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This week I delivered a five-minute talk. I spoke in front of some seventy-five members of the Cambridge Club. Most in the audience were civic friends of mine, and could be relied upon to welcome what I say.

In preparing this talk I was mindful of Blaise Pascal, the great French savant, who is credited with saying: "I have made this longer than usual because I have not had time to make it shorter."

Actually, I did have time to craft my short talk. And I seem to have delivered it right on schedule.

What pleased me most about my presentation was the laughter that came from the group. Perhaps they felt good about it and free to laugh, knowing how short it was going to be.

My chosen subject was the Howl, the paper I publish several times a year for neighbors and interested others. I presented it as something I have done for the community. That, after all, is what qualifies each Cambridge Club member to belong.

I presented the Howl as a service that enables members of my neighborhood community to discover one another. This benefit applies especially when new residents join our district. They become known to all readers when they introduce themselves in print or allow me to do it for them.

In telling the audience about the name Howl, I amused them by referring to my short street and to the poem by Beat poet Allen Ginsberg. They also stayed interested when I cited a few of the typical items the Howl has published. A wedding photo, book reviews, a trip to Japan by my next door neighbors, fine photos of birds, and urchins coming around on Halloween were some I mentioned.

With my last item I paid tribute to the anthropobes who grace our street. Few in number, they do not respond to the Howl. But even they sometimes have their names appear in this even-handed publication.

My brief presentation was followed by something like an hour-and-a-half talk given by two high-ranking officers from the Cambridge Police Department and the chief of the Fire Department. These gentlemen explained in detail the events of the Boston Marathon bombing and Cambridge's part in responding to that crisis.

They left me valuing even more what was said by Pascal.