

Monday January 1st 2018

Happy New Year

Louise was awakened by the brightness of the Super Moon. Louise woke up David at 03:36 to triumphantly exclaim, “See those light splashes on your pillow!”. That proves conclusively that you should have the blinds slats facing up rather than down.

David wished Louise a “Happy New Year” and other things.

When we got up at 07:20 the temperature in Louisville was 4F, with no snow. But in Toronto, with snow, it was 8F. Sadly, it was only 28F in Walton Beach, close to where we would vacation in a few weeks.

David got the NYTX in one minute 50 secs but Louise smoked him in 43 seconds.

We had a fine full breakfast as it was just too cold to walk Maisie.

The Toronto Polar Bear Club canceled its annual New Year's Day dip in Lake Ontario for the first time in its 13-year history due to extreme cold and dangerous ice buildup. Shortly afterward in Oakville, Ontario's Courage Polar Bear Dip for World Vision canceled its event for the first time in its 33-year history.

We posted our first photo album and blog to the new website.

Louise retreated to her Studio to paint while David worked on revising both the first 2018 photo album and blog. There were many links to be updated.

A simple bowl of tomato soup with a slice of cheddar on Melba Toast and a cup of tea was all we had for lunch.

At 14:30 it reached a maximum temperature of 16F. We debated whether it was worth the effort to go for a walk. In the end common sense prevailed and we enjoyed the bright sunny weather by looking through the windows from the warm house. This the first time that we have not gone for a daily walk.

We both read a bit in the afternoon. David finished his “SQPR” and Louise was into “Orchid Fever”. The Roman Empire based in Rome lasted about 1,000 years. The Byzantine Empire based in Constantinople lasted about 1,100 years. Hitler's 1,000 year empire lasted 12 years.

About 17:00 Louise decided we should make some Melba Toast. As soon as the electric slicing machine was switched on, Maisie came dashing over hoping that a slice of bread would fall from heaven. She reluctantly accepted her 17:00 dollop of dog food.

David went back to the 2012 page of the “IronTrip” website. He rescued another blog that had disappeared from Word Press. Specifically, he recovered the daily events of his trip from Berlin to Prague in 2012.

Once again we went our separate ways for dinner. Louise finished off her salmon while David supped on leftover pizza slices. We came together for a South Beach Diet dessert that Louise crafted.

We went back to the fifth season of “The Good Wife”, which had settled down to some very good episodes after a couple of wobbly ones. Tonight there was a very dramatic change.

Tuesday January 2nd

The Supermoon was brightening our bedroom to the point where we got up at 05:50 to look up at the brightness. A supermoon happens when the full moon coincides with the moon's closest approach to Earth in its orbit. Supermoons make the moon appear a little brighter and closer than normal. We posted a photo in the album to illustrate the phenomenon.

It was only 1F at 06:00 and 14F in Toronto. We had no snow forecast whereas Toronto was going to get some more. So far Louisville has been snow free. Louisville would peak at 20F whereas Toronto would get to the same point. How can Louisville be colder than Toronto?

It being so cold outside, we had cruel gruel for breakfast. As soon as possible, Louise got on the phone to tell the chimney sweep that it was not necessary to come to look at the chimney cap as no birds would be nesting today.

With it so cold outside, we did domestic chores much of the morning. David did some ironing while Louise played with the vacuum cleaner. We did some minor furniture rearranging.

The normally balmy southern US has not been insulated from the Arctic blast either. The shores along Mobile Bay, Alabama - in the Gulf of Mexico - saw ocean waters freezing against boat piers.

After soup for lunch Louise went off for an annual medical checkup. David stayed home to polish the silver tea service.

The chimney guy did not show up for the appointment. He either got the message or decided today was not the day to play with ladders on a roof.

About 16:00 we decided we were going to be foolish and take Maisie for a walk. It was brisk but the sun was shining and there was only a slight breeze. Maisie just seemed to be impervious to the cold.

On our return Louise asked David to repair her long coat. The elastic loops kept releasing the buttons when she walked. The elastic was old and stretched, so David took some black thread and resewed the elastic so that the slack was taken out.

Louise decided that we needed to go on a diet. So, we had tuna salad for dinner.

David picked up Louise's book “I Remember: A Life of Politics, Painting and People” by Marian Cannon Schlesinger. The review said: “...the travails and accomplishments of a woman coming of age in a pre-feminist era, an era not quite prepared for strong-willed, independent women who refused to let gender push them to the ornamental edges of political life. As an author, artist and activist, Marian straddled diverse worlds. “I Remember” is an uncommonly appealing account of a thoroughly

uncommon life that offers unexpectedly fresh glimpses into events and people-some illustrious, others forgotten- that have shaped our time.

David really liked the chapter on Guatemala as both of us had been to the area. Chicken buses and the mountain town of Chichicastenango north of Guatemala City are hard to forget.

We watched two episodes of The Good Wife. The writers are throwing curves that are hard to anticipate. One episode in particular was very well-written.

Wednesday January 3rd

We were up at 06:00 and the Supermoon was still in effect. Louisville started at 9F and would go to 30F, while Toronto began at 13F and would climb to 18F with snow and Fort Walton Beach in Florida was 32F going to 59F. This time last year we were on Amelia Island in Florida and would have frozen.

David got the NYTX in 90 seconds, but Louise waxed him at 76 seconds.

Louise now has four oil works on easels in her Studio. To wit: The Japanese Egrets, The Sandhill Cranes, The Cardinals and Osborne House Garden Arcade. Watch for them at your local art gallery – they will be worth millions.

After breakfast Louise drove off to pottery class near Rose Island, Prospect, to the northeast. Her main aim was to glaze the lily pad central table piece she had started months ago. Louise had used a photo David took when they were at the Alhambra Palace in Grenada. In order to use her month of pottery classes wisely, she decided to work again at learning to throw and trim . . . this time she is using porcelain clay.

From the CBC we learned that advocates for Canadian seniors are calling on provincial governments to cover the cost of a new vaccine called Shingrix to protect against shingles, a brutally painful illness that can have debilitating consequences. Shingrix was approved by Health Canada last year and its manufacturer, GlaxoSmithKline, says it should be available in local pharmacies that order it by mid-January, 2018. Both Louise and David have had the older Zostavax - but it's not reported to be as effective in preventing shingles, especially among older people.

David spent a lot of time in the past two days trying to repair and/or post blog reports that somehow seemed to have been tossed/mangled by the ISP server. There were too many missing, spread over several years, for it to be simply forgetfulness on David's part.

David finally figured out how to superimpose a small photo of the TOronto MAple LEaf (TOMALE) mascot onto a larger photo. In this case, at the end of the current slide show.

From Toronto David got news that a company he knows well has merged with a rival.

Louise got home about 12:30 and was quite excited about her potting experience. For the first time she “threw” porcelain clay. Note: Potters use the term “throw” when they put clay on a potter's wheel to turn it. The advantage of porcelain clay is that it is lot easier to work than the heavy clay we have used in the past. Louise had several badges of honor – white splotches of clay – on her sweater. But, there

was no mention of the water lily center table piece.

We also learned about a new way to buy a used car in the US. “Carvana” is a web-based used car sales organization based in Atlanta. The attraction is that you don't have to put up with the salesman with a bad comb-over and a plaid jacket. The downside is that you don't get to kick the tires until you have paid to have it transported to your door.

We had hoped to go for a walk, but in the afternoon the sun went away and the wind picked up. So, much to the disappointment of a certain Cairn Terrier, we stayed home.

Instead we started making preparations for the dinner we would serve our guests this evening. There was a lot of chopping, dicing and slicing involved.

We lit the gas fireplace to add a festive glow for the guests and to generally warm things up a bit.

The menu was ramekins of deviled crab with toasted almonds sprinkled on top, crisp kale, mashed acorn squash with a green salad. We served sparkling cider and white wine spritzers. A guest brought tiramisu for dessert.

Just after the guests had left, at 22:22 hrs, we had a snow shower.

Thursday January 4th

We did not wake up until first light and when we looked out we saw that Louisville had snow on the ground. The first snow that actually accumulated this winter. David's great fear was that it would evaporate before he could get photos. He took a couple of safety shots from the upper floor of the nice warm house. Mind you, it also snowed in Tallahassee, Florida, where Louise went to Florida State University earning her PhD in 1981. The radio reported an inch on the ground.

However, a quick check of the weather revealed that Louisville was at 8F going to 21F – so the snow would stick around. Toronto was warmer at 15F but dropping to 7F. Fort Walton Beach area, where we would be in only three weeks, was 28F rising to 46F – hardly short-sleeve vacation weather.

Invigorated by the fresh freeze, David waxed the NYTX in only 53 seconds. Then he took apart the gas fireplace and turned down the air blower speed from howling to murmuring.

We walked Maisie about 10:00 and there was a damp penetrating cold. We took photos to commemorate this first snow “storm” this winter. Towards the end of the walk Louise's hands went numb even though she was wearing shearling mittens. Maisie, the Arctic Trooper, also cut short the walk to head for the heat.

Back home Louise thawed out, put the garbage bin out, and drove off to the “Hair Twister” to get new hair-raising stories. But, you would be hard-pressed to find juicier tidbits than the “Fire and Fury” book, which the White House is trying to suppress before publication.

Jon Sopel of the BBC News wrote: “This is a vicious knife fight between Donald Trump and his former campaign chief and White House Chief strategist (Steve Bannon) being played out across social media.

I thought nothing would or could eclipse Donald Trump's tweet about Kim Jong-un. But now it seems that Mr Bannon and President Trump are locked in a battle over who's got the bigger button and whose is most powerful.”

Louise got on the phone with her ISP to ask about a \$10 monthly modem charge. Louise found out that she could buy her own modem. The modem costs \$80 from Amazon, which would mean an eight month break even. David found a video on the ISP site showing how to effect the change.

Louise returned from her Hair Twister in Pewee Valley with a new look, having put 31 pieces on the damnably difficult puzzle. It is 1,000 pieces and a Christmas scene. It may be finished by Christmas 2018! Maybe!

After lunch we both took some time off by reading. David gave up on Marian Cannon Schlesinger's book. The book started well and then went downhill. Towards the end it degenerated into a society name-dropping bore.

By mid-afternoon, the beautiful snow had pretty much disappeared.

Then we had to make a difficult choice – would it be tacos or chicken for supper. We elected chicken.

The Good Wife stumbled on, going wherever the road took it.

Friday January 5th

The Bark Machine woke us up before dawn with an urgent jowl to get outside. There she ran into 10F and the best we would get would be 21F. In Toronto it was a killer *minus* 6F and would rise to only 2F. Fort Walton Beach on the Florida Gulf coast was only 27F with a forecast high of 49F.

David trashed the NYTX at 98 seconds. Louise took the day off.

The BBC reported: “Midnight release of Fire and Fury draws dozens to Harry Potter-like queues. Dozens queued in Washington for the middle-of-the-night release of the book that has sparked a dramatic, public feud between Donald Trump and his former aide, Steve Bannon.”

Apple has said that all iPhones, iPads and Mac computers are affected by two major flaws in computer chips. It emerged this week that tech companies have been racing to fix the Meltdown and Spectre bugs, that could allow hackers to steal data. Microsoft pushed out an automatic update for Windows users Wednesday night. PC users will also require a separate CPU update from whoever made their device (for example, Lenovo or HP). "By the end of next week, Intel expects to have issued updates for more than 90 percent of processor products introduced within the past five years," the chipmaker said in a press release.

The Canadian military is researching how to prevent soldiers from being stoned on the job once pot is legal. Only in Canada!

Gale-force winds battered New Zealand's North Island on Friday, tearing off roofs, bringing down trees, cutting power and forcing residents to flee flooded seaside towns. New Zealand's largest city, Auckland, was pummeled by two months' worth of rain in 24 hours, according to the National Institute

of Water and Atmospheric Research, prompting authorities to shut major roads and cancel ferry services and dozens of flights.

Winds of up to 128 kph (80 mph) an hour tore off roofs, felled trees and ripped boats from their moorings overnight, according to media.

We received a message from New Zealand saying that our friends on the North Island survived the mega storm that ravaged the North Island.

The CBC reported that three Canadian federal cabinet members are in the United States this week to promote trade, and more are expected to head south as part of Ottawa's renewed "NAFTA" charm offensive. Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale is in *Kentucky* for a series of meetings with high level officials, including Gov. Matt Bevin. The U.S. Ambassador to Canada, Kelly Craft, who is from *Kentucky*, will also be at the meetings. Environment Minister Catherine McKenna is in California for two days to discuss clean technology and trade. And starting Friday, Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay will be in Tennessee for three days, attending the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual trade show.

About 10:30 we drove downtown to Rellek to drop off a bench for sale and to pick up two wall hangings David purchased on our last foray.

We were home by noon and decided we should walk Maisie. Bad choice. It was 18F and bitterly cold. By the time we got home we were Popsicles.

We had a sliced chicken toasted sandwich with hot tea for lunch.

About 13:00 Louise drove off to Pewee Valley for a redo of her hairdo.

David had found some new raster and vector imaging software called Krita that he wanted to learn. The software is free having been developed by a team of volunteers. The learning curve is about as steep as the summit of Mount Everest.

You probably already guessed that we had tacos for supper. After an interlude, we watched the last episode of Season Five and the first two episodes of Season Six of *The Good Wife*. It was too much.

Saturday January 6th

When David turned on the Windows desktop at 07:02, there was a significant delay while an update installed. Hopefully it was the patch to plug up the leaky chips.

Louise did the NYTX in two minutes. David gave up.

The weather was the story with Louisville starting at only 3F, hopefully rising to 21F (where the F stands for frigid). Toronto was way down at MINUS 8F going up to PLUS 3F. Our Florida vacation spot was only 30F rising to 52F.

North America's East Coast is shivering in a record-breaking freeze in the wake of a deadly "bomb cyclone" that dumped snow as far south as Florida.

In parts of US and Canada, temperatures were forecast to fall below -20F (-29C), with wind chill making it feel more like -90F (-67C) on Friday night.

"An arctic outbreak will keep temperatures 20F to 30F degrees below average across the north-eastern US," the NWS said, adding that there was a "chance for many daily temperature records to be broken".

Canada beat Sweden to win the World Junior Hockey Championship. David is so into hockey that he

did not even know there was a tournament.

About 08:45 we drove over to Kroger in Prospect. Walking across their parking lot the cold was absolutely paralyzing and the sun blindingly bright. David was careful to pick a warm buggy to push in the store. While Louise shopped for vegetables, David went to the other end of the store to hunt for a 40 watt bulb for the hood above the cooking stove – he finally found one and rejoined Louise in veggies.

There was a man in the bread department wearing shorts. David immediately conjured up the image of Kentucky Blue Ass Country.

We were finished by 09:30, too early for Costco's 10:00 opening. So, we simply drove home and installed the new bulb in the range hood.

The fallout from the book “Fire and Fury” continued with US President Donald Trump rejecting questions raised over his mental health in the bombshell book, describing himself as a "very stable genius". It would appear that Merriam-Webster needs to redefine genius.

About 11:00 we drove over to Costco – that was a mistake as trying to find a parking spot on a Saturday morning is difficult. We bought essentials, and yes, Louise did return with a new garment.

As we entered Asbury Park we noticed streaks of wetness on the road. We stopped to chat with a neighbor and he told us that the landscape company was brining the streets in preparation for freezing rain. The rain is not forecast to fall until Sunday late.

We had leftover spaghetti for lunch. Then Louise drove over to the Paddock shopping mall to look at a new clothing store. She was disappointed, but not surprised, by the lack of quality.

While Louise was away Maisie announced the arrival of the new modem. The courier just left it bare naked on the porch as Amazon had not even wrapped it. Anybody want a free \$80 modem – just follow the truck to get free stuff?

When Louise got home we opened the modem package and could see that Louise would have to keep the old TWC modem for the telephone service. The new setup would require a coax cable signal splitter and two short shielded coax cables. One side of the signal would go to the old TWC modem and the other to the new DOCSIS 3.0 modem for the Internet service. We would have to go to Lowe's to get the additional parts.

About 16:00 we started working on a quiche. There was cheese to be grated, broccoli to be chopped, onions and shallots to be diced and a pie shell to be created. It went into the oven to bake for forty-five minutes.

We had an early and superb quiche supper. David is never going to lose weight with Louise creating such fine food.

We both found that we had lost the thread of the story on The Good Wife so we watched the first two episodes of Season Six of TGW again. Then we watched two more for a surfeit of TGW – it was to ensure a good sleep.

Sunday January 7th

We woke at 06:55 and it was pitch black. From the iPad we got the weather as:

Louisville 14F to 39F Cloud : Toronto 6F to 23F Cloud and Walton Beach 38F to 54F Cloud.

Louise smashed the NYTX in 60 seconds. It took David three minutes and fifty six seconds.

David was summoned to take photos of the rosy-fingered dawn. “Red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning” is David's version of the adage. Louise's is “Red sky in morning, sailor take warning.” The obverse, as she remembers it is, “Red sky at night, sailor's delight.”

For breakfast we had waffles with warm maple syrup and blackberries and raspberries.

We drove over to Lowe's about 09:00 and quickly found the coax cable splitter and two short coax cable runs. There were about twenty employees for four customers. Checkout was a bit tricky in that the credit card machine was malfunctioning. Louise had to put in the credit card three times and then use the side swipe technique to get it to work. That clerk is going to have a tough day.

Back home David connected the cables. The old TWC modem remained connected to service the telephone while the new modem picks up the Internet. David had a sheet that indicated that once the Internet connection was switched to the DOCSIS 3.0 modem any web page invoked on the desktop computer would automatically call up Time Warner's automatic connection page. Well, that did not happen.

David then got on the phone with Time Warner, first having to get through a voice activated menu of frustration. He finally got to a human. David passed the MAC codes and the technician said all was OK. David said it was not as the Internet was not working. They narrowed the problem to the Fapple router. After thanking the TWC person, David went offline to tear apart the cables on the old Fapple.

After he installed a brand new Ethernet cable. The Internet came alive.

In the meantime, Louise was attacking her upstairs clothes closets. She extracted sweaters to take to her charity shop “Nearly New”.The sweaters are hand-knits. Sweaters Louise made in her days of knitting frenzy. Actually the sweaters are fine, but the style then was boxy and short, just won't do at present.

We had our favorite tomato soup for lunch and then sinned by eating key lime yogurt for dessert.

When the temperature finally rose to 32F we suited up and took Maisie for an outing. With little breeze it was quite pleasant. We took a photo of a small Indian statue with a new red hat – somebody has a sense of humor.

Louise drove back to Orvis to return a couple of clothing items she has purchased on spec.

David started a book recommended by Louise. “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil” by John Berendt was on the New York Times bestsellers list for four years. “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil” is atmospherically Deep South coastal (Savannah, Georgia, Beaufort, South Carolina) and Southern Gothic in tone, depicting a wide range of eccentric personalities in and around the city of Savannah, Georgia.

The story, unsettling and real, broke down the idea of the quintessential phenomenon of a true American city—only to reveal its quirks: its man walking an invisible dog; its voice of the drag queen; a high-society man in its elite community—all that, somehow, unravels a murder mystery. Virtually seeming like a novel and reading like a tale, the non-fictional story is about the real-life events surrounding the murder.

David & Louise visited Savannah on New Years Day 2017 – nothing was open so we vowed to return.

While David was reading, Louise was in her studio painting up a storm.

We had the leftover quiche for supper with a green salad. Then we watched two exciting episode of TGW.