The Bajoreks Eleven Years Later…
Still Helping. Still Volunteering.

By Bill Kroger

Eleven years ago the front page of *Vintage Views* was graced with a photo of Jean and Roger Bajorek. The accompanying story painted a picture of a local couple who were very busy doing things to help the community and their neighbors.

In 2009 Roger had been retired for four years and Jean had cut back her hair business to two days a week. What have they been up to since then? Maybe they have just been relaxing and puttering, I recently sat down for a chat with them and what do you think I found out? There is not a lot of time in their life for relaxing and puttering. Jean still works two days a week at her salon on Third Street in Rochester that her daughter, Kris, now manages. Roger still provides nature programs at OPC for Adult Daycare and for the visually impaired. Upon request, he presents programs at local schools.

In March of this year Daffodils for Dinosaurs, founded by Jean, raised funds for Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve for the thirtieth year. Every year the couple has also been heavily involved in the Simply Soup Supper, a fundraiser for Kiwanis.

Both Roger and Jean are very active with the Rochester Kiwanis group. In addition to raising funds for Neighborhood House, OPC and Manna Community Meal through the Simply Soup Supper, you can find them in the Rochester Community Park on Thursday evenings in the summer assisting with the Kiwanis music in park programs. And if you are so inclined Roger will gladly sell you a raffle ticket at the concert.

This year because of the COVID pandemic Kiwanis meetings are by Zoom. But Roger says, “We have kept up our program to provide diapers to Neighborhood House and Lighthouse on a monthly schedule.” He also points out that smart shoppers can take advantage of coupons and specials to make money go further.

The Bajoreks have been volunteering at Manna Community Meal in Detroit for more than twenty-five years. This soup kitchen serves meals from 7:00 a.m. till 11:00 a.m. five days a week in the basement of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church building at the corner of Trumbull and Michigan, right across from the now dismantled Tiger Stadium. They have been cooking and serving soup once a month, and they have been involved in other activities providing help for the homeless at the St. Peter’s location.

In 2012 Jean and Roger began working on a project to provide showers and clothes-washing facilities at the location. As Jean says, “Just providing clothes to people who have no way to keep the clothes or themselves clean is not really filling the need.” Their efforts to fill the need really took off in 2015. But it was neither a simple nor an inexpensive project. They were assisted by volunteers from professions as varied as engineer, plumber and lawyer.

The project was completed this year with four showers and three washers and dryers. A manager has been hired to oversee the operation and volunteers are still being recruited to help operate the 501c3 corporation named The Corner Shower and Laundry. The project was funded by voluntary contributions—the largest being $70,000 from the Episcopal Dioceses of Michigan and about $15,000 from 100 Women Who Care in Northville.

The project opened right before the COVID-19 virus hit. Since the onset of social distancing rules, the Shower operation has continued but limits users to one at a time. But, it has kept going, “And I am very happy about that ... it has been a long time coming together and the Corner Shower and Laundry is very helpful to those who need it. Many showers taken; many loads of clothes laundered.” Jean updates.

The soup kitchen had to change its operation because of the virus. Now, five days a week, they prepare sandwiches at 6:45 a.m. and distribute box lunches in the church parking lot around noon. “It is not soup but it is a meal and it helps people in need,” says Roger.

The article honoring these “seniors” was written pre-pandemic and except for some updates was left as written.

Silent Night, Homeless Plight

Silent night, frostbite night
homeless face their constant plight.
Temps are dropping, zero, below
how to survive, where to go?

While we’re warm and safe inside
they walk the streets, where to hide?
From mother nature’s icy finger
how much longer can they linger?

And if tonight they have endured
colder tomorrow, they’ve been assured.
Perhaps a shelter will offer a bed,
someplace to lay a cold, weary head.

Soup kitchen in the morning, for something to eat
they close at noon then it’s out on the street.

Shower and bathroom are at Saint Peter and Paul
too far away to answer the call.

Some may say “they’re just plain lazy”
the pains of war can make one crazy.
Mental illness, poor jobs, few choices
do we hear their plea or muffle their voices?

Where’s our compassion, our consideration
is our compassion, our consideration
how much longer can they linger?
While we

Silent night? Holy night?
All’s not calm. All’s not bright!

Eugenia Bajorek

As you can see, not much time for relaxing or puttering. Jean and Roger are still very active helping others. Like many OPC members, when they see a need they look for ways to meet it.

Jean adds, “While all the work we do to help is so important and many could not survive without it, the real solution will come when the old and continuing attitudes toward the poor are changed, when the reasons for poverty and homelessness are finally recognized and addressed, and when the biases in the hearts of many are transformed into understanding and compassion—only then will the ‘cries of the poor’ be silenced.”

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Photo by: Jean and Roger (2019)
BEST LABOR DAY PICNIC EVER! Well, maybe not.

By Alyson Denyer

Labor Day Weekend...time to put the American flag out; maybe make the last potato salad of the summer. And time to set aside two hours to watch the movie Picnic. Wait, what? Yes, dear readers, you read correctly. How and when this all began I am not sure, but it has become something of a tradition for me.

The movie, released in 1955, revolves around the celebration of a Labor Day picnic in a small Kansas town. Initially, I was intrigued by the decor, clothing, hair styles, and cars. popcornchenille bedspreads adorn the beds. The women wear dresses, nipped at the waist with a belt. The main female character wears two different frocks with frothy skirts redolent of prom dresses worn back in the day. Ladies' hair is curled; the mothers pinned with the same clips I used in my teens. The men sport dress shirts and suits to the picnic; one man drives a classic convertible, cool and fast.

The rendering of the small town picnic is endearing to me, complete with a three-legged race, rolling pin throw, haystack coin hunt, sundown sing-a-long, and, lastly, swing dancing to the theme song Moonglow, a favorite of mine.

Watching the movie in more recent years has given me a new perspective. Setting styles and romance aside, and William Holden. I used in my teens. The men sport dress shirts and suits to the picnic; one man drives a classic convertible, cool and fast.

The movie was adapted for the screen from William Inge's Pulitzer Prize-winning play and was nominated for several Academy Awards in 1956. Although no actors were chosen, it won for Best Art Direction and Best Film Editing. It was one of Kim Novak's earliest films. William Holden, considered too old at 37, was glad to return to the project, Cinemascope? It was a film emotionally charged movie was filmed at four actual locations in Kansas. Do you remember traveling to the Ozarks to get married. As if this isn't enough drama, Millie encourages Madge to follow Hal: "For once in your life, do something bright."

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In spite of weather issues, that emotionally charged movie was filmed at four actual locations in Kansas. Do you remember Cinemascope? It was a film trendsetter and lent itself to several scenes.

I suggested my daughter and 19-year-old granddaughter borrow this movie. Their reaction? "What do you like about this film?" Sigh. I explained my old views versus my new perspective. It helped, a little. So will I watch Picnic this Labor Day weekend? Yes, and I might even play my McGuire Sisters rendition of Moonglow as well. Some traditions are meant to be honored.

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Editor's comment, "Here are some other famous movies from the 1950s. Grab some popcorn and enjoy!"

An American in Paris, 1951
The African Queen, 1951
Singing in the Rain, 1952
The Quiet Man, 1952
High Noon, 1952
Shane, 1953
From Here to Eternity, 1953
Roman Holiday, 1953
Sabrina, 1954
The Last Time I Saw Paris, 1954
Love is a Many Splendored Thing, 1955
Summertime, 1955
The Seven Year Itch, 1955
To Catch a Thief, 1955
The Searchers, 1956
An Affair to Remember, 1957
Love in the Afternoon, 1957
**By Alyson Denyer**

A rose is a rose is a rose...when Gertrude Stein waxed poetic in 1913, she had no idea Weeks Nursery in California would develop an official *Rosie the Riveter Rose* to honor the hard-working American women who helped the Allies win World War II!

OPC is proud to display a beautiful *Rosie the Riveter Rose Bush* in the OPC garden. Our rose, planted in 2019, was purchased by OPC member Sandra Agosta in remembrance of her mother, Iris Longacre Stanfield. Iris worked at Chrysler Corporation inspecting airplane pistons.

This floribunda hybrid features old-fashioned prolific blooms reminiscent of the 1940s. Large orange-gold blossoms are suffused with soft pink edges. But don't let the colors fool you. These plants are strong and require a minimum of fuss, just like Rosie the Riveter!

Weeks Nursery shipped the shrubs to local nurseries from California to Maine and everywhere in between. Michigan's Rosie Chapters in Eastpointe and Willow Run sold them to Veterans memorial gardens, cemeteries, homeowners, senior citizen complexes, even Greenfield Village. Each rose bush bears a red tag with “WWII Rosie” embossed on one side and the name of a Rosie on the other.

Celebrations were often held when the plantings took place; sometimes original Rosies were able to take part. A short ceremony was held when the rose honoring Iris was planted and Sandra placed her mother’s tag on it.

Renee Cortright and the OPC “Late Bloomers” invite you to visit the rose garden to see our own *Rosie the Riveter Rose Bush*!▼

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**Sandra stands proudly with the Rosie Rose Bush dedicated to her mother.**

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Who can you recognize in this *Batting Tiger* drawing?

By Mike Flannery

This is a very unique drawing by artist Robert Fleisher done in April 1984. I first saw the offer for the drawing in the *Detroit Free Press* and sent away for it. The drawing is signed in pencil by the artist. Cost me only a few dollars; I spent a lot more for the framing!

The artwork depicts a Detroit Tiger batter and opposing catcher. However, the special part of the drawing are the people from all walks of life in the stands. You will see many celebrities, politicians, and athletes. I have yet to identify all those in the stands, but for example: there is Tom Selleck, former mayor Coleman Young, Yoko Ono, Jacqueline Onassis Kennedy, Tom Monaghan, Salvador Dalí, Henry Kissinger, golfer Lee Trevino, Mark the Bird Fidrych, Willie Horton, Al Kaline, and Stevie Wonder. There are a host of others. I've never been able to find a list of “Who’s Who” à la “Where’s Waldo” or a key to their location. Maybe one doesn’t exist. So here’s the challenge—can you recognize well-known people in the crowd at this imaginary Detroit Tigers baseball game? Have fun! ▼
Alley musicians of the time in New York. Jack Norworth and Albert von Tilzer were part of the Tin Pan Alley songwriting team everyone knows! According to Smithsonian Magazine, Who are Jack and Albert?

According to historian John Thorn, they were...
I Almost Was In Pictures
By M. Shepard

Mother and I were able to say goodbye to my dad in San Diego before the fleet that included Dad’s ship left for the planned invasion of Japan in 1945.

We were on our way up the California coast to visit my Aunt Mary and Uncle Glenn in Los Angeles. I remembered hearing about them, but had never met them. They had two boys; I was concerned because some of my other boy cousins were a bit rowdy and teased me.

Mother assured me that these cousins were very nice. Then I remembered seeing a picture of them on the back of a pony and thought that they might let me ride it.

When we arrived, we received big hugs from Aunt Mary and Uncle Glenn. Cousin John was there, too, but Cousin Glenn Jr. was at camp. I didn’t see the pony; finally, I asked about the pony. The pony belonged to the photographer! I felt very disappointed. I soon recovered from that disappointment because everyone was so kind to me. One day Uncle Glenn took me on his bakery delivery route where he delivered to people in Beverly Hills, which included many movie stars. The houses were huge. He knew everyone by name and what their orders were, and he would stop and chat with them. At one house, a lady came out to talk with him, and when she saw me she said, “What a pretty child!” Then she invited him to bring Aunt Mary, and my mother, and me back to swim in their pool. I was ecstatic. I hadn’t been in a swimming pool in a very long time.

We finished his route and returned home later that day. Uncle Glenn relayed the invitation to my mother and added that it was Mary Pickford’s pool. Mother was reluctant until he told her that Mary Pickford wasn’t home. I had an inkling he was not telling the truth, because the woman we talked to earlier was named Mary. I just kept quiet. Mother decided it would be okay after my aunt urged Mother to go. We put on bathing suits, collected our swim things and set off in the car.

It was a lovely, large pool. I splashed around and held on to the edge. Much to my mother’s surprise, Mary Pickford walked across the lawn to join us for a few minutes. I think Mother shot daggers with her eyes at Uncle Glenn. Mary Pickford watched me swimming and then turned to talk to Mother. “Would you be willing to bring her to the studio for a screen test tomorrow?” I couldn’t believe my ears! My mother thanked her for the invitation and declined.

I often wondered what would have happened if we had gone to the movie studio. However I was not talented, and I suspect I wouldn’t have become the next child star. I was just three and a half years old.

In vivid detail, I remember so much of our travels, many emotions helping me keep memories. Well there’s that and in my family we have a genetic tendency toward vivid memories from times when very young. It’s fascinating what members of our family do recall.

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Contact Co-Editors Karen Lemon and Maryann Wilshere.

Vintage Views email v@opcseniorcenter.org
Bricks
By Bill Mihalic
For Vintage Views readers who might associate my above by-line with humorous articles, please note that this piece, which deals with loss and grief, is entirely different. No humor here, although it may leave you with a bit of comfort and perhaps even a smile.

Of course, grief and recovery have been the subject of extensive study and recommendations and have been condensed into generally accepted “stages of grief,” with the only question being whether it is best portrayed as five stages or seven.

Although I certainly don’t disagree with any of those analyses, characterizations or recommendations, for me, grieving has always been a three-stage process. And it’s all about bricks.

Stage 1: Initial Impact
People often say the loss of a close friend or loved one has hit them like a ton of bricks, and I think their analogy is spot on. In fact, it is perfectly fitting to compare the emotional blow to a physical one because in both cases the end result is physical: Stunned. Disoriented. Off-balance. Unable to think clearly. Unable to completely process what is happening. Even when a loss is foreseeable and imminent, I’m never entirely prepared, and the impact of an expected loss is not much different from a loss that was a total, sudden shock.

That phrase—hit by a ton of bricks—has always created a very specific image in my mind: the bricks are in a large canvas sack that is suspended at the end of a rope and swinging toward me. It then delivers the inevitable, merciless body slam and knocks me for a loop. And by the way, knocked for a loop is another fitting analogy, especially as it reflects that feeling of suddenly being totally disoriented, not even sure which way is up.

The necessity of making arrangements in the days following a loss—or simply offering and giving help to those who need it—seems to soften the blow by providing a bit of diversion as well as a purpose and objective when we would otherwise languish with an overwhelming feeling of complete emptiness, helplessness, and loss.

Stage 2: Reminders
I’ve been surprised to find that my initial pain—the one that’s like being hit by a ton of bricks— isn’t the worst of it. For me, the really excruciating part comes later and continues for weeks, months, and even years. That’s when those bricks start hitting me squarely on the head, one at a time, as though dropping randomly and unexpectedly from the sky.

Sometimes there’s a “trigger,” such as a sudden urge to call and share exciting news, until, half a second later, I realize I can’t—they’re gone. Other triggers can be an event we previously shared, a family birth the loved one has missed, or a holiday gathering with an empty chair. Sometimes there is no trigger; sometimes the brick picks the time.

Some of those bricks are cherished life experiences that will no longer be the same: listening to stories about our family history, bonding over shared interests, enjoying a holiday toast. (In our family, those holiday toasts usually involved shots of slivovitz and shouts of “Zivio!”)

Some bricks are kindnesses I always appreciated but now value more than ever: help offered, comfort given, sacrifices made.

Some bricks are my regrets, those things that make me wish for a do-over: issues unresolved, gratitude unspoken, conversations avoided, opportunities missed.

These individual bricks are more painful than the body slam from the entire sack because they are so specific; instead of a general feeling of emptiness and loss, these bricks remind me of exactly what I have lost.

Also, the pain is greater at this point because I am no longer stunned by initial loss, nor do I have the merciful distraction of immediate, practical needs that require my full attention. Instead, I now see, feel, and comprehend my loss with complete, painful clarity.

Stage 3: Building
However, there can be healing, perhaps even celebration of shared lives, after a life has been lost. Those falling bricks that inflicted so much pain are why the departed was such an important part of my life. If I pick up—and, in fact embrace—those bricks that are now scattered around me, then in my mind I can build a house. Not a structure that is a memorial to that person, but one that is that person, where each brick is a part of them and a part of our relationship.

Sure...a few of those bricks are reminders of our human frailties and imperfections in our relationship, but without those bricks the house would lack character; it would be missing substance, texture, and style.

I know the generally accepted stages of grief—be it five or seven—are technically correct, and I’m sure many people struggling with loss find enlightenment, comfort, and hope through an awareness of those inevitable steps. But me...I see bricks.

This reflection is dedicated to my mother’s father, Tomas Grgurich, a brick mason.▼
RUBY’S JOURNEY

By Adam Thiny

My journey began nine decades ago near an old-world city where the Danube veers to the east, streaming toward its final destination, the Black Sea. Here, in a small jewelry shop, a goldsmith’s skilled hands crafted me into a circle of gold, crowned with a shiny red stone. Yes, I am a ring, an engagement ring. I am Ruby.

While displayed inside a glass enclosure, I observed a young man pacing the shop floor. Eventually he stopped at my station and took me home to his farming village where I would meet my first mistress.

Back home Niklos slid me onto the finger of a young maiden named Maria. She was overjoyed to receive me; I was pleased to finally belong to someone. My mistress and I spent blissful days strolling through town, basking in admiration bestowed upon us by spectators. But too soon I was removed from Maria’s ring finger and replaced with a wedding band named Goldie. At first I felt rejected, but happy times returned when both Goldie and I concurrently adorned the fingers of our mistress.

Niklos and his father plowed the fields, sowed, and harvested the crop. Maria and her mother-in-law did the gardening, cooking, and cleaning. Soon the children arrived: first a daughter and then a son.

Together we all led a happy life. Peace and tranquility thrived throughout our realm. But then the dark clouds of hostilities drifted in, snuffing out our way of life forever. Niklos went to war; he would never return.

Sensing an unfavorable outcome of this global conflict, Maria bundled up some of her valuables, including me, but still wore Goldie on her ring finger. She then took the bundle to her aunt who smuggled it to a neighboring village. Since her aunt’s husband was of the same ethnicity as the soon-to-arriving victors, those valuables would remain safe and not be confiscated by the new regime.

For two years, Maria labored at an orphanage, without compensation. Eventually she escaped. With sheer determination she managed to be reunited with her children and parents in the camp of the forgotten, ironically on the same day that they all had been scheduled to be transferred to another camp, from which they would soon escape.

Prior to their escape, Maria’s aunt had smuggled into the new camp some of those valuables, including me, which she had guarded over the last three years. Now so we owned some bargaining items, if needed during our escape. My mistress’s father hired a guide who took his money but then abandoned us. The border guards captured us, and after confiscating all our money and most of our belongings, they let us go. Luckily they had missed taking me, a necklace, and a pair of earrings, all of which had been secured within Maria’s garments.

Countless days we trekked across hostile territories, mostly under a clear sky of shining stars, while hiding during the day. At times an isolated farm house provided us refuge, and helped relieve the pains of hunger and thirst. We followed the Danube upstream to the north, crossing it once by row boat. We arrived in Budapest and then headed west, entering the safe haven of Austria. After four more years of wandering, my mistress, her children, and I sailed across the Atlantic, to the land of the free.

In America, I would never encircle my mistress’s finger, which deeply saddened me. Mostly she kept me isolated in darkness, cooped up in her box of memories. Oh, there were times when she opened the box and briefly lifted me out, and with watering eyes gazed down at me. Were those tears meant for her lost wedding ring, my friend Goldie...or did they evoke that day when a young man first slid me onto her finger?

Today, I am happy again. For sure I have aged somewhat; 90 years have taken their toll on my once sparkling stature, and now dents and scuff marks abound. Today, my second mistress, granddaughter of Maria, proudly wears me on her right hand ring finger, taking me with her wherever she roams. Down the road, what will happen to me—will my journey continue? Will I belong to a third mistress that will cherish me and keep me out of darkness? I suppose that will depend on my present mistress. Although, she has already promised that someday I will adorn the finger of Maria’s great-granddaughter!
I’d like to introduce you to Ernst Höfler. The first thing that struck me about Ernst was his sense of humor. I and my own sense of humor could relate to that. Ernst’s own wonderful sense of humor, I thought, could be explained by him being from Austria where, as well as in Bavarian Germany, humor is common.

His region of work included all of Europe; my region was North and South America, Australia and Asia. When he visited me, we would go to the Canadian or Mexican plants as well as USA plants; and I would visit his plants, mainly in Germany, Italy, England and France. We met each other’s colleagues, using English as the common language.

He and I collaborated perfectly, regularly updating each other on environmental, safety, health, and fire protection events and developments at our factories with openness and communication.

Ernst and I loved to give presentations and seminars, and we developed this activity to a new high level with international participation and global topics. He opened his annual Environmental Seminar to his European colleagues outside Germany and added more emphasis on work safety; I developed my American version to increase the environmental content. The two concepts were different but very compatible. I presented at his seminars, and he presented at mine, both of which provided truly global review and planning.

Ernst and I had a lot of fun with language. He knew English pretty well, having spent some time in England. He told the story about taking his wife Anneliese to dinner at a British restaurant. She wanted to taste their kidney pie and the waiter was astounded. The German pronunciation for words with ie is our ee; she ordered kidney pee!

He often questioned me on the precise meanings of words and phrases; I remember we once came up with several synonyms for delicious after a particularly good meal. Once we went to dinner after one of my seminars and had chicken fettuccine. He stared at the check afterward, and asked me, “What is this?” pointing to the entry fett on the receipt. I told him it was for the fettuccini. He responded “Yes, but the German meaning for fett is fat.” Again, we both had a good laugh.

Ernst and I remained good colleagues and best friends. When Ernst was close to retirement, I attended his last European Conference, in Nuremberg, Germany. It was a highly emotional time for me. Brenda and I discussed what kind of retirement present we should give him. We decided on a German gift, but for his granddaughter: a Steiff bear. It was worth taking the almost-life-size bear to Germany to see Ernst’s surprised reaction.

On his last visit to me, I had another surprise for him. This was to be a great secret, keeping Ernst guessing about where we were going. I asked him to prepare to walk a lot, bring walking shoes. When the day came, a limo came to pick us up, and we went to the Detroit airport. When we checked in, he learned the trip was to New York City. Finally, he knew what I was up to: a trip he always had his heart set on—he had never seen New York.

Brenda packed lunches for us and we ate on a park bench in Battery Park, overlooking the Statue of Liberty. We walked the entire way from the tip of Manhattan, visiting sights all day, to Central Park where we ate a light dinner. The weather was beautiful, and the occasion was beautiful. We went to Wall Street, the Empire State Building, Grand Central Station, Times Square, Fifth Avenue, and everything else along the way. It was truly memorable, a treasured time for both of us. He was amazed by the tall buildings and the grandeur of it all.

Even long after retirement, Ernst and I still communicated, by e-mail, and still exchanged writings for comments and corrections including this story!

Epilogue: His wife Anneliese, who regularly painted watercolors and sent them to me around holidays, sent a beautiful painting of “the Gemini Twins” for my June 2019 birthday—as a remembrance that Ernst and I were called “the safety and environment twins.” Ernst passed away on August 16, 2019.
THE OPC BEAT GOES ON...SERVING SENIORS
By Maryann Blodgett Wilshere

Meals on Wheels—Nutrition. Staying connected. And special “Cards For The Elderly” by Rebuild Rochester.

Never missing a step, the OPC Meals on Wheels, culinary team, and devoted volunteers continue to work tirelessly to ensure that homebound seniors enjoy fresh, delicious meals each and every day. Marianne McCauley proudly shared, “I had the honor of assisting these amazing essential men and women a few months during this unprecedented time. I am in awe of them. It is like watching a well choreographed ballet.”

OPC’s Transportation Department starts the day at the break of dawn and continues well after the parking lot empties at the end of a long day. With laughter and love, the team follows strict safety protocols while driving seniors to appointments, grocery shopping, and other important errands.

Tens of thousands of community wellness checks are just one wonderful part of what our Senior Services crew have been up to the past six months. The OPC can help in many additional ways! Do you need a wheelchair, a shower chair, or maybe a walker? Are you looking for: legal advice or Medicare advice? Do you need nutritious food to fill your cupboards? Simply give our Senior Services team a call.

Our community has pitched in every step of the way. One way was Rebuild Rochester, a group of Rochester Community Schools high school students, created beautiful, handmade cards that were delivered personally to homebound seniors with their meals. Smiles were shared. The good will is contagious!

Virtual OPC—And the fun and activity continues. Staff and OPC members realized they are more computer savvy than they ever imagined.

Learn how to meditate, find calm during chaos, discover common words and phrases in different languages, discuss books and movies, enjoy a visit to the Detroit Institute of Arts, discover important information from trusted physicians, join groups and discussions, join virtual fitness classes, experiment with computer programs, play BINGO! The list could go on and on, and our members are catching on to wondrous fun and experience! You may not feel ready to venture out quite yet, but with Virtual OPC you are not alone.

Visit the OPC website’s HOME page and scroll down to “Virtual Programs” for the current and upcoming months.

Busy? Yes Bryan K. Barnett, Rochester Hills Mayor and America’s Mayor of Mayors, is busy and yet he creates a special message for the OPC members on the first Monday of every month!

Mayor Barnett recently shared his love of his home town and of the Older Persons’ Commission:

“It will come as no surprise to you that I share stories about Rochester Hills wherever I go, with people all over the world, to anyone who will listen. I tell them about our great residents and businesses, the creativity and excellence of our City employees, and the collaborative and positive relationship we share with leaders in our community. I especially like to spread the word about the OPC and how it’s truly a national model as the premier community resource for adults 50 and over.”

Thank you Rochester Hills, Rochester, and Oakland Township for your unwavering support in the 2020 millage!

Veterans Connection—“Celebrate Life and Liberty through Service, Honor, Remembrance, Education, and Gratitude”

OPC Under the Tent and More

Exactly what’s happening under that big white tent in the OPC gardens? Our members are socially distancing in the shade, surrounded by glorious gardens, listening to the soothing sounds of water, while they... practice yoga, improve their strength and balance, gently move in Tai Chi class, gather together as veterans and family, join as musicians or in a drum circle, line dance, garden, enjoy socials and lectures, attend luncheons, play bingo, tap their toes to live music, and expand their creativity in some of the most outstanding arts & crafts sessions we’ve ever seen.

Outdoor Fitness—Exercise and social connections boost the immune system that may help fight off infections, are mood-boosters, and can reduce stress levels and build emotional resilience. Enjoy a variety of activities for your body, mind, and soul.

Ascension Providence Rochester Wellness Center and Physical Therapy at OPC—When members need coaching or help with every day tasks, Jennifer Krieter, OPC Physical Therapist, is available. “I love helping people gain functional improvements for everyday tasks”, says Jennifer.

Services include: Ask the Nurse, Ask the Doctor, Ask the Orthopedic Doctor, Educational Seminars, Health Screening Services (Hearing Testing, Hearing Aid Cleaning, Blood Pressure Readings, Bone Density Screening, PSA testing with same day results), Blood Drives, Weight Watchers, and CPR Training. Check the monthly newsletter for current programs and schedules. Contact nurse Cindy McKenna in the Wellness Center at: 248-601-2888. She’s missed everyone. Cindy says, “I’m here, feel free to call me!”

Arts and Crafts—Classes in mosaics, acrylics, watercolors, clay, jewelry, card making, needle art, Zentangle, and finish your own projects. Or there is “Art to Go” with curbside pick-up of kits. Join the fun and let your creativity surprise you. Or maybe you already know your passion for a particular arts medium. Come inspire each other!
Baby James

By Jim Ahearn

He is the latest of our six great-grandchildren and has lived in our home ten hours a day, five days a week, from the time he was six weeks old, and his mother was to return to her teaching assignment. My wife, Karen, who at 82 is much spryer than I, volunteered to take on this day-care responsibility, as she had done for Jessica, our grandchild, who is now the mother.

For me, at age 85, to witness the liveliness in the daily growth of this child has been an awesome experience. When our own children were babies, I was working and missed many of the almost hourly changes in their development. I’m also sure, at that time, I likely took for granted many of their growth events, not cognizant of the amazing hand of creation at work right before my eyes.

The child’s earliest struggle from laying on his back to rolling over onto his tummy seemed an inherent desire but required great determination, yet was somehow built into his make-up. Daily attempts thereafter to correlate body motion into locomotion, better known as crawling, followed.

From his earliest days he responded to music (be it from lullabies, toys, or CD collection) with visible body motions that became a full spectrum of social, health and services, including Meals on Wheels, hot meals, transportation, adult day programs, and travel. 

FAMILY EDITION

The evening cannot overshadow the surgeon’s lamp, or interfere with this introduction. No overcast, in the window of morning, can obstruct the sunrise on our family’s face. So bright the smile on our genealogy, even a switch cannot turn off its brilliance. No cloud can fog our sight, no shade separate us from his appearance.

Light attaches to the child, shines through his stocking-cap and blanket wrapped tight as appliqué. Only an uncovered face reflects his lineage with existence, though known, almost from the moment of conception. The secret kept from the world until released in ultra-sounds and this final published 3D edition.

Welcome! James Michael Urban

James Ahearn

Three steps up from the family room to our dining area had kept him confined thus far. To my wife’s surprise one day, before he began to walk, she came up the stairs and discovered him right behind her. It took her only two days to teach him to turn around and go backward down those three steps. From then on, as conveyed in an old expression, it was Katy bar the door.

I, with low responsibility and balance, participate mostly in the fun activities like bouncing him on my knee or on the bed. Because I stay up late I arise late, so Baby James and I often share meal time, his lunch during my breakfast. Once past the pablum stage he would sit on my knee and nibble on my tea-dunked toast and banana pieces from my cereal. Both of us nutritiously delighted.

I also marvel at his speed of learning. Without speaking a word, he can communicate his desires. When wanting to be picked up, he approaches one with both arms raised. Once up he points to whatever he wants: a book, a grape, a toy. Cheers.

Blessed by opportunity to experience the beginning of life before using up my allotted days, I look back over this article and notice the words I’ve used: “liveliness, awesome, amazing, inherent, awestruck, astonished, delighted, marvel”—all of which can be summed up in a single word that explains what really has happened—a miracle.
In Pursuit of Grandma Moses

By Nancy Knitter

During the imposed confinement due to COVID-19, I joined Great Courses online and had access to hundreds of subjects taught by highly qualified professors. History has always been a topic of great interest, and I took courses on The Rise of Rome, Greek Culture & History as well as The New Testament and Dead Sea Scrolls. Courses consisted of (24) 30-minute lectures. I needed a change of pace and something I could actively engage in physically and mentally. I had minored in Art History in college and had an appreciation of great art, particularly Impressionists, Expressionism, and Modern Art Movements. Other than the Arts and Crafts courses demanded of Education majors, I never really dipped a brush in paint and thought I could never create anything of value. My mom and two brothers were very artistic. I did not inherit those genes. I was up for the challenge and purchased a starter acrylic paint set. After watching several of the 24 lectures on “How to Paint” on Great Courses, I took the plunge.

I can’t believe how hesitant I was in starting. I opened only two color tubes, green and yellow, and tested different brush strokes on regular paper. I tried out some of the blending techniques with shapes and effects. It didn’t matter if it was realistic or not. That was for photographers.

After the lecture on creativity and expanding your own individual expression of how you view the world, I felt more relaxed in my explorations with paint and color and subject. Maybe the geraniums I painted were green and the leaves were purple. I liked it and it was pleasing to my eye. Grandma Moses painted what she loved, particularly her New England town and people as they engaged in hometown activities. Her paintings became widely recognized after she was in her seventies.

What I enjoy is color and how the eye blends and projects different meanings for each individual and how we view a painting. An hour will fly by as my whole focus is my painting. It is personal and a great way to put the cares of the world behind you for a time and appreciate the many beautiful colors and shapes, as you break them down into basic presentations. Winston Churchill and Presidents Ulysses Grant, Jimmy Carter, and George W. Bush all enjoyed painting in their later years.

It is never too late to try something new or challenging.▼

A few artworks from actors and musicians: (L to R)
Lisa Lou
James Dean
Billy Dee Williams
Viggo Martensen.

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A Rose

There’s a rose in the field growing with the grass
Planted by the hand of god to give this world some class
A flower in its little space
To make this world a better place
A flower of beauty tender and soft
To be hugged by kindness on a higher loft
Love is her strength, compassion is her virtue
She may not be perfect but her faults are few
Her friends are close they will never part
She loves them all deep in her heart
When her friends are down she’ll give a tug
To lift them up and all she’ll ask is a little hug
She’ll bend with the strongest and never complain
But when pushed too far she’ll inflict pain
She’s a peaceful rose with fine description
But the thorns are there for protection
Her Happy Times are in the sky
When she can see her butterflies
Her other pleasures are more dear
When her three buds are very near
In twilight years her colors will fade
But her beauty will last through all her days
This rose won’t last its god’s plan
But she’ll leave behind a better land
Her presence here enriches us all
Because of her we stand more tall
Though its not the first or the last
I love that rose in the field growing with the grass

Douglas Elgie

Trying to Write...

“Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans”
John Lennon (1940-1980), song “Beautiful Boy”

How quaint was Dante’s tour.
His descent into
health benefits certainly are expensive, it says right here
this coffee is lousy. On a scale of one to ten, the tree leaves are swaying in the wind, they protect our house from
traffic is heavy today and the national debt reminds me to not forget
we need to play the new CD that has a great interest rate, while the cat is hungry. He’s nibbling on I need to caulk the bathtub and get two teeth filled. I suppose the pneumatic
double cream and sugar should now he’s purring, that’s a good sign. God it’s hot in here, maybe that’s my shoes are untied, but it’s midmorning and that reminds me: I still need to write a poem.

Sam Seabright

Good Morning, Good Morning!

Sitting on our patio glider
enjoying summer’s early morning cool breeze.

Taking in flowers’ bursting colors, listening to birds converse, my awareness swaying with distant sounds of summer morning.

Kids down the block, tree trimming on next street, lawn mower humming, neighbors chatting on their walk.

Gifts for the senses!
Being in the moment...summer’s blessings.

Maryann Blodgett Wilshere

Because of her

Because of her
I’m a better man
Because of her
I understand so much more
Than I did before
Because of her
I’m more aware of my feelings
My joys, my sadness
My love, my gladness
Because of her
My smile is brighter, my heart is bigger
My laughter is louder, my hopes are greater
Because of her
I have matured, and things look more clear
But still warm, when she is near
Her name is Rose
And she makes me glow
Ask god, he knows
Because of her
I’m happy and life is good
For her I pray
My love has helped in some way
Because of her
I’ve been blessed
Twenty years of happiness
Because of her
I live a better life
My Rose, My Rose
Thank you for being my wife
I love you

Douglas Elgie
Breath by James Nestor
Reviewed by Brenda Seabright

Most of us think breathing is an easy and natural thing to do—wrong, according to Nestor, author of Breath, a book about the science of breathing.

N estor says that as far back as 400 B.C., the Chinese Tao had written many manuscripts on how to regulate the breath in order to preserve mental and physical health, and that Buddhists used it to achieve higher levels of consciousness.

The book states that scientists who study the science of breathing today think 90% of us might be breathing incorrectly, and as high as 50% of us may be mouth breathers. Incorrect breathing may worsen many maladies including asthma, anxiety, high blood pressure, autoimmune disease, attention deficit and hyperactivity. Nestor found that mouth breathing may lead to sleep apnea and periodontal disease, while over breathing might cause migraine headaches because of a buildup of carbon monoxide (CO).

A correlation has been noticed between lung size and longevity, according to Nestor. Moderate exercise, like walking and cycling, has been known to increase lung capacity by 15%. Exercises in Nestor’s book that strengthen the diaphragm also help lung capacity. He says that a typical adult uses as little as 10% of the range of the diaphragm, which can overburden the heart, elevate blood pressure, and cause circulatory problems. Nestor has an exercise in the book to eliminate this problem. It is called Breathing Coordination, Chapter 4.

T he book says that to extend longevity, a person needs to balance oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the body, and the best way to do this is by exhaling and inhaling slowly, called Coherent Breath. Nestor found that researchers in 2001 studied this method and found that most efficient breath rhythm pattern was 5.5-second inhales followed by 5.5-second exhales, which work out to almost exactly 5.5 breaths per minute. ”This increased blood flow to the brain and the systems of the body entered a state of coherence where the heart, circulation, and nervous systems were coordinated to peak efficiency. At the time of the test they had the participants recite a Buddhist mantra or the Latin version of the rosary which copied this pattern. The results were profound, even when practiced 10 minutes per day. In the back of the book are many breathing exercises, and throughout the book are many additional resources.

We may not be able to stop and start our hearts like the Yogis or survive in extreme cold, but the book is very interesting and could be beneficial.
By Bruce Raymond

A large percentage of our country doesn’t know the history of Normandy. On June 6, 1944, there were approximately 5000 ships, 11,000 aircraft, and 156,000 troops that comprised the assault and at the end of that battle 9000 bodies lay fallen on the beach.

Two artists from the U.K. wanted to express the horror of war and loss which started the defeat of the Nazis regime in WWII on European soil. In 2013 to Commemorate Peace Day, Jamie Wardley and Andy Moss thought of a way to show tribute to the fallen at D-Day on June 6, 1944, by etching the silhouette of the 9000 body forms in the sands at Normandy, France.

Jamie and Andy named their project “The Fallen” and took the first step of gathering 60 volunteers to make the life size stencils representing the fallen. On International Day of Peace (“Peace Day”) September 21, 2013, the group of 60 had gathered volunteers…500 more, many of whom had lost loved ones in other wars. They all started making silhouettes as soon as the tide started to recede—they were on a timeline to complete 9000 forms on the sand before the tide returned at 7:30 p.m.

Completed were the 9,000 forms, a visual to the enormous sacrifices made to the war. The volunteers stood and watched and cried as the tide returned, symbolically taking away what had been lost in 1944 that day on that Normandy Beach, lives given.

Jamie writes on his Sand in Your Eye June 2014 blog:

The Fallen 9000 was published in a Special D-Day Edition of TIME magazine and is available in North America. The 2013 images continue to ripple across the globe; it is very humbling to see it do so well.

This is also a nice opportunity to thank all those people that have written to us with their personal stories that their families have in connection to the D-Day landings. The purpose for Andy and myself continues to be to show people what 9000 people looks like who lost their lives in one day during conflict, as such a number in our minds cannot be imagined.

It is important to note that the 9000 represented all those that lost their lives, German forces, Allies, and civilians. It is a snapshot of an event that happened during the horrors of World War II. It was significant for us not to make distinctions between nationalities as the art piece hoped to signify that essentially we are all human and conflicts such as this are a great loss to humanity.

The International Day of Peace (“Peace Day”) is observed around the world each year on September 21. This day of observance was proposed to the United Nations by the United Kingdom and Costa Rica in 1981 with the first observance in 1982 declaring this day devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.”

Many U.N. countries stage various ways to celebrate Peace Day. There are around 764 celebrations every year on September 21.

The U.S. calendar does not celebrate this day with the rest of the world. Is this because our country has not had to fight an invasion on our soil?

For all service men and women of all conflicts, it is rightly so—that as a tribute and thank-you we celebrate Veterans Day and that in remembrance of those who gave their lives, we celebrate Memorial Day. Sadly however, neither are observed by many.

Perhaps living in a global time, the United States ought to participate in World Peace Day.

The theme of the 2020 U.N. Peace Day:

- Draw attention to promoting peace throughout the world by celebrating the day spreading compassion, kindness, and hope in the face of the pandemic.
- Stand together with the U.N. against attempts to use the virus to promote discrimination or hatred.

Additionally, the U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres urges the U.N. members:

I count on your continued support as we strive to build a world where we can live every day in harmony with the environment and with each other.▼
DUTTON FARM and their EVERYBODY works for People and the Community

By Bill Kroger
Photos by Michelle Smither and Jeanette Brown

In 2010 Michelle Smither and Jeanette Brown, one of Michelle’s daughters, founded Dutton Farm in Oakland Township.

The Farm is dedicated to teaching, jobs, independent living, and interpersonal skills to Oakland, Wayne, and Macomb county residents who have physical, mental, or emotional impairments.

At the time they created Dutton Farm, they were seeking options for Rebecca (Becca), Jenny’s sister, who although born with Down syndrome, had recently graduated from the public school system. “There were not many options out there,” recalls Brown. So mother and daughter set out to create a place to provide options.

On a recent trip to the Farm, I met about thirty “farmers” engaged in a variety of learning activities. One of the groups was making carrot cakes and another was discussing what had happened the day before when they made the cakes. In the first group one of the cheerful ladies introduced herself as Becca and made sure I knew my tour guide, Michelle, was her mother.

I met others who wait on customers seeking to purchase products at the EVERYBODY store. Stop by at 2290 Dutton Road, Oakland Township, to purchase soaps, balms, and candles or check out everybodyinc.com.

Since 2014 Dutton Farm has operated the market company EVERYBODY selling bath and body products.

The EVERYBODY store is operated by the people of Dutton Farm and is another way of providing employment for program participants.

The nonprofit Dutton Farm currently serves about 76 participants. About 35 staff work diligently to present options to adults with developmental disabilities. Dutton Farm focuses on adult education, community involvement, and workforce development. You might see “farmers” maintaining an area of the Paint Creek Trail near Silverbell Road, or you may find them taking advantage of opportunities at the Rochester Hills Public Library.

Maureen Kijek, Community Involvement Manager, proudly shared with me their participation with Meals on Wheels. There are two routes she and some of her “Farmers” operate for the OPC. Her groups also do some packaging of Meals on Wheels. The groups additionally work at the Oakland University food pantry and the clothing pantry for the Ladies of Charity at St Hugo church.

According to recent government statistics, 85% of adults with developmental disabilities are unemployed. Dutton Farm’s workforce development programs help their participants find jobs with or without support. These programs strive to build confidence and social skills through their various Adult Education programs.

About half of Dutton Farm funding comes from program revenue and product sales. The other half comes from contributions and fundraising events.

About three quarters of their revenue goes right back into providing programs for their participants.

Currently their three major fundraisers are:
1. Diversity and Inclusion Luncheon in April,
2. Golf tournament in the summer, and
3. High Hopes Gala in November.

For a great way to support funding and sales in the non-winter months, stop by the Farm to purchase farm-fresh eggs and honey.

In their literature Dutton Farm tells us that one of every four people in our county lives with a disability and that 35% of them live in poverty.

Dutton Farm’s mission is to support the disabled to live a life of purpose, inclusion, and dignity. The Farm exists to inspire others to see that all people with disabilities are treated equally, valued for who they are, and given opportunity.

Perhaps this can all be summed up as: The millions of disabled deserve a place to go and belong—every day.

How can you help? ...Donate at Duttonfarm.org, ...Shop in person at EVERYBODY or online at everybodyinc.com, ...Attend an event, ...Shop at OPC’s Mary Elizabeth Gift Shoppe, ...Or all of the above opportunities! ▼
Surly Hour
By Bill Mihalic

I recently reconnect with an old friend from my high school years in Washington State, and he told me one of his favorite social activities these days is a monthly “Surly Hour,” when he and former colleagues gather for wine and snacks at one of their homes. They had started the group 20 years ago while working as meteorologists so they could commiserate about their jobs, but now, as retirees, it’s mostly “grumbling about new aches and pains and politics.”

I think Surly Hour is a fantastic concept. Of course, it’s very different from “Happy Hour.” Not only is it at the opposite end of the mood spectrum, but the dynamics are also different: Whereas “Happy Hour” is intended to take away the sullen and make them happy, Surly Hour involves people who are already surly and provides a forum for sharing their mutual surliness.

True confession: I love working with words and I try to make sure I correctly understand their meaning. In fact, I keep the link to the Merriam-Webster website (www.mer-web.com) on my tool bar and I don’t hesitate to click on it to check a word’s definition—or spelling or pronunciation. (Another true confession: I’m embarrassed at how many words don’t mean what I thought they meant.)

So, I wanted to check out the definition of SURLY with Noah Webster and the Merriam brothers (George and Charles), but I was also curious about similar adjectives that often seem to be associated with us seniors, such as CROTCHETY and ORNERY, as well as nouns like CODGER and GEEZER.

SURLY - Merriam-Webster (M-W) defines SURLY as: “Menacing or threatening in appearance. Example: ‘surly weather.’”

Wow. For my friend’s group of meteorologists, that example could not be more perfect. I wonder if they consulted with M-W before selecting their moniker. Perhaps, however, M-W should change their example to “surly weathermen,” not only because of the group in the Northwest, but also because I don’t ever recall a weather person saying, “We’re going to have some really surly weather today.”

M-W continues with a second definition for surly: “Irritably sullen and churlish in mood or manner.”

Wow again. “Surly” can apply to how someone appears, behaves or thinks. What a versatile adjective—you can characterize (or criticize) someone three different ways with just one word.

According to M-W, in addition to surly there are several other words that also indicate “a forbidding or disagreeable mood.”

So, if you want to be precise in your commiserating comments or acerbic accusations, you may want to consider these alternatives. (Warning! Tread cautiously when talking to someone about their surly-ish attitude, since this general category indicates that they’re already in a bad mood.)

Here are M-W’s synonyms for “a forbidding or disagreeable mood” and the nuances of each:

SURLY implies gruffness and sullenness of speech or manner. e.g. “typical surly teenager”

SULLEN implies a silent ill humor and a refusal to be sociable. e.g. “remained sullen amid the festivities”

GLUM suggests a silent dispiritedness. e.g. “a glum candidate left to ponder a stunning defeat”

MOROSE adds to glum an element of bitterness or misanthropy. e.g. “morose job seekers who are inured to rejection”

SULKY suggests childish resentment expressed in peevish sullenness. e.g. “grew sulky after every spat”

CRABBED applies to a forbidding morose harshness of manner. e.g. “the school’s notoriously crabbed headmaster”

SATURNINE describes a heavy forbidding aspect or suggests a bitter disposition. cantankerous. Example: “a crotchety old man…”

CRABBED and SATURNINE are considered normal.

If you act in an upbeat, reasonable and predictable manner, I won’t hesitate to click on it to check a word’s definition—or spelling or pronunciation. An odd, eccentric, or unreasonable person (usually a man, especially an old man). Example: “an ornery old man…”

There it is again! “Old man.” Geesh, don’t old women ever get ornery? (Don’t answer that.)

M-W offers a second definition: “Difficult to deal with or control. An ornery mule.”

Yep, a lot of similarity between us old guys and a beast of burden with an attitude.

And a third definition: “Chiefly Midwest” Having or showing a playful tendency to cause trouble; mischievous. Example: “an ornery smile.” “Chiefly Midwest!” What, guys in New York and California aren’t mischievous?

And finally, my two “hours of interest”:

CODGER - M-W defines CODGER as: “An often mildly eccentric and usually elderly fellow. Example: ‘old codger.’”

You know, I’m beginning to worry that if I, an old guy, ever act in an upbeat, reasonable and predictable manner, I won’t be considered normal.

GEEZER - M-W defines GEEZER as: “…An old, eccentric, or unreasonable person (usually a man, especially an old man). Example: ‘an old geezer.’”

AARRRRGGHH! Need I say more?

M-W often includes an excerpt from a news article or literary work to further show how a given word is used. For GEEZER, they quote a contemporary journalist and humorist, the late Russell Baker, who wrote, “It may suggest only that the offender is…a geezer perhaps, too old and set in his ways to know what’s new in the world.”

Thanks, Mr. Baker, thanks a lot.

I imagine that a lot of the crotchety codgers and ornery geezers here at OPC are now thinking, “Hey, we ought to start our own Surly Hour!” Well, that might be a great idea, although some of us are content to just share our surliness here on the pages of Vintage Views.
The Hystery of Anne Thology

By Hans Koseck

It's the title of her latest book; actually her only book. It has not been written, yet. The cover design has been completed. It shows Anne's face; not a pretty one. She looks like the mundus' (mundi) most miserable misanthropic matron; but she is not.

The book will be available in paperback—and front and paper pages in between—at dime stores near you. The book will be a compilation of the names and descriptions of famous people and their funny short stories. It will be free of charge, but a five-dollar bill will be expected to be used as a bookmark which is to remain in the book between the last page and the cardboard paper-back cover when the book is passed on to the next reader! In that fashion, everybody pays for it indirectly.

It starts with her first-grade teachers Miss Nomer and Miss Takes and their substitute Mr. Al Wright, whom they called Mister Alright.

At this point, Anne realized that readers would not read and absorb; they would scan and look and forget. So she decided to change the list by stating the last names first, again in alphabetic order. It would make people think and reason and it would be beneficial for them.

*continue with "And the Roster started again:"*

---

I f, at this end of the Roster, you didn't stumble over words like hystery, thology, mundus, aluvium, misanthropic, anacoluthon, spoonerism, Marge N. O'Vera, or Siddhartha, you have done fine and have read between the lines and the small print. Thank you!

Please, notice the two abbreviated names in the list:

Doctor Roentgen's first name is Xavier. He never liked it and he created a precedence for people like L. Brooks, J. Edgar, F. Lee, O. Jay, and F. Art.

Marge's parents were mathematicians and they liked numbers. That's why they chose Numbers as their daughter's middle name. Marge liked that name until it happened several times that people would misunderstand and ask, "Did you say Large numbers of errors?" She got tired of correcting people and then decided to abbreviate her middle name.
March 11, 2020—Last day I was my normal “out and about and involved” self. The 13th of March began the stay at home and closure of activities and facilities for—no one knew how long. Honestly, for the first two weeks I enjoyed catching up on my sleep and not setting my alarm. Then I began to miss the reasons I was setting my alarm—and began the sadness, the loneliness of not going and doing, and the missing my purpose and joys of activity in each day. Oh yes, I was absolutely grateful to not be living alone…grateful to have my husband to banter with, to give and receive a hug or simply a “brush-by” in the hallway, to be together.

How long was this stay at home going to last? I am a planner, an organizer, a maker of daily lists that most often are too long for one day’s “To-Do” goals. I needed to plan and needed to look forward to happenings, even during these stay-at-home days.

One early morning I sat in our sunroom enjoying an unusually warmer, sunnier March “spring” day, sipping my green tea. There was like a lightbulb in my mind—and I had this conversation with myself: “I need a recipe to follow daily for however long this stay-at-home lasted. It is health #1 with this virus and with the unknowns of how daily life was going to be for our duration.” I didn’t want to look back and say “What in the world did I do during those at-home days of the pandemic?” We can never do should have, there were mini ones (quickly checked off that day). There were planned, brightly colored meals that made eating similar foods day-to-day delicious to the eye and pallet. There were daily Tai Chi exercises I recalled from my OPC “Wu” class that I missed so much…the people and the energy and the humor of the instructor midst his teachings. There were things that brought joys. Every day I was sure to include something musical such as singing “like no one was listening” (my husband didn’t mind). These singings eased the missing of the guitar group jamming with friends and eased the sadness of cancelled rehearsals and anticipated spring 650 Players performances. Music lifts and calms. Without it “life would B Flat” (pun intended).

There was a list of who to call or text, who might need a chat or a laugh or simply an ear. Or on that day’s list was who I needed a connection with. Yes I missed the going and doing and being involved. I missed—and still miss—all these. Yes, we are missing our planned 2020 road trip to national and baseball parks, visiting friends and family along the way, having new adventures, and making memories. Every day’s #1 purpose then and since and now: To stay well, to be safe, to do what we have control over. To have days during this time in 2020 that, yes, we can look back to and say “We enjoyed,” and “We had purpose.” And for that, we are grateful. ▼

—M.