

Monday January 15th 2018

Martin Luther King Day

We had snow overnight so about 07:15 David went out to sweep the fresh snow off the front steps and the garage ramp.

The weather: Louisville: 22F to 32F cloudy and snow showers. Toronto: 18F to 21F and cloudy. Fort Walton Beach: 34F to 56F and SUN.

David had a cup of freshly-brewed coffee and did the NYTX in a slow 1 minute 58 seconds. Louise was six seconds faster.

CBC reported: All remaining Sears Canada stores closed their doors for good on Sunday. The department store chain had been in business in Canada since 1953, but struggled in recent years to adapt to the internet age and a changing retail environment.

BBC: Aston University predicts that diesel cars will account for just 15% of the UK market by 2025, down from a 50% peak.

David spent some time in Louise's Barber Shop getting his locks sheared. Louise has had lots of practice grooming Maisie and considers David a better subject as he does not snap at her.

Louise recommended "Crescent & Star" by Stephen Kinzer, "Turkey Between the Two World Wars". David has traveled extensively in Turkey and has studied Mustafa Kemal in depth. Louise has a small library of books about Turkey, mostly written by Turkish writers, from which to choose. Both of us have read "Birds Without Wings" in recent times. It is a well written historical novel, really more history than fiction, as these books are when they succeed. Also Louise feels that she learned about modern Turkey from the couple of books by Orhan Pamuk that she read, "Snow" and "Istanbul". David's years of travel and serious interest in history embellish his reading.

Louise started working on her poetry in her upstairs office. David was asked to do some Optical Character Scanning to reduce the amount of retyping. Finally, after several false starts, Louise believes that she has her scribbling in some kind of order. It seems the poetry writing days are over. But there is one unfinished writing that she wants to develop: "The Story of the Canard".

We broke for a lunch of tomato soup with toast and cranberry-covered goat cheese. Half way through we noticed that snow showers had started. By about 14:30 it was serious snow.

CBC: The Black Death, which killed thousands throughout Europe in a pandemic stretching from the 14th to 19th centuries, was likely spread by parasites such as fleas and lice carried on the human body.

While rats have long been blamed for spreading the fatal disease throughout Europe, researchers at the University of Oslo in Norway and the University of Ferrara in Italy now believe humans and their parasites were the biggest carriers. [We will visit Ferrara this autumn].

We did some reading in the living room with the gas fire logs providing both warmth and atmosphere.

About 16:45 we trimmed a whole head of cauliflower and put it in the oven to roast for about 90 minutes. We have baptized it 'Couronne de chou-fleur à Louise'.

The main meal was pan-fried brined chicken that had been rolled in Louise's secret herbs to give it a tangy flavor, with buttered carrots.

We almost always light candles to add a warm ambiance to the dining room.

It was about 19:30 when we turned to Season Seven of The Good Wife. We had the sense that the story had peaked and that it was all being stretched a bit too much.

Tuesday January 16th 2018

At 07:05 David was outside brushing about three inches of light powder snow from the back garage ramp and the front steps. It was one way to wake up. Louise had a fresh cup of brewed coffee waiting.

Wide awake, David tackled the NYTX and got it in 100 seconds. Louise, whose brain had not been frozen, did it in 75 seconds.

The weather: Louisville 9F to 14F - cloudy Toronto: 20F to 27F with snow showers Fort Walton Beach 40F to 58F sunny all day.

BBC: Airbus has said it will stop making its A380 super jumbo if it does not get any more orders. The Boeing Dreamliner has had three times the sales.

After breakfast we took photos of backyard Maisie eating snow, the original no calorie diet.

Louise surfaced an article by Charles McGrath in the New York Times. In it McGrath interviewed retired writer Philip Roth. When asked about America today, Roth pointed to the old saying by H.L. Mencken who described American democracy as "the worship of jackals by jackasses."

Or, as Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr said in 1849 "plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose"

Louise went painting in her Studio - the snow plow finally showed up - too late to do any good.

David was experimenting with image layers in PhotoShop and created a collage of images from last night's chicken dinner.

Lunch was sliced chicken sandwiches that Louise crafts with tasty sauce using toasted Dave's Killer multi-grain bread.

We started developing a poetry website for Louise. We got a skeleton posted and then ran into the usual stumbling block when we realized we needed a table. The WordPress editor does not have one.

We decided to take a break and do some reading and painting.

The photo of Maisie eating snow printed out well as an 8 by 10 and we will buy a frame.

Louise put pork chops in one of her pottery bakers and put it in the oven for about an hour and fifteen minutes. They served up tender and moist. We had cauliflower and crisped kale with them.

The Good Wife recovered and gave us two good episodes.

Wednesday January 17th 2018

We were up at 06:30 and it was very cold. Officially it started at 10F and went to a cloudy 21F. Toronto was 15F rising to 25F with cloud. Our vacation area was a cloudy 26F going to 36F - would you believe it was freezing in Florida?

CBC: In response to an online survey in advance of and expected rise in interest rates, more than a third of the over 2,000 respondents said they have no money left at the end of the month after paying bills and are unable to cover their payments. Almost half of respondents said they were within \$200 of not being able to meet monthly obligations.

The CBC has been experimenting with a very stark "New Look" website that is off-putting - it is starkly sterile.

BBC: The National Health Service is "hemorrhaging" nurses with one in 10 now leaving the NHS in England each year, figures show. More than 33,000 walked away last year, piling pressure on understaffed hospitals and community services. The figures - provided to the BBC by NHS Digital - represent a rise of 20% since 2012-13, and mean there are now more leavers than joiners.

Maisie went on a hunger strike. Usually she has to be pushed away from her feeding bowl so that the delicious dog food can be dispensed. Louise was despondent when Maisie just looked at her offering and walked away. We tried an experiment with David noisily emptying the food in the dog bowl and then reintroducing it from great height to make a lot of noise. Of course a couple of pellets went on the floor. Maisie was not amused.

We had fried eggs for breakfast and Maisie lay on the dining room floor looking absolutely despondent. At the end Louise put a little bit of fried egg on top of our rejected offering in the dog bowl. Maisie made the fried egg disappear and then reluctantly ate her normal dog food.

We were all suffering a bit of cabin fever as the ice under the snow on the sidewalks had prevented our walking for four days.

Louise was getting ready to drive to her pottery class on Rose Island Road in Prospect when she got an e-mail canceling the class.

So, as a replacement for pottery we planned on a series of errands. The first stop was "The Lampmaker" where Louise hoped to find replacements for a couple of lampshades. This place is one of those old style shops where they specialize and know their stock inside out. Louise spoke with two older women who had lots of good ideas. We walked out with two lamp shades. David learned that lamp shades have 'harps'.

We walked across the street, by which time David's back was decaying. Forgetting he was an old man,

he had cleared the snow two mornings in a row and his back was reacting badly. Louise wanted to slowly browse the offerings at "Lotsa Pasta", where truly unique foods of the delicatessen variety were hiding behind big price tags. David was hurting and Louise decided we should cut the shopping circuit down a bit. So, on the way home we dropped into "Trader Joe's", but only Louise entered the store. Likewise, when we got to "Michael's", Louise went solo.

Back home Louise prepared bowls of tomato soup. Whilst that was coming up to the boil, David worked on framing two photos of Maisie.

After lunch Louise drove off for a solo visit to Costco and Kroger's. While Louise was away, David added more pages to test formats for presenting Louise's poems on her new "The Immediate Once" website. He finally figured out how to put up the 'European Bee Eater', Louise's favorite painting, as the splash page.

Louise put a big chunk of steak into her secret marinade. When pan fried and eaten with green beans à Nancy, fried sweet potato slices, green salad and baguette it was a lovely meal. Three Buck Chuck provided Cabernet Sauvignon.

The Good Wife got back on track and was really solid.

Thursday January 18th 2018

We did not get up until 08:15 and it was actually light outside. David was equally slow with the NYTX at two minutes and twenty seven seconds.

Louise came up with a marvelous late breakfast. Yesterday at 'Lotsa Pasta' delicatessen Louise had snagged a special mix. It was from 'Café Du Monde', the original French Market coffee stand in New Orleans (Norlans) that has operated since 1862. The mix allows the gourmet chef to make fresh French Beignets (doughnuts). David was allowed to dust the finished beignets with confectioner's sugar.

We worked on Louise's new poetry website and finally settled on a format.

We had errands so we drove off about 11:00 hrs aimed at the Lyndon Post Office to return a pair of mail order slippers that David found unsuitable. From there we went to Preston Art Supplies where Louise returned an item and bought several other art necessities.

The final stop was Louise's charity shop, "Nearly New". A familiar pattern ensued. Louise brought in several boxes of donations while David browsed in the shop and bought a blue blazer and two silk ties for \$19. David now has a more extensive wardrobe in Louisville than Toronto - everything from Black Tie to a bathing suit.

The other day Louise had bought a big container of Costco Chicken Soup (CCS). We joked that the rotisserie chickens that don't get sold by 17:00 wind up as chicken soup. So, today we had a steaming bowl of CCS with noodles, carrots and celery chunks - delicious.

David demonstrated his restoration skills learned while crashing radio-controlled model aircraft. Louise had dropped a lamp finial and had cracked off a chunk. David took drywall spackling and built

up the chipped area. When it was dry, he took an emery board and shaped the curved surface. Then he applied CA glue to turn the spackling into concrete. Finally, Louise's furniture restoration color tubes were used to blend in the original color.

We spent time this afternoon scanning twenty of Louise's poems into her new website pages.

Dinner was store-bought pizza. But before eating, Louise made some more Melba toast by thinly slicing stale baguette.

We no longer have any idea where *The Good Wife* is going. It is like listening to an orchestral piece that the composer forgot to finish.

Friday January 19th 2018

Spectacle Day

Louise roused us out of bed at 07:00, the middle of the night. She did not want to miss her 12:40 appointment with Dr Ihnen at the Kentucky Eye Center.

Louisville: 23F to 40F with sun (unfreezing day) Toronto: 27F to 33F cloudy
Fort Walton Beach: 29F to 55F with sun.

"The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter. "
Winston Churchill

We got over to the Spring Medical Center in good time and Louise was called right on time. She spent a long time with her eye surgeon but emerged with a clean bill of health - he does not want to see her for a full year.

Anxious to get over to Costco to put in her new prescription, we ran into the first blip. Costco does not accept Medicaid, whereby you get one pair of "free" glasses after cataract surgery. Louise ordered up two new pair of glasses using her old frames.

From there we drove over to Kroger's where David became the third patient of the pharmacist jabbing him with part one of the new two part Shingrix anti-shingles vaccine. While David was being taken care of, Louise was at the other end of the store buying vegetables and losing her credit card.

It was a bit of a scramble when Louise collected David from Sick Bay and then went into Spin-Dry when she realized her credit card was missing. At breakneck speed Louise scrambled through the store retracing her steps. By some minor miracle, she saw her credit card on the floor beneath the carrots. Regardless, Louise was a bit shaken so went next door to the package store to buy a bottle of brandy.

By the time we got back home, it was too late for a Maisie walk, which we all needed having been house-bound for so many days due to the ice-snow sidewalk problem.

We started watching *The Good Wife* right after supper and wound up seeing three episodes, none of which was particularly memorable.

Saturday January 20th 2018

David was up about 06:30 and let Louise get some extra shuteye. He went upstairs and scanned ten of Louise's poems into the new website. With forty out of fifty-five poems in the can, the end was in sight - sort of.

As a special breakfast, Louise modified the Eggs Kejriwal recipe slightly - state secret.

Louse did the NYTX in 80 seconds while David droned in at six minutes twenty-six seconds. It was the big Saturday puzzle and David did not know that California was known colloquially as "Cali".

We continued to "populate" the new website database. This is about as much fun as banging your head against a brick wall. Notwithstanding, it is starting to look quite polished.

It was laundry and vacuuming day.

At some point we made an Internet reservation for a hotel in Athens, Alabama for our overnight mid-way down to Florida.

Lunch was leftovers and hot tea.

In the afternoon we ventured out for our first walk in a week. The footing had been too treacherous to risk a fall. It was 43F in Toronto, a balmy 51F in Louisville and only 60F in Fort Walton Beach.

After slogging away all day Louise needed a break from KP duty so we had a Costco fondue.

Sunday January 21st 2018

This page was vaporized inadvertently. What follows is an attempt to remember what we did.

Louise followed her Sunday ritual and watered the indoor plants.

It being quite warm, we walked Maisie both in the morning and in the afternoon.

We had leftover pizza slices for lunch.

We made butternut squash soup from scratch.

We spent a lot of time working on the new poetry website, called "The Immediate Once".

We had Louise's scratch made spaghetti for lunch. David was allowed to boil the noodles and he assiduously obeyed Al Dente's mafia rules.