

The Bridge

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL BY AND FOR
THE RESIDENTS OF *NEWBRIDGE ON THE CHARLES* IN DEDHAM, MA

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Photo by Linda Silverstein

Intergenerational Concentration

Notes from the Editor

We continue to be very thankful to those of you who have contributed to The Bridge over the past year, both financially and with your stories and poems.

With apologies, we have to update you on our financial situation. Given the tightness of NBOC's current budget, and its goal to balance next year's operating expenses, we will be completely dependent on you, our readers, for support of printing costs for the next year. The total yearly cost is about \$1600.

The same is true for our community website. Its financial needs — for site rental, domain name and updating its current obsolescent software — are in roughly the same ballpark as those of The Bridge.

Modest contributions from those who believe that both The Bridge and the community website are important parts of our community should be able to keep both these facilities operating. We ask that you use the HSL Fund envelopes, available in the Library, for these contributions.

Just Reminiscing *Harry Kaplowitz*

Although many years have gone by,
We can look back at them with a sigh.

In a span of fifty-six years
We have a package of both joys and tears.

Now, in our book, we have turned a page,
And we will be on a different stage.

Our house is at a new place,
And we have made friends with our peers,
Very comfortable just being here.

With whatever comes our way
As we live day by day.
And we fulfill our needs as we please.

As for what lies ahead,
This can be said.

As the years will go by
We will look back at each one with a sigh.

It is our plan
To do the best that we can.

But ever together we will it weather,
Whenever it comes our way.

As we continue to live day by day
And try to fill our minds,
As we please. •

Community Website

www.newbridgeresidents.org

Weekly Restaurant Menus • Daily Events • Videos of Interest to Residents

Searchable Database of Library Media • Searchable Directory of Residents

***Searchable Directory of Residents' Photos • *Online Requests for Repair Services**

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Important Frequently Called Numbers • Download Current/Past Issues of The Bridge

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Coming of Age John Averell

My fellow residents at NewBridge on the Charles are all familiar with the Jewish coming-of-age ceremony of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This important time ushers the young boy or girl into the common community of Judaism as a full member.

Other religions have similar ceremonies. Christianity has a few such services, of different formality and details. The critical differences occur because of the meaning of baptism to different denominations.

Roman Catholics and most Protestant denominations christen infants, sealing the child as a member of The Church, to be confirmed at a coming-of-age ceremony termed *Confirmation*. Baptist Protestants practice *Believer's Baptism* as a coming-of-age service. I was brought up in a Baptist tradition. My personal experience may be of interest to others here.

In our family the coming of age meant a time for baptism by immersion as an adult, with the understanding that this was an outward sign of an inward faith. Of course any adult could be baptized, so, strictly speaking, this was not limited to "coming of age". There was no big celebration, no dancing or food. However the ceremony was quite lovely in my case, since it took place on the shores of an inlet of Long Island Sound in Tokeneke, Darien, Connecticut at the Tjader[†] Estate.

My memories of the event are more tied to the incredible display in the meeting room of the Estate of heads of game animals that Mr. Tjader had collected while on safari with Theodore Roosevelt.

Preceding the ceremony we had attended several weeks of class study and counseling with our pastor. We learned scriptural and doctrinal principles that led us to the baptismal ceremony.

As an aside, this was almost a unique experience as a venue for baptism. All Baptist churches have a tank on the rostrum, normally covered by flooring, that is used for immersing baptismal candidates. I have not encountered an outdoor baptism like mine elsewhere, but I'm sure there are other examples.

Obviously participants wore bathing suits and robes, no matter where the venue. The physical dunking of a person required in some cases some

strength of arm, sometimes including both pastor and deacon for larger persons.

The individual participants did not give an extended discourse on any subject at the baptism. Rather we gave an affirmative declaration of our personal faith in Jesus Christ, and of the meaning of baptism, namely a symbolic leaving behind our sins and rising from the waters to a new born-again life.

To me, as a young adolescent boy trying to live the life of a Christian as my parents and I understood it, this seemed important. Almost none of my schoolmates in Darien were "Christians" in our sense. My social friends outside of school were almost exclusively from our church.



This is a picture of my classmate at school and church, on the day we were both baptized. We think this was 1946 or 1947. On the left is my father Phil, who was Chairman of the Deacons at that time. On the right is our pastor, Rev. Siegfried V. Hanson. Being baptized is Jeanette Toms Iglesias, now living in Florida with her own big family.

This bonding through the baptismal experience cemented my personal and social life to a large extent for a long time.

[†]The Tjader Estate at that time was owned by the widow of Richard Tjader, a well-known Swedish evangelist and big game hunter. She used the large house and grounds for religious services. Since our church was Swedish in origin, there were connections with the Tjadars. •

Thys and Gussie Edward Goldstein

I never saw my father hold hands with my mother. So it was something of a shock to see him on Collins Avenue in Miami Beach strolling hand in hand with his friend Gussie.

It was the night of his ninetieth birthday. My brother Herb and his wife Sheba, and Susan and I had come to Florida for the occasion. Dinner had been relaxed — not something to take for granted in our family. It was a balmy Florida night and we could hear the rhythmic noise of the waves breaking gently along the beach. We were walking slowly toward the upscale condominium where Gussie and Thys lived in their separate apartments. And they were holding hands. (My father's name was Mathias but everyone called him Thys.)

It occurred to me that, perhaps for the first time in his life, Thys was actually happy. This was remarkable because Thys's usual attitude toward happiness was, "Where is it written that people are supposed to be happy?"

My mother had died six years earlier, at the age of seventy-nine, after fifty-three years of marriage. Ever since they moved from Poland to Germany they had worked together in their businesses.

A few years earlier, they had bought the condo in Florida and spent summers in Montreal, where my brother and his family lived, and winters in Miami Beach. They were a close couple, different in what they liked, but dependent on each other. My mother, generally known as Mutti, was the socially adept one; she liked entertaining and being entertained. Thys would allow himself to be dragged into social activity, but much preferred reading.

After my mother's death, Thys withdrew into himself. He began spending both summer and winter in Florida. He walked by himself, making his daily trips to the public library a focus of his activities. And he would write long letters to his children and grandchildren.

During my visits to him, he would complain to me, with tears in his eyes, about his loneliness. I would point to the bulletin board in the lobby of his building, overflowing with notices of lectures, canasta, bridge, exercise and theater parties:

"Thys, why don't you take advantage of any of these activities?"

"*Yech!* There are mostly widows there ... all they want is a new boyfriend or husband."

"So?"

He was indignant: "How can you even talk to me about this?"

"Aren't there any men in the group?"

"Yes, there are some men, but I don't like any of them. They are not intelligent."

Then, one day, three or four years after my mother died, one of his letters mentioned that he had found a new friend, a woman named Gussie, who had an apartment in his building. He wrote something like, "We met at the pool. She is very nice. A younger woman ... she is seventy-eight. We go for walks and have very nice talks."

His letters began to be more cheerful. There were no more complaints about loneliness.

I could hardly wait to meet this miracle woman who was making such a great change in my father's life. And on my next visit, I did just that.

She was a handsome, well-dressed, energetic lady, with an upbeat disposition and a full calendar of social activities; Thys would cheerfully tag along. They usually had dinner together; they would watch television together after dinner, either in his apartment or hers, and then go off to their separate apartments around 9:30 or ten.



Gussie was obviously fond of Thys, but without sentimentality. I really have no clue about what attracted her to Thys, but it was great to see them together. And it was especially great to see the tremendous difference that she made in Thys's enjoyment of life.

Shortly after his ninetieth birthday, Thys's health began to deteriorate. Nothing dramatic, it was just that his heart seemed to be wearing out. He had to cut down on activities, began to use a cane, then a walker. Gussie began to cook for him and to manage his day-to-day affairs: pay his bills, make medi-

cal appointments, bring in a weekly maid and part-time nursing care.

My brother and I were of course immensely grateful to her, not only for what she was doing, but also for just being there for him. But we could not help worrying about the longer-term prospects. For it was clear that his health was getting worse. We wanted to bring him back to a nursing home in Montreal, where Herb and Sheba could look after him and where he could be near his favorite granddaughters.

When we broached the subject to him, he adamantly refused: "I want to be with Gussie." And Gussie, bless her heart, would agree with him.

But his condition continued to deteriorate. Not only was he becoming feebler and entirely bed-ridden, but he also became horribly depressed. He could be rude to the nurses he now depended on, and they would quit, leaving Gussie to scramble to replace them.

Herb and I would get these frantic telephone calls from Gussie: "I can't take this any more. You have to come down and take care of things. Take him to Montreal."

And Sheba or Herb or I would travel to Miami Beach and take care of each emergency as it arose. We would talk to Gussie:

"We're really grateful to you, Gussie. We know things can't go on like this. We want him to go to Montreal, there's a nursing home waiting for him, etc., etc. But he won't go unless you tell him he has to."

"OK, you're right. I'll tell him."

Then we would meet with Thys. He would beg not to go ... and Gussie would look at him and say, "Of course you can stay. I'll be here for you."

And so it went for about a year, until the time came when Gussie finally realized that Thys needed a nursing home just to stay alive.

It fell to me to go to Florida and escort him to Montreal. I would just as soon not remember the wrenchingly painful farewell scene between Thys and Gussie. He slept through most of the trip. In Montreal, Herb and Sheba and his granddaughters met us at the airport.

His room at the nursing home was bright and clean. The staff was professional and kind.

A few months later he died peacefully in his sleep. Gussie did not come to his funeral. •

Our First Home

Sheila Klein

We frantically searched all over Brooklyn for a suitable apartment that we could afford. Our efforts led us to East Fourth Street, near Ocean Parkway, to what appeared to be a very nice neighborhood. The apartment we found was a street-level unit, actually the basement of a one-family row house. It had been converted to a one-bedroom, living room, dinette, kitchen and bathroom apartment.

The most unusual part was that you entered into a little foyer and then had to go through the bedroom to get to the other rooms. The view from the front windows afforded a very special feature. There was a church at the corner of the street and we became authorities on current shoe styles while watching the people as they passed on their way to services on Sunday morning. We couldn't see the people — only their shoes. The back view from the dinette and kitchen was quite nice — it looked out on a nice green garden which was very pleasant and where we could sit out on a nice day. A real problem in this apartment was the lack of sufficient heat. Only newlyweds could have survived!

Most of our neighbors were Italian and they were very friendly to us. We were the recipients of some wonderful Italian cooking and we were invited to various neighborhood get-togethers. While we were living there, we became acquainted with a very pleasant elderly Italian gentleman who lived down the street and had a small vegetable garden in his backyard. From time to time, he would appear at our door with a radish, an onion, a tomato or some other gift from his small garden. Because he didn't speak English, I couldn't properly thank him. Finally, I had an idea. The next time he appeared with some vegetables, I invited him into the apartment. I offered him a cup of tea and some cookies and then brought out our wedding album. We had a wonderful time, pointing at the pictures of the "Mama" and the "Papa" and the wedding ceremony. He really enjoyed himself and the produce kept coming!

Our stay in this apartment was only for nine months. Al was hired by the Revlon Corporation for a position in their Quality Control Department. They moved us to Passaic, New Jersey, where we found a lovely apartment in a beautiful locale. •

Dance and Play

Mike Atlas

My mother introduced me to ballet when I was a youngster. On Saturday mornings my mother and I would board the bus in Winthrop and go to East Boston, where we could take the ferry to Atlantic Avenue in Boston. I loved the ferry ride because there was a coffee mill on the Boston side, and the smell of coffee permeated the air. I don't drink coffee now, even though I loved the smell then. On Atlantic Avenue we would take a streetcar to the dance studio. We did this every Saturday until I was able to make the trip myself.

I enjoyed interpretive dancing and adagio dancing. I danced Spanish dances with castanets, but my favorite was the Russian dances. This consisted of pirouettes (turns), double turns in the air, kicking the left foot in the air and jumping over it with the right foot, jumping into a split in the air while touching my hands to my toes, and a *kazatski*, squatting on my haunches while pushing one leg at a time forward.

My favorite adagio partner was Roberta. She was petite, with long hair, and a lovely smile. She later became a Boston debutante. Our teacher was always urging us to dance closer together. I could feel the outline of her body; it was not unlike "Dancing with the Stars" today.

My teacher and his wife had danced with the *Ballet Russe*. When the troupe came to Boston, some of the dancers would practice at my teacher's studio. During one of my lessons, one of those dancers asked my teacher, and then asked me, whether I would like to dance with them that night. Of course I said yes.

That Saturday night, in costume, I danced a very small chorus part. But I can truthfully say "I danced with the *Ballet Russe* in the old Opera House on Huntington Avenue in Boston."

During these early years I was pretty much a loner. My schoolmates did not share my experiences in ballet and dancing. But in High School my interest turned to sports. I became a member of the track team, the tumbling team, the football team, and in my senior year I was elected captain of the basketball team. In one game I managed to score 33 points, a record at that time.

Fifty-two years later I was given the honor of being selected as a member of the newly formed Winthrop Athletic Hall of Fame. The athletic director told me that my 33-point effort was a record that remained unbroken for 27 years. •

A Genealogical Odyssey

Diana Bronner

When I heard I was going to become a grandmother 18 years ago I began to wonder about the blood and genes that were making up this new life, and decided to embark on a genealogical journey that consumed me for about eight years. This was before one could do such a search from the comfort of one's home on line. I spent many a day at the Regional Archive Center in Waltham where I was taught how to access the various sources available and then spent hours scouring the records. Sometimes I uncovered nothing and other days WOW! I also discovered the LDS Family History Center in Weston, which has a huge collection of Jewish records. What I uncovered over a period of many years was enormous, enough to fill boxes with binders of all the letters I wrote, census reports, marriage, birth and death certificates, photos from new found relatives and so much more.

I was doing this search to find out more about my family as well as that of my late husband Alan, father of our son, who had died when the baby was eleven months old. Alan's middle name was *Maduro*, the maiden name of his mother. He knew little about this side of his family since his mother had died when he was six years old. What he did know was that they were Sephardic Jews and that they owned the largest department store in Panama, called *Maduro y Hijos* (Maduro and Sons). That was all I had to go on.

My first big 'hit' was early on at the Center in Waltham when I was randomly scrolling from A to Z thru a microfilm copy of a 1910 NYC directory when suddenly, there was *Maduro* in what seemed to me to be in flaming red lights. I still get the chills when I think about the first time I saw that entry. Just imagine, it had been lying there for almost 85 years, just waiting for the light of day to be shed on those letters and words, just waiting for me to uncover and unearth its secrets. There was a list of *Maduros*, perhaps eight or ten living not only in NYC, but also Panama and St Thomas (directories back then were organized totally differently from those of today); the final entry was *Maduro y Hijos*, Panama. I was on to something. I didn't sleep that night!

I wrote to the St. Thomas Synagogue immediately, explaining the genealogy search I was doing on the *Maduro* family. After patiently waiting for three months, I finally called, told them who I was

and the secretary said "Oh yes, we've had a student researcher working on it, and he has found your family." With great excitement I started firing questions at her, but she said, "I can't answer these questions, you need to contact Isidor P., he is our island historian, but do it soon because he's near 90 and we don't know how long he will live." Of course, I rapidly wrote a (snail mail) letter again explaining it all. After a few months I finally got a letter from a David Stanley Sasso saying Isidor had given him my letter and that he was my third cousin (of course that was by marriage)!

Thus began a long involved relationship with David. He was a needy man in many ways and came to depend on me; we spoke by phone very often. He knew the Maduro family well and was always saying "Did I ever tell you to write so and so" and I would dutifully send letters to Panama, to California, to wherever. He was always sending me hand scribbled genealogy charts, most of which I couldn't follow. Some of the correspondence created new friendships.

At some point John and I went to St. Thomas but by then David had died so we never did meet. But he is deeply imbedded in my heart, for without him, I could never have achieved my goals. In St. Thomas, we pored over the island's genealogical records making copious notes and going to the synagogue where we found the Maduros had played an active role in the religious life there. We even went to the home of Joshua Piza, one of my son's distant ancestors and a *chazan* of the synagogue.

But still I could not find Joyce, Alan's mother, or her immediate family. Then one day, I got a letter from a man, perhaps from Panama, who, lo and behold, gave me a list of Joyce's many siblings, whom they had married, their children and where they were living. Bingo! I immediately called a Maduro in Miami. The wife answered and as I was telling her who I was, she said "just a minute" (I knew this call meant something to her) and her husband Doug got on the phone. He was Alan's first cousin and,

though they had never met, he had corresponded with him. Then I called another Maduro in Montreal and we shared stories (she was another cousin and we subsequently visited her); there was yet another cousin living in central Florida. We eventually had a family reunion in Florida with my son and his young family. At this time Doug gave me a copy of a family tree that enables me to take my grandchildren back 18 generations.

At the top of the tree is a Maduro who had lived in Spain in the late 1400's. His son moved to Portugal and it was there the Inquisition caught up with him. The notation (it's all in Spanish) says "died in the *auto da fe* for crimes against the Catholic church." What a treasure this document is. Each of my grandchildren has a copy with their names now a part of the tree.

I made contact with a Maduro living in western Canada and he told me about a Maduro reunion that was about to take place in Curaçao. We all went and met 70 or 80 of the cousins and had an historic tour of the island where once again we found the Maduros were very involved. It was in Curaçao that I found a genetic key to better understand some aspects of my son and his abilities.

The other gem of memorabilia I obtained was the microfilm of a book written in 1928 that gathered all the Maduro family stories together. There were only five copies originally made and each was considered precious and never loaned out. From the microfilm, I reprinted the book, had it bound with the original title and gave it as a gift to my son. I printed five more copies and distributed them to Maduro family members who did not have access to this book, which, by the way, is now available on line.

This journey through history in the name of genealogy was truly an odyssey and consumed me for so many years. I subsequently followed other lines of the family (Alan's father as well as my own parents) sort of traipsing all over the world to trace the history of this new generation, my grandchildren. •

**Submit your stories, memoirs, poems, photographs and other artwork
for publication in *The Bridge*.**

For details:

Call John Averell at 4-2222 or email him at TheBridge.NBOC@gmail.com

Matt Aucoin, Wunderkind

Richard J. Feffer

To accurately describe Matt Aucoin one must resort to the German noun *Wunderkind*: “A person who achieves great success when relatively young.” Matt certainly qualifies. He is a brilliant student, a competitive cross-country runner, a published poet, and master of all aspects of music. He is a conductor, a composer, a librettist, a pianist — both jazz and classical — a vocal coach, and (what we at NewBridge appreciate most) a teacher.

Matthew Albert Aucoin was born April 4, 1990 in Watertown, Massachusetts into a home that could not have been more hospitable for his future development. His mother Carole Aucoin is a writer and lecturer who enjoys playing the piano. Don Aucoin, Matt’s father, is the principal drama critic for the Boston Globe. Matt’s younger sister, Christine, is a sophomore at Medfield High School who finds musical theater exciting.

Matt showed interest in music at an early age. At four he had fun picking out the Christmas tunes on the piano after hearing them on the radio. In elementary school, he wrote his first opera. When Matt was nine he wrote a symphony that was performed at the Rivers School. At about the same age, he transcribed the score of *The Marriage of Figaro* into a work for piano.

Matt and five other musical pals, whom he met at various Medfield High School events, formed a band called Elephantom. Although they went on to various colleges in the area, they stayed together to play a few gigs, and make some lively CDs. It is astonishing to see Matt on UTube in such a different context playing jazz.

At Harvard, Matt is an English concentrator; his senior thesis is a collection of poetry called *Aftermusic*. It includes a work entitled *Poem for Violin* that is an original fusion of his two passions — music and poetry. He describes the work as “...a duet for solo violin and the silent speaker of the poem. In performance, the violinist plays the score, and the text of the poem is projected, letter by letter, onto a screen behind the performer...”

Matt is the music director of the Dunster House Opera, for which he conducted the operas *Die Fledermaus* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Both were performed at NewBridge. He composed *Sandover*, a one-act opera, which was produced at Harvard’s Lowell House Opera in May 2010.

One effort at Harvard exemplifies Matt’s genius and resourcefulness. The composer and celebrated guitarist Michael Einziger was selected to write and perform an original composition for the 2011 *First Night* concert at Harvard. But five days before the concert Mr. Einziger was hospitalized in Europe, and was unable to return to Cambridge. Dr. Thomas Kelly, a Professor of Music at Harvard University, was devastated. Matt had the solution. He told Professor Kelly that he had some rough sketches for a double quartet, and that he could expand and complete it in the five days — if he worked all night. At the concert, Matt Aucoin conducted the thirteen-member Harvard Chamber Orchestra in his original work which he titled *Music for Mike*; and received cheers of approval from the critical audience.

The most ambitious project among the many that challenged Matt at Harvard was producing the four act opera *Hart Crane*, at the *Loeb Drama Center Mainstage* in Harvard Square. He wrote the score, the libretto, and conducted the five performances. The text, supported by the music, expressed the beauty and sensitivity of Crane’s poetry ... and short life.



Photo by Diana Bronner

Shortly after NewBridge opened in the spring of 2009, a musical program was held in the Copper Beach dining room, which did not have a piano. Matt brought his own electronic keyboard, and delighted the small group with his virtuosity. Subsequent concerts were scheduled with Matt commenting more and more on the music, comments so insightful and informative that they evolved into a full 24-lesson lecture series on *The History of Opera*, followed by a second lecture series, *Everything in*

Music but Opera. NewBridge residents, most with only a casual interest in opera, would fill to capacity the Great Meadow Hall to learn about relatively obscure composers such as Gluck or Adams.

After Matt's last lecture in May 2012, there was a reception to give Matt's many NewBridge fans the opportunity to wish him well. He was given a check that represented the contributions from his NewBridge friends. He also received an exquisite album created by the artist Diana Bonner. The covers feature photographs of Matt in action — playing the piano, conducting, and lecturing. The text on the inside of the album reads:

**THANK YOU, MATT, FOR ALL THE
KNOWLEDGE YOU HAVE SHARED WITH US,
AS WELL AS ALL THE JOY YOU HAVE
BROUGHT US FOR THESE PAST THREE
YEARS.**

**OUR WISHES FOR YOUR FUTURE
SUCCESS ARE BEYOND MEASURE.
YOUR NEWBRIDGE FANS,
MAY 21, 2012.**

Many of his lectures have been videotaped and are available for a second hearing at the library.

For the fall of 2012, Matt has some very exciting opportunities. He will study composition at the prestigious Juilliard College of Music. He will be an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera Company. He will return to Massachusetts as the newly established Music Director of the Peabody Essex Museum. In this position, he is to compose and arrange musical events for the museum.

According to Matt's professor at Harvard, Federico Cortese, Matt is not only an exceptionally talented pianist, and conductor and composer; but, best of all, he has a genuine love of music. But, he adds cautiously, if one takes on too much at one time, he is in a position to stumble.

When asked the most challenging of questions: "When you return to Harvard in 2037 for your 25th anniversary class reunion, who will you be?" Matt replied, "I hope I'll just be me! But to offer a fuller answer — I want to still be doing what I'm doing today. One concrete dream: to serve as music director and composer-in-residence of an opera company that embraces the fullest definition of 'opera' — a company that presents operas as well as poetry recitations, rock and jazz concerts, dance, theater, and visual art, and sees it all as one activity."

It is most likely that this dream is one that the *wunderkind* will achieve. •

Shooting Coconuts

Nat Goldhaber

On the morning of my second day in the Army, in Fort Dix, NJ, the Sergeant in charge of my barracks gave a speech on what was expected of us as soldiers. When he was done, I half jokingly asked "when do we get our rifles?" Several of my fellow recruits chuckled. The Sergeant did not answer, but simply glared at me. I was later told that the Sergeant wanted me to report to him at 9 p.m. as he had a special assignment for me, and to "dress warmly." It was cold and dark outdoors when I reported to him. We walked to a wooded area quite a ways from the barracks until we came to what looked like a small hut. He said that inside the hut was some very secret and important stuff and for the next two hours I was to guard it with my life. He gave me a rifle with a mounted bayonet. He said I was to patrol around the hut and not to let anyone approach. It was so dark I could barely see, but I started patrolling around the hut. When I reached a certain point I heard a rustling sound. I shouted, "Who's there?" but I got no response. I was scared but continued to patrol around the hut. When I reached the same spot, I heard that same rustling sound--I was now really scared, but continued my patrol. When I reached the same spot a third time, I realized the sound was my bayonet hitting a branch of a tree.

Before leaving Fort Dix a few days later I passed by the hut. It was not locked, so I opened the door and looked inside. What I had been guarding with my life was an old discarded outhouse. The Sergeant, who was from the Deep South and had probably grown up using rifles, had put one over on me, a city boy who had never held a rifle before.

Some two and a half years later I was in the Philippine Islands. The war with Japan had just ended, and we were ordered to turn in our rifles and backpacks. I had not used either since landing in the Philippines. When I reached into my backpack, I came up with a small mouse. He scooted away as soon as I released him. Before returning our rifles, a friend and I borrowed a Jeep from the motor pool. We drove several miles away to a coconut grove and started shooting coconuts. Almost 70 years have gone by since then, and I sometimes wonder how many raw recruits learned their first lesson about soldiering while guarding an old discarded outhouse. •

The Drawing Class Glorianne Wittes

Drawing the nude figure can be very demanding and very rewarding, especially when the model has an interesting body and can get into poses that beg to be captured.

Many years ago I took drawing classes for which we frequently had male and female nude models. I would proudly bring my drawings home after every class for my family to see, and my husband would hang them up on the picture wall in our recreation room with even more pride. Julie and Bob, our children who were about five and eight at the time, were embarrassed at first by the stark nakedness of the models, especially embarrassed for their friends to see them. Television had not yet projected nudity into their lives.

A little art education answered that problem by way of a few trips to the museum to see nude drawings and paintings by famous artists. Further, several illustrated books of nude artwork on our coffee table was the frequent choice of our kids and their friends. Degas's nudes came to be as much a source of pleasure to them as were Dr. Seuss and Madeline illustrations.

In time weekly viewings of my latest nude paintings and drawings became part and parcel of playing in the Wittes rec room. I suspect the children may have considered the subjects of these artworks as "naked" rather than the more academic "nude," given their tittering and not-so-innocent, somewhat prurient interest in them. It certainly sparked their interest in using the art materials in the recreation room to draw their own dressed and undressed figures. Did our child visitors show their pictures to their parents? If they did I never got any complaining phone calls from their moms and dads about the possibly nefarious Wittes household!

There came a time when members of my art class were invited to bring a guest to participate in a *Learn To Draw* session. My husband was thrilled to come and have the pleasure of seeing in the flesh one of these gorgeous models who graced our picture wall. Surprise, surprise! My teacher had other things in mind.

Our nude model for the evening had to be one of the most pathetically haunting figures I have ever seen. She looked like she had stepped off the canvas of one of Picasso's Blue Period figures. Emaciated,

Continued at bottom of next column . . .

Starting Now Caryn Finard

Now is a good time.

Becoming a passenger in life
is a dreadful choice.

Imagine what our life could be
if we started living it.

Do what you can
with what you have right now.

Life and extinction surround us.
Where you decide to put your focus
is what matters.

It's easy to be courageous
from a secure distance.

You can carry the past with you
so tightly to your breast
that there is no room to embrace the present.

There is always a pathway that opens up
to a willing hand and an open heart.

Starting on the most important part of any crusade
is the most arduous.

Be grateful for undiscovered blessings
just around the corner. •

. . . continued from previous column

with sagging breasts and sharp bones breaking into the contours of her flesh, her appearance was shocking. She made one want to scoop her up to keep her warm and protected from staring eyes. She made one truly feel what it was like to be in her body, being seen deliberately as an object to draw rather than as a human being. She inspired the most loving of strokes as we sketched her with intense concentration. One could hear a pin drop as we worked, with none of the hum of words and laughter that was typical in our classroom. None of us was seeing her as an object. Each charcoal mark was a sign of her "realness" to us. We were transfixed with this woman and with wanting to convey the emotions she aroused in us. The end result was astonishing.

There was a singular impression of a vulnerable woman that graced our work, regardless of pose, that broke your heart to see. If anything was naked it was this vulnerability, not her body. The classroom was hushed as our teacher critiqued our drawings, our model sitting with us, now draped in a thin peignoir. Each and every one of us had drawn a small masterpiece straight from our hearts. •

My Bench
Cynthia Markle

Whenever I need to
Tune into me
I know what I must do.
I go to the Cape
To walk by the sea,
And soon the light
Shines through to me.

For years this has been my motto since I first visited the Cape. These past years, I have spent the month of February in beautiful La Jolla, California. It is often called the riviera of the USA.

On my morning walk to the Village, I travel along the coast, and when weary, sit down on one of the many benches facing the ocean and rest. My eyes turn to the interesting comments inscribed upon them and think about these deceased people and what they were like.

I have often commented to my family, "When I depart, get me a *bench*." During a recent 90th birthday celebration with my immediate family at the Hyannis Yacht Club, I was presented with a huge decorated box; nestled inside of it were eight other smaller ones. Each contained a lovely message from my children and grandchildren expressing what I have meant to them over the years, and pictures of the good times we have shared together.

The last box was very small, and inside was a little miniature bench (probably for a doll house). I held it up for all to see and couldn't wait until I opened the last, which was an envelope with this written inside:

Happy 90th Birthday, Nanny
You've shared the Cape with us
And instilled in us a love for that as well.
A BENCH with the following inscription
Has been ordered for you
To be placed at Seaview Beach
In Yarmouth, MA:

*In celebration of Cynthia Markle's
Love of Cape Cod
Continue to enjoy and share
The sand and sea.*

March 11, 2012

Continued at bottom of next column . . .

The Sinister Minister
Al Rosen

He moved and he shook
With glee and delight
As he rewrote the laws
On the left and the right
The queen was so mean
For three days and a night
She held tightly the key
To pass or to fight
What hast thou wrought?
She screamed at the lot
Play ye a game
With rules you forgot?

The sinister minister
Twisted his words
To mish and to mash
In a fast spinning gourd

And thus was forged
In a furious tizzy
A new set of keys
To the Great Public Privy

Editor's Note: *The ancients believed that rain is the urination of the gods. The Greek word for sky or heavens is ouranos, from which is derived the word 'urine', as is the name of the Greek god Uranus.* •

... continued from previous column



The *bench* has now been delivered, and when the tablet is finished, another celebration will take place and will be officially toasted with champagne. If you are ever near that area, you are welcome to sit and visit with me. •

Aggravation Max Potter

Having developed some proficiency on the computer itself, it became necessary to master the Internet, where after all, the action is and will be. I decided to go cable, which is slicker and quicker.

This was an easy decision. My first steps brought joy to the hearts of some superannuated nerds I hung out with, and from whom I milked information. Having found the world to be round I reacted like an Italian explorer and set out to meet the natives.

Initially, they were friendly. I was welcomed and invited to the feast by the cannibals. I was promised an emissary, and sure enough one day a technician “rowed out” to my condo from Comcast. He was a large man, bearing several boxes, only one of which had anything to do with my computer. Around his waist was a heavy-duty leather belt containing all tools known to man that might conceivably play a role in the installation of cable. Wrong. It developed that a trip to the truck was still necessary. We were missing a screw or two, and as we will see, not only virtual but metaphorical. An outlet was found, the modem hooked up and the plug inserted. I was told all was well, given a CD, told to wait 30 minutes and install it. He left. I did that and expected all to be up and running in jig time. As it developed it was one slow jig.

Nothing happened, so I was forced to call Mother Comcast her/himself. A gleeful gentleman with a nearly unintelligible Hindu accent, deciding that I was technically inept, offered to walk me through the installation. At one point, he seemed overwhelmed by my ignorance and was about to call on the goddess Kali for retribution when he suddenly realized that there was some problem with my modem. He discovered that the modem had never been connected. It was not my fault, but rather that of the emissary. I was not cleared of the suspicion of gross stupidity. He mumbled some numbers to me for a reference, assured me that someone would come out and hook me up and that the envoy would arrive the next day, Thursday, between three and five. He didn’t.

I called again, and they said that: a) the time was to be between eight and five, and b) not at my home, but rather at the cable box on the telephone pole. In any case, he didn’t make it anywhere, as the modem was still not on. An appointment was estab-

lished for late Saturday from four to seven. I didn’t believe for a moment that he would make it and hoped that it wouldn’t interfere with my football games. He didn’t interfere, not only with the football games, nor the movie I had brought home as back up — a long one, “Lord of the Rings.” He interfered only with my peace of mind. Of course I called again, and reached a lovely young woman, named Rachel — I had previously spoken to Steve, Mike, and Jawaharlal. There was plenty of time to chat, and I discovered that all these people were in Newfoundland. Rachel’s take was that at least it was a job. I love that all of them were sympathetic, and empathetic as well, but, unfortunately, ineffectual.

It was agreed that I would be visited the next day, Sunday, by the latest Avatar between nine and eleven. You can see that by now I had been beaten down by this modern version of the old Chinese water torture to accept an early Sunday morning appointment. But I was desperate, and anxious to return to the real world.

The next morning, as I was finishing my oatmeal, the phone rang and a chap requested admission. I was elated; I would have let anyone in. I should add here that my wife and daughters were off at a spa, living the good life.

I went to the door. I had hit the jackpot, not one but two technicians. My anxieties were overcome by the fact that they were here, complete with a heavy leather belt each. They filled the entire condo, and began to evaluate the situation, and concluded that the previous technician had exhibited a very high level of ineptitude and inattention to detail, a set of observations I had made personally. They began to undo the mistakes, but it was still not that simple. The cable box had to be visited, and this was on the roof of the eighteenth floor. A new cable had to be laid and this required drilling and carpet moving. All was done, the modem was turned on, and would you believe this — proved to be defective! Never fear. One of the chaps ran down to the truck and returned with a new one. At last. All was accomplished. We were ready to keep on trucking. I was to insert the CD, and install the system. I inserted the CD, and to no surprise, it didn’t make it. Nothing to do but call my friends in Canada, aye? This may be boring, but the mighty COMCAST, had an outage, but not to worry, I was assured that it would be fixed later in the day. It

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Homegrown Rita Fireman

It's the middle of June in my vegetable patch.
Buds are bursting out on the grape tomato plants.
Dill and basil dance in circles around them.
Marigolds dart between like rays of sun
in a green forest.

I snip a dill sprig, a basil leaf.
The aroma makes my mouth water.
I see the sandwich I'll make
some late August afternoon
when the red sun is low in the west
and a breeze blows up from the Charles.

A thick slice of toasted country bread
sprinkled with olive oil, rubbed with garlic,
spread with tomatoes and tucks of basil and dill
fills a white china plate on the kitchen counter.

I take my sandwich to the sun porch.
Marigolds shine in a blue vase.
I sit on rainbow cushions in my favorite
wicker chair and slowly savor
my homegrown harvest. •

wasn't. I went to bed and decided to start over the
next day with a will and a hearty breakfast.

I called and this time got a little girl with a squeaky
voice. Her name was Jennifer and she may well
have been a character out of "Anne of Green Gables."
She was very helpful, but giggled. Still, there
is nothing that says a technician can't giggle, especially
if she gets the system up and running, which she did.

Suddenly, there I was in the New World, and
the 21st century all at the same time. I flooded the
ether with words of my success. Soon I received
messages from all over, including an email from my
wife who was at that time in a eucalyptus inhalation
room, and my daughters in the cyber room, at the
same Spa. My son naturally sent me an email pointing
out that I had made an error. My techie friends
from Brandeis assured me that I could now make
the same mistakes in much faster time. Thank
goodness, one buddy limited himself to a simple
mazel tov. After much *sturm und drang* all systems
were go, as advertised. I was now like everyone
else, but took away one lesson.

Always look a gift horse in the mouth. If the
Trojans had done that, they would still have an empire
today. •

Frank Sinatra Dotty Sacks

One sultry evening in mid September 1953, Lenny,
the best Dad, was at home babysitting our young
son and daughter while I was downtown taking a
home decorating course. Class was over and I was
headed for the subway station.

As I approached the Copley Plaza Hotel, three
men emerged. The one in the middle was none other
than Frank Sinatra. They got into a taxi and then
one of the three got out of the car and approached
me saying, "Did you see who got into that cab?"

"Why yes" I said, "I believe it was Frank Sinatra."

"You're right, honey, Frank thinks you look
like Ava and he would like you to come with us."

"Wow, he must mean Ava Gardner," I thought.
"What a great compliment, but no way am I getting
into a cab with three guys and I'm certainly not
dressed for the occasion." I was wearing bobby sox
and saddle shoes.



In the meantime, this guy is snapping his fingers,
saying, "C'mon, doll, Frank is headed for the Latin
Quarter and he'd like you to join him. Waddya say,
yes or no?"

"Oh my God," I thought, "who would believe
this?"

Then I heard myself saying, "I'd love to but I'm
afraid I have to say no."

I couldn't wait to get home to tell Lenny and
when I did, I could not believe what he said: "You
should have gone with him. Nothing would have
happened because Sinatra had a show to do. You
then could have called me from the Latin Quarter
and I would have come downtown and rescued
you."

Being caught up in the moment, I never would
have thought this out rationally. •

Shopping for Grandma Estelle Schwedock

Memories of my childhood are very vivid. Doing the many household chores for my Grandmother was a great part of my daily routine.

Everyday after school the routine consisted of shopping for food, as well as sweeping and dusting the apartment. Friday particularly was a busy day. The apartment had to be prepared for *Shabbat*. Furniture in every room was polished, floors washed and waxed. The staircase leading to our apartment had to be swept and washed. Once all this was done it was time for shopping.

Going to the bakery for *challah* or fresh rye bread as well as day-old cake was a chore I hated. I was embarrassed to ask for day-old cake, which was set aside in a special area, since I felt it informed the baker we could not afford fresh cake. Checkerboard cake, black and white squares or seven-layer cake were my father's favorites. My wise grandmother, knowing how I felt, explained that day old cake was healthier since the cake had time to, as she put it, "rest", and therefore was easily digested.

Visiting the grocer, fruit store, fish store, butcher and chicken store was an adventure that I loved. I was always greeted by each owner with a smile and referred to as Mrs. Press's granddaughter. The store was large with divisions for each owner. The grocery, dairy was at one end of a large building. Large mounds of butter and assorted bulk cheese were visible, as they were stored in a refrigerator case with glass doors, built against the wall with a marble counter in front. When you purchased one of the items the owner would open the door, reach in and cut a slab for you, wrapping it in wax paper on the counter. The canned and package goods were in the rear and you walked down the aisles selecting your items.

Opposite the grocery, housed behind a large glass counter was the appetizing department with assorted smoked fish displayed. Barrels of sour and half-sour pickles, sauerkraut and assorted candies were also standing near. The owner stood behind the display helping you with your purchase.

Housed behind this department against a common wall was a fruit market. There were car-

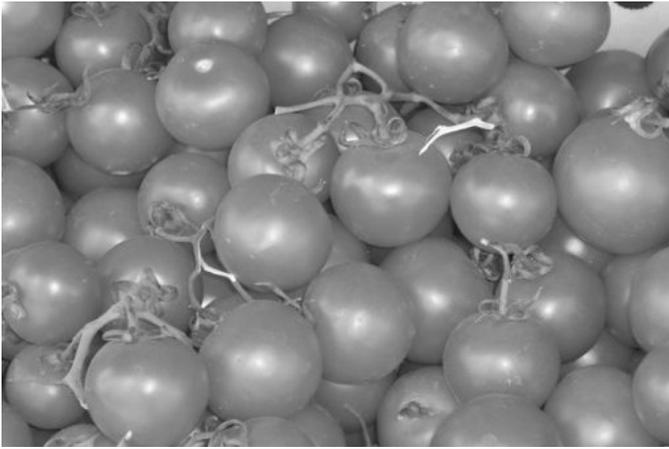
tons of various fruits and vegetables strewn all over the floor. In the back of the building behind the fruit market were fish tanks filled with live carp, white fish, salmon, and other species of fish, all good for the making of *gefilte fish*. After selecting the fish you wanted, the owner caught it in a net, laid the fish on a marble counter and hit it on the head with a wooden mallet. He cleaned it, scaled it and packed it in newspaper. Your purchase was completed.

Across the floor facing the vegetable display was the butcher who had a refrigerated case filled with various cuts of meat, a large walk-in freezer in the rear. Since this area was visible to the street, hanging in a window were pieces of intestine and meats.

In the rear behind the freezer sat a woman, who everyone called the "chicken lady," and her husband. I remember him as a tall very handsome man, wearing a bloodstained apron. They housed live chickens behind the building. He would hold up several live chickens for your selection. Once the selection was made he took it outside in the rear and slaughtered it, bringing the dead chicken back into the building for his wife to handle the final cleansing. She was a small petite woman sitting next to a burner with an open flame. She would pluck off the feathers, burning the remaining pinfeathers in the flame, then cut open the chicken cleaning out all the interior. Sometimes there were unfertilized eggs that my grandmother boiled in chicken soup, a special delight. Feathers filled the air, some resting in her hair, shoulders and on the sawdust floor.

The sweet smell of the butter, cheese, the salty odor of the smoked fish, mixed with the aroma of the assorted pickles, vegetables, fruit, the dry musty odor of the burnt feathers, are easily remembered with a feeling of longing for those days.

Years later when I was an adult, married, with children of my own, I was shopping at a small neighbor store located in a new community. To my surprise, behind the counter was the man who helped me as a child when I did my grandmother's shopping. He recognized me, greeted me by saying "So, Mrs. Press's grandchild, what can I do for you today?" •



The Tomato Kings *Gloria Rosenzweig*

The 1915 N.Y.C. census lists my father as “peddler.” He must have been about 30 years old. By 1918 he was listed as the owner of the Crystal Fruit Market.

He came to this country at 17, an immigrant from Romania with no money, just the address of a cousin. He was the oldest boy. An older, married sister, Marie, was still in Romania. Within a few years he was able to bring his whole family from Birlad, Romania to New York City, leaving only his father behind. No one seemed to miss him. Legend has it that he was killed in a bar room brawl in 1914.

By 1918, when my father’s first wife died during the flu epidemic, he had six children. A few years later he married my mother. Three more children were born; I was the oldest.

We were a large, lusty family, always singing, eating, telling jokes, and working, working, working. The boys followed their father in the produce business. By the time I first remember, Jack and Manny were his partners in a fruit and vegetable market in Laurelton, N.Y., called Power Produce.

Charles, the buyer for the business, was an ornery man with a fierce temper, the exact opposite of all the children. Very early in the morning he drove to the wholesale market to replenish supplies. In fact, he died there one morning.

Jack became the buyer. His picture could be next to the word “extrovert” in the dictionary. I can still hear his booming laugh and see his mischie-

vous eyes. He was unflappable and the hero of this story.

One fateful day, Jack headed for the market in a fierce snowstorm. By the time that he arrived, snow had blanketed New York, making most roads impassable and closing businesses. Jack was one of the few buyers who had made the trip; sellers were frantic, especially those with perishable produce, like tomatoes.

Jack took a gamble. With no money he bought every tomato in the market. He convinced the sellers to give him credit for a few days. You can’t imagine how many tomatoes he brought home – truck loads. The family got to work packaging tomatoes. The next day they spread throughout the city, selling tomatoes. It seems New Yorkers cannot live without tomatoes; the markets were panicked and people bought at any price.

Within a few days he was able to pay his debt and recognize enormous profit. Power Produce used the money to open a wholesale tomato business.

They were enormously successful, eventually growing their own tomatoes. They were generous to a fault, spreading their largesse throughout the family and beyond. The Tomato Kings, as they were called, eventually married, raised families and enjoyed life.

As is often the case, the next generation was fully educated, affluent and uninterested in the business. Power Produce died a natural death. You know the end of the story – it happened all across America. Some of the children continued to flourish, others did not. Fortunes were lost, ill will was created. The love and laughter of the immigrant families, the fearlessness, is gone. We are still a great family but it is not the same.

Actually, this is not the end of the story. Shortly after Jack’s death, my husband Stanley met a friend on the subway, a man who was a serious stamp collector. He said that the stamp market was in a panic following the death of a man by the name of Jack Braunstein. Stan said, “You mean my brother-in-law?” Indeed he did. It seems that Jack had cornered the stamp market, too. •

Adventure in Venice

Sybil Gladstone

The New York Times Magazine was a Sunday stand-by in our house, so of course I read the juicy, detailed article it contained about Peggy Guggenheim's Palazzo, which sat on an island on the Grand Canal in Venice. After a life of amorous misadventures, and feeling that her New York gallery was not sufficiently appreciated, Peggy had moved her considerable art collection to romantic Venice. Some day I hoped to see it, and one day I did. The way I got there, and the way I returned to my hotel were...well, unusual.

Dick was in Italy on a business trip, and I found myself on my own one day in beautiful, sparkling Venice. I hopped onto a *vaporetto* (large water taxi), paying a few cents fare, and crossed the Grand Canal, landing on a small dock. No sign pointed to my desired destination, but a couple of American women said they were heading that way. Off we went, up a narrow, rock-strewn hilly path, finally arriving at tall iron gates, a luxuriant garden, and the *palazzo*.

Awed and respectful, I wandered through galleries of *avant garde* as well as ancient works of art, until I could wander no more. A stone garden bench beckoned me to rest and reflect, and write a few post cards before returning to the Royal Danieli Hotel. In no hurry to leave, I lingered in the garden, daydreaming, when the *grande dame* herself, Peggy Guggenheim, came out of the building to walk her little white dogs. Desperately, I tried to think of something to say to her, but words failed me and off she went, up that rocky path.

Suddenly I became aware that daylight was waning, and the blue hour would soon be upon this watery world. Bestirring myself, I gathered up post cards, purse and various possessions, to head back to the dock. It was easy to find my way this time, and feeling contented, I awaited the next *vaporetto* until some college students came along. Did they know the schedule for these ferries? "Oh, they're not running anymore today!"

Stricken, I could not imagine a way to get back to my hotel and my husband. The Grand Canal loomed wide, endless before me. Evening was slowly descending. I was stranded! Soon a sleek motorboat sidled up to the dock, creating waves and looking tempting when the driver offered to take me



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across the lagoon. At what price? His reply elicited warnings from the young student crowd. "Don't do it! Too much money!" Bargaining was out of the question. He refused.

Despairing, I looked around and saw a woman approach. Did she know a way across the canal? She sternly replied that she was walking over the bridge. What a joy to learn that there was a bridge. Might I accompany her? Without a reply, she departed at a rapid pace and I hastened to keep up with her, following along, huffing and puffing.

Miraculously, the Grand Canal narrowed at a distant point, making possible the construction of a graceful bridge. Once across that bridge, I knew my way back to the hotel, my lovely home for the visit in Venice. •