

The Neptune Mirror



Volume 6 • Issue 3 • September 2023

Editor: Linda Morganstein Fen

Reporters: June Zimmerman & Arlene Shnall

“Human beings are perhaps never more frightening than when they are convinced beyond doubt that they are right.”

- Lauren Van der Post

“Amateurs built the Ark.
Professionals built the
Titanic.”

- Elizabeth May

Intuition is knowing
without knowing why.

“Everybody thinks of
changing humanity
and nobody thinks of
changing himself.”

- Leo Tolstoy



All contributions have been submitted by residents of 2 Neptune Driv. By doing so, they have given consent for publication.
We welcome submissions. Articles will be edited for appropriateness and clarity.

GRATITUDE FOR THINGS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED

There is much here at 2 Neptune that we take for granted – a safe, secure roof over our heads, help when we need it, a clean environment, beautiful surroundings, reliable mail service, heat and A/C when appropriate, a friendly face at the concierge desk – and so much more.

A huge part of “so much more” is because of our Social Director, ROBERT DANCHUK. As with the proverbial iceberg, so much of what Robert does is unseen and, therefore, often unappreciated.

Our bulletin board is crammed to overflowing with the programming he has brought to us. Some is to expand our knowledge, both general and specific (Canadian or Japanese Art, visits to the AGO, plays, St. Jacob’s Market), some to help keep us mentally alert (Bingo, lectures, board games), and some just for fun (Karaoke, the new Men’s Club). Many of us would avoid exercising if not for the laughter and gentle teasing of Robert’s exercise classes. And where would some of us be without the weekly shopping bus!

All of these programmes require work - setting up and taking down of tables and chairs and equipment, replenishing coffee and snack supplies, doing research for discussion or lecture topics, planning and facilitating group programmes - and so much more – much done in his “*free time*”. (*Think of the much-maligned teacher who “works only from 9:00 to 3:00, 5 days a week.” Few consider the countless hours behind the scenes, hours spent preparing and correcting papers, evaluations, and so on.*)

Robert cares about us, and it shows in all he does. He is admired and respected for his unflinching loyalty to us. We are his family.

So, thank you, Robert, for all you do to make 2 Neptune feel like home.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Elka Pelt

Welcome to September 2023, a month of endings and new beginnings! Fond memories of our Summer days at 2 Neptune Drive. June, July and August were sunny, balmy, leisurely days and evenings with occasional rain that was well received by our beautiful outdoor Courtyard garden and the 9th floor patio plants. Highlights of our program activities included The Suzuki Violin and Viola Children's Concert, Krista Samborsky's Joy of Movement classes, Judy Cohen's Strategies for Handling Depression, our Canada Day Celebration with entertainer Etobicoke Elvis, Brown Bag Picnic lunches, the Men's Club lunch events, an outing to the Holocaust Museum at the Jewish Federation Sherman Campus, a day trip to quaint St. Jacobs and their fabled Market with indoor and outdoor shops of historic and modern items, flower, vegetable and fruit vendors. An in house Residents' Art Show curated by Sylvia Horwich was well attended and showcased excellent artistic talent amongst our own residents. A newly formed Drama Club under the direction of Merle Garbe has provided a base for a future play production here at 2 Neptune. A Cake Decoration demonstration by our own pastry guru Linda Morganstein Fen was a new program venture as well.

Though our K9 program on Monday mornings had to stop for a while, we are hoping to find another trained facilitator and affable K9 in the near future to interact with our Monday morning Coffee Club.



The 2 Neptune Choir of the past was a very active part of our social program, halted because of COVID. We are very pleased to have connected with a new highly recommended Choir Director who will be commencing shortly. All residents are welcome to come out and join the new choir. The criteria is your love of singing and sharing your voice with the group. Please feel free to join the group if you have not yet signed up.

Another new venture, to be undertaken by Elaine Temes, is Authors of the Neptune Mirror. The format will feature interviewers and the interviewees who have been published in our quarterly Mirror.

Our Social Director Robert Danchuk will be offering complimentary Concierge service to all residents who need assistance booking anything online. You may want help in booking event tickets for a concert, play or sports event. Wheel-Trans transportation can also be arranged for you for appointments, or going to entertainment events. Many residents share a love of different activities and might be interested to get a group together, sharing a series of plays or concerts, perhaps forming a group for matinees or evenings, sports events. This service is available in Robert's office and you must book an appointment

with him prior to going to his office.
The time scheduled for this is Tuesday
afternoons at 2 pm.

We are in the Hebrew month of Elul, the
last month in the Jewish yearly cycle before
Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. It
is viewed as a month of reflection on the
previous year and looking forward to the
next year. With this focus, Elul is regarded
as a month of Teshuva (forgiveness) or
returning to a clean slate. On behalf of
my husband Mel Pelt and myself, we ask
for your forgiveness if we have offended
anyone. We wish everyone a New Year of
health, happiness, contentment and peace
of mind.

Our New Year High Holiday season will
observed on the following dates.

Rosh Hashanah:

Begins the evening of Friday, September
15th and ends the evening of September
17th.

Yom Kippur:

Kol Nidre opens the Yom Kippur service
the evening of Sunday, September 24th
and Yom Kippur Day concludes Monday
evening, September 25th.

Sukkot:

Begins the evening of September 29th and
ends the evening of October 6th.

Shemini Atzeret:

Begins the evening of October 6th and ends
the evening of October 7th.

Simchas Torah:

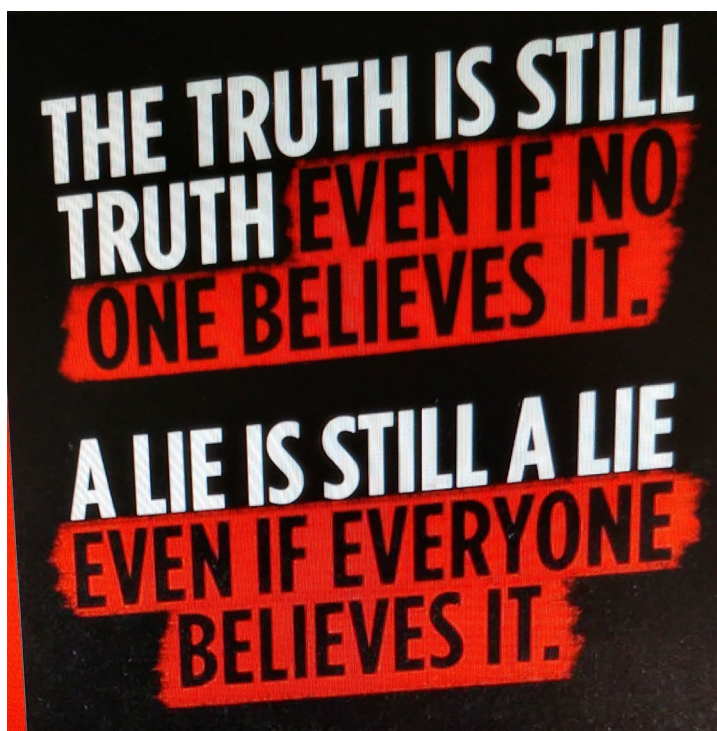
Begins the evening of October 7th and ends
the evening of October 8th.

Enjoy our Autumn/Fall season.

With warm wishes to all of you,

Elka Pelt,

President of the 2 Neptune Drive
Residents' Council



2 NEPTUNE ALERT!

Several weeks ago, one of our residents experienced something very troubling: her Rogers equipment was all down – Internet, TV and, most troubling of all, her home phone.

She felt trapped in her apartment, not wanting to leave to seek help lest she miss the hoped-for repairman.

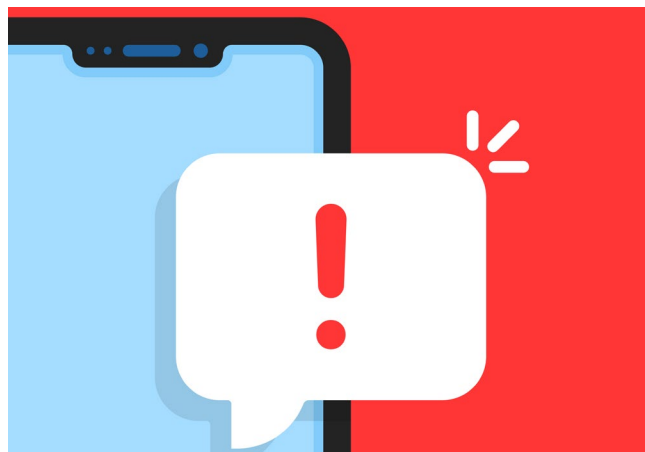
It was a frightening few **days**, yes, days, during which no one came to check on her to see why she'd been absent from the programmes she attended regularly.

There are 2 important lessons to be learned here:

- 1. You could be saving a life.*
- 2. If you have a **Landline** and are a customer of **Bell** or **Rogers**, your telephone is the vital component by which an emergency can be detected. You **must** find a way to get in touch with your provider.*

Enlist a neighbour or Neptune security/management (or use your cell phone if it is working) to call for service.

****Bell or Rogers, under Federal Law, must** dispatch a repair person immediately. This is considered a Medical Emergency situation, as it is putting your safety in jeopardy.*



FYI - The company is vulnerable to a huge lawsuit if you are not accommodated.

Editor: This outage situation also happened to me at about the same time. It occurred on a Friday and, after several hours on my cell phone trying to remedy the outages remotely, I was offered a service call for that Sunday morning. I said this was unacceptable, noting that without my home phone, the Lifeline wasn't working and, if I were to fall between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning, no one would be alerted.

There was a brief moment's hesitation on the other end before he declared this a Medical Emergency and promised to send a technician that evening. The knock on my door came within half an hour.

Why do we not know the things to say or insist on?

Well, now you know this one.

You are NOT a prisoner of THEIR rules.

SPEAK UP.

LIBRARY REPORT

Sid Kardash

Here are my personal reading choices and recommendations for September:

Daniel Silva has done it again with yet a fascinating journey into the organized Crime activities involving art forgeries of the Old Masters' paintings. In pursuit of these criminals is the ever-popular protagonist of all of Silva's books, namely the irrepressible hero of justice in a world filled with crime, terrorism, murder and other activities such as money laundering the sales of forged artworks. This is the subject of Silva's latest novel, "*Portrait of an Unknown Woman*", a forgery sold as a genuine work of art painted by the Dutch Master painter Van Dyck, which brings into focus the world of not only art forgeries, but in this case, murder, deceit and impossible greed.

Silva's hero as the protagonist is Israel's head of counterterrorism, Gabriel Alon and is now retired to pursue his passion, that of a world-famous art restorer. However, as in this novel, this is again brought into play by the top security agencies of Western Europe to help find the elusive whereabouts and arrest of the greatest art forger in history.

This is a must read for Silva fans and his hero Gabriel Alon, and is now available with other Silva novels in our library's Mystery section.



My second current read is "*The Spectre of War*" by Jonathan Haslam – a fascinating insight into the forces that drove the nations of Europe to adopt pathways to deal with the rising fear of the spread of International Communism following the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The adoption of foreign and domestic policies of the nations of Europe which included Britain, France, Spain, Italy and, of course, Russia, also involved events in Asia which included Japan and China. The accumulation of factors inevitably led to World War II. A fascinating read for those with an interest in history that shapes our world today.

Many thanks to our residents who have contributed anecdotes and quotations for this issue of The Mirror:

Myrna Lambert, Joshua Dalfin, Doreen Barabaner, Gert Ludwig, Arlene Shnall, Lazar Greisdorf, Connie Baker, June Zimmerman, Terri Kushner, David Silverman

These are greatly appreciated.

THE BOOK CLUB

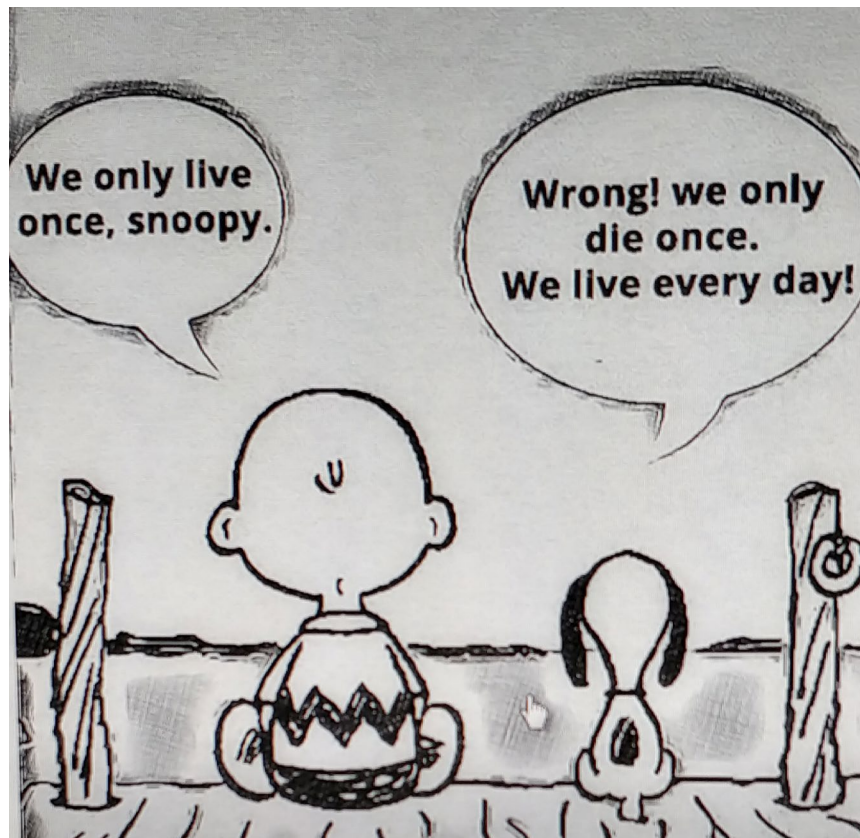
The Book Club choice for August was “Dear Life” by Alice Munro.

Alice Munro, born in 1931 in Wingham, Ontario, is a well-known Canadian author of short stories, her father a fox and mink farmer, of Scottish and Irish descent. Many of her stories are set in Huron County and explore human complexities. The ones in “Dear Life” illuminate the moment that life is altered forever by a chance encounter, or by an action taken or not taken.

Alice Munro won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013.

The Book Club choice for September is “The Kite Runner”, the first novel by Hosseini, published in 2003.

It tells the story of Amir, a young boy growing up in a district of Kabul and is set against a backdrop of Afghanistan monarchy through the invasion of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Taliban.



MY MEMORIES OF THE HIGH HOLIDAYS

Pearl Karal

Every year at Rosh Hashanah, when I was young, I used to go with my family to my Baba and Zaida's house. I knew from the family's plans that a special event would be taking place. The extended family was there; my Baba lit candles, and there was a pleasant atmosphere. However, the historical reasons for the celebration were not emphasized.

At that time, I felt that I didn't understand the significance of most Jewish holidays (except for Passover, when my mother and I would unpack the Pesach dishes and she would tell me the Passover story).

As a youngster, I would walk around my neighbourhood past other Jewish homes during the holidays, and sometimes I could see in through their windows. Their tables were set in a special way, and there were special foods. I could see that Rosh Hashanah had some meaning to Jews, but I never asked for an explanation. I felt something was missing in my life, and that I was left out.

Once I married and had children, I didn't want my children to feel left out of Jewish practice as I had. We joined a shul. Many people at our shul were in the same position



I learned alongside my children who were attending religious classes at our shul. One of my children would come home from those classes and tell me about the discussions they'd had.

I no longer felt that there was something mysterious happening that I didn't understand. I no longer felt excluded.

I continue to learn, to discover and rediscover the meaning of the Jewish holidays and their personal associations.

Over the years, I have come to see Rosh Hashanah as an opportunity to start anew every year, a fresh chance to rediscover the meaning of Jewish life. Yom Kippur is an opportunity to re-evaluate my life and to make resolutions for the new year.

On these High Holidays, I wish to all of you, and to every Jew, good health and a blessed and fulfilling new year. I wish you all the warmth and reaffirmation of your identity as a Jew.

SO YOU CAN'T SLEEP EITHER

Simon Abecassis

It's 2:20 a.m. All is dark and quiet.

The busy street we're on went dead.

Not a car, not a sound.

I've been tossing and turning over and over for the past hour and half, trying in vain to go back to sleep.

I have a doctor's appointment later this morning.

I must be fresh and focused.

Tried every trick in the book.

I counted sheep up to 1450.

Didn't work.

Did my breathing and relaxation exercise, even meditation.

Nothing works.

Another hour went by. What to do?

By now it's 3:25 a.m.

May be if I get up, have a snack.

1450 calories later, I feel bloated and overstuffed.

But not sleepy.

Let's try reading a little more. It may help.

Twenty minutes later, same page, same paragraph.

Nothing registers.

Let's see what's on TV. This has always been the best sleeping aid.

Flipping through hundreds of channels,



NOTHING worth watching.

Let's try the news: CNN, 24 hours a day.

Same single issue covered, ad nauseam, all day, all night.

Really nauseating.

"Trump said this", "Trump did that".

Boring!

It's now 4:30 am.

Tired, exhausted but not sleepy.

Wait, I hear cars on the road.

The City is waking up.

More cars, trucks, buses, even joggers.

I see two men running to the bus stop.

The city is fully awake now.

I'm finally sleepy and ready to go to bed.

Fell asleep instantly. What a relief.

Didn't hear the alarm clock.

Missed my doctor's appointment.

Two weeks later got a \$75 invoice from the Doctor's Office: FEES FOR MISSED APPOINTMENT.

One lesson I learnt, no more early morning appointments.

THE SHAPE OF AN ANGEL

Lorraine Levinson

Angels should fly in and present themselves, so you can be sure to thank them. They seem to come in all sizes and disguises, when you are most oblivious.

During the months that my husband was terribly ill, we thought a couple of days away would be a physical and psychological boost for us both.

We drove out of Toronto onto the 401, feeling quite uplifted, always hopeful that his symptoms would hide, even perhaps disappear, and give us back our lives together.

We chose a hideaway hotel east towards the Thousand Islands. It was late April and just beginning to show hopeful signs of Spring.

Hours later we checked into a charming hotel exactly like the pictures, including the swans swimming close to our dining room picture window. This was a getting away we desperately needed.

Morning brought a gorgeous sunny spring day and we revelled in the change and new hope.

But that was to change. Mid afternoon we received an urgent phone call from the Princess Margaret Hospital. The doctor Ed would see would be available the next morning.

We sat anxiously through a quick dinner

and set out immediately for our return to Toronto, with me at the wheel.

The weather became forbidding in the first hour of the 401. Ed slept soundly, unaware that I was driving unto a frightful weather system with pouring rain and pea soup fog, in intense early darkness. A coffee rest stop just ahead answered my prayer. It would be a long, difficult drive.

Fortified for the testy hours ahead, I pulled out of the parking lot directly behind an 18-wheeler transport truck that was totally blocking my exit. I followed him onto the 401 at his snail pace speed, checking that my husband was fast asleep at my side. Each time I thought to pass the monster transport, I was clearly tempting fate. The hazardous conditions were not negotiable.

While I sipped on my coffee, I suddenly focused on the 12 brilliant lights at the back of this massive truck. They easily pierced through the blanket of fog and steady rain, and were a blessed gift on a dreadful night. After a very short time on the highway, an enlightening recognition of what was happening flashed across my wide-awake brain. "He knows I am here, and he is guiding me!!!"

We both kept our slow steady pace for over an hour. My eyes were glued to his back lights, enabling me to stay inside the yellow highway guidelines.

I never attempted to pass him. I just stayed a close and steady 10 feet at his heels while he guided me safely to my exit at Avenue Road, more than an hour. I waved to him as I exited the highway, noting at

the side of the truck that he was a long way from home --flown in on his angel wings, dropped into the driver's seat of an 18-wheeler transport truck from Nova Scotia to fulfill his job. One should never take an angel for granted.

It has reminded me many times of the joke that tells of a man who is drowning. When he reached the holy gates, he asked God why He had not saved him. God's answer was, "I sent you a helicopter, then a boat, and finally a diver." "God will save me," you said.

Perhaps God sent me a truck driver from Nova Scotia? I never actually saw his wings – but it was a dark and foggy night...



BACK TO SCHOOL AGAIN

Simon Abecassis

It's September.

The short-lived lazy summer days are quickly coming to an end. The days are shorter, the nights cooler, the leaves turning. Birds are flocking to more clement weather.

The Canadian National Exhibition, also known as the CNE and affectionately called by Torontonians as THE EX, is open. It marks the unofficial announcement that Fall is creeping in.

THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL HYPE IS ON.

Big sales everywhere, ads and commercials saturate all media targeting the younger generation and shamelessly pressuring the older one to dish out mega bucks.

In my time, back to school supplies were pens, pencils, paper, slide rules and many, many books.

Today, it's laptops, wireless all-in-one printers, Smart phones, DVD's, Smart TV's, and LOTS of electronic games. Oh, and yes, some books too.

It's a bonanza for merchants, Amazon and other online shoppers. Malls exploding with people, parking a challenge. Big trucks overcrowding highways, major arteries and even side streets to supply stores and deliver goods to the impatiently waiting customers.

People are trickling back from vacation and cottage country.

Everyone prepares for back to school, back to work.

It's now the Labour Day Weekend. Fireworks throughout the city. Summer goes out with a BANG. A reminder the party will soon be over. It's time to get back to normality.

But is it?

After two years of lockdown, virtual, in person and hybrid schooling caused by Covid-19 and its variants, uncertainty is still looming in the air.

The clock is ticking. It's Tuesday morning. Reality sets in. It's no longer a dress rehearsal. It's the real thing. An emotional roller coaster.

Everyone is in a frenzy. Police patrol most school areas and target those unsuspecting delinquent drivers who speeded, ignored stop signs and went through red lights all summer.

Everyone has to adjust to changing scenarios. For children, it's new subjects, new teachers, new kids, old friends, new friends...

For parents, it's all the preparation and anticipation. The challenge is multiplied many times over when they have more than one child.

For the Bubbies and Zaidies, anxiety attacks, calling a hundred times for reassurance their little ones are okay.

For teachers, a new curriculum, endless preparations before, during and after school starts, new colleagues, new students, new parents to deal with, new budgets, new rules and regulations.

For most Junior Kindergarten children, next to the embryo leaving mother's womb, it's the most challenging transition. They



must now face for the first time on their own, numerous dramatic changes.

They leave behind the kingdom where they are princesses and princes. They enter the scary world of the unknown. New toys to play and share with, new adults, new building, new “do’s and don’t’s”.

First day of school, many kids cling to their parents or guardians and don’t want to let go.

My daughter’s first day of school is still vivid in my mind. She was crying and pleading for me not to leave. I had to go and leave her behind.

I was devastated. Couldn’t do an ounce of work all day. Left the office two hours early and rushed back before the end of the school day.

She was fine. PHYEW!! What a relief! Life is good.

Then we have the other major groups – kids changing from elementary school to middle school to high school, to college and university. That too requires major adjustments every step of the way.

All students must grapple with a wide range of changing environments – PHYSICAL,

SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL.

Education is not limited to academic subjects and training for trades and professions. SCHOOL IS A MICROCOSM OF SOCIETY. This where children learn how to study, work, interact with all types of personalities, cope with constantly changing circumstances, set goals, prioritize and persevere.

When things go wrong, schools blame parents, parents blame teachers, spiritual leaders blame society. Politicians blame other parties. Everyone blames everyone else.

The old adage “It takes a village to raise a child” is a reality. It would be so much more beneficial if society were to join forces and work in tandem to shape the future of our new generation.

Now that most families are back in town, traffic seems to have doubled, with rush hour slower than ever.

Everyone is back to school. Everyone is back to work.

LOOKING AT THE MOON

Arlene Shnall

It is 1955. My beau and I are walking on the boardwalk at Sunnyside. It is a glorious evening. We walk arm in arm, staring into each other's eyes, the moon looking down on us. I cannot remember being so happy.

A few weeks later, walking closely together, we are now engaged. We talk about our dreams and future together. The moon is only a quarter but still my ring sparkles in its glow.

Things get very busy. At night when I look out my bedroom window, gazing at the moon, I think of all our wonderful plans.

We get married, and start to raise a family. Years pass. Where have they gone?

Sometimes, when we are driving in the car, I point to the moon and wonder at its beauty.

Working, family, Bar Mitzvahs, graduation, weddings, grandchildren -they keep us on the go.

We are now retired, thinking it is time to travel, to do some of the things we planned to do.

Suddenly my spouse is not well and we are not able to travel.

Still, arm in arm we continue to do so many things together. We are soul mates I want to keep him happy. Our family is important; we share many things.

Our dreams gave us sixty-four years, and I can still look at the moon...



OUR FAMILY NAME

Mimi de Castro

A question I always get asked is, “Where is your name from” or “are you related to Cuba’s Castro?”

In my 65 years of marriage, this has come up more often than I could tell you. My husband’s family originated from Spain. They are what you call Sephardim. The story of this name is shrouded by myth and mystery. My father-in-law used to tell it with tears in his eyes and a proud voice.

The story starts in Castile, Spain, a long time ago, without a definite time frame. He would often tell the story as if it happened now. One of our ancestors, was famous doctor called Leon Moshe Castro, known for his cures and his very helpful medicines. One day, the King (we don’t know his name) had a daughter who suffered from an unknown malady, and no one was able to cure her. So, the King sent for Leon Moshe Castro, who was eventually successful in saving the Princess.

Of course, the King was delighted and very grateful to the man who saved his daughter, and he decided to give him and his heirs the highest reward. From that moment on, the King bestowed on Leon Moshe Castro the title of “Count”, and for his heirs a special sign of nobility the use of “de” in front of their last name. That’s why we write our name in 2 words with a small “de” in front of Castro.



All this happened in Spain when Jews, Christians and Muslims lived side by side in peace. At the advent of their Very Catholic Majesties, Isabella and Ferdinand (as they referred to themselves) the Jews and Muslims were banished. Thus, the expulsion, and the Inquisition as it came to be known, started in 1492. Jews were forced to either convert or leave the country.

The de Castro branch, by then quite famous, had produced writers, artists and judges, abandoned their homeland leaving everything behind, and escaped to the shores of Greece, who at the time gladly accepted refugees.

The de Castros flourished and increased ranks in Yaninna, in inland Greece, until at the end of the 1800’s when the Egyptian Pacha of Egypt encouraged Europeans to come to Egypt and help the country to modernize.

This is how the de Castros continued their existence for 3 generations in Egypt, until again, they were expelled from there in 1956. They then immigrated to Israel, where all branches settled, and where most still remain to present day.

DANDELIONS – FRIENDS OR FOES

Selma Lis



Another summer has come and gone.

but not so for the tenacious dandelions.

They will not rest until the first frost is felt.

No longer visible are their yellow flowers, but their remnants,

the round feathery puffballs, are now entrusted with

the sacred task of floating in the air

to seek out a new habitat

where they can safely drop their seedlings

and flourish for yet another season.

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR DANDELIONS TO SURVIVE THE ONSLOUGHT

OF TOXIC POISONOUS HERBICIDES,

DECADE AFTER DECADE,

AND STILL EMERGE STRONGER, MOORE PLENTIFUL AND HEARTIER,

YEAR AFTER YEAR, GENERATION AFTER GENERATION?

WHAT IS THEIR SECRET?

British scientists from the Imperial College of London, researched this mystery and produced the following revealing results:

1. Dandelions are endowed with “extra-sensitive sensory systems” which allow humidity and wind to “speak” to them about the suitability of a habitat.
2. Dandelions like sunny locations and will grow in disturbed, polluted soil.
3. “Biomechanical seed dispersal” is the method used by the puffballs to safely drop their seeds.
4. The track record for dandelion survival is excellent.
5. Dandelions can teach humans a thing or two about survival.

TRUE

Dandelions are the detested weed of gardeners, and rightly so:

- they suck up most of the soil's moisture with their extra-long taproots
- they invade and crowd out other foliage
- they destroy beautiful landscaping

BUT ALSO TRUE:

Dandelions have life-sustaining benefits:

- they provide food for humans in the form of dandelions greens, honey, pesto and wine
- they provide health benefits in the form of vitamins A and C
- they provide food for pollinators, making them environmentally friendly
- they have decorative appeal

As evidenced in The Neptune Mirror (June/23rd edition)

where sunny yellow flowers and white puffballs
adorned the front and back covers.

And last but not least,

- their strength, their ability to withstand decades of toxic
pesticides have generated more research into their
molecular make-up
as a possible cure for many human diseases
including cancer!

HOW ABOUT A FEW SIPS OF DANDELION WINE TO WELCOME
THE NEW YEAR.

ROSH HASHANA 5784

KARMA

June Zimmerman

His name was Fleming and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog.

There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and trying to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what

could have been a slow and terrifying death.

The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An Elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Farmer Fleming had saved.

"I want to repay you," said the nobleman. "You saved my son's life."

"No, I can't accept payment for what I

did," the Scottish farmer replied, waving off the offer.

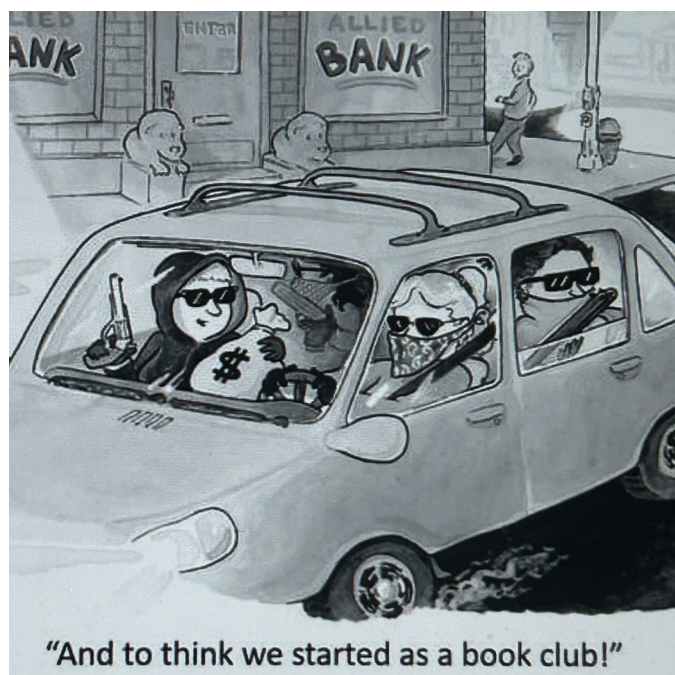
At that moment, the farmer's own son came to the door of the family hovel. "Is that your son?" the nobleman asked.

"Yes", the farmer replied proudly.

"I'll make you a deal," said the nobleman. "Let me take him and give him a good education. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll grow to a man you can be proud of." And that he did.

In time, Farmer Fleming's son graduated from St. Mary's Medical School in London, and went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin.

Years afterwards, the nobleman's son was stricken with pneumonia. What saved him? Penicillin. The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son's name? Sir Winston Churchill.



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Bob Bettson

Our arrival story at 2 Neptune is a sign of the times.

Last September our landlord of almost four years informed us that he wanted us to leave our ground floor, two bedroom apartment at a 24-storey condominium in Etobicoke. Initially he said he wanted to reoccupy the apartment, but it turned out he just wanted us out in order to sell. We hired a paralegal to negotiate with his paralegal and, after three months of back and forth, we reached a settlement to waive our right to tenancy in return for a cash settlement to vacate by the end of May.

As soon as we reached the settlement, my wife, Coline, started an internet search. With a tight rental market and increased rents, we were not looking forward to the search for a new place, particularly when we needed at the very least, an accessible washroom.

It was then she found a listing for 2 Neptune and I came to see apartment 302. Elaine showed me round and soon we made an application. Coline was unable to see the apartment because of her health issues, but I took photographs and we loved it, as well as the opportunity to be part of a 65+ community.



Coline is a retired elementary school teacher who loves kids. I am an Anglican priest who is semi-retired, and working part time taking care of congregations after clergy leave for other posts.

While I have been a priest for 22 years, my previous career was as a journalist, including serving as religion writer for the Calgary Herald, and a writer for the United Church Observer, a monthly magazine.

Both of us are Toronto-born and raised. Coline grew up in Lawrence Park, and I was raised in Newtonbrook. We have a blended family of four grown children and four grandchildren.

Ever stop to think and forget to start again?

REFUGEE BLUES

W.H. Auden

Say this city has ten million souls.
Some are living in mansions; some are living in holes;
Yet there's no place for us, my dear; yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair.
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there.
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew.
Every spring it blossoms anew.
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said,
"If you've got no passport, you're officially dead."
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;
Asked me politely to return next year.
But where shall we go today, my dear, but where shall we go today?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said,
"If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread."
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying "They must die."
O we were in his mind, my dear, o we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin;
Saw a door opened and a cat let in;
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't German Jews.

Went down to the harbour and stood upon the quay;
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free,
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease.
They weren't the human race, my dear; they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,
A thousand windows and a thousand doors.
Not one of them was ours, my dear; not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro,
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.



TUBBY RIDES THE RAILS

by Pearl Karal,
November 2022



There was a red-headed woodpecker who set up residence at the cottage where my family spent summers at Winnipeg Beach. The woodpecker was looking for insects to eat on the young birch tree that grew by the cottage door. It would peck at the tree trunk until its sharp beak pierced the surface and dug out bugs. The woodpecking noise was loud and continuous. Our dog Tubby found this very irritating. And so did we.

One day amid the noise, Tubby looked at the woodpecker and then looked back at my mother as if to say, "What are you going to do about this?" Then he looked at me in the same way as if to ask, "Is anybody going to do anything about this irritating noise?"

When Tubby saw that no one in the family was stopping the woodpecking, he devised his own solution.

During the summer, dad worked weekdays in the city and came to the cottage on weekends to be with the family. Each Sunday evening, the whole family would walk with dad from the cottage to the train station to see him off for the week.

One Sunday night, mother received a

phone call from dad, who was settling in at the city house for the coming week. Guess who was at the front door? The city house was sixty miles from the cottage. How had Tubby returned to the city? Dad took the train to and from the cottage every weekend but had never taken Tubby with him. My father had never seen him on the train.

This happened again the next weekend and continued for several weeks. We asked neighbours at the cottage whether they'd given Tubby a lift to Winnipeg. They said "No." We asked the train personnel if they'd seen a black dog on the train. No. We asked people in the railway station if they'd seen a small dog in the building. No one had seen Tubby.

How could he disappear from the cottage and reappear in the city that same evening?

How had Tubby boarded the train without the train personnel noticing? How did he know where to get off the train in Winnipeg and how to get home from the station? He had never gone by train from the cottage to the city house; he always went in my grandfather's car. How had he found his way home from

the Winnipeg railway station to our city house two miles away? To our knowledge, no one had never taken Tubby walking in that area or shown him the route.

One time when my dad took the train back to Winnipeg, he took the streetcar from the rail station to the city house, and when he got there, Tubby had arrived before him. How did that happen?

One sunny weekday afternoon, I was taking the train from the cottage to Winnipeg for an appointment. The train started, and then for some reason stopped abruptly. That was when I felt something

at my ankles. Tubby rolled out from under the seat. His black coat was so whitened with dust that he was hardly recognizable. That evening I took him back to the cottage with me on the train.

Over the years, we puzzled over these questions. The mystery has endured.

Tubby had solved the problem of the noisy woodpecker by riding the train back to his city home Sunday nights for the week ahead. Humans hadn't handled the problem, but Tubby certainly had.

DID YOU KNOW THIS ABOUT *CURIOUS GEORGE*?

Our beloved children's character "CURIOUS GEORGE" actually escaped from the Nazis.

His creators, Margaret and H.A. Rey, were German Jews who fled Paris on make-shift bicycles after the Nazis invaded France in 1940.

Hidden in one of the bicycle baskets were the stories and illustrations of Curious George.

They escaped the Holocaust, riding all the way to Lisbon, sailed to Brazil, and later made it to the US. There they continued to write about the world's favourite little monkey.



STORMY AFTERNOON

Mimi de Castro

Behind the closed window pane,
I can see the heavy grey clouds
Gathering in their masses
In purposeful rapidity.

The young day darkening quickly
In the breath of a strong northern wind
Blowing through the leafless trees,
Echoing on the roofs and chimney tops.

With a thundering crashing noise,
The storm relieves itself
Over the quiet little village,
Its deserted narrow streets

Washed down by the deluge.
It is briefly illuminated at intervals
By the flashing successive bolts
Of hail-accompanied lightning.

The grassy luscious lawns
Absorbing thirstily the rain,
Glisten brightly and richly,
Shimmer with every drop.



As abruptly as it started,
The storm recedes and the distinctive
Smell of the wet turf
Spreads in the still moist air.

The wind chases the heavy clouds
Racing across the clearing sky,
And the timid rays of the sun
Tentatively slip between them.

Slowly inundating the countryside,
The growing beams attempt
To dry the trickle of water
From the roof tops.

The melting hail on the grass
And on the freshly washed streets
Is all but a forgotten memory
Of a quickly spent stormy afternoon.

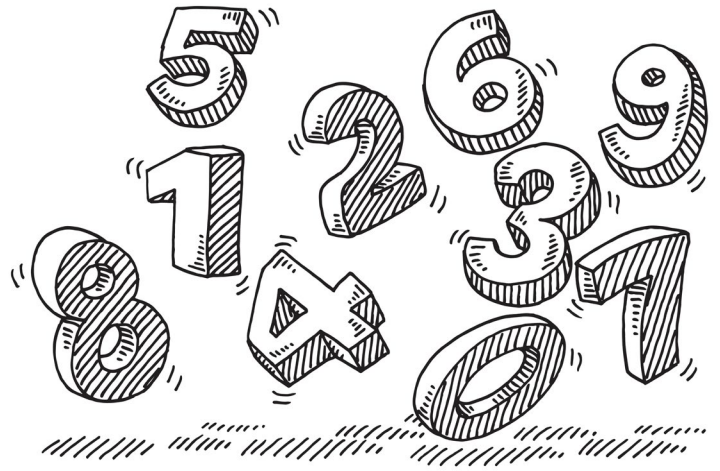
When finally all is restored
To brightness, caressed by the sun,
The birds' lively songs
Clamour the glory of being alive.

NUMBER FROM ONE TO TEN

Lorraine Levinson

How do we rate the ways of our days - -

Are they numbered or painted
or cooked in a pot, or a conundrum that
wandered and just got caught?



“I don’t know your face and I can’t read
your name

but I need to know – How much is your
pain?

The endless question that is always sought,

Am I dead or alive, or what disease have I
got?

I can count my toes from 1 to 10,

Then count my nose, but that’s not fun.

From 1 to 10 how to rate my sneezes?

Am I near to gone when they turn to
wheezes?

“Where are your glasses, from 1 to 10?”

You search all your pockets and find them
then,

On your head,

Or in your pocket or bed?

From 1 to 10, why can’t you sleep?

You’re unable to see to count the sheep?

Are the blankets piled on the floor in a
heap?

Is it freezing cold and numbing your feet?

Or is the bathroom too far for you to
creep?

Suppose we weren’t measured

from 1 to 10,

Would we know who we are,

where we were going, and when?

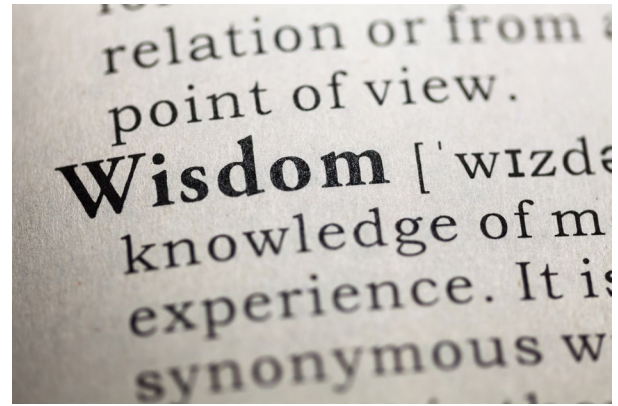
How divine to feel exquisitely fine,

from 1 to 9,

just in time

to end this rhyme.

WISE WORDS AND OBSERVATIONS



* Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint.
- Mark Twain

* We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are.
Anais Nin

* The best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other. - Dalai Lama

* Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.

* If you think you're too small to make a difference, you haven't spent the night with a mosquito.

* Despite the high cost of living, it remains popular.

* The absence of alternatives clears the mind marvelously."
- Henry Kissinger

* If the rich could hire other people to die for them, the poor would make a wonderful living." Jewish proverb

- * The problem with political jokes is that sometimes they get elected.
 - * Death is the Number 1 killer in the world.
 - * Life is sexually transmitted.
 - * Good health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
 - * Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in the hospital, dying of nothing.
 - * All of us could take a lesson from the weather. It pays no attention to criticism.
 - * In the '60s, people took LSD to make the world weird. Now the world is weird and people take Prozac to make it normal.
-

THINGS CONFUCIUS DID NOT SAY:

Submitted by Joshua Dalfin

Man who wants pretty nurse must be patient.

Lady who goes camping with man must beware of evil intent.

Man who leaps off cliff jumps to conclusion.

Man who eats many prunes get good run for his money.

War does not determine who is right. It determines who is left.

Man who drives like hell is bound to get there.

Wise man does not keep sledge hammer and computer in same room.

Man who lives in glass house should change clothes in basement.

HISTORY CORNER CONTINUED:

Submitted by June Zimmerman...

THE JEWS: A STORY OF A PEOPLE BY HOWARD FAST

At first Saul was able to halt the Philistines and for a long time it looked as though he might even defeat them. But he had a dark, brooding disposition and an insane persecution of religious cults that brought an end to the confederation. Saul and his three sons were killed in battle and the prophet Samuel gave his blessing to a young Jew called David.

It was David who took steps from war to peace and made himself King to all the tribes of Israel. This hegemony of Yehudim over Bnai-Yisrael lasted for only two reigning kings, David and Solomon. When Solomon died, the kingdom was split apart. The Northern confederacy separated from the Jews permanently.

David was an extraordinary man. He was beautiful; he had charm, wit, courage and a sense of destiny. He was also ambitious (he married Saul's daughter), opportunistic, cruel and callous. When Saul was alive, he saw David as a threat and tried to get rid of him. A band of Philistines gave David refuge and when he became King he went back to his old friends, the Philistines, talking them into an alliance against the Jebusites who held Jerusalem. The Philistines helped David capture Jerusalem by providing machines that

pounded the walls.

Once in Jerusalem, David made peace with the Jebusites, incorporating them into his army. He then turned on the Philistines with their own machinery, conquering five of their cities, smashing their military, and amassing their land into Eretz Yehudim, "The Land of the Jews." He made Jerusalem his capital and started building the Great Temple.

He made a pact with the Phoenicians mainly because, firstly, it would be very costly to fight them but also because he needed them for their seamanship to manage the trade of the mighty empire he was creating.

From David's time onward, Jewish super cargoes would ride on Phoenician ships, Jewish sailors would sail in Phoenician ships, and Jewish colonies all over the world would maintain, with Phoenicians, a network of trade and credit.

The Book of Psalms is attributed to David but even Orthodox scholars admit, on an historical basis, that the Psalms were written at a later time. It is acknowledged, however, that David did indeed play a stringed instrument.

David is part of the Jewish verve and vitality. The sprawling empire put together by him and his son, Solomon, gives testament to this.

The "gibborim" would not endure nor outlast the two empire builders, as Solomon found it easier to hire mercenaries than to deal with them. He was rich, as David had sacked a number of great cities. Much gold and silver lay in Solomon's stronghold.

Solomon continued his father's partnership

with the Phoenicians and, with King Hiram of Tyre, entered into a business partnership to build a seaport at Elat on the Red Sea. Hiram sent his shipwrights to build the ships and Phoenicians to man them.

(To be continued...)

Thus began one of the great commercial enterprises of history. Shrewd traders, sailors and a monopoly gave them entry into the markets of Babylon and India. Huge profits resulted and, with the help of Tyrian craftsmen, Solomon completed the splendid First Temple upon the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.



MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS

- * If you don't know where you're going, don't try to lead.
- * If you want to, you find a solution. If not, you find an excuse.
- * Your tongue is the only muscle in your body that is attached at only one end.
- * My mind still thinks I'm 25. My body thinks my mind is an idiot.
- * I made a huge to do list for today. I just can't figure out who's going to do it.
- * Stay away from negative people. They have a problem for every solution.
- Albert Einstein
- * For most people, when you've lost your "khakis", you've lost your pants. When you're from Boston and lose your "khakis", you can't start your car.
- * People who ask me what I'm doing tomorrow probably assume that I even know what day of the week it is.
- * Brain cells, hair cells and skin cells – they all die constantly, but freaking fat cells seem to have eternal life.
- * I don't know if Facebook has ever caused the lame to walk, but it sure has caused the dumb to speak.

BLESSING FOR THE HOME

May no sadness come through this gate.

May no trouble come to this dwelling.

May no fear come through this door.

May no conflict be in this place.

May this home be filled with Blessings of Joy and Peace.

*G-d, our Father, walk through my house
and take away all my worries and illness,
and please watch over and heal my family and other families too.*

AMEN

