

from Ellen Demsey  
December 2016

2016 brought me a series of unusual events. The first half of the year was dedicated to the book, Fireside Papers, in which I assembled 18 essays by my sister on a variety of topics and had them published posthumously. I was ably assisted by many friends in the proof-reading, reminding me of similar sessions with students for the Maize News Letter.

I had a near encounter with a murderer at the grocery store. A young man examining the produce had his throat cut and I went blithely on shopping until I was stopped by police on the way out. I found out later what had happened. My next adventure was at Black Rock Forest. I attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony to open a special trail for elderly and handicapped, which had an easy slope ending in a look-out with distant views of Cornwall and beyond. I walked the trail and admired the chestnut oaks with heavy bark along the way.

In Oct. two former Indiana Univ. students visited me, Marsha Altschuler from Williamstown, MA and John Heimke from Troy, NY. Marsha is in a wheelchair but gets around by herself and had been touring in the Tarrytown area before coming here. We had lunch at a nearby restaurant with a lot of good conversation.

In Nov., I registered my disapproval of Donald Trump on Election Day. I also wrote a letter to Smithsonian magazine complaining of their Nov. cover portraying George Washington as an insipid gossipmonger. So, events seem to conspire in making life interesting in spite of my senior status.

Unfortunately, I lost my good friend, Cathy Kelly, who died unexpectedly from a heart problem in July. I recently attended a celebration in which a tree was planted in her honor in a park in Highland Falls. She had a distinguished military career as well as participating in local government and Rotary and was noted for helping out many friends.

I hope your past year was happy and productive, with good things in store for 2017.