

# Meadowood Anthology



A publication by and for the residents  
of Meadowood Retirement Community

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## Meadowood Anthology

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## *From the Editor*

No one says "Spring" quite like  
e.e. cummings.

"sweet spring is your  
time is my time is our  
time for springtime is lovetime  
and viva sweet love"

(all the merry little birds are  
flying in the floating in the  
very spirits singing in  
are winging in the blossoming)

lovers go and lovers come  
awandering awondering  
but any two are perfectly  
alone there's nobody else alive

(such a sky and such a sun  
i never knew and neither did you  
and everybody never breathed  
quite so many kinds of yes)

not a tree can count his leaves  
each herself by opening  
but shining who by thousands mean  
only one amazing thing

(secretly adoring shyly  
tiny winging darting floating  
merry in the blossoming  
always joyful selves are singing)

"sweet spring is your  
time is my time is our  
time for springtime is lovetime  
and viva sweet love"

e.e. cummings

# Thor – Up Close and Personal

*By Robert F. Blakely*

When neighborhoods are new, they are full of children and have many vacant lots. At the time that we moved with our two children into the Bloomington subdivision of Park Ridge, that was the way it was. Almost every home had children, and vacant lots were handy baseball diamonds.

It was a cloudy spring Saturday morning when young ball players began to congregate in a vacant lot on Smith Road near the railroad underpass. Soon there were enough players to form two sides, and I was appointed the umpire, not for my judgment but because of my lack of baseball skill.

It was a good-sized lot for baseball, and the game flowed along nicely. Everyone was engaged in the game and did not notice that the clouds which had been small and thin had, by now, become more numerous and dense. There were no warning raindrops, however, and play continued without anyone yelling “Kill the umpire!”

Suddenly I felt an unusual sensation: every hair on my body stood straight up in the air. Looking around at the players, I could see that all of them were experiencing the same feeling. Sensing that it was atmospheric electricity, I yelled, as loud as I could, “Get down”. Everybody quickly dropped to the ground. We had no sooner

flattened out on the ground than the earth gave a great thump as though it had been hit by a huge sledge hammer. Immediately our hairs dropped to their normal state. Slowly, everyone began to stand up and look at each other in surprise. Someone yelled, “Let’s go home.” Everyone took off, some slowly in wonder, some fast in fear.

Back in the safety of our home, I reasoned that an electrical charge had built up between the overhead clouds and the earth and had jumped the gap between the sky and earth without enough energy to have caused a lightning flash and the resulting thunder. We had simply felt the thump of the transfer of energy as we lay flat on the ground. What might have been a tragedy ended as a memorable event.



## Early Morning

*By Jean Herrman*

Trembling newborn blades of grass  
Cast off dewdrops as I pass.  
A fragile weed, bent yet golden,  
Reflects the sunlight,  
God’s own token  
Of warmth and love. ❖

# My Perfect Garden

*By Julie King*

Garden magazines are full of illusions. When I pick one up, I'll see a garden which someone has transformed from a barren rock and sand pile. Predictably it's in full bloom with every plant oozing a radiant color that complements its neighbor. The border along a winding path is neatly trimmed, and the vine across the arbor is covered in elegant roses. No garden could possibly be so perfect. Yet I never seem to learn.

My garden learning curve is a long one and bent out of shape. Like a reader of romance novels, convinced that love is just around the corner, I've been chasing the elusive dream of **My Perfect Garden** since I was a newlywed with only a flower-box on the balcony of our first apartment.

There may be no enterprise so fraught with misbegotten dreams than gardening. The novice gardener first learns that you must have perfect soil. "Perfect soil" consists of exactly the right proportions of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Serving a meal with ideal dietary content is easier than creating a garden with perfect soil. I learned that lesson the hard way with the first garden I undertook at our new northern Wisconsin home, built in 1993, and dubbed "Kings Knoll."

When the foundation of our house was excavated, we realized there were none of the boulders so familiar in Wisconsin fields – instead we found gritty, sandy soil at the entrance to our house. Sandy soil doesn't hold plants, and it washes away in the first heavy rain. I allowed a local landscaper to dump big chunks of bark mulch over the space designated as a charming entry to our new home. I installed my first carefully-chosen perennials. By the following year I had spindly, weak-stemmed plants struggling to survive. A younger but far wiser gardener poked his foot into the soil and remarked: "*Bark mulch steals nitrogen from the soil.*" Eureka!

This was the first of many missteps in 16 years of pursuing **My Perfect Garden**. My "garden" was actually multiple gardens surrounding a fairly large house on a hill overlooking an area that had once been a swamp and was now choked by decaying roots. It took five seasons to break up those roots and fill the spaces around the house and along the pathways. And it has taken 11 seasons since to cope with unexpected outcomes. In the second year after building our new home, my garden passions knew no bounds. I ordered more than 100 plants. I fell hard for anything listed as "wild" or "native" because I wanted my garden to fit into the North Woods landscape.

"Wild" as in "wild flower" has a soothing sound. But there is another kind of "wild." It's called "invasive", meaning taking over and crowding out other plants that are starved for moisture and nutrients. A prime

example is purple loosestrife, promoted by nurseries for years for its attractive rosy flowers. But those flowers send thousands of seeds onto exposed banks of lakes and streams. It has taken a decade of habitat destruction for this plant to be designated for extermination. Some catalogues promote such plants with language like “attractive space-filler”, or “commands attention”, instead of “Attila the Plant.”

Over the years, we experienced much warmer winters. I lost an entire hillside of expensive junipers when they were exposed to winter winds without the usual snow. When deer herds experience milder winters, their populations increase, and come spring, their progeny munch on my succulent hostas. Ticks and other insect pests proliferate, and shrub and tree damage is now painfully apparent.

Weeds like dandelions and clover have exploded. I had always avoided chemical sprays, but they are now indispensable if it's practical to spray without killing desirable plants. But it's often difficult to distinguish between a noxious weed and a desirable plant. An expert once opined: *“When weeding, the best way to make sure you're removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground, it's a valuable plant.”*

I must confess that **My Perfect Garden** is now a mess. It's not a mess because I gave up. I have a compost pile that provides finer mulch than any landscaper could deliver. I mix my own deer spray that works far better (and smells far worse) than any of the commercial brands. I've latched

onto ornamental herbs which can fill the spaces left blank when aphids attack my dogwoods and delphiniums die from lack of rain. I attack weeds using a stool and special tools adapted for those who cannot kneel. I'm a much smarter gardener. But I know I'll never be able to outsmart the weather gods.

In the north winters are warmer, summers are drier, while southern states get snow and drenching rains. Author and columnist Tom Friedman uses the term ‘global weirding’ to explain what's going on. “The hots are expected to get hotter, the wets wetter, the dries drier and the most violent storms more numerous.” It snows in every state except Hawaii.

I've had first-hand exposure to a threat most people only vaguely sense from dry, scientific studies. Yes, there is much that is confusing and contradictory emboldening the skeptics. And many of us who are older would rather cling to a vision for our grandchildren of a perfect world -- a perfect garden -- rather than dealing with the causes of calamitous weather events.

**My Perfect Garden** was not-to-be. It was a labor of love and joy. It gave each day special meaning. It now gives me new purpose towards the small steps I can take to save our planet. ❖

# I Am Money

By Beth Van Vorst Gray

I am money,  
Green, silver and copper  
Bearing visages of America's past:  
Jackson, Jefferson, Washington.  
Laureates of government and glory,  
Wielding power of the stability in my world.

I am money.  
Once made only on demand with  
Gold or silver to back me up,  
I now recreate myself.  
Moving from one hand to another.  
Credit cards, bank notes  
Promissory notes  
Interest compounded daily.

I am money.  
On computer-borne wings  
I cross international borders,  
Becoming red, pink, yellow  
And fiesta blue in Mexico: brown, taupe and purple  
In Japan. Am I me?  
Are they me? How do we know?  
*E pluribus unum?*

I am money.  
I have built cathedrals,  
Paved highways, educated children,  
Created whole civilizations  
And founded great cities.  
Paid for great art, music and literature,  
Healed the sick and fed the poor.

I am money.  
I have destroyed countries with war,  
Paid for the annihilation of entire races,  
Created weapons that can destroy the world,  
Ruined good men and women in hot pursuit of me.  
A false god to those who worship me.

I am money.  
Flowing like an everlasting fountain to the Moguls,  
A difficult and wearisome crop for most.  
Like Janus, the two-faced god,  
I always have two faces.  
You choose. ❖

# Grain Elevators

By Mary Fielding



Grain storage, a present day necessity, came into being when humans turned from hunting and gathering to farming. This gradual change in lifestyle over the millennia led to milling, transporting and storage of grain. By the middle of the eighteenth century, newly built railroads facilitated the transportation of grain to storage facilities for later sale. These grain elevators were built close to the railroad. They created wealth in the Midwest, where much of the nation's grain is grown.

In 1986, artist Mary Fielding was asked to make a drawing of the Sumner Elevator in Iroquois County, Illinois for a brochure. She enjoyed doing so and decided to draw more of them. In time, she completed drawings of the county's 41 grain elevators. "Although all grain elevators serve the same function," says Mary Fielding, "No two of them are exactly alike." The drawings were published in a booklet, *Prairie Skyscrapers*, providing a pictorial record of the grain elevators of Iroquois County.

# Your “Nutty” Neighbor

By *Betty Myers Bain*

You all have a slightly nutty neighbor. “Nutty” that is, about stuffed animals. I wasn’t as a child. Then I doted on dolls, canvas or leather or beautiful bisque. It didn’t matter. I loved them all. My father had a magnificent doll house built for me, a model of the Georgian Colonial house where I grew up. The last doll that was given to me was an elegant French doll, too fancy to be played with. She sat on my bed in solitary splendor.

When I went East to college, I left even the French doll behind. My bed looked empty, but not for long. That autumn I received the first two stuffed animals, an Army mule and a Yale bulldog! They ruled alone all four of my college years.

After I graduated and began to write stories for children, however, friends and relatives began to present me with storybook stuffed animals, first Peter Rabbit, then Pooh Bear and his friends, Piglet and Eeyore. There were soon far too many for the bed. Besides, I soon got married, and they were in the way. I packed them in protective boxes and banished them to a top shelf. They hibernated for many years, almost forgotten, until a day after I was widowed and moved to Meadowood. When I was

unpacking, I discovered them and took them out of hiding.

I gradually began to collect new stuffed friends, this time concentrating on Teddy Bears. At one period, I owned more than seventy. Some of you may remember The Olde Curiosity Shoppe of Christmas 2007, when I displayed thirty of them all dressed up for the holiday.

In 2008, however, I decided with regret that my collection was taking up too much room. I began to dispose of some, by taking them to the Salvation Army, Opportunity House and the Bloomington Thrift Shop. I kept about twenty-five of my favorites.

Today, two bears sit on the sofa bed in my small bedroom. My largest bear, three feet tall, occupies a spot on the floor of my sunroom, next to a table covered with bear figurines (I never counted them). My bedroom, however, still houses most of my collection, on twin beds and an armchair. Not just bears, but also Peter Rabbit and the Pensive Pup and Tigger the Tiger, too.

It takes me a little extra time each day to arrange those who share my bed, but I enjoy doing it. I still have the Army mule and the Yale Bulldog, but neither one had “the right stuff” after seventy years. Neither, of course, does Your Nutty Neighbor.



*Memories of War:*  
*A Series*

## World War II Pigeoneer

*By Bill Christiansen*

I was drafted into the U.S. Army in October, 1941. I tried to enlist in the Air Corps, but I couldn't pass the eye test. I was sent to Camp Wolters, Texas, for my 13 weeks of basic training. After training we were assigned to various units to bring them up to full strength.

I was first sent to the 108<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division which was the New York National Guard. In April 1942 we were shipped to the island of Maui to fortify the island against possible Japanese attack.

About two months later the Army, in order to create more fighting units, changed the configuration of divisions. The 27<sup>th</sup> Division which is called a "square division" was changed to a triangular division, with three regiments instead of four. My regiment was the "odd man out" and we joined the 40<sup>th</sup> Division which was the California National Guard.

While I was in the hospital with pneumonia, I was visited by Lt. Sedgwick who said he was forming an intelligence and reconnaissance platoon in Army Headquarters Company and that he would

like me to be part of it. I jumped at the chance and transferred the same day.

As I became acquainted with my new friends I discovered that we had a "pigeoneer" Ed Barkoviac, complete with large portable cage and about six or seven birds. I was genuinely puzzled by this fact until I discovered we were operating under a "table of organization" that was still in effect from World War I.

As the war progressed, we "visited" other islands including Guadalcanal, finally ending up on the island of New Britain which was in the Bismarck Archipelago. We were on one end of the island and the Japanese navel base at Rabal at the other. We were told that Rabal was the largest Japanese naval base in the Pacific outside Japan. This was in November of 1944. We still had our pigeoneer.

Our goal was to invade the island of New Ireland which was much closer to Rabal. About 4 a.m. there was a ruckus at Headquarters. No shots were fired so we were not being invaded. When we reached the site, we found that an eight-foot python had stuck its head through the chicken wire, swallowed a bird and couldn't get out.

The officers had squab for dinner.

MacArthur, in his wisdom, canceled the invasion of New Ireland. Instead we became part of the invasion army that hit the island of Luzon on January 9, 1945.



# Shards

*By Miriam Rosenzweig*

Tradition has it that the Virgin Mary grew up in Sepphoris. If so, she could be expected to have been more worldly and sophisticated than her husband, Joseph, whose home was Nazareth, about an hour's walk from Sepphoris and a backwater in Biblical times. Sepphoris, in contrast, was an urban center where persons of many cultures rubbed elbows, exchanging goods, news and views. There are those who speculate that the young Jesus, working as a carpenter, could have been employed in Sepphoris, where he might have found the intellectual stimulation that led toward his vocation as a preacher.

Sepphoris is situated on a hill in Galilee midway between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee. *Sepphoris* is the Greek name for the Hebrew *Zippori*, meaning like a bird. Its central location and good roads leading east, west and south, laid it open to trade, tourism and the mingling of peoples, as well as war, conquest, re-conquest, and turmoil. The city was conquered as early as the Assyrian occupation of Israel in the seventh century BCE. Subsequent Babylonian, Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman conquerors used it as a convenient administrative center.

Herod, appointed by Rome as King of the Judeans in 39 BCE, met with fierce revolt from the citizens of Sepphoris. He subdued

them, then built one of his palaces there. Herod's son, Antipas, a more congenial personality, converted Sepphoris into a model Roman city during a massive building project that included a theater seating 15,000. Even after the final dispersion of the Jews, a small Jewish population remained there for many centuries. The Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish judicial and governing body composed of eminent rabbis, moved to Sepphoris in the second century CE. This was a period of peace between Rome and her vassal city, making it possible for the rabbis to undertake the monumental task of compiling the Mishna, the body of law that became a part of the Talmud.

From the fifth century onward, the Christian population grew, accompanied by the construction of many churches. Following the town's conquest by Arabs during the expansion of the Muslim Empire in the seventh century, Sepphoris went into gradual decline. All that would have been readily visible to a tourist in the area at the beginning of the twentieth century was a citadel, built by the Crusaders in the twelfth century. They also built the Church of Saints Anne and Joachim. Though never mentioned in the New Testament, Anne and Joachim are names traditionally given to the parents of the Virgin Mary. The church was built on a site where their home was said to have stood, and where Mary would have grown up.

In 1930, the University of Michigan began archeological excavations at Sepphoris, and discovered the large Roman theater as well as another nearby buildings. With some lengthy interruptions, archeological work has continued there to present.

Among the most spectacular finds is a mosaic floor in the triclinium (reception and banquet area) of a luxurious villa, located near the theater. It contains a mosaic that covers the entire floor of the room and displays workmanship of extraordinary quality, with the use of small pieces of colored stone of many sizes and shades of color. One image depicts the face of a woman of classical beauty, her features modeled in subtle flesh colors. So superb is her beauty that she has been called “The Mona Lisa of the Galilee.” The floor is now protected by a roof and open to viewing by the public.



When I visited Israel in 1994, a friend and I went to Zippori, while archeological work was in progress at a site that was the commercial center of the city during Roman and Byzantine times. Beginning in 1991, a team working on a large fifth century structure, uncovered exquisite mosaic floors in several rooms of the building. The floor of one room depicts fauna and flora associated with celebrations of the rising Nile River, and it has, therefore, acquired the name “Nile Festival Room.” We watched work being done on this room from a nearby gravel path, a truly sublime experience. Suddenly, my friend bent down to pick up a small ceramic

handle, apparently broken off an antique vessel. She handed it to me, saying, “Take it.” I was shocked and protested that there was no way I would make off with Israel’s antiquities, absolutely no way. She calmly put the handle into her own pocket book, as we continued to examine the beautiful plant, fish, bird and water scenes, laid out on the floor below us. I saw her bend down once more, but she knew better than to hand her find to me.



*Mona Lisa of the Galilee, mosaic floor detail*

On the way home, I received a lecture regarding ethical considerations, as well as rules pertaining to Israel’s antiquities. Israel, she said, is virtually one huge archeological site, and in proportion to its size is carrying on a great deal of excavation work. As a

result, the country has a surfeit of riches, and some artifacts are deliberately left behind because there are hundreds like them, already collected and in much better shape. That, she said, was the case with the shards on the gravel path. And, she added, had she not picked them up, they would have been ground to powder by the public trampling over them. I began to see her point.

When we reached her home, she showed me small artifacts she had collected over time, supposedly left behind at archeological sites. Some were shards, but others seemed remarkably whole. Perhaps she had stretched the rules a bit. In any case, her lecture had gradually changed my mind, and I was willing to accept her finds. She handed me the pieces and generously added a few more from her own collection. One was a smooth water-polished piece of ancient Roman glass. Like the glass, I had been honed down. I took my loot and returned to America.

Some years ago, I donated my shards to the Indiana University Art Museum, and it gives me pleasure to know that current and future students of art history and archeology can benefit from my bits and pieces of ancient pottery. ❖



*Nile Festival, mosaic floor detail*

# Sun Yat-sen and I

*By Leonard Gordon*

As a graduate student in Taiwan studying Chinese, I saw Sun Yat-sen—not in person since he died three years before I was born—but his statue and pictures seemed to be everywhere. He could be found on stamps, currency, and in movies extolling his accomplishments. I also found his bronze image in cities on the China mainland and in North America, images epitomizing a man of intense conviction. In a Memorial Hall in north China, his basic ideology was carved in marble and painted in gold!

This leader of the 1911 revolution in China is revered in Chinese communities throughout the world. At first I found this adulation of Sun rather puzzling. His revolutionary effort to create a unified and lasting Republic in China was never completed in his lifetime. As the Republic of China's first President, he only controlled the southern half of China. In an effort to unite China after six months, Sun resigned and allowed a disreputable warlord to succeed him. Can you imagine George Washington setting a government in, let's say, Charleston, South Carolina, and resigning to give power to a dictatorial General in New York? Sun's action was no different than this fantasy.

Although Sun spent the remainder of his life organizing and writing in preparation for another round of revolutionary activity, he died without completing his objectives—to unite China and set up a modern, democratic Republic incorporating both Chinese and Western principles. In

addition, Sun's Nationalist Party and the Communist Party later engaged in a long and bitter civil war.

Despite Sun's failure to fulfill his goal and the failure of his Nationalist Party to govern China, he is a heroic figure in both China and on Taiwan. He is indeed an enigma wrapped in mystery. Perhaps it was the challenge to understand this curious man that led me to read and write about Sun Yat-sen.

What is the interest of Sun Yat-sen today? Next year, 2011, will be the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's republican revolution. On the China mainland and on Taiwan plans are being made for extensive commemorations of Sun's life and contributions to China.

Most significant is that leaders in China believe that China and Taiwan can be reunited based on the ideology of Sun Yat-sen. The President of the People's Republic of China has often urged the government of the Republic of China on Taiwan to consider this path to a negotiated peace. If successful, it would lead to peace in the Taiwan Strait. If peaceful efforts fail, it could lead to war. The stakes are high, and I am working on this problem of reunification from the perspective of Sun's ideas.

Yes, I look forward to seeing Sun Yat-sen again! ❖

# Letter to My Old Friends in Georgetown

*By Alfred Boissevain*

Greetings from a different world. I loved the last as well as the several before that. And I love this one.

Most of the people here are old, and I qualify in that respect. They have all been closely related in Indiana University, usually as professors of a limitless variety of subjects. It would, however be really great if I could banish all conversation related to football and basketball. I have been accepted here only because Anna, my eldest granddaughter graduated from IU, and was on the volleyball team.

A special factor here is the School of Music at IU. There are, for instance, three full student orchestras, presenting a steady stream of programs at the concert hall on the campus. We have a bus that drives to the concert, and then picks us up for return; no charge for the bus either.

The food here is plentiful and excellent, but is secondary to the fact that Claire, my daughter, lives only a brief mile away.

Regarding the weather, enough said. My salvation is my ability to close my eyes, and visualize the Sierra summit to the East while the dawn approaches, slowly dimming the constellation of stars.



# Contributors

**Betty Myers Bain** writes professionally under the name of Elisabeth P. Myers. Her book manuscripts are preserved in the De Grummond Children's Literature Research Collection at the University of Southern Mississippi.

**Robert F. Blakely** is a geophysicist, a scientist who studies the physical properties of rocks. He retired in 1986 after a career of 37 years as a senior scientist with the Indiana Survey and a professor in Indiana University's department of Geologic Sciences, where he taught meteorology, geophysics and computing techniques. In 2003 he and his wife Rosanna moved to Meadowood.

**Al Boissevain** received his bachelor's degree from Middlebury College in Vermont, where he met his future wife. He earned an aeronautical engineering degree from MIT, then worked for NASA in California until his retirement in 1980. He started a second career growing grapes on five acres of vineyard in the foothills of the Sierra Mountains. Four years ago, Al retired a second time because he realized that he hadn't read a book in 20 years. With a daughter living in Bloomington, he decided to move to Meadowood two years ago. Life is busy here, so he still hasn't got around to reading a book.

**Bill Christiansen** graduated from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa in 1947, and married Barbara in 1946. He worked for 20 years in Marshall Field Advertising Department. They have two children. Bill retired from Phillips Electronics in Evanston, Illinois in 1984. He and Barbara retired to a condo at Eagle Point by Lake Monroe where they lived 21 years, prior to coming to Meadowood.

**Mary Fielding** and her husband Gayle lived in Stockland Township, Illinois for 68 years until 2002 when they moved to Meadowood. Although she has taken some short courses in art at the University of Illinois, she had no formal art training. She has worked in many media. Mary

also plays the piano, sews and works in carpentry and ceramics. Her drawings have been published in three books: *Prairie Skyscrapers*, *Milford Now and Then* and *More Milford*.

**Leonard Gordon** is professor emeritus of Chinese History and former chair of the East Asian Studies Program at Purdue University. He has written on Sun Yat-sen and the diplomatic history of Taiwan. His research abroad was conducted in libraries and archives in England.

**Jean Herrman** came to Bloomington from Indianapolis at the age of four. She attended Bloomington schools and received an IU degree in sociology in 1941. Scouting was the focus of her life. She married a Foreign Service Officer. They lived in Pakistan, Poland, India, Lebanon, Jordan and Greece over a period of 21 years with their five children.

Jack and **Julie King** divide their time between Meadowood and their home in Northern Wisconsin near Lake Superior. In Bloomington they serve on "Earth Stewards" at First Presbyterian Church.

**Miriam Rosenzweig** spent her early childhood in Munich and Vienna. Her family fled Hitler's Austria in 1938 and settled in New York, where she went to high school. She is a graduate of Cornell University. Miriam retired as associate editor of the *Indiana Alumni Magazine*.

**Beth Van Vorst Gray** and her husband, Ralph D. Gray, Professor Emeritus of History, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, are both writers. She was born in Harvey, Illinois and moved to Evansville, Indiana during her high school years. She raised her family and established a career in Indianapolis.

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**Y O U!**

Submit your art, writings, and  
memoirs to the

*Meadowood Anthology.*

You may e-mail submissions to  
[meadowoodanthology@live.com](mailto:meadowoodanthology@live.com).

Or drop by the Front Desk.

We look forward to seeing YOU in  
the next *Meadowood Anthology!*

Deadline for the Summer issue is  
July 10, 2010.

