

Interview with Katie Kachavos

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by Mary Atai for the New Boston Historical Society

Katie and Lou Kachavos moved to an 18th-century New Boston farmhouse on Clark Hill Road in 1971.

Mary Atai: Katie, can you tell us a little bit about your early life?

Katie Kachavos: I was born and grew up in Wisconsin, specifically in Milwaukee. And I was born in 1937. I finished my education from K through 12 in Catholic schools there. From 1954 to '56 I attended Marquette University.

In 1956, I left Wisconsin never to return as a resident and joined the Maryknoll Sisters in Ossining, New York. During my time there, which was from 1956 to 1967, I completed my college work at the College of Mount St. Vincent in New York, and graduated from the St. Louis University School of Medicine in 1965. My post-graduate work in medicine consisted of a full residency, that's four years, in internal medicine, half of which was at Bellevue Hospital in New York. The other half at the Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston. During my time at Tufts I worked specifically for about a half a year at one of the first community health centers, which was established at a housing project, which is now UMass Boston and Harbor Point, but in those days, it was not a very fancy place at all. But I wanted to work with people who were accessing the health system in ways that other people usually weren't. That is they had no insurance and they were dependent on clinics. And it also gave me my first opportunity to work with families. I finished my psychiatry residence in 1972. That was at Harvard, in Boston. On New Year's Eve in 1967, the last day of the year, I got a telephone call from someone whose name I barely remembered. That was Louis Kachavos. He was a head of an engineering group in Nashua, New Hampshire. I was doing some work at Tufts New England Medical Center and the charge nurse I was working with was engaged to one of the engineers in Louis' group.

As I said, I barely remembered his name and when he called I wasn't sure I wanted to go out on New Year's Eve with someone I barely remembered. But we went out and things developed from there, and we married in 1970 in Cambridge, Mass. Lou let it be known immediately that he wanted to buy a house with property on both sides of the road, and with some acreage. Being raised entirely in a city, I assumed that acreage meant two acres, five acres, and I was a little astonished to find out he wouldn't consider anything unless it had at least 25 acres.

I started by perusing the Boston Globe and discovered a small advertisement, which led me to Heidi Palmer, and I spent Friday afternoons during most of 1970 traipsing all over southern New Hampshire looking for this ideal piece of property. And in some ways the house was secondary. I had insisted the house had to have a workable kitchen. It was the October 12th weekend, it was Columbus Day when we came up here and Heidi said she had just listed a place

that maybe we would be interested in. Then she looked at me and said, "But it doesn't have a kitchen." She was right. The kitchen consisted of a 220 plug for an oven, and a hand pump, and a very old sink. That was it.

The house had not been lived in for three years, that is there were lots of animal life around including a big family of woodchucks that had made their home in the shed. But we fell in love with it. It had acreage on both sides of the road and, to be honest, it looked to us like a house that needed someone to take care of it. We moved into what is now 200 Clark Hill Road. For weekends, like camping out, on Memorial Day weekend in 1971 and indeed the woodchucks kept us up that whole first night as they rummaged around in the shed right next to where we had set up our bed.

Over the years we very gradually, and I do mean gradually, renovated the house one or two rooms at time. The very first thing we did was to put in a kitchen. And for the kitchen we used barn board from our barn, which was slowly falling into the earth and it finally met its demise about 25 years later. It really lasted longer than we expected. It was a first generation barn, and there are very few of those left. It was standing independently of the house. It has beautiful beams, which we used and reused. And they were all done by hand, and they were notched as they fitted together, and they were all numbered. And what fascinated me was they were numbered with Roman numerals. So, I guess the carpenters that built it really understood Roman numerology.

The property that we occupied has only been deeded to four families since it was built. It does appear on the 1770 census for property listing as the property of Simon Dodge. Simon Dodge was further identified as someone who moved here from the Londonderry, N.H. area, and he had three or four brothers that also bought property surrounding our property. He was also the last surviving veteran of the Revolutionary War in New Boston. And a couple of years ago when I was doing some research in the cemetery I discovered he actually outlived his wife, which surprised me. That was not ordinary for those times. He lived 'til 1838.

The house is interesting because it has some specific kinds of molding and little touches from the builder. The builder, we think, is someone who built from towns in Massachusetts up to Hillsborough and the characteristics specific to him are that he uses a double cove molding and he turns his banisters on end so that if you look at them, they look like diamonds. They are square, but if you just turn them 45 degrees then you get this different shape. He built the front house, we call it the front house, which has four rooms, originally two chimneys, and a center hallway type of early federal construction. He probably built from a pattern book, but sometime after the Civil War the back house was moved and joined to the front house. The back house is a cape, a center chimney cape and does still have some of its features like gunstock corners and some wide floorboards in some areas. And the reason that we think it was moved is because the front house is entirely pegged, but the back house has primitive nails and is held to the front house with three hand forged bolts. The

dimensions of this back house match a cellar hole down the road from Clark Hill and we forget sometimes that it was very easy to move houses back in those days because they didn't have any electrical wires to worry about and they just hitched up some oxen and pulled the building.

And we're very happy to have the house the way it's laid out because in most of its extension and the way the footprint works its only one room deep, so it's a house with a lot of brightness. It also sits right under the geologic top of Clark Hill, which is about 810 feet, but the house is down around 760 feet. It was probably built to face compass south when it was erected and that gives us wonderful sun most of the year, and also protection from those nasty northwest winds.

Mary Atai: Katie, can you tell us more about the names of the people who have lived in your house between Simon Dodge and when you and your husband bought it?

Katie Kachavos: Yes. After Simon Dodge, there was a family named Wallace and they stayed in the house until somewhere around 1920. When the house was deeded to Lou Berry, L-O-U B-E-R-R-Y, as we think a wedding present from her step-father who was a man named Colonel Orne, who shows up in lots of other New Boston histories. He had purchased quite a bit of property in our neighborhood and we bought the house from the Estate of Lou Berry. She died in '67 and we purchased the house and actually closed in January of '71.

And we've lived in the house since then. One of the things I want to say about that is that then there was a family that rented briefly for about three years during World War I. We're not sure of the exact time. Their name is O'Neal and their name can be found in the tax records and also on the agricultural maps that were done at that time where they kept track of how many cows, pigs, and chickens that every farm raised.

What I would say about one of the things that I've thought about a lot living in that house is that up 'til now every person who's lived in the house except for the O'Neals has died in that house. And my husband and I always said that we felt that was the mark of a kind house. And he had also died in the house. So, we've, in a way, carried on that particular situation.

Mary Atai: Can you tell what is your favorite thing about living in that house? I'm sure you love this house...

Katie Kachavos: I think it is because I feel the house has a kindness. I think that for a family to stay until the last member of the family dies means that it's more than just a place for shelter. I think the way the house is situated relative to the land around it is really lovely. It's also very unusual. Simon Dodge built his house in the middle of his 50 acres. He did not build it near a corner, and that's very unusual for Revolutionary times because they wanted to be close to a neighbor. And I don't know why, but it creates, especially if you have most of the winds

come from the northwest, north northwest, and if you're in the house and you hear the wind and it's always coming over the top of the house it's never blowing right through it. And also, the light. The fact that the house, even on the 21st of December, there's a window where the light in the afternoon gets in.

Mary Atai: Very nice. Now how about the land? What are you actually doing with your land? Do you still have 50 acres?

Katie Kachavos: The way the original land was divided up in New Boston a lot of it was divided into 50-acre pieces. So, we bought from Simon Dodge the original 50 acres. The deed at that time had only a single measurement on it, which was in rods. I can't remember how many rods, but since we've lived there we've been surveyed on all sides and the surveys agree with our boundaries. So, we've been able to do what they call a pick-up survey. The land slopes down from the house. We're up at about 700 feet, but it drops continually down to the edge of the property.

Now, we moved the road in front of the house in 1987. And to accomplish that we bought a ten-acre lot right next to us across the road. It's 200 feet wide and 10 acres deep, which is how they subdivide acreage at times. And the reason we had to do that was the road is going to curve a little bit and you have to have a certain radius, and we needed actually just the corner of that lot to make the curve proper, so that's what we did.

Since probably I would say 1978, '79 we've managed our property for timber. Bob Todd was my forester for a long time and Dennis McKenney is now. When we purchased the 10-acre piece it had undergone what's called high grading, which is a timber practice where they go in and take out anything they can sell. Our property's never been managed like that. Our property's been managed so that there's always new growth coming along, and our cuts open up areas to foster that kind of growth. But when high grading happens what you get back is a lot of growth that isn't very marketable because it's too small, it's growing too close. And so, we've begun to manage that. We purchased that piece in '87.

Katie Kachavos: And then the front two acres was open and was a hay field. And I raised Christmas trees there for about 15 years. Now I've put it back into hay and I'm also a registered tree farm. So, this is all stuff that's of much interest to me. We just about finished another timber cut. I harvest more or less once a decade. Trees have a maturity and then they get old, just like us. And if you're growing them for harvest you want to harvest them at the peak of their maturity, not let them go downhill.

Mary Atai: So, that's being managed for you? The tree farm?

Katie Kachavos: No, I'm the manager in the sense that I decide who does what.

Mary Atai: Okay.

Katie Kachavos: But I work with a forester, and we set up this timber sale. They negotiate the terms of the sale, they supervise it because it's really important that when you harvest, you do it in such a way that you protect what isn't being harvested, if that makes sense to you.

Mary Atai: Yes.

Mary Atai: Okay. When you and Lou first came to New Boston ... So, here you are a psychiatrist. You continued to work?

Katie Kachavos: Well, I finished my residency in '72, so I was actually commuting all the time into downtown Boston. I know I had set up another part of finishing my last year at a clinic up in Lowell, Mass, where I was doing child and family work because that was the area I wanted to concentrate on. So, yes.

Katie Kachavos: I also, through being in residency, had two friends, one of whom was in internal medicine, and one of whom was a surgeon. And they started Matthew Thornton Health Plan in 1972. So, I got a job there as a psychiatrist and I also for the first two years, worked for the state doing clinical evaluations wherever they needed them and things like that. That gave me an opportunity to meet with and get to know probably one of the most prominent women psychiatrists in New Hampshire, and that was Anna Philbrook. And I don't know if you were familiar with the Philbrook Center, but that was named for her because of her work with children. When we first met she asked about my background and everything and then she said, "Okay", she said, "I'm getting too old. You're going to have start doing what I can't do anymore."

Katie Kachavos: I wasn't sure exactly how to take that, but our interests certainly were quite similar even though our backgrounds were very different. She was always active politically in terms of trying to get funding. I'm sure you can understand that, even today trying to get adequate funding for mental health is a problem. And I did end up being very active in the psychiatric society here. First in terms of going in to suggest to the leadership at the time in the early 80s that we needed to do more for children and adolescents and families in terms of advocacy. And then of course, I found myself being given that assignment.

Mary Atai: Of course.

Katie Kachavos: Which I did. And then later on towards the end of that decade I was the president of the group and we maintained a very active presence at the legislature because we had found that most of the legislators, especially early on, had no idea of what mental health was all about and didn't understand any of the needs in terms of the budget. This was also, if you'll remember, in the 70s. There was a time before that if you had a serious psychiatric illness the chances were that you might be locked up forever in a psychiatric hospital, especially the state hospitals. And they realized that wasn't the way to go. So, there was a big movement to get people out of them. But you need what I call

adequate downstream facilities and it's always been a fight to get them and keep them adequately funded because-

Mary Atai: Like halfway houses and that sort of thing?

Katie Kachavos: Halfway houses in the sense that there's 24/7 supervision to make sure people stay on their meds, keep their appointments, but also it creates a family atmosphere so that they all get to know each other. And I know of one situation where this young ... I was going to say young man. He's reaching 65 and he's going into retirement. He's been able to hold down a job in one of the hospitals just delivering whatever is needed to the nurse's station, or to the O.R., or whatever for about 20 hours a week, and lives in a four- apartment unit, with somebody on site. And certainly, he has a quite serious psychiatric diagnosis, but he's been very well maintained in the community. And his family, actually his mother who's now 90 (the rest of her family is out in Denver), but she's refused to move out there because she wants to stay here near him. But that's the kind of situation which we'd like to be able to offer everyone, but so far it hasn't happened.

Mary Atai: That is a very successful outcome, definitely. That's probably as successful as he could possibly attain.

Katie Kachavos: It is.

Katie Kachavos: And families can't do this by themselves. The notion that they should step up to the plate or whatever because this is a 24/7 situation. So, that's been, even though I retired back in ... Let's see, when was it, '98 and I was really looking forward to that, but I have maintained an interest on the political side of things. I'm involved with something called The Children's Lobby which is the lobbying activist arm of Child and Family Services, the non-profit. And originally, we started out as the advocacy committee. And the reason I was involved with it was because back in 1972 a social worker from the Division of Welfare had come to my office and asked me to co-write a grant with her to evaluate and identify the incidents of sexual abuse in the state of New Hampshire.

As a result of doing that, I ended up doing evaluations, going to court, and working with Jack Lightfoot, who was an originator of the Children's Lobby at Child and Family. He put together a panel in the early 80s on child development. We presented to judges. We presented to anybody who was interested because it was absolutely amazing how little knowledge many of these people had of normal child development, which was really important if you're going to work with kids. That led me down a path that I never would have anticipated. And I worked on legislation. There were all kinds of things that came up, sometimes involving the budget.

Katie Kachavos: I'm still involved with the Children's Lobby. We get together nine, 10 times a year, 10 months out of the year and we follow legislation. The chair is actually a

full-time lobbyist. For instance, we were able, about two years ago with a whole group of other organizations, to get the age of majority in terms of criminality changed to 18, because it was 17. And the reason it was 17 most probably had to do with money, because they didn't want to put out the money to provide services to these kids. And that doesn't mean that if someone commits a murder they can't be tried as an adult. People sometimes don't understand that. But for kids who are arrested for vandalism or something like that, the problem with declaring them, in that sense, adults is that most of the judges didn't even give them a slap on the wrist. In the adult system the fact that you painted something on a bridge or whatever once doesn't count for anything. But in the juvenile system it's the kind of behavior that you want to monitor and keep the kid under a little more supervision.

Mary Atai: Right. Prevent it from happening again. Well, Katie, when you and Lou came in the early 70s around 1970, '71 there were only about 1200 people in New Boston. So, can you tell me a little bit about how did the town seem to you and what did you get into? What did you get involved with? You were working, but-

Katie Kachavos: Right. Well, the first thing was that about once a month there was something like a spaghetti supper downtown. In fact, we went to them all the time because you would just sit around and have spaghetti, and somebody would have a bottle of wine, and it was a great way to get to know people and things like that. And then one time we went and there was a table at the door because the other spaghetti suppers had, I think they had a little thing you could put something in, but you didn't have to buy a ticket or anything. But this one you seemed to have to pay for something. Then we found out it was the forerunner of the PLC, the Piscataquog Land Conservancy and well we were very interested in that because we actually have a head water of the river on our property. And they used to have every year in the spring, when the river was high, they'd have a canoe event on the river and everybody that came would sleep inside the Town Hall and things like that. So, that was one of the things.

Then I've been a reader all my life and so we got involved in the library very early. Right up the road from me lived ... You mentioned Reggie Hayes, Reg and Beulah. And Beulah, if she said you're going to do this, you just couldn't say no. So, she resurrected the Friends of the Library. And that was really fun ... We had a lot of fun. We started doing the auction and things like that.

Mary Atai: So, you just had to walk down the hill to the library. Did you do that?

Katie Kachavos: Yeah. I love walking. I just ... And, of course, in those days people occasionally even sledged down Clark Hill. Now, you have to understand because there were so few people around and I remember ... I'm not sure if it was '71 or '72 there was a huge storm on Thanksgiving and Reg and Beulah had invited us up to their place to have Thanksgiving dinner with them. And we didn't think too much of it and we brought a flash light. We got out to go home. We had to find our way home by looking up to see where the trees arched over the road. That's how bad that storm was. But in those days where our part of the hill was when Reg

and Beulah found out we were going to stay year-round, they were delighted because they were the only occupied place through the whole winter for a stretch of four miles. Because of course none of those newer places had been built. And most of the people that owned the other places just came up summers.

Mary Atai: Right. Well, when you spoke about the spaghetti dinners where were they held?

Katie Kachavos: Down at the Town Hall. Now the Town Hall, in those days, was a Town Hall.

Mary Atai: Okay.

Katie Kachavos: In other words, it wasn't divided into offices.

Mary Atai: Right.

Katie Kachavos: Okay, and it had a kitchen. So, would just get together and organize like I said. They had them about one a month.

Mary Atai: And the kitchen was in the back there?

Katie Kachavos: The kitchen was in the back, yeah. And the rest was wide open space.

Mary Atai: Okay. And sometimes you had dances in there?

Katie Kachavos: We had dances. That's right, yeah.

Mary Atai: Did you go to the dances?

Katie Kachavos: Oh, yeah. We went to the dances. We did whatever was going on ... Lou wanted a tractor and he got a tractor. And the first one ... I'm not going to go into the details, but it was so old ... Tractors never die, actually, that the implements, you couldn't find them anymore. So, I said lets at least get one that not quite that old. Then he started doing field work for people, mostly cutting and stuff like that. He was an engineer and he did not have the discipline to learn to make hay. Hay is really ... You have to have some skill to do it and it takes time and you got to worry about the weather and everything. But he did a lot of field cutting for folks. And he really enjoyed doing that. That was something that was part of what made him happy. And, of course, he loved having his tractor and something to keep him busy all the time.

Mary Atai: Now at that time did they have ... I know they restarted the Garden Club, but did they have a Garden Club at that time?

Katie Kachavos: No.

Mary Atai: Okay. What else did they have? Besides the spaghetti dinners and ... Obviously you're Catholic. Did you go to the community church?

Katie Kachavos: No. Well, I'm glad you mentioned this because you're heard about the monastery.

Mary Atai: Yes.

Katie Kachavos: Okay.

Mary Atai: So, tell us about that whole situation.

Katie Kachavos: Well, the monastery, the day we closed on our house, which was January 15th in 1971, Heidi said, "You're Catholic, aren't you?" And I said, "Yes." And she said, "Well, there's a monastery right near your house." I said "Really?" Well, yes, there was. It's where the Sagnas live now. Okay, you're familiar with it right?

Mary Atai: The Hundred Acre Monastery?

Katie Kachavos: Hundred Acres. And I believe it had started let's say three years before. I'm not sure since I wasn't here. But anyway, there was one Trappist Monk there. There had been others, but they had all left. Father Paul, and yes, I walked through the woods. It was about three miles one way to church there every Sunday until it closed in 1998. That was my church.

Mary Atai: So, it was in progress in the 70s, the 80s, the 90s.

Katie Kachavos: Oh, yeah. Now, what happened was Father Paul died in 1990. He had been in failing health. He had developed Parkinson's. There was core group of us and one of that group had been in the Trappist himself and we were concerned that we would ... Because we wanted the place to stay open and wanted to have a priest there that we might overlook some of his physical concerns. But when Bob checked with Spencer Mass, where there is another Trappist place, and technically he was part of their group, but living up here. And Bob found out that he actually had already talked things over with them, and every 90 days he went down there so they could evaluate and see whether he should keep going.

But what happened was one night, and it was in April, he had a meeting with somebody and then he was out in the driveway and he said he was going for a walk. And if you're aware of where 100 acres is there's a huge wetland behind it.

Mary Atai: Yes.

Katie Kachavos: And he got out in that wetland and I'm sure he died the first night. It was a Monday night. And it was, for me, particularly sad because we were both gardeners, and that year I had opened up a new garden. I hadn't moved

anything into it yet. So, in the fall before, I planted 200 tulips in it because I love tulips and he was going to come over that Tuesday to see the tulips. So, instead I cut all the tulips for his funeral.

Katie Kachavos: And then we were without a priest for two years, or almost two years. But we would have a communion service every Sunday and priests would show up every once in a while, because Father Paul had friends all over the country. And then another group of Benedictine priests came from California. They stayed until '98. Then I guess ... It's hard to know exactly what went on there.

There was one priest who really wanted to stay, but they didn't want just one person out there and so they actually sold the place to St. Anselm's. And the Sagnas bought it from St. A's.

Mary Atai: And when they sold it to St. Anselm's, they didn't want there to be any kind of meetings there anymore?

Katie Kachavos: Do you want to know what happened?

Mary Atai: I think you should put it on record.

Katie Kachavos: Okay. I was an incorporator for the Camaldolese monks, the group that was selling it. So I was kept informed of what they were doing when they were selling it. I knew that the closing, it was supposed to be December 1st and I had said to everybody, "Look, St. Anselm's is not going to put a priest out here and everything. We need ..." Well, the person who had brought the Camaldolese monks here and had been in the Trappists himself made a couple of phone calls to St. Anselm's. No response. We sent a registered letter just asking if we could meet? We didn't expect them to provide a priest and our thought was ... We didn't say this in the letter, but that we would meet weekly until maybe the spring and decide what we wanted to do because we didn't know at that point. People resented not having the place to go to or anybody offering any consideration. But nothing happened, or we didn't hear back.

Katie Kachavos: Then it was very, how shall I say ... It was a tough time for me because Lou had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer the first week in December, and he died April 22nd. Pancreatic cancer is usually very quick, and it's a very tragic diagnosis usually. So, I, and the community had changed over the years. People came and went, but one thing that was a constant was when anybody was in any kind of difficulty you always knew you could find comfort from the people there. So, this next Sunday it was around, I'd say let's say the 10th of December, something like that. I walked out there because we had been meeting and there was a note on the door. "This place is closed for public worship. Go back to your parishes where you belong. "

Katie Kachavos: And I walked home and I wrote a letter to the Abbot at St. Anselm's. I told him that basically I could not understand why he had never made a reply to us, that

we understood that there wouldn't be any priest assigned or anything. And then I said this. I told him that I didn't want a reply to my letter because I paraphrased Nietzsche and said, "Pity is the worst of virtues." And I never heard anything further.

Mary Atai: And then after that they sold it?

Katie Kachavos: Well, they didn't really use it very much. They couldn't figure out ... Do you know Barry Wicklow?

Mary Atai: No.

Katie Kachavos: You might want to talk with Barry because Barry lived here for quite a while and he may be close to retiring from St. Anselm's. But he's a Biology professor and he's very much into conservation issues and stuff like that. They live in Francestown now, but he would have a really good feel for some of the stuff that went on there because one of the things I know he tried very hard was to get St. A's to put an easement on the property. I have an easement on my property so that it cannot be developed. But he was unable to get that accomplished. But he might be worthwhile to contact. They lived here for a long time and they were very active at Hundred Acres and Epiphany Monastery. Epiphany was the name the Camaldolese gave to the Monastery.

Mary Atai: Since your husband died in 1999, how has your life changed?

Katie Kachavos: Well, in some ways it's not changed because I still am active in a lot of the things that I was active all the way through. But I think, for me, marriage was a partnership. He was an engineer and I was an M.D., and we certainly shared just all kinds of things about science. But we both also loved music. He was very dyslexic, but he loved literature in terms of drama, things like that. So, when you lose a spouse that whole part of your life disappears in the sense that there isn't anybody there to participate in these things with you anymore. You can go with a friend or something, but it's not the same.

Mary Atai: No. I can understand that, definitely.

Mary Atai: You've lived through a lot of changes in the town. Do you think most of it's for the better or for the worse?

Katie Kachavos: Let me ... I made some notes here. ... One of the things I wanted to talk about, and it wasn't mentioned, was the town's move to zoning. There was no zoning when we first moved here. I may be mistaken about this, but I think Yvonne Gomes was one of the people who was very influential and hardworking in terms of getting our initial zoning ordinance passed. But there was an incredible amount of resistance. We had open town meetings in those days, but of course those are ballot votes, the zoning and things like that.

But I remember another vote, the gravel ordinance. There was an attempt by a company to come in here ... (well, just a little bit about the geology). Anywhere there's a river there's usually somewhere in the neighborhood of the river significant gravel deposits. It depends on a lot of things. So, there's a lot of gravel available in New Boston. Some group actually talked about reopening the railroad line into New Boston to truck out gravel and stuff like that. I was going to go into the town records and look up the dates on this, but I would assume it was back in the 70s, or maybe it's later than that. But anyway, we passed a gravel ordinance with a lot of teeth in it.

Mainly it didn't say you couldn't take out gravel, but it said it provided for reclamation and things like that. And one of the very interesting things that was an open vote because of the way it came up in town meeting. I notice that there were some couples where usually the woman voted in opposition to her husband. Now we're talking about open town meeting, so this really took a lot of courage on people's part.

Mary Atai: Yes.

Katie Kachavos: Unfortunately, the state eventually passed some gravel ordinances and they supersede what we had and they aren't as tough. They aren't as thorough because ours really was good, and it was workable. Now, some people will still complain about that. And then the other thing ... And I didn't get a chance to go back and look at this either. Somebody wanted to put up a great big condo development. And I'm talking really large for a town this size.

Katie Kachavos: There was a public hearing, but when we went you had to sign in if you wanted to talk. You had to sign in with your legal name and address. And I said to people, "Don't do that because ..." That turned out that a young attorney took that case and argued it and pointed out it was an infringement on freedom of speech.

Mary Atai: That you had to sign in to be heard?

Katie Kachavos: Yes.

Katie Kachavos: And he went on to become a very fine judge. But I remember because there were 10 of us that were intervenors. I was an intervenor in that case and my husband was not too happy because of his concerns about if there would be a lot of money involved and stuff like that. But no, the attorney did a wonderful job, but it was also an education because there's ... How to say, no one should feel if they offer an opinion in an open meeting that someone is going to get hold of information that they could use legally against a person.

Katie Kachavos: So, that was one of the things. And, of course, every time the funding came up for the school it was a big concern. It was very difficult. Do you know the history of the library funding?

Mary Atai: Yes. I know that it never did get passed and that they finally built it with money that they had raised.

Katie Kachavos: Yeah, that's right.

Mary Atai: But luckily we have a great library. We still have a great library.

Katie Kachavos: But the concern ... I remember someone ... Because I was on the fundraising end of things and I remember someone saying, an individual ... Well, it was reported and I'm sure it was true, that he had the funds to build the whole thing but that he felt that was a mistake because he said, "This library belongs to a community, and the community should figure out how to support it." And he was distressed because of the vote.

Mary Atai: Okay.

Katie Kachavos: So, that was really a difficult time. And the other thing I remember was when I moved here in you talked about this, the commotion about the school, the high school, which everybody initially that first year wanted to tell us what their opinion was about the high school.

Mary Atai: You moved here right at the height of that controversy over the High School building.

Katie Kachavos: Right at the height. They took it down I think in April of '71. And May of '71 was the first night we spent in the house.

Mary Atai: So, you didn't have to get in on that.

Katie Kachavos: We certainly heard a ton of it.

Mary Atai: People were quite vocal in their opinions.

Katie Kachavos: Yes.

Mary Atai: A lot of them feel that was the wrong decision and it should never have been done.

Katie Kachavos: It's ... How to say ... You can argue that both sides, but I really feel that there's no way that small towns can offer secondary education in the way it ought to be done. And yet, the plus is having the kids closer to home, everybody knowing everybody else. There's a lot of plus in that. I would support that, but you just can't take away all of the other situations. And you can't provide the education that they really need.

Mary Atai: I didn't get the impression that it was that the school had to remain here. It was that that building had to remain. In their minds that building should not be torn down no matter what it was used for.

Katie Kachavos: We were here for that part of it, but what we always heard was just wrong ... The kids we all knew them and they got a good education and stuff like that. Wasn't the last class graduated in didn't you say '65?

Mary Atai: '65.

Katie Kachavos: And I do remember the fire station being built.

Mary Atai: A lot people seem to be against any kind of population growth really. Even though in my talk I was pointing out I think it's relatively slow.

Katie Kachavos: Well, I think it is reasonable. I think what I'm more concerned about is land use. I have a friend who has some connections in the upper valley, and I've looked at some of their land use situations. They develop land based on how much acreage is needed to provide an adequate septic. And I think that's a much better mark than just dividing little pieces off and stuff like that. I wish we could help people to understand that because that way you protect soils ... Some soils are okay, but if the grade is too steep that's not really good either for a septic. So, I'd like to see more attention paid to that. I don't particularly object to cluster building and stuff like that.

Mary Atai: Subdivisions?

Katie Kachavos: Yeah because I think that they can be done in a way that makes sense. But there seems to be a fair amount of animus about that, too. But that's what I would like. I'd like people to be more tuned into what a conservation easement does and doesn't do. I timber. I don't have to get permission to timber or anything like that. Somebody was tapping some of my trees for a while and he's moved out of town. So, for the conservation easement in and of itself doesn't mean that you have no use of the land. I allow hunting on my land, although less since all that buildup is going on around me. They're all local guys. I remind them because they have to stay 500 feet away from any dwelling.

Mary Atai: Oh, yes. Katie, what do you think of the sense of volunteerism in New Boston? Do you think it's a high level, an unusual amount of volunteerism?

Katie Kachavos: I'm not sure what I have to compare it to. I think there is substantial volunteerism in New Boston. What I don't see is with people who are newer to the community and for instance busy raising their families, there doesn't seem to be an opportunity for them to become very involved. I know that they're scheduled and everything. But I also think what I've noticed is a lot of them program their kids in the summer so the kids are away at camp and stuff like that so that there's not as much of a tie to the town as when we moved here. Everybody knew everybody else's kid. I got a phone call one morning about 9:00 on a school day. "Katie, I don't know what's going on. But David and two other kids just ran through my backyard." (my son)

Mary Atai: Everyone knew all the children.

Katie Kachavos: But there was never a ... That was, how shall I say, there was a goodness about that. It wasn't people were out to clash or anything like that. So, I am concerned that with some exceptions, we don't see as many volunteers say from people under 35.

Mary Atai: Okay.

Katie Kachavos: I would like to see it because for one thing, they have ideas. The older you get, the less likely you are to have new ideas.

Mary Atai: Okay. And, more personally, I did want to ask you, aren't you a weaver?

Katie Kachavos: Yes, I am. I'm glad you did ask me that.

Mary Atai: Okay, and you have a wonderful large loom?

Katie Kachavos: The story of my loom. Father Paul, who was the Trappist out at the monastery, one day after mass ... Now, he knew I was a knitter. He looked at me and said, "Katie I'm going to give you my loom." I said, "What?" I said, "The only loom I had ever done was a little box loom." You know what those are?

Mary Atai: Yes.

Katie Kachavos: When I was nine or 10 years old or something. I said, "Well, at least let me do a workshop or something to make sure I'm going to like it." And he looked at me and he said, "You will love weaving." Well, he's right. And he gave me his loom. It's MACOMBER and, as someone said to me very early in my career in weaving, "It's like the Cadillac of looms." I did make him pull out his little slip of what he paid for it because I felt ... I knew I was getting something really special.

Katie Kachavos: So, yes, I have his loom. And I will tell you that mostly because of the demands from my parish now, I haven't at this point touched my loom for a year, and I'm angry about that, but my term over there is ending. So, I plan to get back to weaving because it is wonderful. I love knitting, but I love color, and you can just do so much more with color on a loom.

Mary Atai: And do you just have the entire loom set up in your house all the time?

Katie Kachavos: Yeah. I've got one room.

Mary Atai: One whole room?

Katie Kachavos: Why yes, the loom's quite large.

Katie Kachavos: But it's wonderful and it's easy to use. And you can ... A loom is very versatile. And even the commercial looms all operate on the same principle, although they use lasers nowadays. Shoot the shuttle and stuff with a commercial loom. One of the interesting things is that a commercial loom is usually only threaded maybe once, maybe every 18 months. And then they do what they call a tie on when they add new yarn, but they don't have to re thread it. And there's families who go around the world and do this threading because the threading is difficult. A loom is really a very primitive computer.

Mary Atai: Yes.

Katie Kachavos: So, you understand that you have to put yarn through holes and so forth. And so these families just go from place to place because I'm sure somebody has invented a way to thread a loom, but when you think about it, it's a pretty complicated thing. Your hands can probably do it as fast as any machine.

Mary Atai: What have you made so far?

Katie Kachavos: I've done blankets, yardage, pillow tops. Let's see, what else? Well, I've done a lot of scarfs because people love them.

Katie Kachavos: Then I love designing them. I've done stuff like you can do a top and a bottom at the same time. It's called double weave. I've made a couple of tops, and things like that.

Mary Atai: Very nice. And I hope you are able to get back into it soon. All right, Katie, I want to thank you for all this information. Is there anything else that you want to add?

Katie Kachavos: Well, I guess one thing, in terms of my background, I was on the New Hampshire Juvenile Parole Board for five years. And that reflects my interests in families, and kids, and that's still a big thing with me, in terms of being able to evaluate needs culturally and make sure those needs are met. I think that right now there is really a problem, because part of what's happened is that kids and families are dealing with so much overwhelming stuff that sometimes they just can't get out from under it.

Mary Atai: You have done some excellent work.

Katie Kachavos: So, all right. Well thank you very much.

Mary Atai: Thank you very much.