

## Monday January 22nd 2018

Louise was the one to wake up early today, so we were out of bed by 06:30 – the first job being to brew some coffee, the second to empty the dishwasher.

David did the NYTX in two minutes and thirty-one seconds while Louise cleaned his clock at 62 seconds. It must be the American spelling.

Louisville: 58F to 57 F with showers Toronto: 36F to 35F with rain. Fort Walton Beach: 56F to 68F clouds and thunderstorms

David is well into his book on Turkey, “Crescent and Star” by Stephen Kinzer. In 1996 Kinzer was named chief of the newly opened New York Times bureau in Istanbul, Turkey. He spent four years there, traveling widely in Turkey and in the new nations of Central Asia and the Caucasus. After completing this assignment, Kinzer published “Crescent and Star: Turkey Between Two Worlds”.

David has re-learned a lot and discovered that there are a lot of myths about Mustafa Kemal. The author thinks Atatürk did a great job modernizing Turkey, but that his acolytes, Kemalites, had held Turkey back by freezing society in place – not opening up to new ideas. Most of all he rails against the lack of reconciliation with the Kurds. David took a very dangerous trip along the frontier with Georgia, Armenia, Iran and Syria in September 2011. On two separate days the Kurdish PKK killed soldiers and police in the area being visited.

Turkey's President Tayyip Erdoğan seems obsessed with the idea that there is a coup hiding behind every tree. In “protecting” the Republic he may be doing more harm than good. Turkey was recently told that it would not become a member of the EU, one of Erdoğan main election promises.

Hundreds of thousands of US federal workers will be unable to report for work on Monday, as the US Senate struggles to end a government shutdown. Some will not be paid until the stalemate is resolved. Under Senate rules, the bill needs 60 votes in the 100-member chamber. The Republicans currently have 51 senators, so they need some Democratic support to pass a budget.

The US suffers from an eighteenth century form of government that has not kept up with the times. How many countries in the West have repeated shut downs of the federal government? Then there is the Electoral College. Who would want to emulate this archaic dysfunctional system that creaks and groans?

The gap between the super rich and the rest of the world widened last year as wealth continued to be owned by a small minority, Oxfam has claimed. Some 82% of money generated last year went to the richest 1% of the global population while the poorest half saw no increase at all, the charity said.

We took a walk at 08:30 – very warm and spring-like. Maisie lunged at one remaining pile of snow thinking of it as an ice cream parlor. Louise pulled her back afraid of road salt and other nasty things - Maisie just loves those sorts of “toppings”.

At 10:00 Louise drove away for a facial. Women should start shaving every day to exfoliate – it is a lot cheaper.

It started raining a short time later. The warm rain should wash away the road salt, wake up the vegetation and get the birds all atwitter.

BBC: Amazon.com Inc opened its checkout-free grocery store to the public after more than a year of testing, moving forward on an experiment that could dramatically alter brick-and-mortar retail.

Combined with existing self-checkout lanes, a huge number of check out clerks could lose their jobs. More and more, work is being pushed down onto customers.

Louise came home and made one of her delicious PLAT sandwiches - that would be sliced Pork, Lettuce, Avocado and Tomato on toasted multi-grain Dave's Killer Bread.

After lunch Louise was off to her Hair Twister in Pewee Valley. She stopped off at Kroger's for a couple of things. It rained on and off all afternoon.

ACDSee, David's favorite image cataloging software, blew up. It took a bit of poking around on the Internet until a solution was found. Basically he had to find the old index, rename it and then let ACDSee build a new index.

A neighbor came to dinner. Louise came up with steak, green beans, double-baked white potatoes au gratin and green salad.

### **Tuesday January 23rd 2018**

The day got off to a bad start. For the first time the NYTX had actual Arabic numbers in the puzzle. Up to this time each square required only a Latin letter. David finally got it after a very slow 5 minutes and twenty-seven seconds.

BBC: Singer Neil Diamond has announced he will retire from touring, after a recent diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. Diamond, who turns 77 on Wednesday, canceled his March tour dates for Australia and New Zealand on medical advice. The Solitary Man singer was midway through his 50th anniversary tour.

CBC: U.S. President Donald Trump has signed a bill funding the government through Feb. 8, ending a 69-hour shutdown after Democrats accepted promises from Republicans for a broad debate later on the future of young illegal immigrants (Dreamers).

Louisville: 43F down to 41F – cloud Toronto: 38F to 41F cloud and rain Fort Walton Beach: 50F to 63 with sun.

Canada has agreed to a revised version of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and will sign on to the deal. The deal came after talks in Japan this week with the 11 countries still committed to the deal.

After breakfast we took Maisie for a chilly 41F walk. There was a stiff breeze so we came back cold-soaked. However, David did have an idea.

We had the lingering problem of trying to replace the backup 9 volt battery in the smoke detector in the garage, It was nailed onto a fifteen foot high ceiling in the garage and the step ladder was too short to

reach it. On the Web we had found a \$90 extension ladder at Lowe's and had intended to buy it today.

On a hunch, David drove Louise's Scion out of the garage and parked in the Visitor's Parking lot. He then drove the van out and backed into the garage at an angle to get in right beneath the smoke alarm. Louise guided him back to make sure we did not take out the steps from the garage into the house. David's intention had been to use the step ladder to get up onto the roof of the van and thereby access the smoke alarm.

When he looked at the rear of the van up against the steps leading into the house, he saw that he could put one half of the step ladder on the steps and one half on the shelf under the van's rear door. The step ladder in place, he easily replaced the smoke detector battery. David calls this Egyptian Engineering.

We had leftover butternut squash soup for lunch along with some cranberry bread spread with Philadelphia cream cheese.

David spent quite a bit of time resurrecting the blog from the week starting January 15th – it had vaporized when the wrong button was pushed.

Louise went down into her Studio to paint. It is a slow process as Louise has to let layers of paint dry before another layer can be applied.

The BBC reported that DJI is about to release new drone named Mavic Air. It is about the size of the Bose 3 earphones David uses. It will cost \$US 800 and weighs 430g (0.95lb), making it 41% lighter than the Mavic Pro. Folded it is about half the size of the Mavic Pro. The Transport Canada weight limit for unregulated drones is 250 grams.

It was spicy fried chicken, crisp kale, green beans, twice baked potato and baguette for dinner.

### **Wednesday January 24<sup>th</sup> 2018**

We were up at 06:06 and of course it was pitch black outside. Louisville: 34F to 38F with cloud  
Toronto: 17F to 24F with sun Fort Walton Beach 41F to 56F mixed

We both got stuck on the NYTX – usually one of us gets it.

Google introduced its new 12 inch Pixelbook starting at \$1,300. TechRadar said “The Google Pixelbook is the first Chromebook worthy of consideration alongside the most high-end Windows and Mac devices. From its excellent design to its massive software enhancements, this is the best Chromebook to date, bar none.”

Problem is most of it lives in “The Cloud”. It uses the Chrome OS so you escape the clutches of Windoz and Apple iOS. But forget things like PhotoShop, ACDSee etc. David will not go there.

CBC: From lights and heating to pumps and ventilation fans, it's estimated that it takes about 2,000 kWh to make a pound of product using traditional growing methods. That's close to how much electricity an average Canadian household uses in two months.

CBC: “NAFTA is moving along pretty well. I happen to be of the opinion that if it doesn’t work out, we’ll terminate it,” Trump said in the Oval Office as he signed orders imposing tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines.

CBC: With NAFTA’s future up in the air, Canada is taking steps to diversify its trade. Canada currently sends 75 percent of its goods exports to the United States. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will sit down with U.S. corporate and financial leaders Wednesday for a private round-table at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to push his invest-in/trade-with Canada agenda.

We did a chilly early morning walk with Maisie. Twice we felt snow pellets on our cheeks, but it all melted the moment it hit the ground. It was just a reminder that winter has not given up – yet.

About 09:00 Louise went off to the Pottery Studio in Prospect to throw porcelain. It was a very drab, gray day as she drove away.

BBC: More detail on the new Mavic Air emerged. With a weight of 430 grams, the Mavic Air is heavier than the diminutive Spark (300 grams), yet substantially lighter than the Mavic Pro (734 grams), demonstrating just how much technology DJI has been able to cram into a very small package. It uses the same 12MP 1/2.3” CMOS sensor found in the Mavic Pro, so it’s fair to expect similar image quality. The camera is mounted on a compact 3-axis gimbal, a welcome improvement over the 2-axis gimbal found on the Spark.

BBC: As the move to electric cars heats up, as new battle is looming – plug war. There has to be a massive charging station infrastructure build. Swiss bank UBS has estimated that \$360 billion will need to be spent over the next eight years to build global charging infrastructure to keep pace with electric car sales, and it will be key to limit the numerous technologies now in use. But, right now there is no universal charging plug design.

The Porcelain Princess got back around noon, splattered with white badges of combat.

We had a toasted sliced pork sandwich for lunch.

We then set out on several errands. First we dropped off gently-used dog toys , legacies of past pets – Maisie was the victim of “Use them or lose them” - to an animal shelter. Then we drove to the other side of town to enjoy \$20 worth of car washing and cleaning at the Sparkle Brite in St Matthews. From there we went on to Costco to fill up the gas tank. Into the store we went to pick up Louise's new eye glasses – ready in only four days.

Back home we took Maisie for a second walk – it was quite cool and chilly. Maisie just goes faster when it is colder.

Once we got home we had a hot chocolate to warm up.

BBC: Ex-US Olympic gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar has been sentenced to 40 to 175 years after testimony from nearly 160 of his victims.

CBC: The Campbell Soup Company will shut down its Toronto soup plant, cutting 380 manufacturing

jobs. The company says soup and broth production at the Toronto facility will be moved in phases over the next 18 months to three plants in North Carolina, Ohio and Texas.

BBC: Travel to the US is falling, a decline some in the tourism industry blame on US President Donald Trump. The number of international visitors fell by 4% in the first seven months of 2017, according to the US National Travel & Tourism Office.

Late afternoon we started preparing a quiche for supper. There was quite a bit of chopping and grating involved. Louise made a pie crust and we popped the offering into the oven at 17:45 for an 18:30 serving. Louise substituted chopped bell peppers for chopped mushroom and the result was delicious.

During The Good Wife episodes two characters were in trouble. We are left wondering if anybody will be left standing. Part of one episode claimed to be in Terminal 3 of Toronto's Pearson Airport – it seemed authentic in many ways.

### **Thursday January 25<sup>th</sup> 2018**

We got up too early and David fluffed the NYTX. Louise also admitted defeat. It was one of those combined down and across that nixed us.

Louisville: 25F to 50F with sun Toronto: 14F to 24F cloud Fort Walton: 39F to 62F sun.

CBC: Patrick Brown stepped down as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario early Thursday, only hours after denying allegations of sexual misconduct.

CBC: Nearly five million Canadians (population 35 million) spent money on marijuana last year, spending an average of about \$1,200 each, according to new federal data. That's one of the main takeaways of a Statistics Canada report released today that attempts to quantify the size of the market leading up to legalization in the summer of 2018. The almost \$6-billion figure compares with the just over \$22 billion that Canadians spent on alcohol last year, and the \$16 billion they spent on tobacco products.

BBC: Veteran US diplomat Bill Richardson has resigned from an international panel set up by Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi to advise on the Rohingya crisis. He claimed the panel was a "whitewash" and accused Ms Suu Kyi of lacking "moral leadership" on the issue. Mr Richardson, a long-time friend of Ms Suu Kyi, added she had been "furious" when he raised the case of two Reuters reporters on trial in Myanmar.

BBC: Lou Anna Simon, the head of Michigan State University (MSU) has resigned, hours after sports doctor Larry Nassar was sentenced for sexually abusing young athletes.

