

Monday February 26th 2018

Weather: Toronto 35F to 45F sun Louisville 38F to 57F sun

When Louise let Maisie out into the yard at 07:00 it was downright cool.

BBC: UK millennials are on track to be the most overweight generation since records began, health experts say. Based on population trends, more than seven in every 10 people born between the early 1980s and mid-90s will be too fat by the time they reach middle age. In comparison, about half of the "baby boomer" generation, born just after World War Two, were fat at that age.

We had waffles for breakfast with fresh strawberries and maple syrup.

Louise got on the phone very early to make several important calls. David continued to work on the photo album.

Then we did a long neighborhood walk, dropping off mis-directed mail and taking a bird feeders to the house sitter for installation in 'The Meadow'. We saw the first daffodils in bloom down in the lower meadow.

Jesus, (that is his real name) the miracle landscape man, dropped by to get directions from Louise for spring fixings.

Louise went off to Pewee Valley to the Hair Twister to get all the latest gossip. She returned with tales of Hepatitis and Whooping Cough contagions in the region.

Meanwhile, the whole Ohio River valley is under flood warning. It has been the rainiest February in 135 years. Fortunately, we missed most of that having been at Grayton Beach.

For dinner we had a very tasty cheese omelet and a green salad. The Kroger sharp cheddar cheese was the key ingredient.

We started a new season of Boston Legal. It was as wacky as ever.

Tuesday February 27th 2018

Things got off to a rocky start with David taking five minutes and 53 seconds to do the NYTX. There was so much American content.

We had oatmeal with fig jam and orange slices for breakfast.

Louise was in 'Spin-Dry' because her bathrobe, mailed by the Holiday Inn from Quincy, Florida had not arrived. She phoned the US Post Office and the Neighborhood President. Part of the problem is that there are five houses with the same number in this small complex – just the street name changes. We have often wondered which agency decided how the houses should be numbered.

David had heating pad therapy for his aching back while Louise walked Maisie on a perfect sunny morning. David acted as telephone guard in case the Holiday Inn in Quincy phoned to provide a USPS tracking number.

After a lunch of bean soup, Louise departed for a post-operative cataract surgery checkup. While Louise was away, the Holiday Inn phoned to say that Louise's bathrobe had been tracked down. It was being held as flooding in the Louisville area had prevented its delivery.

David finished Alexandra Fuller's book "Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight". It is a raw and unblinking look at a British expatriate family in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Malawi and Zambia leading a hard-scrabble life barely making ends meet. Fuller left Africa to study English literature at Acadia University in Nova Scotia, Canada. This is a book you will not forget - highly recommended.

In late afternoon Louise sprinkled her back lawn with grass seed, otherwise known as bird food, in anticipation of rain the next day.

For supper Louise made Cuban Piccadillo with saffron rice and frijoles negros, We dined listening to Andrés Segovia's guitar.

Boston Legal had one rather strange episode in which the main character got a guilty client off a murder charge. The lawyer was mortified when he realized he had been conned.

Wednesday February 28th 2018

We were up at 06:30 as Louise had pottery class. Her teacher lives in a house on the banks of the Ohio River. The river had risen about twenty feet and lapped at the front door, but not entered the house.

Weather: Toronto 39F to 57F cloud Louisville 58F to 59F cloud & showers

David took two minutes and 35 seconds to finish the NYTX. Louise cracked it in one minute 11 seconds.

After a fried egg breakfast with toast and orange marmalade, Louise drove off to pottery class.

CBC: Dick's Sporting Goods says it will no longer sell assault weapons in any of its stores, or sell any type of guns or ammunition to anyone under 21. The move comes after the attack on a high school in Parkland, Fla., on Feb. 14 in which 17 people were killed by a gunman who used an AR-15 assault rifle. Nikolas Cruz, a 19-year-old former student, has been charged with 17 counts of premeditated murder.

Financial Post: One powerful polar bear fact is slowly rising above the message of looming catastrophe repeated endlessly by the media: More than 15,000 polar bears have not disappeared since 2005. Although the extent of the summer sea ice after 2006 dropped abruptly to levels not expected until 2050, the predicted 67-per-cent decline in polar bear numbers simply didn't happen. Rather, global polar bear numbers have been stable or slightly improved. The polar bear's resilience should have meant the end of its use as a cherished icon of global warming doom, but it didn't. The alarmism is not going away without a struggle.

BBC: The head of Russia's Olympic Committee said Wednesday the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has reinstated the organization's membership after it was suspended over doping allegations.

Just before the predicted rain started to fall, the landscapers showed up to revive Louise's front plantings. Louise has two skylights leading to the upper story. They make good "rain announcers" and did their trick at 10:20 am.

Louise came back from pottery with tales of flooding. She did some glazing of material she had worked on a long time ago. Louise brought home three pieces she purchased from her tutor. One tall conical work will be taken to 'The Lamp Maker' to be turned into, wait for it, a lamp.

We had leftovers for lunch.

Louise was quite tired from standing at pottery for three hours so she took a nap. David went upstairs and worked on the desktop computer to try to recover from a bad case of brain fade – Denny Crane would call it “Mad Cow”.

Before going to Florida David & Louise had spent quite a bit of time working on a new website. Now, after baking in the hot Florida sun, neither of us could remember the password. Finally, we gave up and we tried to get Word Press to send us an email to reset. BUT...

David had set up the Word Press account using HostPapa his ISP. So, when Word Press sent the reset email it went into NeverNeverLand.

First, David had to remember how to get to the Control Panel in Word Press. That in itself took half an hour. Once into cPanel he then had to figure out how HostPapa had set up the Word Press website using the Softaculous application. Once he got that far he could see the detail of what Word Press had been given as the email address.

He then had to get into HostPapa email accounts and set up an account under the detail Word Press had been given. That having been done he had to set up a default email service, in this case SquirrelMail (We are not making this up).

Then we had to open the SquirrelMail application to see if any reset email had come in from Word Press. Of course not, because the account had not been set up.

Clenching teeth, we went back into Word Press to try to open the website and of course used a bad password. But that allowed us to ask Word Press to send off another reset email. We finally got it to work and can now access the new website.

The point of this whole story is to tell you why old people should not try to do this sort of thing. Hire a teenager!

In mid-afternoon, and pouring rain, Louise drove over to see her CPA about her tax return. All went well and they may have even found a deduction missed last year.

It was a dreary, rainy afternoon. Maisie was not deterred and enjoyed her walk.

Not having received an order from Peruvian, Louise phoned. The garment had been shipped to the correct house address with the wrong ZIP code. Louise was a bit upset.

We started sending out the links for our Florida sojourn.

For supper we had fried bratwurst slices.

After the meal we read a bit and then watched two episodes of Boston Legal. One episode was really not up to snuff. It was a ridiculous, unbelievable episode.

Thursday March 1st 2018

It rained most of the night, which was not helpful given the amount of flooding in this area. We have a radar app on the iPad which shows flooding in red swaths.

Weather: Toronto 34F to 40F partly cloudy Louisville 58F t 60 cloudy and rain showers. A friend in Camberley, England sent photos of snow.

BBC: In Britain it is "the Beast from the East" - with Storm Emma close behind - while the Dutch are calling it the "Siberian bear" and Swedes the "snow cannon".

BBC: US President Donald Trump has stunned lawmakers from both parties by accusing them of being "petrified" of the National Rifle Association (NRA). In a break from his party's anti-gun control stance, Mr Trump urged lawmakers during a televised meeting to come up with a "strong" reform bill.

CBC: Walmart has become the second major U.S. retailer to restrict gun sales. The company says it will no longer sell firearms and ammunition to people younger than 21.

CBC: The Kroger Company will stop selling guns to customers under the age of 21, the grocery store chain said Thursday, joining two other major retailers who have raised age limits after last month's school shooting in Florida.

CBC: Standing in front of a giant video screen, President Putin showcased Russia's very latest strategic weapons. Like a magician pulling one rabbit after another out of his hat, he wowed his audience with images of cruise missiles, intercontinental ballistic missiles, underwater drones and supersonic jets.

National Post: [On the Second Amendment] But this changed with 2008's Supreme Court decision in District of Columbia v. Heller; advocates of gun rights found a promising case and brought the ancient questions before the Supreme Court for the first time. The result was that the right to bear arms was found to pertain to individuals in their private capacity — not merely as hypothetical participants in a "militia", if that matters — and to guarantee that the American state would not interfere with the use of guns for purely personal self-defence.

In Heller, the majority of the Court stipulated that some regulatory limits to who can bear arms, and to what kind of arms they can bear, are still potentially possible. But one could not help noticing that the "militia" clause was always going to be a problem for the gun-controllers who emphasized it: if we take the clause seriously, it must mean that the "right to bear arms," however exercised in practice, must involve military-grade means of "defence." Violent resistance to authority is one of the premises of the American revolution. Anyone who can't live with that idea needs to consider moving to the neighbour that didn't have a revolution.

National Post: CANBERRA, Australia — More than 57,000 illegal firearms including a rocket launcher and machine-guns were handed in during a recent Australian amnesty in which gun owners could surrender such weapons without penalty.

The government and some gun policy analysts were surprised by the large number of weapons that were surrendered in the first nationwide amnesty since 1996, when a lone gunman killed 35 people in Tasmania state and galvanized popular support for tough national gun controls.

David did the NYTX in two minutes and 19 seconds. Of course, Louise beat him at one minute 42 seconds.

David has spent two days trying to get into “A Legacy” by Sybille Bedford. 100 pages in, he was ready to quit. He finds it very hard to read book.

So, he put it away and has started on “Agent Garbo” by Stephan Talty. David had glanced off Garbo in “Double Cross” by Ben Macintyre . He was also very aware of the Allied deception plan known as “Operation Fortitude” - the code name for the World War II military deception employed by the Allied nations as part of an overall deception strategy (code named Bodyguard) during the build-up to the 1944 Normandy landings.

Stephan Talty offered a new spin on an old story. The tease from the book offering: ***“Before he remade himself as the master spy known as Garbo, Juan Pujol was nothing more than a Barcelona poultry farmer. But as Garbo, he turned in a masterpiece of deception that changed the course of World War II. Posing as the Nazis’ only reliable spy inside England, he created an imaginary million-man army, invented armadas out of thin air, and brought a vast network of fictional sub-agents to life. The scheme culminated on June 6, 1944, when Garbo convinced the Germans that the Allied forces approaching Normandy were just a feint—the real invasion would come at Calais. Because of his brilliant trickery, the Allies were able to land with much less opposition and eventually push on to Berlin”.***

David covered upstairs while downstairs Louise conducted a house clearing operation worthy of a commando unit.

Louise got on the phone to the US Postal Service to try to track two missing parcels. After being put on hold, and subsequently being told that USPS did not have a clue, Louise was ready to explode. When David tried to cheer up Louise, he became collateral damage.

Lunch was tomato soup and a two cheese grilled sandwich.

Louise's bathrobe came in the afternoon mail from the Holiday Inn in Quincy, Florida. The threat of nuclear war was diminished.

Maisie made the mistake of coming out from under the living room table (aka the hidden cave). She got scooped up and groomed.

However, later the sun came out and Maisie had a nice walk.

CBC: New fears about trade wars pushed stock markets into the red on Thursday after U.S. President Donald Trump said he would slap tariffs on steel and aluminum — moves that many industries say will raise prices and cost jobs. Trump said he would sign a document to impose a tariff of as much as 25 per cent on all steel imported into the U.S., and 10 per cent on all aluminum. Beer companies were not amused as their beer is canned in aluminum and costs would go up. Similar tariffs on steel

implemented in 2002 under the Bush administration cost the US auto sector 200,000 jobs, the American International Automobile Dealers Association said.

Supper was tacos. We had strawberries for dessert, drizzled with cane sugar.

Boston Legal got straightened out with a couple of hard-hitting episodes.

Friday March 2nd 2018

Weather: Toronto 33F to 37F cloud Louisville 36F to 50F sun

David was slow – NYTE three minutes and 2 seconds. Louise waxed it at 64 seconds.

Financial Post: Canada is the largest foreign supplier of steel to the U.S., accounting for 16.1 per cent of the country's imports. Brazil has the next-largest share at 13 per cent, followed by South Korea at 10.2 per cent. Further muddying the waters were questions whether steel products used in highly integrated supply chains, such as auto manufacturers in Canada and the U.S., would face steeper duties.

BBC: In 2005, China produced nearly a third of the world's steel. By 2017, it was nearer to half the global supply.

BBC: Among the EU's discussed targets for retaliation are bourbon from Kentucky (Mitch McConnell) and dairy (Paul Ryan) from Wisconsin. Those states are home to the highest ranking members of the US congress.

It being very sunny, albeit cool, we walked the neighborhood. We took photos of daffodils in bloom. Later that day we found out that a fellow dog walker had died.

Then we took the Scion out for an airing, stopping first at Stock Yards bank to deposit Louise's Costco rebate check. The very long forsythia hedge was getting yellow. We continued on to the nearby Kroger Pharmacy where Louise got the type two pneumonia shot. Note: the type of shot is alternated every two years.

Next up was Home Depot where David had found a pack of four Kidde smoke detectors at the best price. It took forever to get through the automated check out system.

Then we drove westwards half way across town to the Lamp Maker where Louise consulted on the parameters to turn a piece of pottery into a lamp. The man who served her was not young and obviously very expert in his trade. To top it off David even learned that a finial was the knob used to secure a lamp shade.

Louise had received a phone call from Costco indicating that her new prescription sunglasses were ready for pickup – sort of – she had asked them to reuse an old set of frames and that did not work out. When we got to the optometry department there was a very long lineup. So, we took a stage left and did some other shopping while the line up decreased. That sort of worked, a bit.

En route we spotted the ornamental cherry tree cluster in full bloom. The Japanese Magnolias were

also in the pink.

We got home quite late for lunch and ate a prepared sandwich from Costco. But, we washed it down with the famous Dr Brown milk shake.

In the afternoon we dozed a little and read some. Louise took Maisie for a walk while David spared his back from pavement pounding.

David was thoroughly enjoying his book “Agent Garbo”. He knew most of the place names and could appreciate exactly how difficult trying to create and execute a deception plan could be.

Late afternoon we electronically signed Louise's tax return. That was not easy.

Louise prepared baked acorn squash and vegetable cake to go with chicken à l'Italian and a salad.

We watched two episodes of Boston Legal, one good the other silly.

Saturday March 3rd 2018

Louise had a very rough night. She had a severe reaction to the pneumonia inoculation. We read the sheet the pharmacist gave her and this was quite abnormal. Her arm was really sore, she ached in general and was shivering with cold.

Weather: Toronto 28F to 39F sun Louisville 32F to 52 F sun

The big Saturday NYTX took David three minutes and 34 seconds, whereas Louise took only two minutes 34 seconds.

BBC: The world's biggest investment management firm is stepping up pressure on companies that make and sell guns after the Florida school shooting. BlackRock Inc, the largest shareholder in two of the biggest US gun manufacturers, is considering offering investors the chance not to invest in gun firms, and is asking those firms how they monitor safe use of weapons.

Financial Post: The loonie fell 0.40 per cent to 77.59 U.S. cents at 10:30 a.m. in Toronto, extending its year-to-date loss to 2.5 per cent, the worst performance among major currencies tracked by Bloomberg. The currency has weakened in 10 of the past 11 sessions. The Canadian dollar has been under pressure in recent weeks on concerns that negotiators will fail to reach an agreement to overhaul the North American Free Trade Agreement. President Donald Trump added to trade worries Thursday, pledging to impose tariffs of 25 per cent on imported steel and 10 per cent on aluminum. *Canada is the largest exporter of steel to the U.S.*

Financial Post: In Mexico City U.S. President Donald Trump’s threats to unleash a trade war over steel crushed any hopes of substantial progress in talks to rework NAFTA, pitching negotiators into a political maelstrom and heightening fears for the trade deal’s future. That has cast a pall over the latest talks to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, which had already been disrupted by the early departure of a key U.S. official handling one of the most divisive subjects, content rules for autos.

National Post: According to Conrad Black, Henry Cabot Lodge, U.S. ambassador to the UN, gave Lester Pearson the improvised peacekeeping formula to settle the Suez Crisis, because, he said, if the U.S. proposed it, the U.S.S.R. would veto it. It worked, Pearson won the Nobel Prize, the Liberal leadership, and Canada embraced the myth that it had a national vocation for peacekeeping. *[Say it ain't so – the Pearson myth is fanned by every school teacher in Canada]*.

A bit of Web sleuthing coughed up:

Lester Pearson recalled in his memoirs that in response to comments which Secretary Dulles had made to Ambassador Heeney on November 2, 1956 the Canadian Government decided to propose that the U.N. General Assembly create a Committee of Five to consider and report within 48 hours on the immediate establishment of an international "intervention force". The following day in New York, however, Lodge presented Pearson with a draft resolution prepared by the State Department, which Lodge felt would be acceptable to the Egyptians and consequently to the Afro-Asian group. Noting that the U.S. draft was simpler than the Canadian one, Pearson decided to adopt it with a few revisions and later that day presented the revised version to the General Assembly as a Canadian draft resolution. (Mike, *The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B. Pearson*, Vol. II (New York: Quadrangle, 1973), pp. 249–251) No copy of the draft resolution which Lodge showed to Pearson has been found in Department of State files.

[It is concluded that Conrad got it half right].

CBC: With so much cooperation between the two countries on the defence file, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said it was "absolutely unacceptable" to highlight Canadian steel or aluminum as a security threat. Trump is justifying the tariffs in part on national security grounds. The United States imported 26.9 million tonnes of steel in 2017; more than four million tonnes of it, came from Canada. Canada buys more American steel than any other country, accounting for 50 per cent of U.S. exports, according to the Canadian Steel Producers Association.

After flipping the mattress, we walked Maisie. The sun was blazing but it was a tad nippy. One of us wore gloves.

Then it was off to Locust Grove for the Spring Book Sale. We took the road on the higher ground as we were afraid that our normal route, River Road, might well be covered by the Ohio River. We were early birds and managed to get an armful of books. Louise had to be careful, dodging books she had donated herself.

Then we drove back east to the Kroger grocery store in Prospect, dropping in to the US Post Office long enough to post Louise's check to pay her tax accountant.

At Kroger's we did the normal 'flight of the bumble bee' trying to get all the things on the list, and several that simply popped up. David's primary job is to get the plastic bags off the spool and then rub them until they open up so that Louise can insert the vegetables.

Back home we had Costco chicken soup. As mentioned before, we are pretty sure that these are the roasted chickens that don't get sold that day.

BBC: On Saturday afternoon Mr Trump stepped up his war of words over trade tariffs, threatening to "apply a tax" on imports of cars from the European Union. The US is the largest export market for EU cars - making up 25% of the €192bn (£171bn; \$237bn) worth of motor vehicles the bloc exported in

2016 (China was second with 16%).

BBC: Senator Orrin Hatch said: "I'm very surprised, he's had very bad advice from somebody down there. The people who are going to have to pay these tariffs are going to be the American citizens."

BBC: Senator Ben Sasse said: "Kooky 18th Century protectionism will jack up prices on American families - and will prompt retaliation."

BBC: And industry bodies like the US Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association have expressed deep concern, saying the benefits from the recent cuts in corporation tax "could all be for naught".

Louise came up with rib eye steak for dinner.

David finished his book "Agent Garbo". He found it outstanding. At the Locust Grove Book Sale he had bought J.K.Masterman's "Double-Cross for \$1 – it had been mentioned many times in "Agent Garbo".

David cobbled together a makeshift 110 volt wiring harness to get two smoke detectors going in the master bedroom.

We watched the final episodes of Boston Legal. The ending was sappy and weak.

Sunday March 4th 2018

Weather: Toronto 26F to 36F sun Louisville 33F to 54F sun

David took a full five minutes to solve the NYTX while Louise did it in three minutes and change.

BBC: Sir Roger Bannister, the first person to run a mile in under four minutes, has died at the age of 88. His time of three minutes 59.4 seconds, set at Iffley Road sports ground in Oxford on 6 May 1954, stood as a record for just 46 days but his place in athletics history was assured.

After a breakfast of French toast with Florida maple syrup, we walked Maisie – there was a very chilly wind from the north.

Back home David continued his examination of the smoke detectors. The smoke detectors are ganged together so that if one goes off, they all go off. Having examined the Kidde literature it was known that a green LED should light if the unit was getting 110 volt power. Only one upstairs bedroom detector was showing a green LED – the two makeshifts plugged into wall sockets in the master bedroom were showing green.

David took the stepladder upstairs and worked on the second smoke detector. After undoing the 110 harness and refastening it, the second and third upstairs detector showed green.

On the main circuit panel in the basement only one circuit breaker was marked "Smokes & Bedroom". Flipping it turned off the upstairs detectors and the lights in the south upstairs bedroom.

Further investigation confirmed that the smoke detectors in the garage, furnace room, master bedroom and downstairs hall were not being powered by 110 volts. David was fuming.

Louise spent a long time on the telephone with a garment seller. Her shipment had been sent to the wrong post office, even though the correct post office showed on the shipping bill.

BBC: German Chancellor Angela Merkel is set to form her fourth government after the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) voted in favour of another grand coalition.

CBC: Reported by Michael Enright: Here's a quote from the president of the National Rifle Association: "I have never believed in the general practice of carrying weapons. I do not believe in the general promiscuous toting of guns. I think it should be sharply restricted and only under license." The NRA president was Karl Frederick, and he was making his argument to the United States Congress — in 1939.

After a tomato soup lunch, we drove over to Kroger's pharmacy to show Louise's sore red arm from the pneumonia vaccination. The pharmacist waved it off as being normal. At least 1 in 1,000 showed the same symptoms. He made Louise angry. The Pharmacist finally and reluctantly admitted that he'd never seen a reaction as bad as the one Louise showed him.

We then went on downtown. First we went to the Jefferson County Courthouse on Jefferson Street, where Louise will be reporting for jury duty on March 12th. Then we parked in the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts.

We went to see “The Beyond”, a blend of opera and ballet. It was a bit too doleful, so we left at the intermission. However, we did see David's fellow Torontonion, Kateryna Sellers who has been with the Louisville Ballet since 2005.

Back home we read.

Supper was cheese fondue and then we watched some “The Crown” on Netflix. It covered the Suez Canal crisis and made note that Prince Philip often did not come home to sleep in his bed at night.