



The Bridge

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

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Umbrellas of NewBridge

Photo by Diana Bronner

Notes from the Editor

In this issue we have two stories by residents who passed away recently.

Max Potter was a special person to us. His seven stories have appeared in all but the first issue of *The Bridge*. They were all wonderfully funny, insightful, interesting, often educational, as Max himself was. Max was part of our Editorial staff since its inception. His final story appearing in this issue, "The Long Walk", is typical; the title is ironic, as Max takes that final walk from NewBridge.

Al Garshick's story "Pizza All Around" is his first and last entry in *The Bridge*. Al stopped

me one day and asked if he could work with me to tell his story, how he felt he was watched over throughout his whole life.

Many of you knew Al only as a man severely disabled with Parkinson's who rode a motorized scooter and coped with his difficulties with truly remarkable determination. I recorded about 45 minutes in an interview with Al. The short story we publish here came after he showed me the photo that is part of this tale. Al was working on a more organized personal life story up to his death. Unfortunately you will not see more, but enjoy reading this anecdote. We will miss them. May their memories be a blessing. •

Invitation to Lunch

Harvey Burstein

The time: The morning of Erev Pesach, 1950

The place: An apartment building on Chicago's South Side.

I was the FBI special agent assigned the Chicago phase of a background investigation of a local attorney nominated by the President to be a U. S. District Court Judge. Among those to be interviewed were the nominee's current and former apartment building neighbors. The hallways were filled with the smell of holiday preparation.

I knocked on one door. A woman who spoke with an accent answered but despite identifying myself by name and as an FBI agent, refused to open it. Instead she told me to go away and not bother her. At this point I broke into Yiddish telling her I knew how busy she must be getting ready for Pesach with all of the cooking and baking, and I promised that I'd not take up a lot of her time.

The door flew open, she invited me in, made me sit on a comfortable chair, knew the nominee, and answered all of my questions. The interview lasted about half an hour. I thanked her for her help and speaking with me, apologized for the interruption, and as I prepared to leave her apartment she said to me "If you'll still be in the neighborhood lunch time come back, the gefilte fish will be done and I'll give you lunch."

This was not the only time my speaking Yiddish proved helpful; it also enabled me to help another agent whose sole lead from the New York office was to positively identify the author of a letter in an edition of *The Morning Freiheit*, the Yiddish version of *The Daily Worker*, the Communist Party's organ. He made several pretext calls in an attempt to get confirmation but with no luck, undoubtedly due in large part to his unmistakable Southern drawl. He then asked for my help.

I called the author's home and in his absence spoke with his wife. No less important than my knowledge of Yiddish was my familiarity with idiomatic expressions and linguistics – in this case the author and his wife were *Litvaks* not Russians.

A lengthy conversation ensued, the author's identity was confirmed, and she blessed and thanked me for complimenting her husband on his article. She said she'd love for him to meet me and, not surprisingly, she extended an invitation to lunch for that purpose. I thanked her but declined. The other agent now was able to close his case.

It was my Yiddish speaking ability that resulted in a friendship with the Chicago editor of the Yiddish paper *The Morning Journal*. He then became an invaluable source of information (*not* an informant) to all Chicago agents in helping identify Jewish members of the Communist Party and Party activities. •

Harvey Burstein is an AL resident

It's The People

Babs Radner

I remember when someone asked me, "What do you like about NBOC?" My immediate response was

"It's the people."

When my husband Eph became ill, there was a knock on the door, and a delicious, home-made apple pie was handed to me.

"Yes, it's the people."

After my husband died, when I and other residents were returning from an evening event, walking through the garage to our separate villas, they said to me, "We are going to watch you until you are safely in the elevator."

"Yes, it's the people."

When a physician resident noticed a sore on my nose, the physician said "Come to my apartment and I'll give you something for that."

"Yes, it's the people."

And when someone said to me, "I'm going shopping; is there anything you need?"

"Yes, it's the people."

When I told someone that my alarm clock was no longer working, a new one appeared at my door.

"Yes, it's the people."

And again after Eph died, and I was sitting on a bench in the courtyard, a friendly couple came over and asked me if I would like to join them for supper. Since I had seen a car sticker which said, "Loneliness Kills", I immediately accepted.

"Yes, it's the people."

And finally, a comment was recently made to me, "Your daughters are beautiful." How could I feel otherwise?

"Yes, it's the people. •

Time Fades

Liane Reif-Lehrer

Time fades in my mind.
And things compress
In antitelescopic fashion
On a small space
In that gelatinous grey computer

Encased in bone
Memory comes
in disproportionate snatches;

Years jumble and falter,
one over the other.

Strangers momentarily
converge in time and place,
Only to be plucked apart
by logical computation.

Trivia loom large
And impose their past presence
over and over,

Weaving irrelevantly in and out of now,
While other happenings,
Of perhaps great consequence,
Hide, like a buried hieroglyph,
Somewhere

between those layers of cells.

Still photos emerge in time
As mobile realities;
Momentous action
frozen into a single frame

—Masked in black—
Statically, searchingly, thrown at times
On that inner screen.

Axons crossing axons,
A jumbled network—
Superconvoluted—
Once meticulously insulated—
The myelin sheaths wear thin
At ancient crossings: short circuits!
Waking approaches dreaming
Asymptotically—
Or perhaps it will cross the axis! •

Maduro Genealogy

Diana Bronner



My name is Joshua Piza and I would like to tell you my story. I am a Dutchman, born in Amsterdam, Netherlands on August 23, 1772 to Moses Piza and Sara Palache. I became a scholar, an astronomer, and a linguist well versed in

Hebrew and Spanish and of course Dutch. I was also very involved in my work as a hazan, which means that I was an official of the synagogue and conducted part of the service, as well as acting as a cantor. In 1816 I was appointed by the government of Holland to become the hazan for the Mikve Israel Congregation in Curaçao, a Dutch island in the southwestern Caribbean. With some excitement, but also trepidation, I accepted the position, though my wife Bienvenida was very reluctant to make this move. It comforted her to know that her unmarried sister, Esther Zacuto, as well as, of course, our two young boys, would be going with us.

After a long arduous journey we finally arrived in Curaçao. There was a huge celebration banquet to welcome and honor me and my family. The food was brought in with great ceremony, on platters delicately balanced on the heads of what I later found out were Nubian slaves of dark skin and great stature. We had never seen such black people before and my wife, in great fear, cried out "*ach der duyvil, der duyvil!*" She fainted and never recovered from her demonic apparitions and died several days later. I was grief-stricken. My sister-in-law moved in with me to look after the two children, but the congregation would not permit such an arrangement and, following Jewish tradition, said I had to marry her. I dutifully complied.

She soon became pregnant, but died in childbirth, as did her twin babies. Once again the congregation said that as the hazan, I had to be married. I didn't know whom to marry so they chose for me a sixteen-year-

old girl, Hannah Sasso. Not only was I twenty-eight years her senior, but even worse, she had an uncle who had 24 children, all boys! And I feared she also would fill me with children. I resisted the marriage, but we married anyway in 1816; over the course of our marriage we had, I am happy to say, only nine children. After ten years in Curaçao there arose dissension in the congregation over the pronunciation of certain Hebrew words. It had always been Sephardic, but now with the influx of Ashkenazi members, they wanted it their way. I vehemently protested in favor of Sephardic, but in the ensuing battle, which was splitting the congregation, I was told it would be best that I leave. You can imagine my anger, but I had no choice.

My family and I set sail for St. Thomas where I secured a position in the synagogue as the hazan. Once again though, after many years of faithful service, the same vexations about pronunciation arose and Hannah thought that, at my age, it would be best if I resigned. Resign! With all these daughters on my hands! Oh woe! How was I going to support my family?

But Hannah was resourceful and ahead of her time and she said she would become the family breadwinner. She opened a little dry goods store on the island, which at the time was experiencing great prosperity, and managed to bring in enough income to support us.

In the meantime, one of our daughters, Esther, married Solomon Maduro, a man from a very respectable family, highly regarded in our congregation. They had eight children, bringing me many blessings.

Around this time there was much talk about Panama and the building of some kind of a canal. Esther, who had inherited her mother's business sense, suggested moving to Panama to join her son, Sam, who had started a small store in Panama City to take advantage of what appeared to be a promising future for the country. The store was called *Maduro e Hijos* (Maduro & Sons). The store prospered.

Author's Note: If you can imagine, it is today (2012) the oldest department store in the

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How to Make Baklava

Richard J. Feffer

Richard A Norton, MD, Chief of Gastroenterology at the Tufts-New England Medical Center was deeply troubled. On routine rounds with his retinue of students and interns, he was at the bedside of a patient suffering from a *phytobezoar*. This is the unusual condition when fibers in the ingested food cling together forming a ball in the stomach. As more food is consumed, the ball, in "snowball" fashion, becomes larger and larger. It can eventually block the digestive process. The usual corrective procedure is simple: a surgeon slits the gut and removes the growth. But this patient had had this condition several times before, and surgery was deemed risky.

At the conference that followed the rounds, Dr. Norton reviewed this case, emphasizing the risks of another operation. Did anyone have a suggestion? After a long pause, he noticed Janice Feffer, RD, the clinical nutritionist assigned to the team, raise her hand. "You have a suggestion, Janice?" She replied, "I know that raw pineapple juice has the protein-splitting enzyme, Bromelain, which dissolves mucus. If the patient were to drink quantities of uncooked pineapple juice, the adhesive holding the fibers together might dissolve and the fibers would then pass through the digestive system. It would be crucial that the juice be unprocessed"

The group's skepticism was expressed by a lengthy silence. Dr. Norton asked her if she really thought this would work. Janice replied, "I can't be sure it will work; but the treatment is not costly, and there is absolutely no risk." "Further," she added, "I haven't heard any other suggestions." "We will give it a try," decided Dr. Norton.

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country, 137 years old; it has expanded to nine stores throughout Panama, employing over 1000 workers. Now that's a successful entrepreneurial venture! My son is a direct descendant of Joshua Piza and Hannah. I learned all of the above through many years of genealogical research. •

For days the patient sipped unprocessed pineapple juice, and more unprocessed pineapple juice. The phytobezoar kept getting smaller and smaller and finally disappeared.

Dr. Norton and Janice thought that this unusual treatment might be useful to other physicians who might have similar cases. They submitted an account of the pineapple juice procedure to the *Journal of the American Medical Society*, which published the article. Not surprisingly, many inquiries followed, and they came from locations as distant as Honolulu and London.

Lawrence Galton, the medical editor of *Family Circle*, a magazine for homemakers sold at the checkout stations in supermarkets, thought that it would be relevant information for housewives. He was permitted to rewrite the *Journal* entry in lay language, and it was featured in the April 1977 issue.

The patient was ecstatic. She had not only avoided dreaded surgery but she would continue to drink raw pineapple juice, therapeutically assuring her that there would be no more phytobezoars in her future. How could she express her thanks to Janice? She was of Armenian descent, and she would teach her how to make baklava from a family recipe. On an arranged Saturday morning, she came to Janice's home burdened with two large aluminum cookie sheets and bundles containing phylo dough, chopped nuts and honey. This sweet Armenian delicacy satisfied Janice's sweet tooth; but her real satisfaction was the gratitude from a woman whose life she may have saved. •

Hey there Residents!

Are you a new resident, or have you never written something for *The Bridge*? We really need new stories, poems, artwork, articles. Everyone has something to tell. We hear them over the dinner table.

If you need some pointers or instructions, get in touch with Ed Goldstein by email (EG.TheBridge@gmail.com) or telephone (4-2251).

If you want to work with an

My Father's Secret Sister *Edward Goldstein*

My father had two brothers and two sisters.

Uncle Marcus was the eldest. My mother and I spent a week with him and his family in his beautiful summer home in the Carpathian Mountains when we visited Poland in 1936. He had two sons, Erik and Hugo; you will hear more about Hugo later.

Aunt Rosa lived with us in Germany for many years. She practically raised my brother and me.

And then there was Aunt Klara. I didn't even know I had an aunt named Klara until my father, in his eighties, wrote me a letter in which he told me about her. The purpose of the letter was actually to expound on the evils of intermarriage (I was not married at the time), and Klara's story was intended to serve as an object lesson to me.

So, here's the story my father told in his letter.

Aunt Klara was born in 1899 in a village in Galicia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She was the next-to-youngest child.

The story really begins in the year 1921. My father, after serving in the Austrian and Polish Armies for seven years, had returned home. My uncle Marcus had gone into the timber business and was building a new sawmill near a village called Dzwiniacz, in newly independent Poland. My father and my uncle Siegfried were supervising the building of the sawmill. They lived with Klara and Rosa, who kept house for them.

The two young men worked long hours all week. On Saturday nights they would dress up and attend dances in the neighboring small town of Solotwina, the commercial center for the surrounding villages. Rosa, the youngest, stayed home. Klara usually went with them. According to my father, she was "a very nice girl, long natural blond hair, a nice figure, etc."

At one of the dances she met Viktor Klatka, a "very fine young engineer with a big oil outfit," but not Jewish. As these things will happen, Klara and Viktor fell in love, eloped, and got married. As my father wrote, "we could do nothing, they were married, and that was that."

My father saw her once after that and sent her some money after the War.

Why had he kept her existence secret from his children for so long?

I don't know. But conversion and intermarriage of a family member has traditionally been a matter of deep shame and embarrassment for Jews. In fact, it was a custom for many devout Jewish families to sit *shiva*, i.e., to enter into a week's deep mourning, when a member married outside the faith or converted. I don't think my father's family actually went that far — the brothers were, after all, not that religious, and their parents were dead. But the fact is that my father kept his sister a deep dark secret for fifty years.

That letter was the last I heard on the subject from him. He never mentioned it again, and neither did I.

I had more or less forgotten about Aunt Klara when I received a rather different letter a few years ago.

As part of my genealogical research, I had written to my cousin Hugo, Uncle Marcus's younger son, who lives in Israel. Among other matters I had asked him, if he wanted, to tell me about his experiences during the years of the Holocaust. He responded with a long letter. This is part of the story he told in it.

Stanislawow, his hometown, is located in Eastern Galicia, which had been taken over by the Russians when World War II started in 1939. When the Germans invaded Russia in June 1941, they overran and occupied the town. Four months later, in October 1941, Hugo (then 18) was among the Jews in the town who were rounded up and moved to the Jewish cemetery; there, about 12,000 of them were shot dead. He and his parents succeeded in escaping. A few weeks later the surviving Jews were moved into the Ghetto.

Hugo and his parents were thinking desperately of how to escape the fate that they by now recognized was awaiting them. At this point, Klara and her non-Jewish husband Viktor enter into the story. Viktor, hearing about their situation, wrote to Hugo's parents in the Ghetto and offered to hide Hugo from the Germans.

But Hugo knew that Viktor's family was

already sheltering Klara and her children, who, being of Jewish blood, were at great risk; he did not want to endanger them further by living with them.

So Hugo stayed in the Ghetto until August 1942 when his parents were killed in a particularly gruesome way. He got in touch with Viktor through the Polish underground. At great risk to himself, Viktor gave him some forged papers and money, which allowed him to escape the Ghetto and join a group of Jewish partisans fighting the Germans. After months of heavy fighting, Hugo was severely wounded and recovered after a long stay in a Russian military hospital.

When the War ended he left Poland and made his way to a Displaced Persons camp in Bad Gastein in Austria where I visited him while I was serving in the Army of Occupation of Germany. From there he went illegally to Israel.

Klara and Viktor survived the War. Hugo has remained in touch with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Today, Hugo lives in Haifa. He has a son and three grandchildren and, oh yes, a new girlfriend. He credits his Polish uncle Viktor, as he calls him, with his survival.

Is there a moral to this story? I don't know, but there certainly is some irony. •

The Artist *Sybil Gladstone*

Young people who attend Newton schools have many fine opportunities. Some years ago, when I was working at Bigelow Junior High School as a teacher aide, I was asked to take a carful of ninth graders to visit an artist. All ninth graders were to be given an opportunity to interview a person pursuing the career the student hoped to follow. It was decided that we would call on David Holleman, creator of fine mosaics for religious institutions and private individuals.

Driving to the Cambridge studio in my car, I spoke to the kids about David Holleman, suggesting that in his work clothes he might look unimpressive, but he was actually quite famous and should be treated with respect. On arrival, we were welcomed into the storefront studio as Mr. Holleman set out folding chairs for us and proceeded to share information about his early years. How did he become an artist? He said he was "very lucky" because his father allowed him, while attending high school, to use his meager earnings to travel to Saturday art classes in Boston.

One of the irrepressible students blurted out, "How does it feel to be famous?" The artist offered to tell us a story. One day, while he had visitors in his studio, the woman who was working at the pottery wheel in a back room came out to ask him for assistance. He helped her, then returned to the people in the studio. When he asked

them, "Do you know who that is?" There was no response, just blank looks.

Then he spoke golden words to the young people with me, saying "That was Ginger Rogers, once a famous movie star, and none of the visitors that day recognized her. So you see," said David Holleman, "it's not important to be famous. It's much more important to be happy with your wife and children."

Later we talked about his work, and he showed us a large flat frame in which he had rolled out a bed of brown clay. On the wet clay he had placed a cartoon (original drawing, first step in the production of a work of art). With a stylus he went over the lines of the drawing, impressing them slightly into the clay. When he lifted the paper, there was the drawing, brown lines from the clay on the paper, a beautiful image of Boston Symphony Orchestra players. This drawing was hanging up drying on the day of our visit, and I was irresistibly drawn to it. He agreed that he would be willing to sell it, and I arranged to have my husband see it. The clay in the large frame would be sculpted, and the finished piece given to the artist's dentist or doctor or lawyer, in exchange for their services. What a beautiful arrangement! David offered to frame the drawing and we brought it proudly home to elicit surprise and wonderment from friends who see it.

One Eventful Evening
Nat Goldhaber

It was the winter of 1988. I was courting Bunny (her real name is Ruth, but her mother said she was born on Easter Sunday and had nicknamed her Bunny.) She had invited me for a lobster dinner one Friday evening. She lived in Manhattan and I lived in New Jersey. I drove into the City and found a parking spot on Park Avenue, at the corner of 80th Street. Bunny lived on 79th Street at Third Avenue.

I got out of my car and started walking on 80th toward Third Avenue. The block between Park and Third Avenue had homes mainly occupied by diplomats and had no pedestrians. It was getting dark; suddenly a young man started walking beside me, keeping step with me but not saying a word. After a while, I said to him: "I'm not giving you a handout. You would do better getting a job." He did not say anything, but kept on walking. Becoming somewhat apprehensive, I reached in my pocket and took out several quarters and gave them to him. He took them and threw them into the gutter. He said, "I want your wallet." Instinctively, I said, "I am not giving you my wallet." He then jumped in front of me and drew a gun from inside his jacket. I raised my hands and said: "OK - I'll give you my wallet." As I gave him my wallet I said, "There is a lot of cash. Why not take the cash and give me back my wallet?" Much to my surprise, he removed the cash, dropped the wallet on the ground and ran off. I then continued walking to Bunny's apartment.

When I got there I told her to shut off the stove. I told her what had happened and that I had to get to a police station and report the theft. When I got to the police station and told them my story, they sat me down at a table, gave me several albums with photos of suspects and asked me to try to identify the young man who had robbed me. I could not. They told me that walking on the Avenue is safe, but when going crosstown, such as what I was doing, it was much safer to use streets with two-way traffic, such as 72nd Street, 79th Street or 86th Street.

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Customer is Always Right?
Rita Fireman

What is the Occasion dear?
Your son is getting married.
We outfit many mothers of the groom.
I'd say about a size 14.
You are sure it's 12.
I'll bring some 14s just in case.
You want 12s, I'll bring 12s.
I've got some gorgeous gowns.
Just came in yesterday, all new styles.
Just sit down and relax.
You came to the right place.
Ah, here we are.
Take a look at this.
Makes a statement, don't you think.
Blush rose, newest shade from New York.
Oh, rose is not your color.
You prefer blue. I'll give you blue.
This we call Alice blue gown.
It's a classic.
Worn by a president's daughter.
Too plain for you? You want softness.
I'll bring softness.
Now this beauty has everything you want.
Try it on dear.
Stunning. It's absolutely you.
Bertha, come over here.
Does she look fabulous or does she look fabulous.
For this price you are getting a jewel.
Look darling, Filenes Basement we are not.
Two blocks down and around the corner. •

After walking out of the police station I realized I had forgotten to tell them that there might be fingerprints on my wallet that he had touched and given back to me. I did not go back. I was anxious to get back to Bunny and our lobster dinner. She had agonized all day about putting live lobsters in boiling water, something she had never done before. I realized then that she was interested in me. Six months later we were married. •

Eric's Arrival *Estelle Schwedock*

Eric arrived after six years.

Early in our marriage Herb and I agreed that we would have a large family with many children. However after six years we had not been successful. Having visited many physicians, each one giving us useless advice, we finally decided to take another path to parenthood and adopt.

We contacted the Louise Wise Agency in New York City and applied. We were invited to a seminar in a large auditorium given by one of the social workers. A representative of the agency standing on the stage informed us about the procedures involved. We were startled to learn that of the 100 couples attending only 10 couples would eventually go home with a child. After the lecture we spoke to several couples, which left us feeling depressed. Many of those applying were professional: doctors, lawyers, one judge, bankers, investment brokers. We didn't have a chance. Herb taught in a New York City school earning a small salary and I worked for an optical company earning a reasonable salary – nothing compared to the other applicants. Doom set in, but we started the process.

A social worker, Miss Fisher, was assigned to us. She was rather young and

really unattractive, with dowdy hair pulled back in an old fashion bun, no makeup. She interviewed us together several times as well as separately.

After each interview we waited for a letter that would inform us of the next step or of dismissal. It was a nightmare. When the letter finally came we both hesitated opening it, and heaved a great sigh of relief when reading of the next appointment. A home visit was scheduled. Finally after ten months we were informed that we were to appear for a physical. I was now completely apprehensive about our ever getting a baby. I was overweight and I was sure this would be taken into account. But on June 18th after 11 months we were called and told to come to the agency to meet our four-month-old baby boy. It's hard for me to describe the joy, the happiness, the excitement we both felt. When we arrived at the agency we were escorted to a private room where we waited impatiently for him to arrive. After a short time a lovely blonde woman, his foster mother, carried in this adorable shaggy haired, thumb in mouth baby. He was introduced to us. Papers describing his likes and dislikes were given to us. We visited with him for one hour, changing his diaper, cuddling him. What glee! On June 24th, our sixth wedding anniversary, we brought our son home. Eric had finally arrived. •

A Happy Ending *Caryn B. Finard*

I awoke one Saturday morning with great elation and anticipation. The sun was smiling back at me. It was the day I was going to an animal shelter to adopt a dog. I had to consciously watch my speed as I drove to my destination, because I was so anxious to arrive. When I walked into the area where the crates were housing the dogs, I was traumatized by the sight. I observed a miniature French Poodle trembling in her crate. My heart broke when the attendant told me that she had been abused.

She had only been in the shelter for a few days. They drove out of state to rescue her from another shelter that was going to euthanize her, because she had worn out her welcome. I am a passionate animal lover and

her abuse history tore me apart. I asked if I could hold her. I held her in my arms and nurtured her, trying to alleviate her fear. She captured my heart, and I tenderly smothered her with kisses. I announced joyfully that this was the dog for me.

It took her three weeks to adjust to her new environment, and gradually learn to trust me. I chose a French name for her, Cherie, meaning "Dear". I take her everywhere with me. She enjoys her walks, going to the park, and sniffing everything in sight. Cherie used to cower when she was greeted by anyone. Now she welcomes everyone, tail wagging, eager to meet her next friend. I feel so proud and elated that I rescued Cherie, and gave her a loving and safe home free from fear and cruelty. I love her dearly and I'm so glad she is such an important part of my life. •

The Wheels of the Bus

Glorianne Wittes.

My husband and I spent most of the summer of 1972 in travel, starting in Germany and ending in Greece, culminating in a seven day cruise of the Greek Islands. A Yugoslavian travel agency arranged for what was billed as "a luxury overnight cruise from Dubrovnik to a port in Greece and an overnight, air-conditioned ride on a beautifully appointed bus from there to Athens." Sounded good. We signed on.

Our luxury boat turned out to be a decidedly non-luxurious old WW II warship put to peacetime use. Our luxury cabin turned out to be a tiny space with room only for hard-as-rocks bunk beds. Dinner was served at the Captains Table where the only other guests on the boat were a tour-group of about sixty very loud and boisterous Germans. They cut us dead. The food was indigestible and tasteless. That and pipes which seemed to surround our room rattled and groaned and kept us up all night.

Our host on the bus was a Yugoslav man from the agency with which we had booked. The bus driver was Greek. Then there were ourselves, the only Americans on the bus, and a busload of elderly Finnish comrades who were travelling together. Their tour guide was a woman who, throughout the trip, lectured on the history of Greece in Finnish.

Summer in Greece is very, very hot. It was stifling in our "luxury air conditioned bus" that turned out to be non-air-conditioned. The Yugoslav agent claimed it had just broken down and would be fixed *en route* so as not to delay us. We should have known better.

The wheels of the bus rolled on and on but the air conditioning was never fixed. And the Finnish guide never stopped for a moment in telling her charges the entire history of Greece to the delight of her group and the horror of the bus driver. It was aggravating. We sympathized with the bus driver who begged the guide to stop her delivery. She smiled politely, nodded her head in what appeared to be a yes (straight up and down) but which must have meant NO for she continued on. Our Yugoslav agent asked her to oblige the driver and to stop

but to no avail. The Greek bus driver started to curse (there is no mistaking a curse in any language). Eventually he would throw his hands up in the air in total fury just at the point where we would be hugging a curve on a treacherously winding cliffside road.

Eventually we stopped in the late afternoon at a waterside inn where we were to spend the night. The Finnish group did not wait to check in before flinging off their clothes and running nude into the ocean with whoops of delight. He roared in fury at the Finns, gesticulating at them to come out, calling them an immodest, insensitive lot who were offending morality through their disgusting behavior. He ended up slamming his keys to the ground and submitting his resignation to the near-paralyzed agent who didn't know what to do next.

What comes next was actually very funny. The driver was to spend the night at the Inn along with the guests. And where else was he to go in the middle of nowhere, somewhere in Greece? Better to spend the night in comfort than to try to hitchhike back when night was about to fall. So the driver joined us for a delicious dinner and many rounds of ouzo. He laughed, he danced, he became the best of friends with everyone and in particular with the Finnish tour guide. She did not have to talk when they indulged in some mild making-out. For the most part she did nothing but laugh, sometimes hilariously, when "communicating" with the bus driver. And so the evening's festivities continued on well into the night, and it was a bunch of happy, exhausted comrades who finally went to bed. Next morning we continued on our bus ride. (No, the air conditioning was still broken. Yes, the Finnish tour guide continued her monotonous story-telling.) But the Greek bus driver had quit as he had said he would for he knew when he was beat. He recognized a consensus between the Finns and their guide that the story telling would continue. And why kick a dead horse? He was replaced by a young man who did not appear to be either amused or offended by the guide's monotone. I guess his motto was to let the show go on. And go on it did, all the way to Athens. •

St. Thomas, My Shadchen Rabbi Miller

She, Margaret Kober, was born in Berlin, and arrived in New York in 1938. I was born in Brooklyn. I thought my name was *Tateleh*, until Mrs. Kelly, my kindergarten teacher in PS 144, told me my real name was Robert Miller.

She was of *Galitzianer* stock, I was a *Litvak*. By 1944 Margaret had lost every dram of a German accent. That same year my Brooklyn accent was completely internalized.

As teenagers we were both Rebels with Different Causes. She was a dedicated feminist. On one occasion she dismantled the *mechitza*, the partition of curtain or wood separating men from women in the temple. When challenged by the *shammes* (sexton) she responded, "I traveled four hours from Massachusetts to New Jersey to witness my nephew's *bar mitzvah*. I don't intend to allow any barrier to hinder my view." The *shammes* left in silence; the *mechitza* was not put back for that service. My career was different. I was concerned with the inequality that prevailed in American society in the 40's: racism, poverty, and the actions of the House Un-American Activities Committee as they conducted a witch hunt. I was left of center. During the 1948 election I would ascend a soapbox on a major avenue, with a yarmulka on my head, encouraging my fellow citizens to vote for Henry Wallace.

"Dear Reader," can you ever imagine that these two people, worlds apart, would someday marry and after 54 years would have parented a daughter a lawyer, a son a doctor, and another daughter an MBA? But herein lies a story in which St. Thomas Aquinas, the most famous medieval Catholic philosopher, played a major role.

As a philosophy major I was required to take a course in Scholastic Medieval Philosophy. It was boring. The teacher held forth with the prevailing philosophical issues

at that time – the Universal versus the Particular: St. Thomas' idea of creation versus the vision of St. Abelard. It was so boring. In front of me sat a student with long black hair, so I began to stroke, twirl, and gently twist those strands of hair. After a while the girl turned around and said "Would you please stop annoying me?" She obviously did not enjoy my attention or me. Subsequently I found out that the girl was Margaret Kober, who took a distinct distaste to me, avoiding me for the semester.

In the last weeks the professor, Dr. Taylor, informed us that we were to write a term paper on the thoughts and teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. Margaret was sitting close to the professor's desk, and overheard my conversation with him. "Dr. Taylor," I said, "would it be permissible to write a paper on the most famous Jewish philosopher of that time, Moses ben Maimon – Maimonides?". The teacher agreed. At that moment Margaret realized that the same fellow who was pulling her hair was really a nice Jewish boy, learned in matters Judaica, proud of his heritage, and possibly worthy of a date.

I courted Margaret, who now became Margee, for more than a year. We talked and talked around the Goldfish Pond at Brooklyn College, on a daylong trip to Bear Mountain on the Hudson River Day Line. We held hands, we fell in love, we kissed in the hallway of her home at 262 Kosciusko St. We became engaged and were married on the fourth night of *Chanukah*, corresponding to the 25th of December 1954.

We were convinced that St. Thomas Aquinas and Maimonides were both looking down from heaven, and in unison saying: "A Blessing on their Heads, *Mazel Tov, Mazel Tov.*" •

Editor's Note: For readers not fluent in Yiddish, here is a brief list of translations: shadchen = marriage broker, tateleh = little darling, shammes = sexton.

The Long Walk

Max Potter

It was spring, a Southern spring. We had lots of real time with nothing to do. In short, we were bored.

In those days the Boy Scouts required a 14-mile hike for promotion to First Class. It was to be completed in one day and in the company of another Scout. I was not an avid scouter, but this seemed to be a worthwhile thing to do, something we had to do anyway so in conjunction with my good friend, J.B., we prepared to hike.

We planned our trek in keeping with ideas from J.B. and his father. They knew the area, and I didn't, but I was game. Our mothers had concerns about this, as mothers will, imagining all sorts of hazards and possible catastrophes and not truly convinced of the ability of two 13-year olds to bring off such an event – with some reason. We were not a prepossessing pair, possibly coming up on 5 feet, and totaling perhaps 160 lbs or so between us. I was better prepared for the journey in that I was olive-skinned with dark hair and somewhat more sun-resistant, while J.B. was very fair-skinned and blond, and there would be much sun exposure before the day was over. We were underwhelming as outdoorsmen, but gallant of heart. We were good friends, both intelligent and able to exchange ideas without too much arguing.

The day came. We departed just after sunrise, stalking off through the dew-laden grass, with improvised staffs and carrying some sort of ill-remembered lunch. Peanut butter? Jelly? We crossed Hackberry Lane to traverse an adjacent cotton field, stepping over the rows of cotton, past the pine-planked shack where "Uncle," an avuncular black man lived alongside a deep cool well beneath a stand of pine trees. Naturally, we hauled up what must have been the best, clearest, coldest water in the world. We weren't thirsty. It's just that you don't pass up well water when it is there for the taking.

On we went until we came to the railroad tracks. This was familiar territory to us, and we went up them past the culvert and arch to the creek in the cow pasture which was our frequent destination. It was our intention

to reach the suburban Boy Scout camp which neither of us had the money to attend, but which was a reasonable goal for a hike.

We stuck with the tracks for some time. It was practical. They were straight, fixed, and knew where they were going as much as we didn't. Alongside, the ground was free of vegetation and loaded with gravel. It was easy walking and we didn't have to worry about poison ivy or oak. Equally, there were not too many trains to dodge during the early morning hours. An occasional freight would pass, and we received "huzzahs" from the hoboes aboard. The day grew increasingly hot, but pleasant enough with a gentle breeze and pervasive song-mocking birds, blue jays, orioles, with bright flashes of color soaring through the trees. Naturally we took extensive notes as part of the exercise, but I regret to say they have long since vanished.

Ultimately we had to leave the tracks as they veered off to the northeast on their way to Birmingham, and eventually New York, while we were only going to Camp Horn which was in nearby Cottdale.

We came to a highway overpass and took the opportunity to climb out of the tracks and trudge along the road. One thing truly impressed us – the large accumulation of beer cans by the side of the road, jettisoned from cars as they sped by. J.B. was a devout Baptist and I severely naive. Both of us were shocked, albeit not permanently. What was strange was that Tuscaloosa at that time was a dry county, suggesting some nefarious activity in the roadhouse we had just passed.

Our route continued until we came to a gravel road cutting off to the right. Soon we were at Rock Creek, which flowed under an old iron bridge, and we were in Cottdale. By now, we were hot, hungry, thirsty and tired in some sort of order. Behold a babbling brook and an inviting pool, a perfect solution. We went swimming after we ate lunch, allowing enough time to avoid cramps, a deadly hazard which might cause us to drown in the two feet of water. We were good Scouts! It showed a bit of courage on my part, since I was pretty sure that there were poisonous snakes like cottonmouth moccasins just waiting for me

in the depths. This was a constant fear growing up, but it never seemed to stop me, even though I did see my share of snakes.

After lunch and swimming we performed a scientific experiment. We poured some cake crumbs down an anthill. Would you believe it? Ants came out in droves.

Our curiosity satisfied, we moved on and, lo, we soon arrived at Camp Horn. A sad and discouraging sight it was! Some beaten-down, weathered shacks all the worse for wear and tear, huddling on a knoll above a still lake, repulsively opaque the color *cafe-au-lait*, sodden as it was with the rich red clay of this part of the South. In addition, I noted that some of the kids, being bucolic, were also rather obnoxious; I feared for my life were we to stay over. I don't remember J.B. being any more sanguine about the place than I was.

Thus, it was with great joy we found out that we had already hiked twelve miles. This was good news indeed, our trek nearly done. But where to pick up two additional miles? The total is all. Also, how to get back.

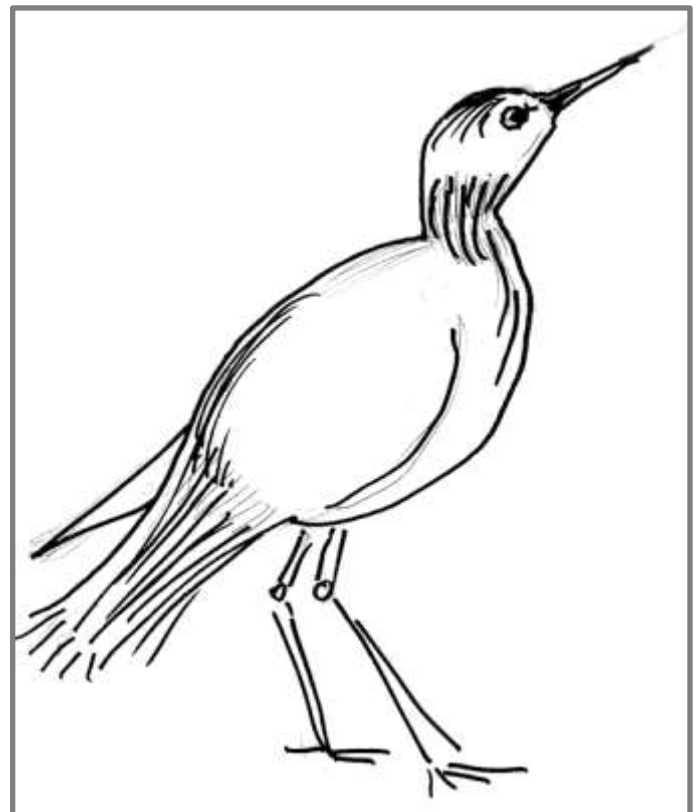
In the best classical tradition, a god stepped from his machine, in this instance a pickup truck. A scouting official offered to drive us back to town, save for the 2 missing miles, thus giving us the opportunity to complete the task with our integrity intact and our bodies in one piece.

Somehow or other, we made our way back to the cotton field where this quest had commenced. It was now late afternoon, and it had been a long, hot sweaty day and we had had a reasonable number of developmental experiences. We were satisfied. As we approached the street, we saw off through the sunny haze the sudden materialization of two monoliths.

As we reached them, we realized they were our mothers. They were concerned about the safety of their boys, who had, in the meantime, done well enough and had had a splendid time, save for a little sunburn, a few insect bites and minor but survivable physical pain. We had prevailed and were prepared to fight another day. It was disheartening to think our mothers had had no more confidence in us than that. Besides, what did a pair of middle-aged women expect to learn about boys by

standing at the corner of the cotton patch and Hackberry Lane. It didn't bring us home any sooner. Obviously they were concerned about us, and they were seeing a bold stroke of independence in their little boys.

Nothing very much happened save for the day itself. We had travelled independently through some rural terrain, and made some contact with nature. We didn't think of this as a Rite of Passage, inasmuch as we were kids and didn't think in those terms. Manhood just around the corner? Nonsense. What's for breakfast tomorrow? That was the real issue. •



Drawing by Marcia Frank

Pizza All Around *Al Garshick with John Averell*

In 1971 I was the Chief Engineer for Boston Insulated Wire and Cable Company. I had begun working for BIW as a Northeastern coop student, leaving after graduation. I returned in 1957 and retired after 37 years as vice-president in charge of product development. The company specialized in the development and manufacture of insulated wire and cable with properties that solved problems ordinary cable could not. We developed a wide variety of innovative designs and insulations for applications ranging from high speed elevators to deep-sea cable to heat and radiation resistant harnesses for spacecraft. I collected patents for company profit along the way.

We had come to the point in one of the manufacturing processes where we had to postcure silicone rubber cable. If you don't postcure a heavy thickness of silicone rubber at a temperature above its service temperature for 24 hours, it will revert and become gummy. We had to build the equipment to do this. My plant engineer, John Marshall, designed an oven for the processing.

I said "Gee, that would make a hell of a pizza oven!" I had learned to make pizza from a friend of mine who had an Italian restaurant in Middleborough. After a year, someone asked, "Are you going to make that pizza?" I said "Yeah, we'll make it."

We had a six-foot pan lined with aluminum foil that just fit into the oven. Working with my son Eric, then a Tufts freshman, and also a summer employee of Lorenzo's, we got the pizza dough and made believe we were putting it in the mill. We pieced together 60 pounds of dough, purchased 30 gallons of sauce from Lorenzo Grosso and his restaurant, and spread it on the pizza. We filled in whatever people wanted to bring for toppings. There was a section of beansprouts from one of my chemical men – whatever the crew wanted. We baked the pizza at 400 degrees. We fed 200 people there. Next year I made two pizzas. One we shipped to the former factory in Plymouth.

Below is a picture taken of our employees enjoying the pizza. Far left is my son Eric. I am third from the left, overseeing the action. •



My Zayde Had a Zayde

Ken Fradin

I knew my *zayde*, my father's father. He had a grocery store in the east side of Buffalo. He was a dignified, religious man, and frequented the *Anshe Lubovitz Shul*. On Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur we would visit Zayde in the *shul*, always being careful to park around the corner, so no one could know that we drove from several miles away. We would be in *shul* for a while, and then would go into the street where some of the congregants were outside talking. There being several orthodox *shuls* nearby, we would often wander around to see what was doing there. After returning to Zayde's *shul* we would head for downtown Buffalo for lunch and a movie. There was a regular Friday night ritual, after the store closed, when my father, mother and I visited. There was always a lot of conversation, nearly entirely in Yiddish while they drank tea in a

glass. Between the Yiddish at home, and the Friday nights, I got to understand it quite well. At times there was company, often *landsleiter* from their Ukrainian city of Chernigov. I usually got hungry after a while listening to these conversations, and was often rewarded with a cheese sandwich on a hard roll.

During World War II help was hard to find. I drove one of my father's soda-pop trucks with a Junior License. I would call on my *zayde*, who was one of Dad's customers. I knew him. We would speak together in Yiddish. I remember that when I returned from the war, after a year in Berlin after the war in Europe ended, I was speaking German. When I attempted that on my *zayde*, he laughed. I told my grand-kids that it was important that they knew something of my *zayde* and I related all this to them.

My *zayde* had a *zayde*. I don't know anything about him. I never asked. •

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- **Mr. and Mrs. John Averell:** *In memory of Max Potter*
- **Mr. and Mrs. Julian Bussgang**
- **Sheila Klein:** *In honor of milestone birthday of Estelle Schwedock*
- **Jack "Jacob" Goldberg**

April 2013

- **Mr. and Mrs. John Averell:** *In memory of Melvin Cerier*
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- **Milton and Marcia Frank:** *Thank you for The Bridge*
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- **Marilyn Stone and Samuel Spiegel:** *Thank you - Claire Aronson*
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Thanks to your many generous donations with designations to *The Bridge* over the years, we have accumulated sufficient reserves for several future issues. We would like to continue to receive modest designations in the \$10 to \$25 range for the time being, honoring or remembering various persons if you wish. If unexpected special needs arise, we will notify our residents. In the meantime, your stories, poems, and art are needed even more. Thank you all for your continued interest in *The Bridge*.

Sufi Camp (2013)

Frankie Wolff

We always begin with gratitude for the people who led us to this time, this place, people who came before us, who gave us life.

There are phrases like alchemy of the soul — questions that focus our attention on whose life are we living — on lovingkindness — on others' responsiveness to us — on the difference between *special* and *unique*. A continuous thread throughout our time together is the word *discernment*, clarifying it, sorting out differences, explanations subtle, sometimes distinct that Atum, our teacher, explains is key in understanding our thoughts, our actions, our lives.

Mar De Jade, about one hour south of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, is where I spent the first week of this New Year. I went there with my son, Len, and his wife Robin. Of particular importance to me is that my "kids" asked me back this year — of that I am very proud, especially because I am about 15 to 20 years older than any of the other 50-plus participants at Sufi Camp.

Mar De Jade is a tiny jewel, sitting so close to the water that the surf runs up to the table we eat our meals on. I call it Nirvana-on-the-Pacific because of its feeling of timelessness and natural beauty, its quiet other than the undulating surf, its sense of peacefulness that embraces us. One night as Len walked with me on an uneven cobblestone path to my room, under a blackened night sky studded with pinpoints of bright light, I wondered aloud why I was receiving so much loving attention. Len answered, "I think it has to do with a number of different reasons. You are very present, friendly. You are obviously enjoying yourself. You participate with full heart in the dances, in the discussions. You represent hope to the others that they can be like you at your age. And — they see us as a family here together. Earlier you told me about four women who spoke movingly about their mothers' dementia, and Alzheimer's, and the toll their illnesses is having, has had, on



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Photo of New Bridge in Nameplate by John Averell

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them as care givers while here we are, a family fully engaged in Life."

Len's words stayed with me. They were sobering, real. When I reached deeply into myself, I was faced with a hard truth. I had been feeling so special! But the reality was quite different.

I may be unique. But I was not special. When my ego recovered, I smiled deeply, knowingly, recognizing Atum's wisdom in teaching us the difference between *special* and *unique*.

With only a slight bruise to my ego, I understood the meaning of discernment as I never had before. •