

WOBURN AND ITS PEOPLE

by Marie Coady

The sun rises in the East but it's warm rays fall over all corners of Woburn at the same time. In North Woburn parents drop their little ones off to the care of Linda Renell at World of Wonder Daycare. Linda greets each child with a smile and charms reluctant children into wanting to explore her World of Wonder. This summer Linda ran a summer day camp for her little charges and was considered a lifesaver to many parents who depend on her tender loving care for their children.

Meanwhile, Mary Barron of North Woburn, logs on with the World Wide Web and designs a Web Page for the city of Woburn as a labor of love. Mary is house bound due to illness, but her interest in the city and its people never waivers. She has even set up a Web site to aid families who have elderly parents to care for. The site gathers services that range from getting your hair done to having your meals delivered. She got the idea when her ninety-two year old mother was released from the hospital, needing some specialized care, and Mary had to hunt far and wide to find it. Now all you have to do is tune in to her Web site and everything from having your teeth cleaned to phone calls that will check on a parent's welfare are listed for your convenience.

Meanwhile, in the center of Woburn, the stores on Main Street unlock their doors and get ready for the first customers of the day. Burton Fineberg, owner of Bond Shoes, continues the fine tradition his father, Albert Fineberg, began forty-nine years ago of service to the community in more than the selling of shoes. Burton also custom designs special shoes for the disabled, and unlike some doctors, he makes house calls.

At Woburn High School the indefatigable Mrs. Gagon motors along the corridors defying even the youngest freshman to keep up with her. The fact that she is seventy years old hasn't slowed her down a bit. As you might expect, Mrs. Gagon is from the old school. She takes a personal interest in her students, some of whom are the toughest challenges at Woburn High.

As the day wears on, loved ones arrive at Woodbrook Cemetery to care for the living memorials they have planted in the form of flowers, small bushes and window boxes. The care of Woodbrook is in the capable hands of Guy D'Agostino, its conscientious groundskeeper and maintenance specialist. Guy and his staff do everything from mowing to repairing the grounds equipment. He also takes the time to help anyone who drops by the office and needs assistance finding a relatives plot.

Evening arrives, and Primo's Restaurant fills its table with everyone from the casual diner to a party of two hundred. Recently, they were hosts to a camera

man from the New England Cable News Network's, Phantom Gourmet show. Keep your eyes peeled in August when the show airs, and you're liable to see some of your neighbors enjoying one of Primo's Italian specialties. To John and Jim Primo, Primo's is more than a Woburn dining tradition. It's a family operation. Along with their sons, their seventy-seven year old mother is their most faithful employee. She never misses a day helping to see that things run smoothly.

On the west side of Woburn, there's a steady stream of customers lining up for their wake-up cup of coffee coolata at Dunkin Donuts at Four Corners. Owner Manny Moniz gets up pretty early when it's time to make the donuts. Manny lives here in the community, and I'm sure if he didn't show up some morning to get the coffee perking and the donuts sugared, a lot of people would miss him.

The Mentzer family mans the counters of the Carvel ice cream store on the west side of Woburn. The business opened its doors in 1979 and shows no sign of slowing down. Anyone who has gotten a craving for real ice cream on a hot evening knows that the Mentzer family is always there to satisfy their sweet tooth. Besides, where else can you get an ice cream cake with Pocahontas or the Hunchback of Notre Dame on it.

As the day wears to a close, a dedicated nurse from the south side of Woburn is just beginning her day. She works the 11-7 shift at the Fernald School in Waltham, taking care of the elderly mentally retarded. This is the first group of mentally handicapped people who have lived to be senior citizens. I'm sure we'll all agree it takes a special kind of person to do her job.

As the sun sets in the West, the city of Woburn sleeps contentedly only to wake another day to caring neighbors and local businesses that make this city work.

September 1996

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