

**Monday April 9th 2018**

**Vimy Ridge Day**

In 2003, the Government of Canada declared 9 April to be "Vimy Ridge Day", to honour and remember the Battle of Vimy Ridge which took place during the First World War at Vimy Ridge, France, in 1917. For the first time, all four Canadian divisions were to be assembled to operate in combat as a corps. The corps suffered 10,602 casualties; 3,598 killed and 7,004 wounded. Four Victoria Crosses, the highest military decoration awarded to British and Commonwealth forces for valour, were awarded to members of the Canadian Corps.

Weather: Toronto 26F to 38F cloudy Louisville 35F to 51F part cloud

David got the NYTX in one minute and 58 seconds.

The Dawn Patrol launched at 07:20 and angry squirrels were the main event. Maisie kept trying to climb trees to catch the squirrels.

We had porridge for breakfast.

David spent quite a while trying to access his account for his web hosting on Host Papa. He finally got it – hopefully he will now be able to store key documents from the desktop PCs in both Louisville and Toronto on his web space.

A light bulb in the family room had burned out. David took off the ceiling-mounted globe and placed on the table underneath. He unscrewed the old bulb. When he tried to screw in the new bulb he dropped it and it fell and smashed the globe. The new light bulb now works, but the fixture looks a bit stark.

Working on this success, David changed an outer light bulb without falling off the ladder or smashing the light fixture.

BBC: Facebook has said it believes that up to 87 million users' data was improperly shared with Cambridge Analytica. Cambridge Analytica claims its data and research helped Donald Trump win the US presidency.

For lunch we had leftover quiche. It always seems to age well.

Then we drove to the Toronto Public Library Port Union Branch and picked up a book Louise ordered: "The City of Fallen Angels" by Jon Berendt.

Nissan Ajax was next so that we could check out the all-electric Leaf. We were taken for a test drive on city streets and on the 401 highway. It was all so quiet and the performance very impressive. The salesman even put it into "hands-free" mode on the 401 and the Leaf dutifully followed the white lines on the highway. Back on the city streets the "shaker" wobbled the steering wheel if "lane departure" was detected. We were both very impressed so David ordered one. They are so popular that there is a 90-day waiting period.

Then on to Costco for a very few comestibles and a \$60 infusion of gasoline for the van. Gas is about twice the price as Costco Louisville.

On our return to Colonel Danforth, we took Maisie for an afternoon preamble. We met on the way with a neighbour and her Basset Hound, who appeared to be very happy to see us. It was good to her about some neighbourhood news and her trip to Cuba and the time she visited Key West.

Reading time was much welcome. We are pretty tired after the exertions of recent days, but we feel that we are finally settled in and on our way to being resident Canadians for the nonce.

For supper we had left over beef stew and added Brussels sprouts. We had just sat down to eat when Maisie exploded like a firecracker. A very big healthy raccoon slowly ambled across the back deck. While Maisie barked herself into hysteria, the raccoon merely glanced at Maisie with disdain.

Then it was off to the “Gilmore Girls”. We ended Season 1 last night on what can only be called a highly romantic note. Although! There will be difficulty in Season 2 that we can almost imagine. And we must note that while romance is in the air, the 'mother-daughter' connection continues to drive the narrative. In addition, the mother-in-law horror was also part of the plot, showing us how impossible even in the 'nicest' circumstances it is for females to understand and trust each other.

### **Tuesday April 10th 2018**

Weather: Toronto 31F to 41F part cloud    Louisville 38F to 50F mostly cloudy [Note it is only three weeks to the Kentucky Derby – think short-sleeved summer dresses]

NYT: One third of adults suffer from shingles. The new Shingrix vaccine is 97% effective but a large percentage of seniors suffer side effects from the actual vaccination process. The article carried a heavy exhortation for all adults over the age of 50, chicken pox or no, to get the new vaccine! Immunities cannot be relied on over time and especially in ones later years.

When we walked Maisie just after 07:00 the neighbourhood was just waking up. There was a light dusting of snow covering the recycle and compost bins at the curb. Also, we saw hockey sticks propped up at the end of driveways in silent tribute to the victims of the Tinsdale, Saskatchewan Humboldt Broncos hockey team coach crash.

Breakfast was fried egg on toasted Costco bun with fried prosciutto.

David started the process of finding a Level Two charging unit for the Nissan Leaf. His radio control flying buddy made some suggestions and also pointed to a qualified electrician. Both the charging unit and electrician must be approved by the Government of Ontario to qualify for the rebates.

David spent the morning sorting out and anticipating his medical appointments. As we all have learned, somehow this process has become complex enough to cross a rabbi's eyes and requires one to hang on to a telephone for literally HOURS.

Lunch for David was Montreal Smoked Meat with Dijon Mustard on Costco hollowed out toasted buns, with Moishe's coleslaw on the side and in the sandwich. Louise opted for a nicely aged slice of

quiche. We shared a bowl of big juicy blueberries, sprinkled with cane sugar and cream.

David drove away at 12:45 to get some prescriptions refilled. As usual, he had to cool his heels. David got in his walk, in snow flurries, going from 'Tilley Endurables' to the doctor's office and return. As he drove into our driveway, the Scottish pair were walking out.

Supper was spicy chicken with souped up rice with a salad.

“The Gilmore Girls” drove right off a cliff. We will see tomorrow whether the series can recover.

### **Wednesday April 11th 2018**

Weather: Toronto 33F to 43F cloud Louisville 33F to 62F sun

David got the NYTX in two minutes and 45 seconds. Louise was only 1 minute and 8 seconds.

We got back home after a chilly walk, where we met Maisie's fellow Cairn named Digby. There was frost on the roofs and salt crystals indicated that the City thought there would have been a snow fall over night.

BBC: US House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan will not run for re-election this year. Congress' most powerful lawmaker has told friends he will not stand for another term in his Wisconsin district this autumn. His exit would be a blow to the Republican party ahead of November's mid-term elections.

After a breakfast of cold cereal and fat blueberries we drove off to a double appointment. We arrived on time at 11:00 and David was sent to the lab in the basement for blood work and an ECG. After waiting for 1 hour and 15 minutes he was still fourth in line – and, after the blood work he would have to line up again for the ECG. He stormed upstairs and collected a surprised Louise whose procedure was finished after a quick thirty minutes. The Canadian medical system, that we preach about to the world, is falling apart due to under funding. Politicians are afraid to fix it as they think the electorate will punish them for raising taxes.

CBC: [To underline the above] Record numbers of Canada's best and brightest medical graduates are having their careers stalled by a lack of residency spots, a problem that could snowball for doctors and their patients. Medical school graduates have an MD after their name. But they still need to complete years of supervised training, or residency, in specialties such as family medicine, general surgery or neurology before they can be licensed to practise medicine in Canada.

On the way home we dropped into the Dollarama, where just about everything now costs more than a dollar. In pouring rain, we finally got home to have tomato soup with cheese toast.

After lunch we rained our way to “No Frills” for a significant grocery shopping and then went on to Shopper's Drug Mart to mail Louise's letter to “Slightly Foxed” in London, England. The final stop was the LCBO to buy some wine to recover from medical malpractice.

We had only been home a short while when our house-sitting friend dropped by for a consultation. We

are hoping to rebuild the upstairs powder room starting around May 15<sup>th</sup>.

We had tacos for supper. Then we watched some “Gilmore Girls” - the narrative skipped right over the last episode's “driving off the cliff”. We watched two episodes. David could not retain his interest and fell sound asleep in the second one. Both were in a word a bit banal. What was presented as humorous, fell flat for Louise.

### **Thursday April 12th 2018**

We were up at dawn and out the door by 07:00 hrs. A grey dank mist covered all like a wet blanket. The roofs were covered with frost. However, it was not that cold as there was no wind and the forecast rain had not started. But, this cool weather has gone on far too long.

David was in the van by 08:00 to go to a blood-sucking lab to get that the blood work and ECG he could not get the day before due to the incompetent lab staff.

Weather: Toronto 36F to 52F rain      Louisville 59F to 76F sunny

David was home by 09:00 and was a happy camper. He made a second pot of coffee while Louise cooked up an onion, cheese and parsley scramlette – delicious – with slices of tea bread with honey.

We wanted to do some shopping before the threatened rain and freezing rain got into our area. First up was Home Depot where we found a new sink top with built in basin, taps, tile squares as a back and side splash and a toilet. Louise found a light beige paint colour that was called Venetian Mask – Louise is reading a book about Venice. At breakfast she described to David a part she just read about the mask tradition in Venice. Another very striking coincidence! We took photos and want to go back for a second look to confirm our choices.

Next up was tennis balls for the clothes dryer. Louise has a down-filled winter jacket that needs to be washed. A trick to get the down to fluff up is to put three tennis balls in the clothes dryer – they pummel the garment to death. We found a bargain tube of three balls for under \$5 at National – a sports store.

However to get to National we had to pass the upscale food store named Bruno's. Louise got some salmon for herself and some tourtière for David.

From there David visited a 7-Eleven store to buy a cheap cell phone that did not require a monthly plan. There was no display and some high school kids were acting up so we gave up. A big pickup truck tried to run into us as we backed out. This on a rainy day was not a good adventure. We will avoid that area again.

Then it was 'The Bay' – it had to be 'The Bay' because 'Sears' had gone Tango Uniform since our last visit. We could not find winter leather gloves or a bathrobe for David. Then it was on to the kitchen shop where we bought two more place mats to cover the expanse of the leaf we had added into kitchen table.

In the National sports store and the Pickering Town Centre Mall a lot of people were wearing hockey

jerseys as a tribute to the 16 people who died when a bus carrying the Humboldt Broncos, a junior ice hockey team, collided with a truck. The tragedy has shocked Canada, where ice hockey is not just a national sport but a huge part of its identity, especially in rural communities where many children begin to play as soon as they can walk.

Back home David got on the Web and figured out that you had to buy the 7-Eleven cell phone and SIM cards on-line. He did so in preparation for his jury duty in downtown Toronto in mid May and to have an Android 6 phone that would communicate with an OBD II plugged into the Nissan Leaf. Somebody has written an app that allows one to view the battery status of the Leaf in great detail.

David took down the face towel rack in the master bedroom. He dug in the basement to find a scrap of the original wallpaper to cover over the old retaining screw holes.

Louse had found a new recipe she wanted to try that involved roast pork medallions with chutney. Ancient grains and broccoli were added as was baked acorn squash. Louse found a new salad and modified it a bit. Nominally called “Roasted Squash Salad”, it involved walnuts, slices of Granny Smith, chunks of acorn squash (fried banana might work), arugula and goat cheese. The meal was served with Gato Negro Cabernet Sauvignon wine (which was judged to be better than the Chilean Santa Carolina Cabernet Sauvignon).

We watched two episodes of Gilmore Girls, our bedtime story. These two were not quite as infantile as the night before. We'll stay with it a couple more nights. At least it is not gory or entirely implausible.

### **Friday April 13th 2018**

#### **Oh Oh**

Weather: Toronto 37F to 41F rain    Louisville 67F to 78F    sun & cloud

We woke up about 05:30 and were downstairs making drip coffee by 05:55 hrs. It was out the door with Maisie at 06:55 to get ahead of the forecast rain. On the walk we met a five year old bouncing Yorkie type by the name of “Jackson”. Maisie and Jackson have met three or four times now and like each other.

After coffee we tackled the NYTX – David one minute and 29 seconds and Louise only 66 seconds. ( Editor's Note: Yes, Louise did well today, but two previous days, she totally bombed. Confession is good for the soul.)

The task after breakfast was installing the new hand towel bar in the master bedroom. First, the old one had to be removed – that left holes that had to be filled with spackling. The paper template for the new rack was taped to the wall and then the levelling bubble app in the iPad used to get a perfect horizontal alignment.

Having remembered to charge up the port able electric drill, it was used to drill four holes in the drywall into which expanding plugs were inserted. Of course only one side worked well, hitting the drywall as expected. On the other side the wooden stud got in the way and the system had to be adjusted. The metal anchoring system was screwed into place. The next steps required patience –

cosmetic steps using scraps of the original wallpaper to camouflage the old installation.

Today's startling coincidence is yet more startling: This morning's NYT has a long article about the life and times of Stan Lee, the creator of Marvel comics, the genesis actually of a long line of superhero types. The article is comprehensive about his life and details how his creative force is extended over time to be seen even in today's Black Panther. At 95, as the piece goes on, the question of whether his life may be compromised, how he may be a victim of unscrupulous family and friends. He is wealthy beyond belief, suffering with macular degeneration among other things, and a widower who depended on his wife for financial oversight. He is also without an Oscar at this late date, though many Hollywood luminaries, including Leonardo DiCaprio, want to see that he is properly recognized.

Louise had never heard of him until this morning.

After breakfast Louise began to work a Sunday NYT crossword from a book of Sunday NYT crosswords that she purchased about ten years ago. She began to work #12, and as she read down the list of clues to her amazed eyes number 71 Down is "Lee who created Spider Man". Beyond startling! Especially after the Venetian Mask coincidence of yesterday!

Lunch was tomato soup for both. David built a 7 grains bread, salami and cheese sandwich. Louise had chesse toast with sliced tomato. We shared some Moishe's coleslaw. Then came a bowl of fresh Florida strawberries with a small dollop of ice cream.

Louise's friend and neighbour, who watches her house while she is in Canada, sent a picture of her Jeep and Scion from his cell phone by text! What a nice thought!

CBC: Heavy rain, freezing rain and even ice pellets are all part of a weather "cocktail" expected to fall in the Greater Toronto Area this weekend, bringing with it gusty winds that could cause widespread power outages, Environment Canada warns.

A freezing rain warning is now in effect for Toronto because of the storm heading toward the city. The worst of the weather is expected this weekend.

Louise went out with Maisie about 17:20 for some "exercise". It started raining and they fled back to the house. The rain was falling in pellets! But after the twosome returned to the house and Maisie had her dinner, they went out again in a light shower to finish their walk. Maisie is a creature of habit, habits which are best observed on schedule, rain, snow, hail, sleet notwithstanding.

With such grungy weather, it was a perfect night for tourtière with brown gravy, asparagus and peas. Louise added an avocado salad.

We started watching the "Gilmore Girls" about 19:00 hrs. The series does not have a continuous story line. Major topics get dropped like a hot potato.

### **Saturday April 14th 2018**

As soon as we saw the weather forecast, we knew we had to get Maisie out for a walk as soon as possible. As rain was imminent, David took the new Costco golf umbrella. We had just got out the door when Maisie went berserk. Maisie sounded the alarm throughout the area on a quiet Saturday morning. All the neighbours should have known to beware! She had flushed a raccoon in the front

yard. Maisie yanked Louise out onto the lawn and there we could see Rocky Raccoon quickly shimmying up the new power pole – the one they dropped in six months ago and have yet to drape with power cables. We got photos with the trusty Lumix ZS 50, even in the low light levels.

Weather: Toronto 36F to 29F freezing rain    Louisville 69K to 70F Thunderstorms

NYTX: Saturday Biggie: David three minutes and one second    Louise one minute and fifty-nine seconds.

Right on time it started freezing rain so David deployed the umbrella – Maisie went solo glorifying in the cool shower. This cold, wet weather seems to be her delight!

Back home, Louise made waffles with warm maple syrup, Florida strawberries and juicy blueberries – drizzled with balsamic vinegar.

Maisie curled up in her dog bed, apparently exhausted by her early day labours, protecting us from “Rocky” Now we only have to utter the word “Rocky” to bring her to full- on alert status. However, when we processed the photos we thought that there was a distinct possibility that “Rocky” was a pregnant “Rockette”.

As she is wont to do, Louise skimmed the NYT headlines. Wow! Another coincidence. Maybe not a Class One as the two days before, nevertheless . . . Two days ago we bought a sweet potato and an Irish potato at the grocery. When packing said items, David conjectured that there is really no difference, that the two are basically different varieties. Louise disagreed, saying that they are quite distinct one from the other, in origin and in type. She opined that the sweet potato originated in the New World and was discovered there by the first Europeans who visited.

After dinner last night, Louise continued in this vein, for some unknown reason, about how the sweet potato is loaded with nutritional benefits that the Irish potato completely lacks.

This morning the NYT had a long article titled “All by Itself, the Humble Sweet Potato Colonized the World.” Pretty amazing connection of topic . The article is a scientific argument based on DNA and what several scientists believe about the way the sweet potato spread from Central America to the rest of the world, including the Pacific islands, thousands of years ago: not spread by man is the conclusion, but by natural forces at work over 800,000 years. Another amazing story from the NYT Science News. And a good , if spread out over three days, coincidence

BBC: The US, UK and France bombed three Syrian government sites, targeting what they said were chemical weapons facilities. The strikes were in response to a suspected deadly chemical attack on the town of Douma last week.

In the book on Churchill, the decline of both Churchill and Roosevelt is most noticeable. Increasingly, Stalin is going to get his way as the Soviet armies bludgeon their way into Germany sweeping up anything in their path. Not mentioned in any meaningful way is the fact that the US was fighting Japan as well as Germany. General George Marshall missed the opportunity to command Overlord because Roosevelt could not afford to let him leave Washington with the war in the Pacific consuming ever more resources. Generals Montgomery and Eisenhower do not exactly glow, while Patton appeared to be unstoppable – until Eisenhower took away his gasoline to supply Montgomery's push into the Netherlands and the Ruhr area.

On the collapse of Nazi Germany, it was Roosevelt's intention to bring all US military back to the US, ship them by rail to the US west coast in preparation for an all-out assault on Japan. The casualty figures in that last part were estimated at one million.

Mid-morning a neighbour came over to consult on how and where to run wiring for a Level 2 (240 volt) charging unit for the Nissan Leaf. It was more complicated than we first thought. However, the pieces are slowly coming together. In theory:

“New Nissan LEAF buyers will be able to purchase the FLO Home charging station directly from participating Nissan dealerships across Canada. In addition, FLO will be offering new LEAF owners a free membership card to access its countrywide charging network.”

It being such a bleak day we had hearty Habitant pea soup for lunch. Not even Maisie wanted to step outside.

We did laundry and read all afternoon as there was nothing else to do.

Louise took Maisie out for a very short airing, being careful to only walk on the grass as any paved surface was a skating rink. Maisie half co-operated.

We did a split supper – David Montreal Smoked Meat and Louise salmon. Louise cooked a vegetable pilaf – Brussels sprouts, carrots, broccoli and scallions - to share.

Of course we had lots of time to watch the “Gilmore Girls”.

CBC: More than 550 vehicle crashes were reported across the Greater Toronto Area as it experienced a wintry blast of weather in the form of freezing rain and ice pellets. The mix of precipitation was coming ahead of a potential ice storm on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Sunday April 15th 2018**

#### Major Ice Storm

It howled overnight and the temperature dropped to freeze all the moisture in place. The front walk was a skating rink. Louise had to walk on the frozen grass so that Maisie could have biological breaks.

Weather: Toronto 27F to 33F freezing rain Louisville 56F to 52F rain This is a massive system that stretches from Grayton Beach, Florida to Toronto.

NYTX: David one minute 37 seconds. Louise one minute 29 seconds.

In keeping with the weather, we had hot oatmeal for breakfast. About breakfast time it started raining – with a temperature of only 27F the water froze when it hit a surface.

CP24: “Following yesterday's bout of ice pellets and some freezing rain, the more significant freezing rain episode is about to commence,” the national weather agency said Sunday.

“Ice pellets are expected to redevelop early this morning but change to freezing rain shortly thereafter. It may fall somewhat heavily and produce an ice buildup of 10 mm.”

In its weather advisory, Environment Canada warned residents to be prepared for power outages.

“Ice accumulations of this magnitude combined with gusty northeast winds of 70 km/h will likely result in power outages due to fallen tree limbs and power lines” the weather advisory read.

Pearson International Airport: Toronto Pearson continues to be affected by prolonged periods of freezing rain and ice pellets. The airport website reported:

**•Please be prepared for significant delays and possible cancellations. Airport operations will be very slow today as result of the weather.**

**•The airlines are working hard to deliver bags, but outdoor conditions are very difficult and the safety of workers is a priority.**

**•For passengers travelling today, arrive early for your flight. Drive safely or use public transit, if possible.**

By noon, in David's book "The Last Lion" by William Manchester and Paul Reid, the war in Europe was over. The book had been most interesting in the manner in which some leading figures were considered to be lesser than previously thought. The defeat of Japan was next on the agenda.

We both had Lipton's chicken noodle soup for lunch. David had a larger portion as Louise ate the second portion of her salmon dish.

We were reading while the storm lashed the house when the power went out at 14:25 hours. By 15:30 Toronto Hydro crews with five big utility trucks showed up. In the pouring rain, we went out to investigate. A tree about 100 yards from the house had come down and taken the power line with it. The hydro crews warned us to stay back, which we did quite promptly after trying to take a photo.

The Temperature in the house started to drop as the wind was sucking warm air out of the house. So, we used a match to light the gas burner and heated a pot of water for a cup of tea.

About 16:45 the power came back on. But, the wind was still howling so there was every chance all would stay connected. A bit later we went out and got a photo of the tree that had snapped off about ten feet up. The top of the tree had blocked our street. The Toronto Hydro crew had cut the tree into big pieces in order to allow vehicles to use the road. They had spliced in a high tension wire across the road high up to feed electricity to our side of the street.

We had a President's Choice Pepperoni thin crust German pizza for supper along with an avocado salad and no-cal ginger ale. We have started counting calories.

Then we watched three "Gilmore Girls", a couple of which were quite funny and one rather laborious.

With the wind howling and rain pelting the house, getting to sleep was quite hard for one of us.