

ALUMNAE QUARTERLY

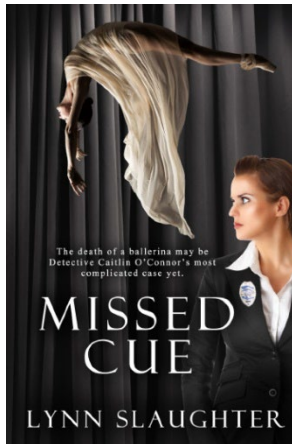
CLASS OF 1969 NOTES

WINTER, 2025

As we wrote this (August, 2024) reunion was still fresh in our minds. “It was so good to catch up with former housemates and meet new friends,” said **Carol Fox Kurt**, and **Lynn Slaughter** said, “I loved seeing everyone at reunion. My thanks go out to our classmates who worked so hard to make it a wonderful event.”

One of those was **Sue Ann Levin Schiff**, who was too ill to travel but – with help from friends **Pam Chamberlain**, **Sandra Fascell Diamond**, and **Susan Jackson Stillman** – organized a Botanic Garden tour for ‘69ers to enjoy in her absence. Sue Ann was a strong advocate for the garden, member of its Friends Advisory Committee, and founding chair of its Friends Leadership Council. Her death saddens both her classmates and the Botanic Garden Community. (See a memorial for Sue Ann [here](#), or visit our class In Memoriam listings [here](#).)

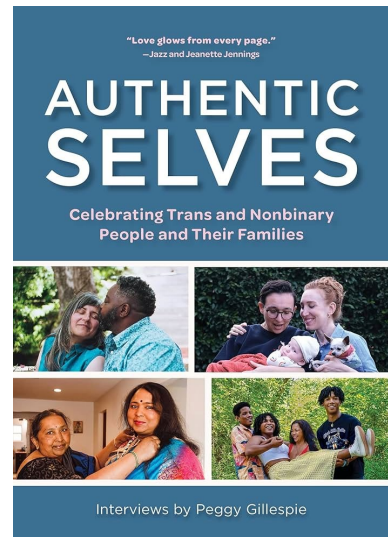
Rosalyn Zakheim, our 2019 – 2024 president, couldn’t make it either; her husband sustained a concussion and traumatic brain injury after slipping on ice in Spokane. Recovery has been slow, she wrote, but “we hope he will soon be driving again.” In happier news, she enjoyed seeing **Mary Cwalina** (who recently moved to the Spokane area) and **Fran McSweeney** (who with partner Meg Kelley lives in Pullman).



Post-reunion, **Lynn Slaughter** reported that her debut adult mystery, *Missed Cue*, was named a Top Pick for the Silver Falchion Award, and her next YA novel, *Missing Mom*, was scheduled for publication in January, 2025. All this in spite of impending spinal surgery! “I’m wishing I could request a new body transplant,” she said. But her granddaughter’s quinceanera was amazing.

Master naturalist **Carol Fox Kurt** was back in Colorado, hiking and enjoying the environment. She teaches a course on adaptations of plants and animals in the tundra for the Forest Conservancy and Aspen Center for Environmental Studies, and in ski season she leads a group to a backcountry hut. And she celebrated her own bat mitzvah on January 13 (2024), “at this late stage of my life.”

Peggy Elman Gillespie wrote, “Hard to believe how old I/we are. Just hit 76 which amazes, sometimes horrifies me, and of course, I'm grateful for being alive and well as of today. My new book (*Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and their Families*) was chosen as the Common Read by the Unitarian Universalists for 2024-2025, and fabulous curriculum was developed to accompany the book. The exhibit version is traveling all over the USA including recent showings at the El Paso Museum of History (amazing!), the Maltz Museum in Cleveland, many preK-12 schools, colleges, public libraries, houses of worship and other public spaces in Iowa, New Mexico, Georgia, Illinois, California, and Massachusetts. “I hope MANY of my fellow Smith Alums will help bring the exhibit to their communities (It is easy to do). Please spread the word



about the exhibit and the book—buy copies for yourselves, friends, religious leaders, legislators. We must all work to help stop the hate and violence targeting LGBTQ+ communities and youth and trans women of color! I'm writing from Truro, MA on Cape Cod where Jill and I spend August each summer (lucky us) surrounded by our Western MA (Northampton) friends where we live a mile from Smith. Love the beach and the culture in Provincetown including Family Week for LGBTQ families where I display some of the exhibit each summer. To learn more: www.familydiversityprojects.org or email me at peggywrite@gmail.com.”

In October 2024, Northampton’s Academy of Music showed [*The Painted Life of Gregory Gillespie*](#), a documentary about Peggy’s late husband. She asks, “If you have any museum connections or Netflix/Amazon Prime connections, please let me know as I'd love to see it distributed nationally.”

And [here](#) is Peggy’s January 2025 update.

Mary Douglas and Jim moved in 2021 to Lewes, Delaware, where they have been enjoying a quiet country life punctuated by travel and by visits to their friends and children in DC and Philadelphia. Mary has quickly become involved with the Sierra Club and the League of Women Voters, making presentations on offshore wind, electric vehicles, and climate change, and writing and delivering testimony before the legislature. “Delaware passed the Climate Change Solutions Act in 2023 and, this last June, enacted legislation that will, we hope, lead to offshore wind displacing about a third of the fossil-fuel generated electricity in the State,” she writes. She takes part in a monthly Emerson House Zoom call and has luckily been able to see fellow Emersonians **Betsy Lamson Humphries** and **Debby Slavitt** over the years, as well as newer Smith friends **Liz Murray Platts**, **Dabney Waters Schmitt**, **Susan MacMillan Arensberg**, **Corbin Crews Harwood**, and **Peak Mason Power**.

One new 55th reunion friendship is between your new co-secretaries, **Gale Eaton** and **Marguerite Smith**. In August 2024 we met at Mashantucket, Connecticut, for [Schemitzun](#), a feast of green corn and dance that for me (Gale) was my first ever powwow; Marguerite seemed to know everybody there. I was in awe of the vibrant community, the music and dancing and arts, and sadly forgot to take a picture before getting on the bus back to Foxwoods. There, my seatmate in his beautiful dance regalia was absorbed in a video game on his phone. Tradition lives.



We look forward to working with each other and with you to keep our class connections lively.