



## HARVARD-RADCLIFFE CLASS OF 1966

Dear Classmates,

August 2025

Our first newsletter was published in 2017; does that make this one part of volume nine? Anyway, here is the August newsletter.

### **Neil Kominsky:**

My wife Debbie Frank, '70 and I have been blessed with the birth of a grandson in Vienna, where my son Jonathan teaches at Central European University. By the time you read this, we'll be there for about a month getting acquainted with the baby and lending as much of a hand as we can.

### **Charles Fienning:**

Tom, thanks for serving as our Harvard Class Secretary. I have performed in a similar role for my section (C) of the HBS MBA Class of 1970 since we graduated.

Like you, I have 5 "regular" doctors and am in good health. Summer activities included two family reunions, one in Estes Park, CO and another at our beach house at Pawleys Island, SC. On May 1, I was honored as the 2025 inductee into the AICC Hall of Fame at the association's spring meeting in Bonita Springs, FL. AICC is a trade association representing independent paper packaging companies including our family business, Sumter Packaging Corporation (now Hood Container - Sumter).

I worked in the family corrugated paper packaging business for 41 years (1977-2018) and was CEO for 25 years. I served on the AICC board of directors for 12 years and was chairman in 2012-13. Our son, Benjamin DeSollar '90, joined the firm as CFO in 2003 and bought the business from his mother and me in 2009. I worked as Ben's "Asst. to the President" consulting for the firm for 9 years before my retirement. Ben sold the company in January 2024.

My principal activity in the Harvard community was my 30-year stint as an interviewer with the Harvard Club of SC Schools Committee. When I was old enough to be the grandfather of the applicants, I decided to "hang it up" doing interviews. Our son, Ted '01, is now serving on the Schools Committee and will co-chair his 25th Class Reunion next year.

### **Mary Mackey:**

My summer escapades have included a flight to Rio de Janeiro where I read poetry from my new collection about climate change "In This Burning World: Poems of Love and

Apocalypse" as a member of a panel at the meeting of the society of Latin American and Caribbean Environmental History (aka SOLCHA); a couple of days revisiting old sites in Rio with some friends who had never been there before, including Sugarloaf, where I found the monkeys had multiplied; and Corcovado, that big mountain with a statue Crist on top. At Corcovado, I got a stress test—probably too much of a stress test for my age—by climbing multiple flights of steep stairs to the top level before I noticed there was an escalator and an elevator. My summer escapades also include a month trip to Cape Split Maine. If anybody from our classes is at Cape Split or Jonesport this August, please let me know and we'll go eat some lobster rolls together.

### **David Trollman:**

I'm writing from my summer home on Langeland in Denmark, where time seems to stand still: a half-timbered cottage with a thatch roof surrounded by forest and field, the Baltic a mile over

here and the village of Tryggevlev a mile over there. There's a dreamy garden in our backyard that's calling me now as it has all summer.

This morning I was recalling a lecture on intellectual history I attended by H. Stuart Hughes. He alertly caught one of our fellows reading a newspaper (well, it was a 9am class) and loudly corrected his rude behavior. What must he have thought to see all the cell phones at our tables?

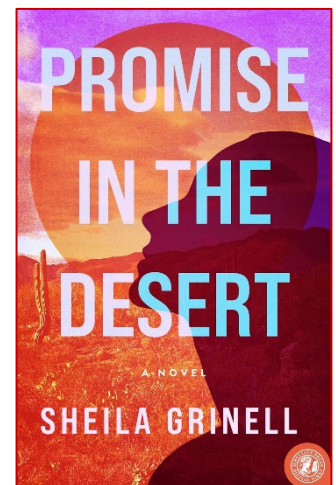
#### **Julie Cheever:**

As we're all entering a new decade, here's a photo of four '66 classmates at a birthday gathering in San Francisco this past spring: Lois Schiffer, Janice Dost, Marsha Berzon and Julie Cheever.



#### **Sheila Grinell:**

Sheila Grinell's new novel will be published on Sept. 5. Set in present-day Arizona, *Promise in the Desert* is about a young woman from back East who works for a real estate company developing the world's first post-pandemic community. Bee's boss sends her to meet 92-year-old Sydelle Hammer, whose family has ranched on the land adjacent to the planned community for 150 years. The two strike up an unlikely friendship. But Bee soon discovers that both her boss and an environmental activist are cooking up shady deals to acquire the ranch. When Sydelle has a mini-stroke, the scavengers start to circle. Disgusted, Bee is compelled to defend her friend. At a crossroads, she must take a stand about the best way forward for the land, for Sydelle--and for herself.



#### **Charles Smart:**

As you have encouraged us to do, I have composed a proposed entry for the newsletter, covering what's been going on recently in my family life and emphasizing what we did during our August summer vacation in Maine. The text for the proposed entry is enclosed in the attached Word Doc file. I have also included four (4) photos that show some of our vacation activities.

In particular, there's a photo of fellow classmate, Ben Emory, and myself at Ben's summer house in Brooklin, Maine. As the text of my newsletter entry indicates, Ben and I go back a long way, including our assignment as officers and shipmates on the same Navy destroyer (USS New-DD 818) during the Vietnam War—a complete coincidence arranged by the Navy and a pleasant surprise for the two of us!



### **Catherine Hughes:**

Back in our day, Harvard/Radcliffe was not an especially welcoming or supportive place for those interested in pursuing artistic endeavors. A small group of your RC '66 classmates who are actively working in various artistic media have been meeting online periodically since our last class reunion, to review the artistic projects they are each working on and to discuss the differing techniques and approaches that their particular forms of artistic expression require. Three of us are painters, two are primarily fiber artists, one creates collages of photographs & natural objects, another currently focuses mainly on clay works and print projects.

This group is not currently looking for new members—our online meetings would extend far too long with more artistic projects to discuss! But if anyone would be interested in starting a similar group, we would be happy to provide advice!

Here we are as pictured by our waitress at The Russell House Tavern in Harvard Square for a lunch on August 5th, enjoying a rare in-person gathering. It was such fun to see everyone “for real” for once, instead of inside a tiny box on Zoom!



From left to right: (seated) Abby Record & Jude Larzalere; (standing) Florie Maynard, Lee Eyler, Eileen Kahan, & Cathy Hughes. Missing: Nancy Mimno



A small selection of my landscape paintings in oil and watercolors will be on display during the month of September at the Boothbay Region Art Foundation gallery in Boothbay Harbor, ME, in a small joint exhibition with my longtime plein air painting buddy, Darcey Crandall.

# Mostly Landscapes

In BRAF Gallery One

Darcey Crandall  
Catherine Hughes



Darcey Crandall, "Monhegan Morning," Oil

Catherine Hughes, "Marsh View," Oil

**August 27 - September 21**  
Opening Reception: Friday, September 5, 5 - 7 PM

**Boothbay Region Art Foundation**  
1 Townsend Ave., Boothbay Harbor, ME  
[www.boothbayartists.org](http://www.boothbayartists.org) (207) 655-2705

### Bob Zarrett:

I can count only four doctors I see regularly, at least annually. Several others are on an as-needed basis, e.g. an orthopedic surgeon for a new hip, a urologist for a kidney stone, etc.

My excitement this summer was a canoeing/camping trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness with my son and grandson. My son and I had made many trips there together, but the most recent was about 20 years ago. I thought it would be really cool to do a three-generation trip, and I also wanted to know if an 81 year old guy of average physical fitness could do it. The answer to that question is yes, but I learned there is a considerable loss of physical capability as the years pile on! We had a great time, despite not-so-great weather for a good portion of our trip.

My grandson Lochlann is 14 (very happy to have his driver's permit, & he did all the driving to get us from Minneapolis to the Boundary Waters and back) and had minimal canoeing experience but had done a fair amount of tent camping. My son Rob (a retired police officer, now age 54 & trying to figure out what to do next...) is the expert – he's done a lot more camping & canoeing than I have. We were both able to give Lochlann some instructional help. He was more enthusiastic about the trip than I expected. If I'm still in half-decent shape next summer, we'll try it again!



#### Barbara Richardson:

I too have been going to Maine for many years, 74 to be precise. Starting when my parents owned a cottage in New Harbor and continuing as I go back each year in a cottage with a friend a few minutes away from my old house in Long Cove Point. I claim to friends that I lost my virginity in a lobster boat.... But it was so foggy, we were never certain

#### David Andelman:

David A. Andelman was elected president of The Deadline Club, the largest chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, dating to 1925. It marks a trifecta for Andelman of journalistic societies he has led, having served as president of The Overseas Press Club of America (OPC) and The Silurians Press Club, and is a governor of the Foreign Press Association. Andelman, who has twice won the Deadline Club Award for Best Opinion Writing (for his columns successively at CNN Opinion and Reuters), is editor and publisher of [Andelman Unleashed](#) on Substack. He has been a veteran national and foreign correspondent for *The New York Times* and CBS News, an executive editor of *Forbes*, editor & publisher of *World Policy Journal*, and the author of five books.

For his first action as president, the board of the Deadline Club unanimously endorsed this message in support of Michael Abramowitz, just removed as Director of the Voice of America: **The Deadline Club condemns the decision by the Agency for Global Media to fire Michael Abramowitz as the Director of Voice of America in what appears to be part of an effort to dismantle the VOA and all related services that have, since the Second World War,**

**served as a source of objective information about the world and America's place within it. We urge the Agency and senior advisor Kari Lake to reverse this action and restore the operations of all of AGM's media voices**

btw, I have several (paid!) subscribers to ***Andelman Unleashed*** who also happen to be WHRBies !!!

THEN, there's my appearance for the Autumn Garden Society in NYC on September 4: <https://www.autumngarden.org/event-details/david-andelman-america-takes-on-the-world>

**J. Chester Johnson:**

***For Racial Healing: #1 "To Begin With. . ."***

Sixty years ago, Lerone Bennett, Jr., wrote: "There is no Negro problem in America; there has never been a Negro problem in America – the problem of race in America is a white problem." I'm white, having grown up in the South along the Mississippi River Delta. Mr. Bennett was absolutely right in the mid-1960s, and his judgment is absolutely correct today.

A major improvement to the ingrained, national, Black-white race problem, exemplified by the historical, white subjugation of Black Americans, has to rely on an alternative, powerful approach for more individual, personal responsibility being taken for racial healing by American whites. This view replaces the previous emphasis of engagement generally assumed by public and private institutions, but based on the thick catalogue of individual stories involving both Black and white persons who serve as an inspiration to us all, it is not an exaggeration to accept that individuals, away from the ambit of institutions, can be more effective change-agents for racial healing.

In fact, we probably always realized that ultimately resolution to Black-white racial healing should fall heavily on whites individually – a one-to-one promise that we whites were better than the racial history in America had shown us to be. The correction begins with individual responsibilities for a one-to-one dialogue and relationship, grounded in Black-white potential and realization. A detailed blueprint for the implementation of a major improvement, if not solution, in white behavior for Black-white relations will be set forth in my future distributions and blogs.

For many generations now, we've known that if there were a real solution to the Black-white racial problem in this country, it should come, at least in large part, from white folks for no other reason than it had been whites who created the problem in the first place by embracing slavery and Black subjugation and who benefitted from the evil construct. However, it is reasonable to assume that the absence of strong, generalized initiatives from whites for racial healing derives from whites being subject to an axis of filiopietism (excessive veneration of the past, traditions, and ancestors) and damaged heritage that stifled who those whites could be and that kept them locked into a system propelling them to reflect, through themselves, racial ideas, temperament, and treatment that evolved from several lifetimes before them.

While there should be a *prima facie* recognition of filiopietism's reality in this context, damaged heritage requires a little more examination. In this respect, damaged heritage is an essential part of American white racism against Blacks and consists of evidence, passed on from generation to generation, of established, prejudicial traditions and customs, sometimes codified into law, and historically combined with not infrequent and gratuitous violence and repression perpetrated by American whites against Black Americans.

In contravention to the axis of filiopietism and damaged heritage, whites have a significant purpose to demonstrate authentic passion for Black personhood, persona, history, and culture. A more detailed description of the authentic passion will be the subject covered in the next distribution and blog of "For Racial Healing", though it doesn't depart in a substantial way from what Martin Luther King, Jr., had in mind for his concept of "the weapon of love". The adoption of authentic passion, as it works and wills the connection between Blacks and whites, can be

made much deeper, more fundamental, and instinctual than the axis of filiofetism and damaged heritage.

In turn, authentic passion endows us with the capacity to understand, empathize, heal, love, and co-inhere. Relationships that are founded on authentic passion can rise above principal shortcomings that limit human engagement. Through authentic passion, Black-white relationships can be created and can and will blossom, as Sheila Lorraine Walker and I were able to experience, express, and foster. In this respect, much more about Sheila Walker and me will appear throughout the distributions and blogs to come. In particular, the racial healing created between the two of us – Black and white – will be described in a distribution to come, entitled, “Sheila Lorraine Walker: Lesson in Authentic Passion”.

Being white, I believe it to be presumptuous of me to offer strict and strong advice on actions that victims of racism – Black Americans – should take toward racial healing, except insofar as those steps may impact meaningfully the effectiveness of adherence to the protocol to be prescribed in these distributions and blogs. Nevertheless, I do hope that Black Americans will note in future writings in this space the remarkably generous and constructive efforts that Sheila Walker took to support the seven-year, racially healing relationship that existed between Sheila, a Black woman, and me, which ended upon her death in March, 2021. In response to a request from Sheila’s family, I gave the eulogy at Sheila Walker’s memorial service. I remain close to her family, especially her husband, Ivor Walker.

When so much more has been written and examined about the causes and results of American white racism, especially about white subjugation of Blacks, than on the subject of possible major improvements or solutions to the problem, there has been therefore a formidable inference that little exists to suggest or promise that such an improvement or solution can be applied to the problem. Actually, the inference intimates that there is likely no major improvement or solution at all. I stand in direct opposition to this conclusion. For one thing, Sheila Walker and I experienced meaningful and consequential racial healing, and that success can be duplicated. As one who has read much of my work on this subject asked the question: “How do we translate morality to action? How do we help to create millions of Johnson/Walker friendships?” Further, the acclaimed Black poet and author, Cornelius Eady, responding to my writing on Black-white racial healing, has commented: “(Johnson) has laid the healing tools in our hands, and left instructions. This is how it starts.” The intention of the distributions and blogs is to bring a meaningful improvement or solution proposal and protocol for Black-white racial healing clearly into focus.

It is indeed regrettable that sharp pessimism has prevailed about a major improvement or solution in Black-white relations. A couple of years ago, I participated as the only white person on a panel discussing Black-white status when a fellow panelist, a Black professor, in reaction to my remarks, pulled out a book by a well-known Black writer to define the dangers of so-called positive prospects for resolving racial dissonance in Black-white relations. Judged from the Black perspective, I might also arrive at the same cynicism, for white responses to the situation have been muted in comparison to the problem. While such cynicism may be a logical view for Blacks to take, it is not where the story must end.

As I have searched for fundamental truths and viewpoints on which to lay claim for greater racial healing, I was again struck by the messages of Martin Luther King, Jr., and I wish to underscore the proposition by him that the basis for his proclamations on “the weapon of love” lies in an appreciation that what connects us individually is deeper and more fundamental than what can divide us, a concept consistent with the protocol to be promoted by my distributions and blogs. For example, King felt love to be a dominant force since love can drive out hate. Moreover, hate can also turn to love quickly, driving out residual hate.\

The past cannot be prologue. We whites especially can and should do much better; this distribution and blog and the ones to come rely on elements of an approach to be adopted and implemented for the attainment of that goal.



## ***For Racial Healing: #2 'Authentic Passion'***

The concept of authentic passion has occupied a prominent, if not a uniquely crucial place in my writings and oral presentations on racial healing. What exactly is it? We can't go much further into racial healing without understanding its core meaning or meanings, as consequential in the discussion.

I'll try to arrive at authentic passion by pointing out the various ways that its core and related meanings have been identified over time – actually, over centuries. We are far from the first to recognize that little can be done beneficially without its application. We will use a method of defining the concept by looking at its whole cloth over time for its meaning.

Simply put, we start with one word that relays an access to the whole, and that word is “love”. But there is an abundance of ways that, for centuries, the application of love has been defined and discussed in the context of relatedness and interconnectedness. Most recently in my last distribution, ‘To Begin With’, I described Martin Luther King’s reference in terms of racial healing emanating from “the weapon of love”, and how love has the ability to drive out hate. At the same time, Soren Kierkegaard emphasizes a different term, but employs the concept always in the currency of the time as King undoubtedly also had in mind; in this spirit, Kierkegaard wrote, “Whatever one generation learns from another, no generation learns the genuinely human from a previous one. . . no generation has learned how to love from another. . . this genuinely human quality is passion.” In other words, love is always expressed and exercised, certainly in the concept of racial healing, by not relying on the past. Personal love and its manifestation through curative action have to be current.

The Greeks long ago held the notion of “agape love”, a love that seeks the well-being of others. Indeed, over millennia, agape love has often been perceived as a model for how humans should love one another – again, for the currency of any particular time. The British theologian, Charles Williams, characterized his vision of relatedness between persons in present time, whenever that occurs, as “co-inherence”, stressing that individuals are not isolated but depend on each other for their own well-being. As a devout Christian, Williams stressed the words of Jesus from John 14: “. . . you are in me, and I am in you.” Martin Buber, the Jewish theologian, put it this way: “True beings are lived in the present; the life of objects is lived in the past. . . Love is responsibility of an I for a You.”

The world has also become aware of this concept of essential interrelatedness being expressed through many voices in South Africa, including, if not especially, the Nobel Prize winner, Desmond Tutu, praising the idea of Ubuntu, meaning that a person’s humanity consists of one’s relationship to others, which is achieved through mutual support, respect, and acknowledgement of “I am because we are”.

It is not coincidental that the quotes, set forth above, are, grammatically speaking, in the present tense. I believe there is an ultimate significance and relevance to that realization, illustrating the importance of currency in fostering relatedness and interconnectedness. Indeed, the term I have chosen to communicate this reality – and the obligation that goes along with it – is authentic passion. With this choice, I meant for there to be an inference for action, for human passion is always expressed through action – action in the present tense, action in the present sense.

It has been shown, however, that authentic passion, a natural propensity to love, to demonstrate love by whites for our Black brothers and sisters can unfortunately be replaced instead with filiopietism and damaged heritage, as discussed in the last distribution, ‘To Begin With. . .’ commentary, through aggressive and repetitive proselytization and relentless concentration of prejudice and racial rejection by whites of Blacks and various others. Nonetheless, wherever authentic passion is adopted, it is much deeper than custom, tradition, skin color, etc. It is more fundamental, individualistic, and instinctual as it wills and works the connection between human beings of all colors to understand, empathize, heal, love, and co-inhere. I am a great believer in adherence to authentic passion as a catalyst for anti-racism; I should also say that Sheila



Walker and I came to rely heavily on expressions of authentic passion as a compelling agent for our own mutual, racial healing.

When whites adopt authentic passion by accepting the prospect for new friendships and attitudes, enriched personal freedoms and perspectives, and many more racial possibilities, it is just not probable for authentic passion to be consistent with the past. Of course, there are those who will continue to dreamily romanticize a kind of mythical adoration for previous ideas and historical moments and fanfare, which lead to non-communication with prevailing reality, but that behavior is a denial of or counterpoint to love, not of the kind of personal commitment that I have discussed and that results in the present taking control of one's life and mission.

We can never predict when the light of authentic passion will break through the pernicious fog of resistance to help bring racial healing to places that have endured some of the worst parts of racial tyranny. For example, the grandson of the principal architect of apartheid in South Africa has become one of its outspoken critics and has argued persuasively against it and its residual tentacles. In addition, he has written movingly about the important role that Ubuntu can play for South Africa in achieving Black-white relatedness and mutual support and respect.

For a more personal view, I could not have predicted the following, affirmative example and encounter I ascribe to authentic passion for a change in attitude and perspective. Toward the end of the late September, 2019 weekend ceremonies, surrounding the dedication of the Elaine Massacre Memorial in Phillips County, Arkansas, a white friend, someone I got to know in recent decades, someone with whom I enjoyed spending time even though he had not adopted my ideas about either Black liberation matters or the features that lead to Black-white racial healing, came to me, grabbed me by the shoulders, looked me squarely in the eye, and offered an amazingly empathetic insight. Instantly, I knew, and he knew I knew that what he had said was something beyond the particular words he chose to describe that insight that night; rather, he was actually saying he had received a moment of epiphany about race, Black-white racial healing, and the broader love and adjusted understandings that go into such a moment. It was not a decision by him at all, but a moment of acceptance of something fundamentally different from the hours, days, months, and years he had previously known. The present then deflected the visions and wons of a more racially biased past.

We're familiar with the end result of letting the filiopietistic-damaged heritage axis flourish, but we cannot permit that axis to continue unaddressed. In truth, we know that filiopietism and damaged heritage in racial matters make authentic passion absolutely necessary, which allows whites to be truly human; for authentic passion is that attribute we whites are able to access in order to make much greater progress as individuals in Black-white relations.

If a generation fails to address its own and inherited shortcomings in race relations and racial healing, then the generation has forced those failures forward into the future. Unfortunately, we have followed that course repeatedly as whites have regularly chosen a pattern of allowing the past to determine our present and future racially, foisting the racially unhealed and malevolent ghosts onto innocence once again.

Next Time: Allyship

### ***For Racial Healing: #3 'Allyship'***

As an outgrowth of authentic passion, another crucial element in the racial healing process is allyship, which combines sure friendship and a mutual and joint commitment between persons of different skin color (refined in this set of commentaries to be Black and white) to oppose together individual, institutional, and systemic racism. In addition, commitment to allyship includes the elimination of stereotypical, white racist behavior and practices toward Blacks. Based on constant friendship and comprehensive tenets of truth and honesty, allyship shall become for each person in the relationship an internal source of strength and an external demonstration of trust.

Parties to a Black-white allyship should expect the following to happen. One cares deeply for the other's condition. One routinely employs an empathetic response for benefit of the other. Racial healing is a regular topic for examination, refinement, and confirmation between the two. Each acknowledges the love between each other and does the same publicly.

For many of the presentations and interviews I give on these subjects, I normally finish with an exhortation for Black-white racial healing and allyships, describing the advantages and prospects for individual "escapes", particularly from collective white enclaves that occur in so many business and social settings with little exposure to Black brothers and sisters. I have argued for whites to break free from being captive to institutionalized cocoons where whites remain without communication or experience with Blacks. For most places in the country, this captivity describes a current condition; for instance, in predominantly white churches, regardless of denomination, I find that there are few well-articulated and disciplined programs to broaden the inclusion of Blacks and to achieve consequential relations with Black persons.

At these moments, I'm repeatedly asked by members of an audience the question: what do you do about those whites who continue to live in silos and have little, if any, contact with Blacks? How can they or we, who live that way, be part of racial healing and engage in reciprocity of authentic passion? I routinely acknowledge the problem, but I also remind an audience that there are plenty of opportunities today to connect Black and white individuals, such as the internet, anti-racism task forces, common interest groups, religious outreach initiatives, music enthusiasts and choruses, arts and literature gatherings, etc.

In the normal course of observing racial behavior, there is no question that one can detect inertia, supported by indifference, two impassive factors, allowing filiopietism and damaged heritage to work their wills time and again, keeping those whites undisturbed about the adverse effects of their attitudes toward racism. Inertia just is without an excuse or an apology. Times come and go, and we grow older, and people die, and others are born, and inertia wins out in the end, for the past has then been forced forward once more. Whites learn inertia and how to put racial healing actions to the side and behind, and it is then said among white families and friends, "Oh, we're not racists. It's just that charity begins at home. We look after our own, and if we do that, then that's been our priority and our blessing, and we don't have any reason to apologize. That was the best we could do, and now we'll turn it all over to the young to accomplish the same." Thus rings the death knell for authentic passion, allyship, and ultimately, a cure and abatement for racism.

It is precisely this continuity of age to age that prevents Black-white allyship from burgeoning forth with a new discipline, new prospects, new attachments, new coda, new racial behavior. We whites can do better. It is a very narrow way for life and liberty. It is this normalcy that must be opposed for the centuries of America's stand in white self-regard and self-styled glorification and all that has been allowed to transpire, endure, and illustrate. It is all of this that allyship and authentic passion must oppose

What criteria does one embrace for establishing an allyship? Having lived mostly, though not completely, among whites, I suggest to Blacks a white partner with traits that consist of the following. In addition to a commitment by whites to follow a course to authentic passion, Blacks should have a one-to-one partner that has also shown a strong penchant to break old racial models. I would also be skeptical, if Black, of establishing an allyship with a white person who appears quite comfortable with silo dwelling or a propensity for finding meaningful value in various expressions of filiopietism (both revealed and disguised). I think it wise for Blacks to engage with white individuals who show a considerable preference for pluralism and an inclination to the present tense in attitude, aptitude, and interests.

Since allyships shall confront and oppose racial isolation, separation, and subjugation, I also believe that each partner, Black and white, should not be reserved about expressing oneself in public on the subject of race matters. Along the way, I think we're all called upon in this endeavor to express our views on these subjects publicly.

The partner can be the same sex or opposite sex; a preference should not be an allyship prerequisite.

For a white person looking for a suitable Black partner in an allyship, I may not be a totally objective source since Sheila Walker proved to be so distinctive and productive, which would lead me to recommend someone like her. Nonetheless, the individual should be well-versed in the subject matter, described here, and represent attributes that a prospective ally would comfortably bear to be an effective racial healing and racially liberating partner.

As a result of these commitments for and to each other, an effort to undo an untrue fabric of racist officialdom through allyship becomes inevitable, for there will be, of course, a large number of external, racist forces that will work to break down allyship, sometimes even by those institutions that, on the surface, appear and initially act supportive. For example, because of the research Sheila and I conducted separately before we ever met, we recognized that a local Arkansas, white narrative surrounding the Elaine Race Massacre was not only false, serving as another marker for racism, but that the narrative's existence and continued employment by some local whites were also, in a not-so-subtle way, an attack on our own racial healing and friendship, which began with an agreement between us, consisting of, in part, the establishment of a body of historical material and evidence that did not include features of the discredited, white narrative. So, we were both impelled to address the fabricated white story when given opportunities, and that is what we did and continued to do, even up to the time of her death – a mantle of allyship I have continued to carry forward.

Racial healing and deep friendship, derived from the application of authentic passion and allyship for a period of seven years with Sheila and me that also embodied our respective families, can be adapted, adopted, and employed elsewhere.

Next Time: One-To-One

BlazeVOX Books will publish in the coming months a new book of poems, ***Reading Whispers***, authored by **J. Chester Johnson**, the notable poet and nonfiction writer. Having published over 500 books by American and foreign authors since its founding in 1999, BlazeVOX is known for its adherence to a standard “to publish the innovative works of the greatest minds writing poetry today” with the added mission “to select for publication only the highest quality of writing.”

Johnson describes ***Reading Whispers*** as being representative of a new, poetic form, the triple haiku, which he has used for several years and which is derivative of the original haiku that Japanese poets have employed for centuries.

He further explains that American poets – initially, the Imagists, such as Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, and John Gould Fletcher – began writing haiku poems in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but not as Johnson has formulated in his triple haiku poems, which rely on three haiku with each one being the equivalent of a stanza, and each stanza being based on the normal haiku format: three lines with five syllables in the first and last lines and seven syllables for the middle line.

Johnson suggests about his poetic form, “While the subjects of these triple haiku poems are more varied than those conveyed traditionally in haiku poetry (seasons and relatedly, nature), the tight and inferential qualities of the haiku form are, I believe, still retained.”

Geoffrey Gatz, publisher and editor of BlazeVOX Books, has said of ***Reading Whispers***, “What J. Chester Johnson has created in these poems is not only innovative; it's compelling. These poems are not bound to one fleeting image, but rather expand the moment into an arc of experience. This book of triple haiku stands out for its originality and craft, and BlazeVOX is honored to help bring it into the world. It's inspiring to see someone take a form that's often treated as static and show how alive and dynamic it can be.”

Books recently authored by Johnson include two nonfiction volumes, ***Auden, the Psalms, and Me***, the story of the retranslation of the psalms by The Episcopal Church for which W. H. Auden and J. Chester Johnson were the two poets on the drafting committee, and ***Damaged Heritage***, the unearthing of a major race massacre and a related account of racial reconciliation between two descendants of the massacre, one Black and one white.



Recently published books of his poetry consist of ***Now And Then: Selected Longer Poems*** and ***St. Paul's Chapel & Selected Shorter Poems***. The *American Book Review* said in 2017 of the signature poem for the latter volume, "Johnson's 'St. Paul's Chapel' is one of the most widely distributed, lauded, and translated poems of the current century".

"I'm absolutely thrilled," Johnson added, "to join the consequential group of outstanding writers and poets that have been published by BlazeVox, including Robert Creeley, Eileen Myles, Grace C. Ocasio, Michael Kelleher, and Anne Waldman, to name just a few."

Three sample, triple haiku poems from ***Reading Whispers*** appear below:

#### WINTER

The jaws of the cliff  
Stood square against the soft hands  
Of a first snowfall.

Yet children do not  
Cry out nor do they plead once;  
Snow dampens the wood.

You had said one thing,  
And someone else another;  
Outside, winter waits.

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#### YOU, A Love Poem

From many places  
To many voices I hear,  
I sought only one.

I am who I am  
Where you are, and I'll be who  
I'll be where you've been.

You were there before  
We were, before there, before  
I knew you would be.

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#### OBVERSE

Be wary of wins,  
Disagree with convention,  
Give weight to last place.

My flaws are my strength,  
And they do not hide but warn  
Once my name is called.

Learn then to quit: if  
Song has run out, questions stop  
Asking for answers.

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**In Memoriam:**

**David Trollman** has reported the obituary of **Harry Bishara** here:

<https://www.salazarfunerals.com/obituaries/harry-bishara>

'65	Donald Marshall	06/01/25	Fullerton, CA
'65	Jonathan Bangs	06/22/25	Kennebunk, ME
'65	Theodore Moran	04/27/25	
'66	Thomas Draeger	06/14/25	

Lots of good stuff in here this month! Be well!

**Tom Black**

co-Class Secretary

