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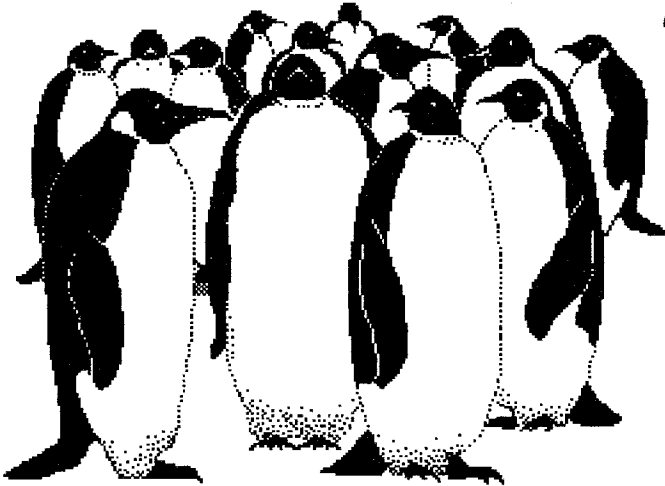
# Collingtonian

Vol. 6, No 2

Mitchellville, MD

February, 1994

NEWS & VIEWS



## Deep Freeze SURVIVORS!

*Hooray for Us!* Hooray for all of us--staff and residents--who met the challenge of a record cold spell, and won.

*Residents* of the 3100 Cluster were left without electricity when a PEPCO transformer malfunctioned. Health Center staff rallied to see that all spent a warm, comfortable night. A couple with health problems stayed in the Health Center, other bunked with friends, and still more (including two dogs) were bused over to the Holiday Inn the evening of January 19, and returned to warm cottages around noon the next day.

*Dining Services*, plagued by a high rate of absenteeism among servers, nonetheless gave us three hot meals every day. Cottage dwellers were especially grateful on three bitter cold evenings for the "room service" delivery of soup and sandwich or a hot meal.

Rich Baker's kitchen staff got back and forth to work, but Kevin McInerney spent a couple of restless nights on a fold-up bed several inches too short for his 6' 5" frame.

*Environmental Services* was plagued with some absent staff as well as the widespread shortage of salt and sand but managed to keep walkways passable. Clearing parking lots and the Peripheral Road required heavier equipment than Collington owns. Frozen pipes in the Creighton Center created pesky ceiling leaks. Shelby Austin says she hit bottom the morning the 3100 Cluster lost electric power. The daily bulletins from her office gave us up-to-the minute instructions and kept us in touch with the situation.

*The Health Center's* P. Gail Whitehead lives way down in Charles County. To make sure she would be on the job she bunked one night in her office with sleeping bag and air mattress. Residents who volunteered to answer phones and do other jobs get a great big "Thank You."

# Double Take

by Leila Wilson

It was 1988 and we were travelling north on a road through the Caucasus connecting Baku to Semahka, the ancient capitol of Azerbaijan long before the tribes were overthrown by the expanding Russian empire. This was a Textile Museum tour in search of carpet weaving centers, ancient cemeteries with grave stones designed like carpets and other curiosities.

Our guide spoke with pride of the road we traveled--the only asphalted road in that part of the Soviet Union, she said, adding it had been built during World War II to facilitate the transport of materiel to sustain Stalingrad.

I did a double take and my mind leaped back forty years to a time when the family home was in Tehran. I asked if this was not the road used to transport American military supplies from Khorramshahr at the top of the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union. "No, indeed," came the reply. "Any American aid came through Murmansk on the Baltic Sea. Nothing came through Iran." I recalled that the Murmansk route had been abandoned after overwhelming losses to German torpedoes, but argument would have been unrewarding.

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With Murmansk rejected as a port of entry, the USSR and the USA took virtual

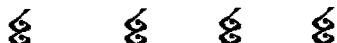
control of Iran. The Soviets took over Iranian Azerbaijan in the north, the Americans the southern region, patrolling and controlling the route from Khorramshahr on the gulf to Qazvin, northwest of Tehran. Much of the equipment the U.S. provided consisted of transport trucks. These were offloaded and filled with supplies the Russians required. The trucks were then driven north by Iranian drivers accompanied by a Soviet soldier with a loaded gun across his knees. The terrified Iranians disembarked at Qazvin and the Russians proceeded through occupied Iranian territory on to Baku. The Iranians were employed as drivers

because they were expected to know the route with its dangerous and nearly waterless terrain of mountains and desert.

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In 1948 my husband and I drove a stretch of this "road" from Tehran to Isfahan. We lost three tires to blowouts and inhaled and absorbed untold quantities of sand even though windows were closed against the torrid desert heat. Years earlier, the Germans had built a railroad that snaked its way up, around and over the treacherous Zagros mountains, using seventy-odd tunnels and traversing many a valley two or three times before reaching the pass at the top. It was a fantastic job of

engineering, but the tunnels would not have been large enough to accommodate the American military trucks. When the lift van containing our personal effects came by this route in 1947, every tunnel had to be measured to make sure the van would fit.



After the war, the Americans withdrew as an occupying force, leaving, at the Iranian's request, a military training mission and a gendarmerie mission under the command of a General Schwartzkopf--yes, the father of our General Norman, who, as a youngster, attended the Tehran American school, along with youngsters of some twenty nationalities, our daughter among them.



The Russians, for their part, held tight control of the northern border provinces of Iran and refused to relinquish domination until international pressure led by our very capable Ambassador, George Allen, forced a capitulation, and they withdrew in 1947.

When we arrived in Tehran, The Shah, accompanied by our Ambassador and a considerable entourage, was off touring these repatriated territories. One ceremony honoring the Shah included the slaughter of a bull through whose blood the Shah and the Ambassador had to walk. So much for the joys of diplomacy!

Because this was the first time the Shah had left Tehran since taking over his father's throne, his return to the capitol was the occasion for a regal celebration. It was held in an ancient palace with rooms completely lined with

tiny pieces of mirror. Lit exclusively by candles flickering in crystal chandeliers and standing candelabra, it was a magical scene. Divans were scattered about for the comfort of all. What we ate I cannot remember, but I do recall sitting on a divan exchanging cigarettes with a Russian colleague. He was evidently the member of the staff designated to socialize with westerners, and we met on various other occasions for pleasant, unimportant conversation. Then one day he was gone.



These long-lost memories emerged as my Textile friends and I explored the very similar Caucasian mountains and desert to the north.

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**P. G. Philharmonic Concert Date Changed**

February 25 is the date of the P.G. Philharmonic Orchestra's next concert. The February 5 concert is cancelled.

The February 25th concert will be held at 8 pm in the Showplace Arena in Upper Marlboro and will feature pianist Thomas Schumacher performing the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto.

Black History Month will be celebrated with a performance of William Grant Still's Danzandi Panama.

Bob Willing will arrange a bus if enough music lovers sign up. The price of concert tickets is \$12.50. This local orchestra needs your support.

# The Remarkable All Souls Madrigal Singers

by Emily Abouchar

**The** Madrigal Singers of All Souls Unitarian Church came to Collington on January 7 and treated us to a concert that was as interesting for its unusual presentation of the plainsong of the 15th and 16th centuries as for its fine singing. Unfortunately, there were no madrigals on the program. Previous concerts had delighted us with a fine program of madrigals, which are secular.

**T**his time it was religious music sung *a cappella*, which means that it is unaccompanied by any instrument. Only cathedrals or court chapels had organs in earlier times. Nor was there any standardized system of notation or scales. These did not come into use until several centuries later. "Modes" established a limited range around a certain note in music sung largely by monks. Pope Gregory (c. 540-604 A.D.) attempted to enlarge this system of modes by adding another four to the original four. This became known as the Gregorian Chant. Later, four more were added. Many centuries later, two scales with definite intervals evolved, becoming what we know today as major and minor keys, written on a staff of five lines, instead of the four used by the earlier modes.

**T**he Madrigal Singers program consisted of a processional, with the singers clothed in monks hooded brown robes with a rope girdle, singing a very early plainsong written in one of the early modes. This was followed by five later versions of plainsong, from the 16th century. Each was preceded by a

reading of the biblical text used. Also there was a sing-along of "Once in Royal David's City" to bring the audience into the performance with a familiar and loved hymn.

**F**ollowing an intermission and a change of costume--this time holiday attire--there was a charming recorder ensemble, followed by a "Story of Hannukah" written by the Director, Peter Sailer, and a lovely rendition of a traditional song which was sung in the synagogues of that period.

**T**hen came an hilarious skit, "St. Lucia and the Dragon," also written by the gifted Peter Sailer, complete with a wonderful dragon. The traditional offering of cookies to the audience was made by Laura Sailer and her pretty little daughter. The program ended on a jolly note with several carols including another sing-along of "Miss Fogerty's Christmas Cake" and the closing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," sending everyone home feeling happy and warm.

**W**hat a charming concert, elegantly performed, imaginatively programmed, and presented with an informality that did not altogether hide the meticulous care and skill of the performers and especially of the gifted Peter Sailer. It was a gem, from beginning to end.

Please see the notice on page 3  
announcing a change of program dates  
for the Prince George's County  
Philharmonic Orchestra.

## Four Pin Oaks on the Dining Room Terrace

by M. E. Wallen

Have you noticed our newcomers? Four pin oaks have taken up residence in the Dining Room Terrace displacing four saucer magnolias. The goal is to produce more shade and less heat in the Terrace in summers to come, and make it a more inviting place for *al fresco* dining. Eventually there will be 12 oak trees providing ample shade.

Kevin Shaver, Mark Kirkeby and Sally Sanders of Environmental Services contributed their time and muscle to the project which was carried out after hours on November 29 and 30.

The trees were set into holes three feet deep and 5-feet in diameter as apartment dwellers whose windows give on the terrace marvelled at these nocturnal activities.

And what became of the saucer magnolias? They were transplanted; two to the barren hillside just below the



Maintenance building, and two on the road to the Hilltop Garden, helping to screen the bare area beyond them.

This plan owes much to the efforts of Ildene Filer of the Landscape Committee. Kevin suggested she visit Robin Hill Nursery on Croom Road in Brandywine to inspect their trees. Ildene found Robin Hill such a beautiful spot she recommends it as nice trip for a pleasant afternoon. Ildene chose 4-inch pin oaks (the 4-inch refers to the diameter of the trunk), which were priced beyond our budget. Kevin worked a little magic and got the price down to \$220. That Kevin was willing to do the planting resulted in additional savings--a great help when working with a tight budget.



Photos by M.E. Wallen

So far pin oaks and magnolias are both doing well.

# The Language We Spoke At Home

by Jack Fisher

A recent Census Bureau report indicates that Spanish is the principal foreign language spoken at home by U. S. residents who speak English as a second language. French is second, but a poor second, followed by German and Italian.

Of principal interest to me was the New World origin of these foreign languages. That is to say, the Spanish was of Puerto Rican or Mexican origin, the French, probably Haitian. The parent continent was North or South America, not Europe. When I was a child growing up in New York, foreign languages were all European imports.

Myself, I am interested in what has happened to Yiddish in the 20th Century. My parents spoke Yiddish, a language written in Hebrew characters, but derived from a form of German in use in the late Middle Ages in Central and Eastern Europe. By the 19th Century it was mainly spoken in Eastern Europe. Ours was a bilingual family. The parents spoke Yiddish; the children spoke English. We understood each other quite well.

Sometimes my father's efforts to incorporate an English word into his vocabulary resulted in an amusing hybrid. Recently, the echo of his voice called to me: "How long is a 'chop-rock'?" I mulled this over and remembered how I used to plead to be allowed to keep the light on long enough to read just one more chapter. And then I would cheat, and read yet another, until my father

would roar: "How long is a 'chop-rock'?" and I knew I had to turn off the light.

For Yiddish, its adaptability is the secret of its survival. An example: the Yiddish word for stairs is shteigen from the German steigen (to rise). In the Yiddish I heard as a child, the word became stezzes, obviously from the English word steps. Dozens of such "loan words" made their way into Yiddish.

The Holocaust wiped out Yiddish-speaking Jews in Europe. Those who had earlier fled to Palestine had learned to speak Hebrew--not the Hebrew of the Bible, but an adapted Hebrew, revived in the 19th Century by Zionists who had gone to settle in the land of the Bible, an effort which culminated in the formation of the State of Israel in 1948.

As Yiddish-speaking Jews die out in this country, Yiddish as a spoken language may well become a museum piece. The Census Bureau report indicated that the number of homes in which Yiddish was spoken had dropped from 320,000 in 1980 to 213,000 in 1990 or a 33 percent decline, the largest of any of the foreign languages surveyed. The well is drying up.

Isaac Bashevis Singer, a winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, wrote exclusively in Yiddish. A resident of Miami Beach during his last years, he is honored with a street bearing his name--I. B. Singer Avenue. Tourists seek out the delicatessen where he was wont to go for chicken soup or a bagel. But they are not likely to be speaking Yiddish and Singer's choice of language is not likely to swell the Yiddish-speaking population. Or, as my mother would have said in Yiddish, s'vet helfen vi a toten bankes, which translates roughly as "as much good as cupping a corpse."

## Our Phone System:

# Yoo-Hoo, Lily Tomlin

By Frances Kolarek



I wish I could get Lily Tomlin to write this article, but I don't even know how to get in touch with her agent. "One ringy dingy, two ringy dingies. Hello, is this the person to whom I am speaking?" Yes, it is, Lily, and I made it to the phone on time!

My daughter frequently calls me from Miami. I recently heard a ringy-dingy, heaved my carcass from the chair (two ringy-dingies), galumphed toward the nearest phone (three ringy-dingies) and snatched it from the cradle shouting "Hello, hello!" expecting the caller to have hung up, as is often the case.

"Where WERE you, mother?" my daughter asked.

"Where WAS I? Reading the paper in my chair in the living room. Why?"

"I just wondered. It took you six rings to answer."

"No. Only THREE rings."

"No," said daughter. "I heard SIX rings."

"I can't help how many rings you heard," "THE PHONE RANG THREE TIMES."

"Six."

"Three."

As a trained scientist (I took a couple of Chemistry courses about 50 years ago) I could see this was a matter for investigation.

Later in the day I called my next door neighbor, Gloria Emerson, and filled her

in and we set up a carefully controlled scientific experiment. I would call her and count the number of rings I heard. She would answer and tell the number of rings she heard. I heard six. She reported three. We did it the other way, Gloria calling, Frances answering. Same result. AHA. It is time to CALL IN THE EXPERTS.

Enter: Phil Smith.

"Yes", Phil the phone fellow said. "Most people won't wait long enough for you to come to the phone. The caller considers four rings a reasonable time, but that means two, or possibly three rings for the callee. Actually, almost nobody waits that long."

What to do? Well, in point of fact, nothing. That's how the system works. It is a business system we participate in, and it sees you sitting at your desk with the computer going and one little old ringy-dingy is all you need to reach out and pick up the phone. That a bunch of arthritic, old people are rising slowly from their chairs, testing their knees, and teetering out to the next room is not a concept embraced by "the system."

We should, of course, have phones at our elbow wherever we are. But the phone jack in my living room is almost as far from my chair as the phone in the kitchen. Besides, I consider phones ugly clutter and don't want one in my living room.

But for every drawback there is a boon. Under the system, our long distance rates are truly small. That daughter in Miami? I talked to her for 26 minutes on November 15 at 8 p.m. for \$3.90. My friend on Cape Cod talked to me 18 minutes and I paid only \$2.34. Long distance rates after 5 p.m. are such a bargain we should all make calls just to enjoy the savings. Phil Smith wants me to remind you that after 11 p.m. the rates are still lower. My friends do not encourage calls after 11 p.m., however. Save a buck, lose a friend.

The voice mail, incidentally, cuts in after three ringy-dingies. If you want to disconnect it while you are at home, you can punch \*6, and the phone will ring as long as your caller has the patience to let it. But please. When you go out, remember to punch \*33 to reconnect the voice mail feature.

So, folks, when calling your Collington neighbors, for heaven's sake give them lots of ringy-dingies to get to their phone. Six is not enough. Count up to eight, at least. Or more. Lily Tomlin says so. So does Phil Smith.

## *Moving Together*

*by Mary C. MacLean*

An ongoing activity on Level II of the Creighton Center, initiated by Sue Lembeck-Edens who recently left us to take care of her young family, is called "Moving Together." It is designed to encourage people confined to wheelchairs, or with limited mobility, to get whatever exercise they can.

One exercise involves the use of scarves. It is fun to wave a brightly-colored chiffon scarf in circles or in whatever pattern takes one's fancy. In spite of the limitations imposed by cranky muscles, it is still possible to create graceful motion and to enjoy simple beauty.

At a recent session when Sue brought out the old and battered basket in which she stores the scarves, it occurred to me that the basket weavers might provide a new basket, or at any rate, repair the old one. My suggestions sparked a revealing

conversation.

The residents made it clear in a lighthearted, humorous way that to be old and worn should not be equated with being useless and ready for disposal. Unspoken, but very present in our discussion was their personal sense of worth, their own wish not to be discarded even though old and worn.

I have been participating in the Moving Together activity nearly five years. Not every session reveals so much about feelings, but emotions are often expressed. Mutual concerns and a sense of community surface with regularity, and smiles and laughter tell us that the capacity for joy is an enduring quality if we will make the effort to provide some stimulation.

I often hear active residents deplore the sight of those who live on Level II sitting alone in the corridors. That happens. But because a wealth of activities takes place daily, those who



live there have many opportunities. I have watched with an observing eye and have seen that there is response. A finger taps, a hand strokes a brightly colored scarf, a response is made to questions.

The basket weavers will make every effort to restore the basket's handle, for there is much good life left in it.



Thankyouthankyouthankyou!

To: All Staff Members  
From: Phyllis Sternau

It is said often that Collington is known as a caring community. These past few days certainly showed that it is. No stone--or should I say iceflow--was left unturned in your combined effort to help us. You wouldn't let us walk to Creighton Center, but you managed to get here from outlying sections. We are very grateful and very impressed. Many, many thanks.

January 21, 1994



The Collingtonian is published monthly (except July and August) by the Collington Residents Association, Inc., 10450 Lottsford Road, Mitchellville, MD 20721-2734.

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In Memoriam, 1993

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"That the end of life should be death may be sad: yet what other end can anything have? The end of an evening party is to go to bed; but its use is to gather congenial people together, that they may pass the time pleasantly. An invitation to the dance is not rendered ironical because the dance cannot last forever."

George Santayana



(The Collingtonian thanks Sharon Thomas of Medical Records for her kind help in assembling this list.)



### **RETIREMENT COMMUNITY?**

by Annette Herman

#### **Shouldn't this mean ...**

- Time to catch up on reading the books you never had time for?
- Watching a few of the daytime TV programs you have read and heard so much about?
- Finishing the sweater you started to knit ten years ago?
- Telephoning friends you promised to keep in touch with?
- Corresponding with those faraway friends you hope are still among the living?
- Taking long leisurely walks through malls and new shopping centers?

#### **In lieu of daily telephone requests:-**

- Can you help arrange flowers today?
- Can you serve on the (fill in the blank) committee? We need you.
- Can you help at the Gift Shop today?
- Can you come to the Flower Room? Six loads just arrived.
- Can you bake some cookies for the party tonight?
- Can we bring the children for dinner again this weekend? They love your Dining Room.

#### **What does it all add up to?**

### **RETIREMENT AT COLLINGTON!!**

Democrats buy most of the books that have been banned somewhere. Republicans form censorship committees and read them as a group.

Democrats give their worn-out clothes to those less fortunate. Republicans wear theirs.

Republicans employ exterminators. Democrats step on the bugs.

Democrats name their children after currently popular sports figures, politicians and entertainers. Republican children are named after their parents and grandparents, according to where the money is.

Democrats keep trying to cut down on smoking but are not successful. Neither are Republicans.

Republicans tend to keep their shades drawn, although there is seldom any reason why they should. Democrats ought to, but don't.

Republicans study the financial pages of the newspaper. Democrats put them in the bottom of the bird cage.

Democrats eat the fish they catch. Republicans hang them on the wall.

Most of the stuff alongside the road has been thrown out of car windows by Democrats.

Republican boys date Democratic girls. They plan to marry Republican girls but feel they're entitled to a little fun first.

Republicans sleep in twin beds-- some even in separate rooms. That is why there are more Democrats.

--Congressional Record  
(Contributed by Louise Eckerson)

## Speakeasy Department

"Why," Jack Fisher asked Frances Kolarek at the last Collingtonian meeting, "didn't you put anything about speakeasies in that article on Greenwich Village in the Twenties?"

He hit a nerve. Frances had taken pains to ask those Village residents about speakeasies and had drawn a total blank. Diane Trilling in her new book about her late husband, the literary critic Lionel, tells how their courtship blossomed in a Village speakeasy, which, she writes, was actually a small, completely respectable family-owned Italian restaurant which served wine--in tea cups. Frances also learned that DeWitt Wallace started the Readers Digest in the basement of a Village speakeasy in the early 1920's.

*Speaking Up about Speakeasies*  
by Betty Clark

Since none of the people interviewed for the Greenwich Village piece would admit to having entered a speakeasy, I'll speak up: I did. Of two tries, I made it inside once.

The first try was in Washington, D. C. on a date with a midshipman. A high school senior, I had heard of "The Black Cat" located in an alley off New York Avenue. We found it and knocked. A peephole opened--and closed. Nothing happened. Finally we left, having decided that the doorman upon seeing brass buttons thought my date was a cop! (It later dawned on me that he sized up our youth and innocence and possibly suspected a set-up.).

The second time came years later when I was a reporter on the Washington bureau of McGraw Hill. On a trip to New York one of my editors

took me to lunch. As we were about to order he said: "I'll bet you've never been in a speakeasy. Would you like to go?"

"Oh, yes," my curiosity replied.

When we arrived at the basement door of an ordinary house, he presented a card and we were admitted. What a disappointment! It looked like any small, expensive restaurant with red velvet walls. While we lunched I looked around, big-eyed, at the other "club members," searching for brassy women or low-life men. Zero.

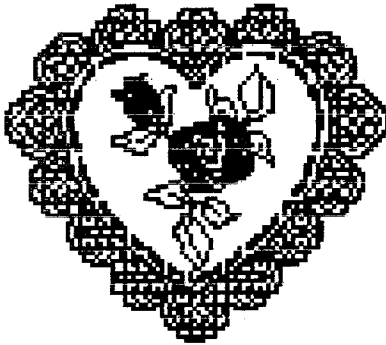
Another time in New York I lunched with a woman who chose the restaurant and when she gave our coffee order she must have winked at the waitress, because her cup arrived filled with wine. It seemed a routine procedure. (Yes, she came to no good end.)

Prohibition brought a bothersome business into the life of our family in Washington. We got frequent early morning phone calls meant for a bootlegger whose phone number was close to ours. Eventually we found out his address and phone number and asked the police for relief from this nuisance. Their remedy: "Change your phone number."



## **“Love in Bloom” Valentine Stories by Al Rosen**

They were engaged on their third date. On their fifth meeting they were married. And it was a two-year courtship! They first met at a dinner party in Washington, D. C. at the home of a mutual friend. The following day “Tully” left for Mobile, Alabama to start a new job. But he kept thinking about the young lady he had just met. He mailed her a postcard during a stop in Atlanta. Subsequently, Anne “chased” him to Mobile in the company of their mutual friend. The Torberts were married on Valentine’s Day 52 years ago.



She and the boss started dating soon after she went to work as his secretary. On their second date he proposed marriage. It was so sudden and confusing. She was engaged to another young man who was away at college. But Peg said, “Yes,” and soon after the couple moved to Washington, D. C. where Louis Chatten had a war job. Sadly, the romance was short-lived. Lou died within eight years.

Their romance started at Mrs. Shippen’s Dancing School in Washington, D. C. when they were 14 or 15 years old. He didn’t see her again for nine years while he attended the Naval Academy and went off to war. Then, all the girls he had once known, his own fiancée included, had married. In December, 1943, at a dance, he recognized “Pinky” by her “flashy red hair.” But she didn’t remember him. Not until he described the dress she had worn years ago was she convinced. On a trip to the zoo during their engagement, they discovered that the name of the hippopotamus was “Pinky.” On the spot, Hugh said this would never do. No wife of his could share her name with a hippo. He chose “Penny” to go with her copper-colored hair. In May, Hugh and Penny Vickery will have been married fifty years.