

# Scarlet Letters

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*This is the last of the 1956 banner pictures known to us. Have you any others? Send them along.*

## Comments, Contributions, Inquiries Invited

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## Class of 1956 Mini Reunion

**Chautauqua Institute, Chautauqua, NY**  
**August 10-16, or any portion of that week**

“Shifting Global Power” is the topic of study for the week, featuring lectures and discussion groups, and a full program of theater, music and dance along with our own cocktail hours, picnics and chats. Please contact Marian McGrath Percy (marian@mpearcylaw.com) 812-267-9187 or Anne Sinnott Moore (djas-moore@gmail.com) 603-998-6484, co-planners of the event, and go to the Chautauqua website (chq.org) for more information.

Currently twelve classmates and four guests are registered. We want YOU to join us.

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## My Life With Liz

*Like most of you, I idolized and was inspired by Liz Taylor. Perhaps you will appreciate reliving with me my acquaintance with her during my campaign for the U.S. Senate from Colorado in 1980, against Gary Hart. Here is a shortened chapter from what I hope will be my memoir, "Through the Brass Ring." I would love to hear your comments and questions.*

The National Republican Senate Campaign Committee scheduled a slew of seated Republican Senators to come to Colorado to raise funds and campaign with me. Among those was Virginia's Senator John Warner, co-chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and slated to be its chairman in a new Republican Senate. I sent a personal, hand-written invitation to his wife to please come too.

In mid-October, we held a major, widely promoted event for Senator Warner at the Brown Palace Hotel. I, my campaign manager Curt Uhre, and my Campaign and Finance Chairman Dwight Moorehead met the Warners at the airport. While Curt and Dwight briefed the Senator on the audience and campaign situation, His wife and I went to settle them into their hotel room.

His wife is Elizabeth Taylor. I tell her how honored I am that she came too. She had inspired me as a teenager in her courageous, determined struggle as an eleven-year-old to win her first leading role as the feisty horse trainer Velvet Brown in *National Velvet*. Her brilliant performance lifted the hearts of so many Americans, and it inspired many girls to pursue their own dreams. She was relaxed alone with me, but nervous about being with such a partisan political crowd of only men.

She assures me she, too, is delighted to be here, for she so strongly supports bringing women to the United States Senate. She asks if she can join us at five, as she needs to rest. She wants to shower, set her hair, and change clothes. I leave her to join the men downstairs and introduce our guest, the Senator.

He is roundly received and begins with a dynamic talk on why it was necessary for a stronger national defense that I be elected to join him by winning a new Republican Senate. Before he is finished, the Senator stops mid-sentence. A hush falls on the room. All heads turn.

There, alone, in the middle of the open doorway,



framed in the light beaming through, stands Elizabeth Taylor.

The cameras flash. She is stunning. Her large, richly patterned silk caftan flutters at her ankles over her sparkling silver sandals. A silk turban crowns her head. Her skin glows, and with her large, jeweled earrings and luscious lavender eyes, she lights up the room. I, too, dumbly gaze upon her, awestruck. She beams at the crowd, nods to her husband, and turns to me with a small, quizzical smile and slightly raised dark, curved eyebrows. Without shifting my eyes, I slowly begin to clap. Her husband joins me, and the room explodes into surprised, standing applause.

The Senator closes and takes a few questions from the audience. We three lead the way out to the foyer where the Senator pauses to shake hands with the guests as they depart. Liz and I go to the sidewalk. Dozens of cameras flash. We are the feature on all the evening TV news. The next morning, *The Rocky Mountain News* runs a full-page picture of the two of us walking to the curb. She is stunning and glamorous. It's not hard to tell who is the Special Guest, and who is the Political Candidate.

We enter a waiting limo. Our drive through Denver is deliberately long and slow, in the right lane. People look, pause, then cluster. Small crowds form.

Liz confesses to me she is considering returning to the theater, to perform in *The Little Foxes*, scheduled to open in New York the following spring. She loves her staid and upright husband, but she is not sure about herself in this public political role.

Nearly 1,000 people attend the evening reception at \$250 a person. Liz and I have a small powder room to freshen up in. I brush my hair and put on lipstick. She removes her turban, her curlers, and shakes her head. Long black waves tumble slowly down to her shoulders. She is gorgeous.

*(continued on next page)*

## Exposé

Before it comes out in the papers, I have a confession. I posed nude for photographs. There must have been four or five of them, back, side, and frontal views. They were passed around from one group of men to another, who discussed things in great animation, pointing to certain parts of the photos. I am guessing they were not good enough for publication, because I have never seen them again. I don't know if anyone else has.

I was not a desperate actress, starving or homeless. I did not need the money. In fact, I didn't receive payment. Also, this was first time I was away from home for any length of time. All on my own. A parent's worst nightmare. A young girl being in a predicament she didn't begin to understand. There was no possible opportunity to question the directions given me. Just do it!

This is what I did: I took off ALL my clothes, walked down a long corridor, slouching all the way trying to disappear, and entered a cavernous, bright room. Many other girls moved around the room too, but I hardly noticed them, distracted by my own discomfort. The hum of masculine voices was the background music as I stepped before a photographer's assistant. She placed 4-inch steel markers sticking out on parts of my body, up and down and all around. Try standing still in the nude with someone placing metal against you as the lights are shining—it isn't easy.

Once this procedure was complete, I was shown to an even brighter area with a photographer and his camera and young men standing around, just looking. They had on white doctor coats, assuming I wouldn't be uncomfortable with "medical professionals" on the set. I'm sure they'd never been in a situation where



*The incredible story. Fortunately no actual photos are available.*

they were standing nude encircled by lots of young women, gawking at them.

I was told what to do, where to stand, when to move. Why? To see if I had proper posture. That was the whole exercise. No robes to ward off the chill, no modest coverings for non-posture areas, just stand for all to see how perfect, or imperfect, my posture was. And then, still undressed, I had to discuss the photographs with the men. Posture okay, but one leg was longer than the other, one hip higher than the other. That was it for now. Come back in two years for another go-round.

So, two years later, despite my misgivings, I'd have to go through it all again? Would this "nude photo" stigma be with me forever? After the hour of unimagined mortification, I escaped and ran back to my room, gasping for air and trying to forget the whole spectacle.

*(continued on page 8)*

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*("My Life with Liz," continued)*

The receiving line starts with Dwight, who welcomes and passes each guest by name to Senator Warner. Next is his wife, Liz. From their approach to the line, all eyes are only on her. Each guest barely notices Dwight. Each person stands nervously looking to his or her left, many silently moving their lips, rehearsing what they want to say, to touch The Elizabeth Taylor. Each one stammers out his name, where or how they saw *National Velvet* or *Cleopatra*, what they were doing then, how old or young they were. I am deeply touched. She is a tireless, radiant trooper throughout,

a champion still.

The esteemed couple exits to their limo shortly after nine. Liz and I hug a tearful goodbye. They promise to see me soon in Washington, and Liz invites me to stay with them in Virginia when I arrive. She wants me to go with her to political events. And I can't wait.

Polls the next day show me ten points ahead of Gary Hart. Election Day is only three weeks away. I never see either one again.

**Mary Estill (Henlein/Grozier) Buchanan**  
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*A piece I made for my grandchildren: a fanciful tree full of flowers, animals, and birds .*



*Two panels inspired by the Bradford table carpet in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which depicts life in Elizabethan England. You can spot Mary, Queen of Scots, a well-known embroiderer, with Bess of Hardwick, England's richest woman, in front of her stately home. And if you look carefully you can find Falstaff and some naughty goings-on in a haystack.*

## My Embroidery Life

I have always enjoyed working with my hands. My mother taught me to knit in the days when yarns were not as varied and luscious as they are now, but I had never done any embroidery. Some time after moving into a new apartment on East End Avenue, I came across a delectable shop down the street that was owned by Erica Wilson, an Englishwoman who revolutionized the art of crewel embroidery. (Crewel is usually done in wool and does not cover the whole surface of the fabric.) I was intrigued by her designs and ended up buying a kit with a Beatrix Potter illustration, as well as her book, which gave meticulous instructions for the varied embroidery stitches. Thus, my new occupation was launched.

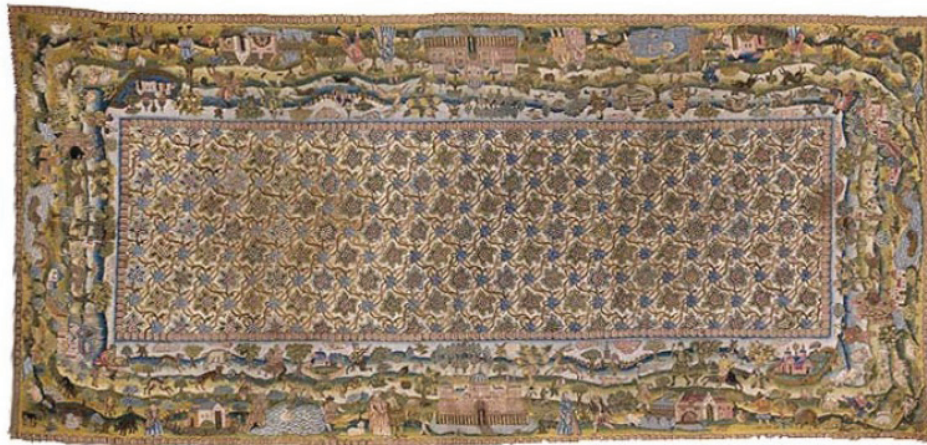
Once I had mastered some stitches, I set out to find new designs—a problem, since I cannot draw, and certainly not on fabric. My savior came when an English friend of mine came to see the fall foliage in New England. Looking for places to stay, I found a B&B in North Sandwich, NH, whose description mentioned that the owner, Betsy Leiper, did a lot of embroidery. Betsy's designs were a revelation—delicate drawings full of birds and flowers, fuzzy animals and charming cottages. I was delighted to hear that she ran “crewel camps” each year where stitchers could stay a few days, create designs (with Betsy), and learn new stitches. Over the years I attended several of these camps, making friends and improving my skills.

I owe so much to Betsy, who transferred her great skills at design and color and her love of handwork not only to me but to all her students around the country.

Herewith some of the projects that I have stitched with Betsy's help.

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*The Bradford table carpet, made in the early seventeenth century, originally belonged to the Earl of Bradford at Castle Bromwich. It is worked in silk thread in the tent stitch, similar to needlepoint, on a linen fabric. Its design has sometimes been described as depicting humankind's progression from the wild state to civilization. It can also be seen more simply as a celebration of country pursuits. There are scenes of hunting, fishing, and shooting, as well as rural occupations.*

*Left, a scene from the Bradford carpet.*



*Here in close-up are my versions of various occupations in Elizabethan times. The miller is bringing his grain to the mill. There is also a fisherman, a milkmaid, a farmer gathering hay, and an apple picker.*



*In the center a picnic, where you can find Falstaff and Alice Ford.*



## A Review of Two Books by Corinne Gordon Whitaker: *A Tale of Gold Buttons* and *and*

To review these works as books is very difficult. *A Tale of Gold Buttons* and *and* are both art and literature. They explode in meaning the more I examine and explore them

*A Tale of Gold Buttons*, with themes of authority and tradition, and their loss as metaphor for the immigrant experience in subsequent generations, is introduced by Whitaker as a tribute to her family. Each individual thought, such as these in the *Gold Buttons* book, is followed by a page of her phantasmagorical computer-generated art. Each of these computer-generated images is an explosion of shapes and colors.

The second work, *and*, uses the same format to explore and illustrate the world of today and of the possible worlds of tomorrow. She sees and illuminates a world where old norms, ideas, and ideals have been exploded. This is a world of chaos that her computer-science-generated art does more than illustrate. These images are also preceded by texts and are perhaps exemplifications of chaos and de-

struction, such as: “And the heavenly band / Heard the end of ‘And’ /with the shattering of infinity.”

I found the foreword printed in *and* most helpful. Dr. Stephen Guisinger, a professor at the University of Texas at Dallas, calls Whitaker a “non-linear innovator in art.” . . . “She has stormed the main gates of our sensibilities with the tools and language of modern science . . . to propel herself in unexplored directions.”

Whitaker’s illustrations, her paintings, can each stand alone, but the accompanying phrases provide additional meaning. These singular works bring the viewer into a new way of seeing. I, for one, was certainly ushered into a new way of seeing.

The format of each book is the same. A page of print with one phrase printed, blocked onto a contrasting color, and the work of art printed on the following page.

These are books to be examined and explored, held in the hand and contemplated for a long time.

**Betsy Cassel Stern**  
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*“It’s time to acknowledge / That she went to college”*



*“And the heavenly band / Heard the end of ‘And’ /  
With the shattering of infinity”*





*"They fled to manhattan / Through Ellis and Staten"*



*"Of minds trapped in savagery / lusting to win."*

*Corrinne Whitaker has been creating digital images on her computer for fifty-seven years. She considers herself an innovator, an experimenter, a programmer, a designer, and an editor. She has had 300 exhibitions worldwide. In the years she has been working in 3D printing she has published twenty-five books, all to be found in Wellesley's Margaret Clapp Library. She has been publishing online for twenty-four years and is the "chief imagineer of the digital giraffe empire." A monthly issue of her publication can be found at [www.giraffe.com](http://www.giraffe.com) / [giraffe@giraffe.com](mailto:giraffe@giraffe.com). Check it out.*

## IS THIS THE NIGHT?

*by Sheila Owen Monks*

Is this the night you will come  
and beckon me to follow you?  
Is this the day you will gently take the spoon  
from my hand  
and lay it on the counter, saying  
"You knew I was coming. Say goodbye now  
to your favorite pink sweater  
the squirrel on the front steps  
and the geranium in the clay pot.  
There's no time to comb your hair  
or turn the light out.  
Someone else will do that for you."



*Maud Hazeltine Chaplin, Sheila Owen Monks, and  
Maggie Daniel Russell*

(Exposé, continued from page 3)

Not an isolated incident; it had happened before me and would continue for many more years. It always involved hundreds of naïve, young women, each one trying not to let this embarrassing scene take over her life. At least I wasn't alone—I was a member of the freshman class at Wellesley College in September 1952, going through the rigors of orientation which included, among other things, nude posture pictures. It is amazing how quickly this trauma left my mind. I did discuss it with some other friends, wondering if we'd ever meet up with the Harvard medical students who evidently were the men in the white coats. But other, more important incidents surfaced to engage our conversation, and the nude pictures faded into forgetfulness.

Then, in 1995, *The New York Times Magazine* had an article about some weird scientist, William H. Sheldon, who in the 1940s conned many of the Ivy League Schools into taking pictures of naked matriculating students.<sup>1</sup> When he learned that Wellesley and other all-women colleges had been taking similar photos for health/posture evaluation since the 1920s, Sheldon and his researchers convinced the Seven Sister colleges to join the study. The scientists were studying the relationship between posture and intelligence, temperament, and genetics, and they needed a lot of guinea pigs. By the end of the 1960s this custom of taking pictures of nude young men and women was stopped, probably because the students never had given, and probably never would give, their consent for the photographs, and the schools, in the midst of other campus troubles, figured they had better cease that exercise. Thus, this part of orientation was eliminated. But it was buried deep in the minds of the specimens.

When the story appeared, the horror of that day burst into my consciousness, and I called friends to ask if they'd read the article. They reacted as I had. They'd forgotten all about the pictures. Until the article. Now we all were destined to relive the demeaning images. Our angst didn't last long ... we started laughing. After all, what else can one do?

But the hard questions began to surface. 1) How could we have permitted such a thing? Well, we were products of the Silent Majority, following our leaders. We certainly flunked our first college test of thinking for ourselves when we didn't express great indignation over this shameful practice and refuse to co-operate. But we didn't—we just shuffled along. We had



*A Purple Class remembers the event*

to wait for the rabble-rousers of the 1960s to protest the picture taking. I can only imagine the conversations that took place to get rid of the naked ordeal. 2) Why hadn't the college told us the truth? Maybe by the 1950s, the administration didn't even know how this nude photo thing had started, and they were just following their leaders. 3) What happened to all the photographs? One of Sheldon's followers said they were in the archives of the Smithsonian Institution. Anthropology researchers stated that they have seen them and that some reproductions were available in one of Sheldon's books. Ask the schools? Most replied that the photos were destroyed long ago. But do they really know?

Is my nubile, eighteen-year-old, firm, tanned body going to show up on the internet when I celebrate my approaching 85<sup>th</sup> birthday? Actually, that's the best birthday present I could have.

**Carolyn Evans**

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1. "The Great Ivy League Nude Posture Photo Scandal," by Ron Rosenbaum, January 15, 1995.