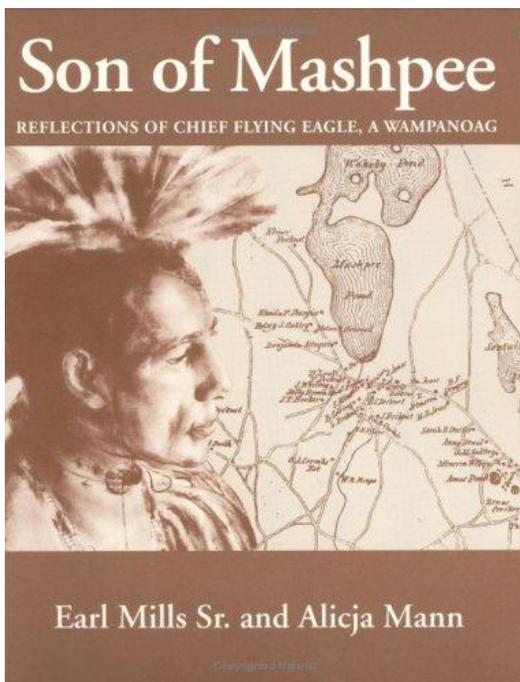
I've known Earl for many years and enjoyed visiting with him in his home, usually coming with questions that only he could answer. His house was a treasure trove of knowledge. The information he collected over the years in large binders, his many papers, and the books he wrote were impressive. (Photos of a few of his books are shown on the next page.) Truly I feel honored whenever I am in his presence. The legacy he leaves will have a long-lasting impact on his tribe and on so many others.

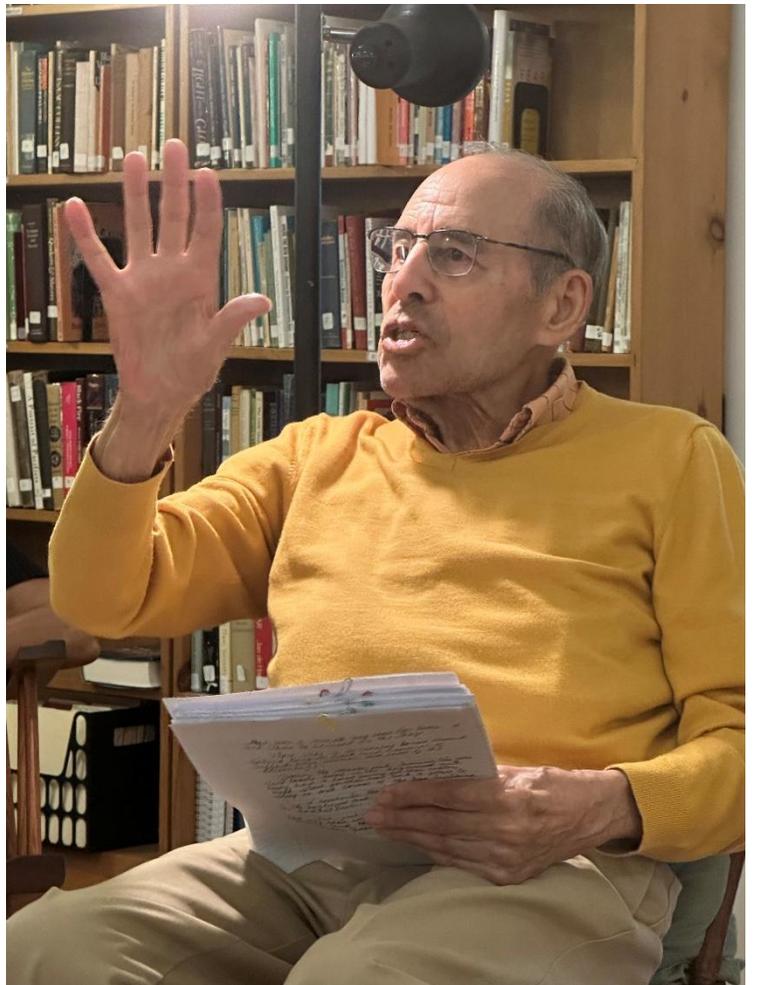
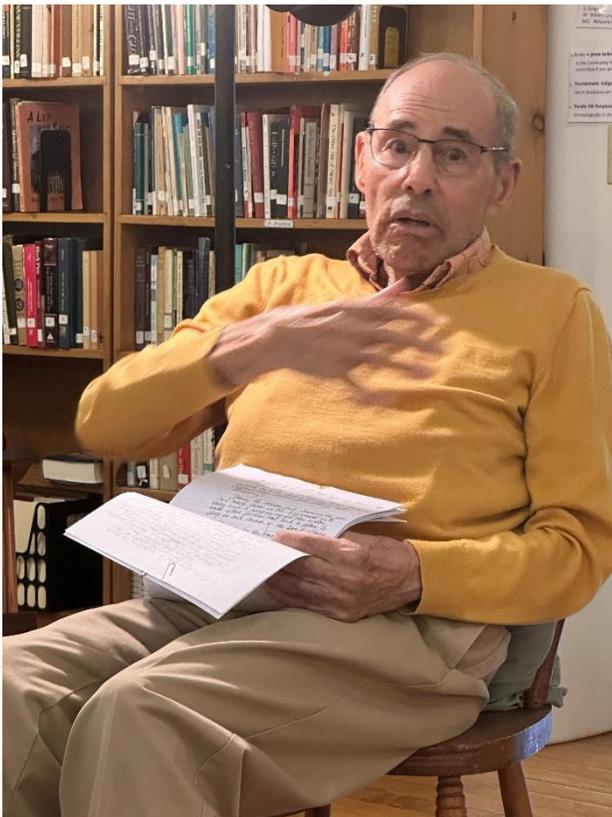
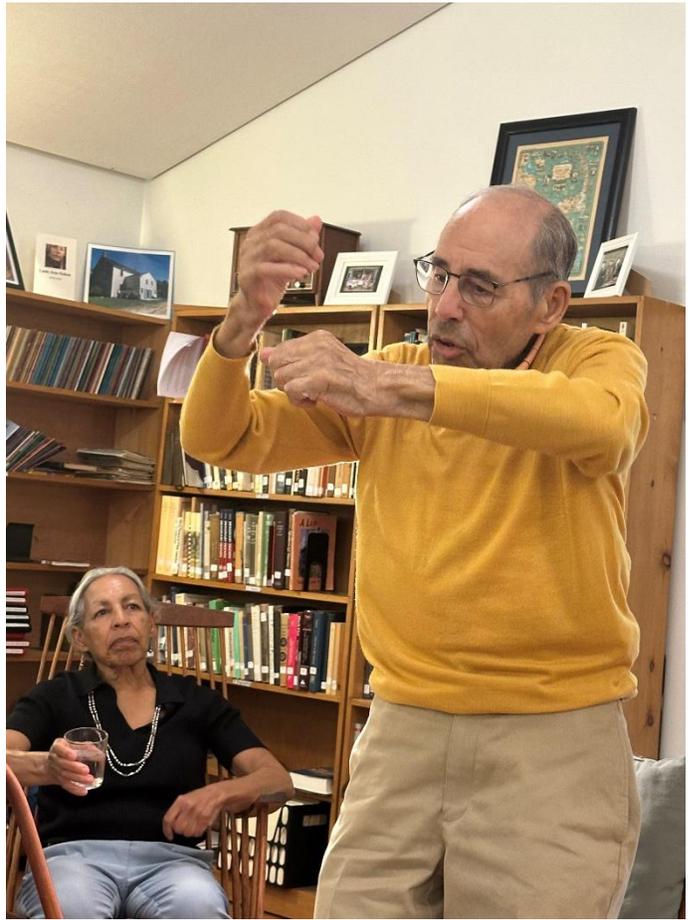
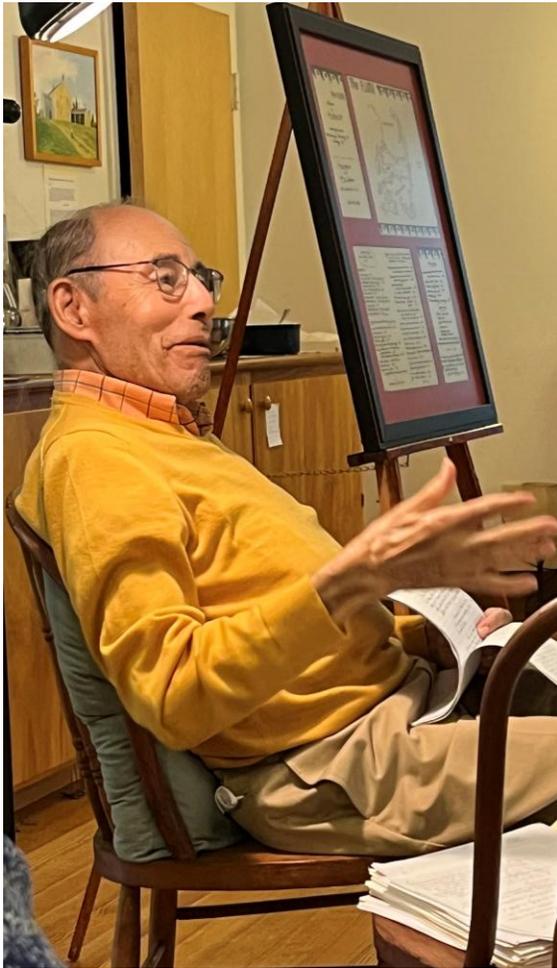
***Linda Gaboriau:***

How lucky we were to have the opportunity to listen to Chief Flying Eagle, Earl Mills Sr., share his memories and stories of life in the Wampanoag community in Mashpee over the decades! He introduced us to a special cast of characters, all those dear members of his family including the aunts and uncles who played important roles in his life and in the community. Hearing about his cross-country trip back home after serving in the army in Korea took us back into a decade that marked a turning point in 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. history. All fascinating stories, but on a more personal level, I was particularly struck by the pleasure Chief Mills took in sharing his love of cooking and by his mouth-watering descriptions of some of his favourite recipes. What a delight to learn that he was heart and soul and chief cook at my mother's favourite restaurant – The Flume!

When I was a child growing up in Westwood outside of Boston, we often came to the Cape for family get-togethers at Coonamessett Inn in Falmouth. I have no memory of those occasions. My mother's happiest childhood memories were of the summers she spent at my great-grandparents' house in Dennisport. Perhaps that is where she developed her taste for local fare (long before the bumper

stickers!), for the crops grown in the sandy soil of this peninsula, and the fish and game born in the local waters and woods. Every year she looked forward to the fall crop of white turnips. In 1970, when my parents decided to spend their retirement years on the Cape and moved to East Sandwich, I had been living in Montreal for several years. My visits back home were special occasions and called for a special restaurant meal – at The Flume, of course. No more Coonamesett Inn. My memories of the menu at those wonderful meals are vague but I do remember cod, quahogs, and delicious “Cape Cod turnips”!





## ***Earl Mills Sr. at 96***

First and foremost I have known Earl Mills as a human being. At 96, his perspective is naturally not quite the same as it was at 46, when I began to be aware of him as a person and not just as another teacher or administrator. 1964 Or 5, I was leaving the tennis courts after our high school team's practice, when he rolls up with his daughter (some of us met her when he spoke in Sandwich), to play some tennis with her. He was an athlete, always showing not what it meant to succeed as an athlete, but to love the physical life, to embrace an active engagement with the world, to keep us in tune with the mental needs of the culture. He seemed then and still does, to be an integrated human being. Being a Mashpee Wampanoag is more natural to him than going to Korea as a soldier, the one fact never not the case, the other just one of the kind of circumstances that life puts in front of all of us, but neither fact needs to be forgotten or over or under valued.

In his most recent writings he has tried to collect memories of those Wampanoags who preceded him in Mashpee. He then ties them into his own memories of a town now lost to time but not to history, and not lost in the past but creating new life ways for those who live there now. Here is the challenge and the invitation: his life is a marker, a memorial, a sense of place, and others can be part of it. His life is present to us. We can possess our own lives and integrate them into what this time gives us. We can say we know him and that he influences us. That would be a true gift.

***Eric Edwards***

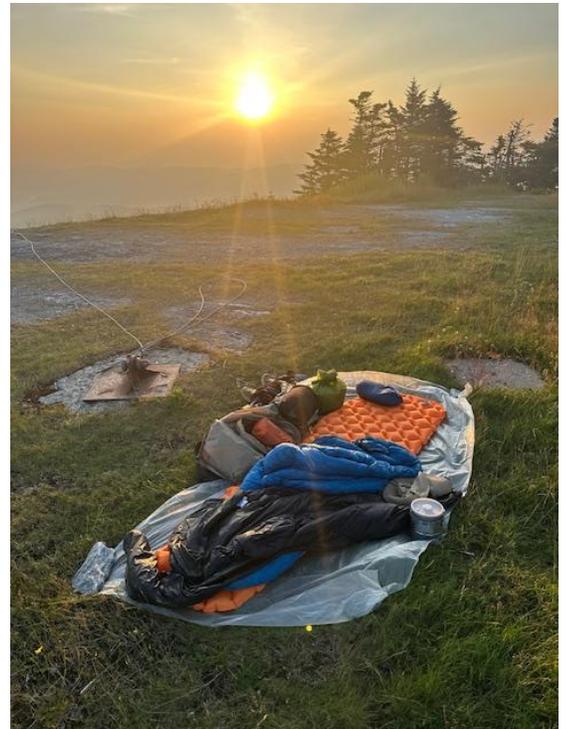
## Readers Write

### *Trail Angels*

*Paul Denoncourt*

Not all angels have wings. Some angels drink beer. I know because I had a beer with two last month.

This August I once again donned my backpack and went to the woods. This time I hiked Vermont's Long Trail. This trail runs south to north along the spine of the Green Mountains to the Canadian border. It took 15 days to cover 172 very steep and challenging miles. I had good but hot weather and sometimes slept under the stars on mountain tops to catch the spectacular sunrises. (Photo right)\*. It was my fourth long distance (over 100 miles) trek in five years and, as in the other hikes, I was the recipient of Trail Magic from Trail Angels.



Trail Magic is unexpected and free beneficence from complete strangers while hiking. It greatly lifts your mood -- makes your day, in fact -- and restores your confidence in your fellow man. It can be filling your water bottle in a stretch of trail with no water source, a cold beverage on a hot day, a hot beverage on a cold day, snack food, sandwiches, homemade cookies, fresh fruit, headlamp batteries, replacement shoelaces, band-aids, Ace wraps, toilet paper, or a ride into town and back so you can resupply. Some will even take what trash you have accumulated so you don't have to pack it further.

People who provide this largess are called Trail Angels. They may leave a cooler of cold drinks trailside with a sign saying, "For Thru Hikers", or they may be day-

hiking the trail looking for people to help. More often they set up at road crossings with a table, chairs and, sometimes, an awning. Many are hikers who wish to give back to the trail because someone helped them years before. Some are affiliated with religious institutions and do this as a ministry. Many more, however, just do it because they are kind souls and expect nothing in return.



I join other hikers for lunch at the Leapfrog Café.

The most famous Trail Angel of all is a North Carolina resident whose trail name is Freshground. Every summer he drives his van -- which he calls the Leapfrog Café -- up and down the eastern states setting up at Appalachian Trail Road crossings and feeds hungry hikers a FULL meal which he cooks on a propane camp stove. I met Freshground in Pennsylvania at midday and was fed a beef burrito, fruit, chips, soda, and coffee. Then he gave me a second burrito to pack out for supper later and he topped off my water bottles. (Photo next page). He had been there since early morning that day when he cooked blueberry pancakes for hikers. He spends a lot of his own money doing this but also has a 401-c charity to which his supporters donate to keep him going.

There is a church in Duncannon, PA which feeds hikers a spaghetti supper every Wednesday. Another religious group in Rutland, VT offers hikers a shower, use of a washer and drier, a bunk for the night, and breakfast, all at no charge (although

they accept donations). A widower and devout Baptist in Virginia does the same, but he also provides supper. At no time have I been subject to any proselytizing. There are two "Cookie Ladies", one in Massachusetts and another in Virginia. They bake cookies daily and hand them out to any hiker who knocks on the door. On the Long Trail, I had mailed myself a resupply box to Johnson, Vermont, where I also planned to check into a motel for a night. About two days beforehand I ran into another hiker who was doing a short section hike in the opposite direction. We chatted and she mentioned that she lived in Johnson. When I told her my plan, she informed me that there was no motel or B&B in town and that the post office was far from the road crossing. She gave me her phone number, told me to call when I got to the trailhead and said that she or her husband would pick me up and give me a ride to the post office. They did give me the promised ride. They also took me to their home where I had my first shower in 5 days of hiking in 90° weather. Once I had cleaned up, we enjoyed a cold beer. They then cooked me supper and put me up for the night in their guest cabin. That was great Trail Magic from two amazing Trail Angels! They took a risk and welcomed me, a stranger, into their home. (Photo right).

My wife is a native of Maine, and I lived there for almost three decades. When she retires in 2028 we plan to move back there. We want to settle in western Maine near the Appalachian Trail so we, too, can provide Trail Magic. Meanwhile, we make annual donations to the Leapfrog Cafe. In addition, my experience of Trail Magic by Trail Angels reminds me that there are still many good people in this world despite what is reported on the evening news.



\*All photos by author, August 2025.

## ***Forefathers Nest a Metaphor for Today's Immigrants\**** Lewis M. Randa

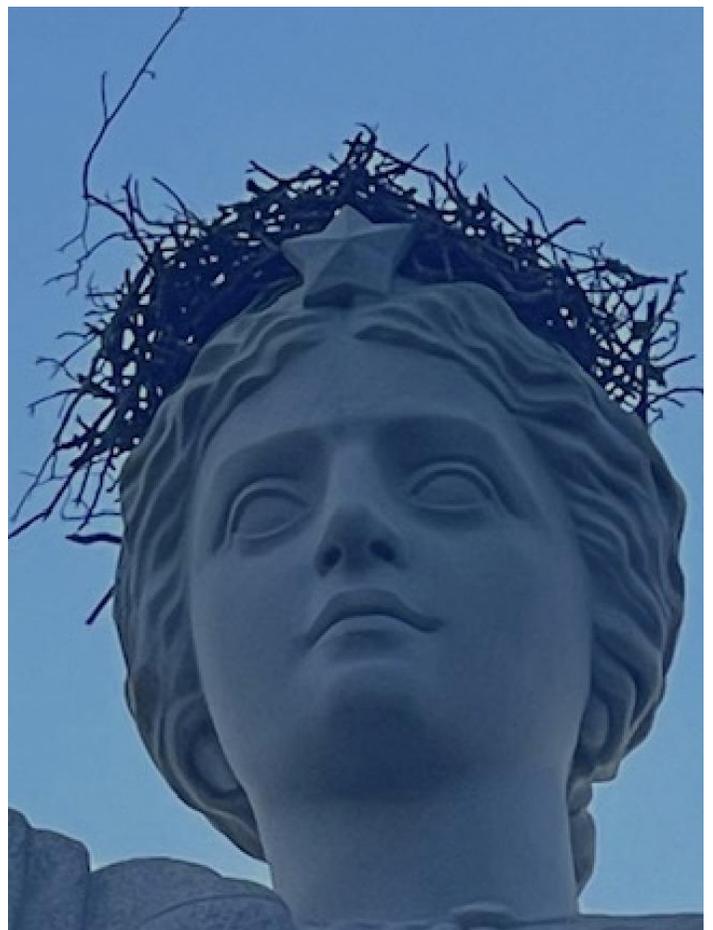
Birds have built a nest on the head of Faith at the *National Monument to the Forefathers* in Plymouth. The image is striking: a monument meant to honor courage and principle now also holds a simple home, high above, built for protection and survival. The nest is a reminder that strength comes from weaving together something sturdy enough to withstand storms, seasons, and time.

The lesson of the nest, nestled high atop the granite statue and built by a pair of ospreys, feels relevant today. Our forefathers came here without papers, risking everything for a chance to build a new life, to weave a nest that lovingly holds those they cared for, as if in the palm of their hand.

Yet today, people who come here seeking safety and opportunity are too often deported for that same lack of papers. The nest on Faith suggests a broader truth—that a lasting home, like a just nation, must be built to shelter and include, not to exclude.

That nest can be seen as a metaphor for much in our present day – an uninvited guest making a home where it was not expected. What if, by looking through nature's lens, we allowed it to teach us something about belonging, and what it truly means to be home?

\*Originally published by the Plymouth Independent, September 9, 2025.  
Photo by L. Randa.



An osprey nest atop the figure of Faith on the *Forefathers Monument* in Plymouth, MA.

***Western Civ Discontent***  
***or***  
***Rejecting this Modern Life***

For every second every minute  
spent on the phone listening to  
the same message admonishing us  
to call 911 in a medical emergency  
before being put on hold

I say, Kill all the Lawyers  
who profited from one or two  
stretch suits resulting in this  
99.9% pure inane necessity

Or  
Did all this seep out of  
some remote federal sinecure  
HIPPA office buried in fear

I harken back to my family doctor  
who showed up at our house  
little black bag in hand.

Who but the oldest left still  
waking remembers?

Who knows?

I do know thanks to my son  
that interaction with the  
eWorld has been driven  
to the phone these days.

These days

I do know thanks to my son  
that Customer Service  
as it once existed  
Rests in Peace  
outside some India city.

And need I list  
the costs the ills  
the human misery  
attributable to algorithms  
created by brightest & best  
to wrest to hold to strangle  
our attention attention as commodity  
feeding enabling engaging  
The Monetization of Everything?

I think not.

And now we have AI  
to do that bidding for the Billionaires  
no worry 'bout whistle blowers alors

Lucky us.

Lucky us.

***Bill Holcombe***  
***September 2025***

## ***World Quaker Day 2025 – October 5 -- Love Your Neighbor***



Additional photo credits from this issue -- *SMM annual picnic* (p.2), Erica H. Adams; p.3 (above) *Sally Fritz and friends* by Sally's son-in-law, Greg; (below) *Janet Rodgers with Friends* by Alan Burt; *Friendship Garden* (p.4) by Erica H. Adams. Earl Mills, Sr. (p.10) by Steve Gates (upper left); (all others, pp.9-10) by Erica H. Adams).

### ***Clerks\****

***Sandwich Monthly Meeting Fran Lightsom***

***Sandwich Monthly Meeting Ministry and Counsel Alan Burt***

***East Sandwich Preparative Meeting***

*Gail Melix and Barbara Goodman*

***West Falmouth Preparative Meeting***

*Molly Cornell*

***Yarmouth Preparative Meeting***

*Pat Harvey*

*\*Contact information can be found in the Sandwich Monthly Meeting Directory.*



Front and back cover photos by Erica H. Adams; Friendship Garden at West Falmouth, September, 2025.

*The Gazette* is a publication of  
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*Rita O'Donnell, Editor*  
*Alta Mae Stevens, Founding Editor*  
*Stephen Gates, Photographer*  
*Brenda Nolan, Transmitter*

The next *Gazette* will be the December 2025 issue. Deadline is Monday, Nov. 24.