

Monday May 14th 2018

Jury Duty Started

We were both awake at 05:15 so we got up and brewed some coffee.

David was out the door by 06:45 on his way to the Guildwood GO train station. There he bought a same day return ticket to Union Station in downtown Toronto. Since it was a clear day he decided to walk north to 361 University Avenue, the location of the Superior Court of Justice.

The Sheriff had summoned him to report to Ground Floor Room 167 by 08:30 where he would be searched for sharp objects. For the first ten days he would be paid nothing and not reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

After David left, Louise and Maisie took the long way round the neighbourhood for a chilly walk. Only one dog, actually a very noisy, wiggly puppy, was sighted. Louise has cautioned herself to try to avoid meeting closely with other dogs. Yesterday Maisie seemed to have got up on the wrong side of the bed with every other dog she saw. Incipient Doggie Alzheimer's?

I left the house at 06:40 and was at Guildwood 20 minutes later. But, half the parking lot was blocked due to construction. I had a long walk before I found the only tunnel connecting to the ticket booth.

I spent \$7.00 for a senior day return from Guildwood GO to Union station. To get on the train I had to walk back a long way. This construction has been going on almost two years and it does not appear to be close to completion.

I arrived in Union Station about 07:45 and made my way to Front Street. I joined a herd of wage slaves and walked west to University Avenue. It was a pleasant walk northward up University Avenue.

I arrived at 361 University, opposite the US Consulate, by 08:10 hrs.

Lining up for security, I put my summons between my lips and suffered a paper cut. I was seated in the holding pen by 08:20 hrs. I was lucky enough to get a carrel for my iPad. Lesson: arrive early.

I was Green Panel 51 and juror XXXXXX.

It was a large room with about 200 mystified people. Most people were wearing street clothes, with the odd jacket and tie.

About 08:35 we watched a twenty minute video extolling the virtues of jury duty. Louise having recently served for two weeks on a jury for a civil suit, I was informed that, if chosen as a juror, I could never discuss the proceedings before, during or after the verdict. Louise could say nothing during the trial, but was able to discuss it once the jury was dismissed by the judge.

The staff members were building decks of cards for random jury selection.

Then we had a droning lecture of the rules of conduct for sitting in the jury lounge. Basically, sit and

be bored. We were to get a lunch hour from 13:00 to 14:00 hrs, but if we left the building, we had to come back through security. There is a cafeteria in the second basement level. We have to report by 09:30 each subsequent day and usually go home by 16:30 (maybe).

The bad news was that we probably would be serving for five days in the bull pen, and longer if we pulled a jury trial. Six jurors for a civil case and twelve jurors for a criminal trial. We could expect to get paid nothing for the first ten days of duty. The first day of the third week we would get \$40 a day.

At 10:00 they handed out forms to be filled for consideration to be excused. There was quite a line up after people had filled out the form.

If we serve out the week, we will be excused further consideration for three years.

It took David ten minutes and 19 seconds to do the NY Times crossword. The staff kept making announcements, ruining his train of thought.

The man in the carrel next to me was wearing an Order of Canada pin the lapel of his jacket.

At 10:33 the Purple Panel got called down to a Court Room.

At 11:40 the Green Group were led up to a court room on the fourth floor. Milady, the judge, came in and the clerk called 20 juror numbers from a bingo cage. I was number 17. There were three lawyers who could either accept or reject. Milady asked what had been my profession. When I answered retired Army Lt Col all three lawyers rejected me. Two men were charged with a firearms attempted murder from May 2016. The trial would probably go for a minimum of two and a half weeks.

At 13:00 we were released for a one hour lunch break. Louise had prepared a sandwich, biscotti and tangerines in an LCBO bag - very classy. I had brought a small plastic bottle that I filled with tap water. I later saw a sign pronouncing the water non-potable.

We had been told to switch off all electronic devices when going up to the courtroom. Back in the juror's room I fired up my iPad. It wanted to reactivate as though it was day one. It took a long time to remember I had registered an unused mail account and the password was the NATO stock number for grease. Apple is so good at blocking you at just the right moment. One of these days the iPad will be reduced to a pile of rubbish when it gets thrown against a brick wall.

At 15:15 the Master of Ceremonies in the jury bullpen told us we could go home. I walked south on University Avenue to Front Street. From there I went into Union Station. Looking at the LCD screens in the concourse, I spotted the time (15:45) and track number (27) for my return train to Guildwood.

The train had no sooner started rolling than there was an announcement that if you were seated in car 1,2,3, 4 or 5 you could not get off at Guildwood due to the construction. I was in a wrong car, and had to walk forward through several cars until I hit car 2539, the doors of which would open at Guildwood

I got back to Guildwood in about 30 minutes and drove the van home.

Louise and I exchanged recollections of our day.

David transcribed his courthouse blog and then worked out his GO Train timings for Tuesday. If he departed at 08:16 he would get into Union Station at 08:45 and would have 45 minutes to walk to 361 University Avenue.

As a special treat to revive David's flagging spirits, Louise cooked her special hamburgers with a deluxe salad to match.

With his experience in court today, David was more than ready to watch "Bailey and Scott" take on the bad guys.

Tuesday May 15th 2018

Jury Duty Day 2

We were woken up at 05:00 by a deluge of rain. The safety alarm had been set for 07:00 hrs.

We had worked out that David should take the 08:09 GO train from Rouge Hill rather than risking a full parking lot at Guildwood. That meant leaving the house at 07:45 hrs.

We had a full breakfast of egg-in-a-nest, strawberries and blueberries with Greek yogourt and lovely drip coffee.

Louise drove David to the Rouge Hill GO station in the pouring rain to catch the 08:09 train to Union Station. David picked up two copies of the printed GO train schedule for the Lakeshore East line. The train was full with people who were obviously enjoying the rain. It was a surprisingly long distance from the Rouge Hill to the Guildwood stop. It had cost and extra 25 cents - \$7.25

When we got to the Guildwood stop the lot had only the monthly pass slots left. The construction material and offices had gobbled up half the parking spots.

On arrival at Union Station at 08:45 David walked in the rain under his small umbrella with all the other happy office workers. Curiously, a couple of macho men wore no rain jacket and carried no umbrella - they wore only shirts that were getting soaked.

As David got to Richmond and University he saw the same homeless man as yesterday sleeping on a hot air grill. He had a plastic covering to keep off most of the rain

David got to the Court House and did not make it through security without being wanded. Then he was into the jury bull pen by 09:15, had his name checked off the list and snagged a carrel right beside the window. He needed the window to watch the rain. He parked his wet umbrella on the ledge so that the ventilation system would dry it out. His rain jacket went over the soft chair back to dry out.

The early birds got the carrels and the late comers got stuck with steerage class row chairs.

David settled down at his carrel and cracked the New York Times crossword in two minutes and 11 seconds. Louise reported later that she got it in an astounding 45 seconds.

When David came up for air he noted there were only about half as many people as yesterday. All four panels had been called up to the Court Rooms on Monday, which suggests four trials were underway. However, given that as many as four times twelve had been seated a jurors, the only conclusion was that a lot of other people had been able to find ways of being excused.

By 10:18 David had finally won a hand of iPad Solitaire and was bored to tears. So, he went back to his book, "Master and Commander" by Patrick O'Brian. This was the first of a series of at least twenty nautical tales. David also has #18, "The Yellow Admiral" in the queue. Louise was the source of these books.

The book features Captain Jack Aubrey RN and Stephen Maturin, the secretive ships' surgeon. The detail describing life on board a Nelsonic man-of-war is incredible. There was a plate at the front of the book labelling every one of the 21 sails.

At 11:12 the Master of Ceremonies asked for 15 to 20 volunteers for a Coroner's Inquest into a death that occurred when a person was being arrested. It would start on June 18th in the Yorkdale area and would run for two weeks. David sat on his hands.

Some people in the juror's room like to talk - non stop.

At 12:20 the MC announced a second Coroner's Inquest. The interviews for this case involving the death of a homeless person will be conducted on May 16th. This was a fairly heavy hint that we would all be coming back on May 16th.

The MC broke us off for lunch at 12:55 with the admonition that we all get back by 14:00 hrs. I enjoyed my 7 grains sandwich of aged cheddar cheese with a thin smear of Dijon mustard. The small plastic bottle of ginger ale matched the sandwich perfectly. Louise had packed both a chocolate and vanilla biscotti, crumbs of which fell on the floor to keep the cleaning staff happy. Dessert was a single juicy clementine.

Louise walked Maisie sometime in this period in case David was released early and would require Louise to pick him up at Rouge Hill earlier than forecast.

The MC released as such that David figured he could catch the 16:40 out of Union. With clever communication Louise was at Rouge Hill to pick up David at 17:09 hrs.

Although he had done nothing all day, David was very tired. He had been kept of edge all day with announcements and was constantly expecting something to happen.

Amazon had delivered a new antenna to get off air TV programming. It was easy to install and suddenly we were watching PBS Buffalo. Louise was elated because we would now be able to watch the wedding of Harry and Meghan. The image and sound were remarkably clear. Memories of rabbit ears and the nineteen fifties popped up and faded.

Louise cooked a favourite shrimp and rice dish for supper.

A friend brought a plumber over about 19:30 to plan the sink and toilet installation in the Powder

Room. Between them they figured out how to redo the plumbing so the sink top would fit the plumbing. They would come back later to do the actual work.

It was late, but we decided we needed some “Bailey and Scott” to unwind. We were a bit bewildered by Rachel's domestic situation.

Wednesday May 16th 2018

Jury Duty Day 3

There was an orange glow in the eastern sky as a flawless day unfolded.

Weather: Toronto 51F to 57F sun Louisville 69F to 81F part cloud

Louise drove David over to the Port Union GO station, leaving the house at 07:45 hrs. Maisie came along to find out what all the excitement was about. Since we drove right past the groomer's shop, we wondered why Maisie did not react. Louise imagined she heard a sigh of relief as we continued past the bathing place.

Upon returning to Colonel Danforth, Louise and Maisie went on their later than usual dawn patrol. There was a strong, cold breeze, surprisingly.

After the normal smooth GO ride, David had a brisk sunny walk up from Union station - it felt like fall even though the cherry blossoms were out.

David was in the Jury Room by 09:15 hrs and was early enough to grab a carrel for his laptop. The court officers were playing with the jury cards and something seemed different.

David solved the NY Times crossword in two minutes 11 seconds. Louise did it in one minute 32 seconds.

After a while the court officers read out a long list of names. There was no reply from the huddled masses. One could assume that these were people who were AWOL.

By the way, did you know that the French word for 'carrel' is 'bureau-isoloir'. Neither did David.

Back home, Louise was supervising the removal of three dead bushes in preparation for a new planting arrangement in the front garden.

About 12:40 the Master of Ceremonies declared it lunch hour and asked us to be back by 14:00 hrs. David thought it would be a good idea to go for a walk.

David was munching on the egg salad sandwich that Louise had prepared when a nice man came over to have a long conversation. David missed his walk.

We all had to book back in with the court officers after lunch.

About 14:35 the MC gave up and sent us home. David looked at the GO schedule and thought he could make the 15:15 out of Union Station. He sent an e-mail to Louise and then marched briskly south on University Avenue. He got into Union and got the iPad onto the Union Station WiFi. He saw no acknowledgement that Louise had received his first message so he sent a second indicating his time of arrival at Rouge Hill GO Station.

He had to run to the train and lost the WiFi connection so he switched on his 7-11 mobile phone. He received no phone call en route. He was very happy to see Louise waiting for him at Rouge Hill.

When they got home they decided to walk Maisie on this sunny afternoon. The weather has perfect , trees are leafed out, sky was without a cloud. We remarked how much easier the walks have become. It is the better weather or have we become a bit more fit by following this daily regimen? The word 'regimen' really doesn't signify on such halcyon days. The walk is a pleasure and a privilege when one thinks about it.

Louise reworked last evening's shrimp and rice to give added pizzazz. Roasted garlic broccoli and an avocado stuffed with diced tomato topped with sour cream went well with the main dish.

“Bailey and Scott” were called upon to send us off to bed. Rachel gets herself into real messy situation in her civilian life – so much so that you wonder why she has not been kicked of the force.

David had difficulty getting to sleep churning the probability of getting picked as a juror.

Thursday May 17th 2018

Jury Duty Day 4

Weather: Toronto 57F to 65F sun Louisville 67F to 80F cloud

NYTX: David one minute and 55 seconds Louise one minute and 8 seconds

We were up at 06:00 and there was a nice orange glow to the east. The dish washer was emptied and the drip coffee maker charged to produce wake-up juice.

About 06:45 we walked along the top of the ravine and took photos of white blossoms. Once again, the beautiful spring morning greeted us.

Back home Louise prepared fried eggs on a toasted bun, with raspberry jam and vanilla yogourt as sides.

David re-posted the photo album and the blog.

David did not have to report to the jury room until 10:30 hrs. From the GO train schedule he figured that we needed to leave the house at 08:55 hrs.

We got to the Rouge Hill GO station about 08:50 to catch the 09:14 train to Union Station. The \$7.25 return fare was paid as 'une personne âgée'.

On the train David sensed a dampness on his right thigh. His bottle of ginger ale had leaked through his rain jacket pocket. It was just a few drops that were easily sponged up with tissue. Otherwise, the trip to the Central Business District was uneventful.

We arrived at Union Station at 09:36 and managed to get out on the west side of Bay Street, which eliminated one street crossing. He was getting smarter each day.

David was a bit slower this morning as the sun is shining. He strolled up University Avenue rather than charging.

The jury room was hot - the air con had yet to kick in. There was a bit of gallows humour as people expressed the hope the ordeal would soon be over. David had a sense of doom. The Sword of Damocles sort of thing. He had not slept well and was feeling out of sorts.

At 10:44 the AWOL list was read out. There were no takers.

About 11:30 we were led up to the fourth floor court room number 9. We were told that the case was a criminal one involving rape. The woman had allegedly been raped when buying cocaine. So, we needed 12 jurors.

There we went through an agonizing process whereby the clerk of the court randomly pulled juror cards out of a Bingo drum in platoons of twenty. After each twenty, individual jurors were presented to the Crown and Defence Counsels - to accept or reject. About one third of the victims gave reasons to the judge as to why they could not serve. The judge granted about half the requests.

The final jury was half male and half female. It is a mystery why either lawyer challenged people that seemed to be perfectly acceptable.

It took over an hour to seat the jury. The survivors were led upstairs to a fifth floor jury room. We were told that we would be required to be in this room at 13:45 hrs. We had to wait until the first witness was called in the trial - all things being equal, we would then be dismissed.

David went back down to the ground floor, but was not allowed into the jury room as new panels were in attendance. From the hallway he was able to use the jury room WiFi. David made plans to catch the 14:43 train out of Union to get to Rouge Hill about 15:15 hrs.

He returned to the fifth floor jury room and ate his peanut butter and jam sandwiches, washed down with ginger ale. David was feeling emotionally wiped.

Well the court got delayed and we did not get dismissed as hoped. Finally we were sent home and David used his 7-11 phone to contact Louise telling her he would start walking to the station at 15:15 and be on the 15:43 arriving at Port Union at 16:13 – and so it was.

The GO Train works on the honour system. He had eight rides and never saw a ticket taker. So, jury duty had cost David \$28.75 in train tickets.

Bless her heart, Louise was there when David got off the train.

When we got home we took Maisie for a walk. It was a very warm 78F and we all noticed that going up a slight incline was hard work.

Supper was an extravagant chicken salad plate with green beans.

We were both looking forward to a good lot of “Bailey and Scott”. Both of the leading ladies passed their Sergeant's exams. But, there was only one opening for Sergeant at the Manchester Cop Shop.

Friday May 18th 2018

When we woke up to the rays of sunshine a huge load had been lifted knowing that jury duty was over for both of us. We had both suffered emotional strain from exercising our civic duty.

By the way, David had not lost ten pounds since arriving from Louisville on April 1st.

Weather: Toronto 52F to 58F sun Louisville 69F to 78F part sun

NYTX: David took two minutes 13 seconds

Since Jan. 1, 2017, the political parties have been banned from receiving donations from corporations and unions. That means only an individual can give money, and the maximum amount an individual can give to parties and candidates in a given year is now just \$3,600 a year, down from \$23,275.

This change developed rapidly during 2016, as stories like this revealed the deep-pocketed donors funding Ontario's political parties, and raised questions about possible links between donations and government policy decisions.

Although the ban on corporate and union donations means the parties' fundraising machines will be constrained, they have a new source of revenue: taxpayers. All parties who received at least two per cent of the popular vote in the last election are getting an annual allowance of \$2.71 per vote. It means the three official parties and the Green Party of Ontario get the following amounts in 2017:

- Liberal: \$5.06 million
- PC: \$4.09 million
- NDP: \$3.1 million
- Green: \$630,000

We had a chilly morning walk. It was quite refreshing with sunlight and a crispness that invited a quicker pace.

We had hot oatmeal for breakfast, with a couple of figs to munch on.

About 09:15we drove off to Costco in Ajax. David had to return a pair of jeans. His diet had not reduced his waist size. He also had to redeem his rebate cheque.

When we arrived the line ups at the gas pumps were very long. We sensed that something was wrong. After gassing up we went to the store and the line up for returns was the longest we had ever seen. Finally the penny dropped. It was the Victoria Day long weekend. The actual civic holiday was not until Monday May 21st, but many people had obviously started early.

The store was very crowded inside, but we got the things we needed. After over \$300 damage, we went on to “No Frills” to do even more damage. We scored two President's Choice cheese fondues for \$7 each.

Louise stirred up a remoulade sauce to go with cold cooked shrimp, lettuce and green beans. We shared a bun.

BBC: Between eight and 10 people have been killed in a shooting at a Texas high school, say police. Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez told reporters the majority of the dead at Santa Fe High School were students. Two suspects have been arrested.

US President Donald Trump says "this has been going on too long in our country".

CBC: The United States declared the NAFTA countries were nowhere close to a deal, in a statement Thursday designed to douse expectations that an agreement might be just a few minor adjustments away.

It rebuffed an effort from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland, and several high-ranking staffers who were in the U.S. on Thursday urging a quick deal.

U.S. trade czar Robert Lighthizer rejected the idea that an agreement was within imminent reach. He cited big differences on intellectual property, agriculture, online purchases, energy, labour, rules of origin and other issues.

"The NAFTA countries are nowhere near close to a deal.... There are gaping differences," Lighthizer said in an evening statement.

In mid-afternoon we drove the van down into Colonel Danforth Park. We went for a walk southwards following Highland Creek towards Lake Ontario. It was sunny, but quite nippy in the shade. After we passed underneath Lawrence Avenue, the trillium started to show their white perfection. We took photos of trillium, dandelions, violets and the general vibrant fresh green of the new foliage.

When we got home we watch the PBS News Hour on the 65 inch LCD screen using our new broadcast TV “rabbit ear”.

Louise got a bit hooked on the Harry and Meghan wedding pre-pre-pre broadcast. So, David prepared the cheese fondue for supper.

After that we wanted to see how the new Sergeant would perform on “Bailey and Scott”. We noted that the series is getting a bit grungy. In the earlier episodes it was a bit lighter and fun.

Saturday May 19th 2018

Meghan and Harry – Windsor Castle

We were up at 04:45 getting ready for a Royal Wedding. Using our new \$50 broadcast TV aerial, we tuned into PBS Buffalo to watch the BBC broadcasting live from Windsor. The signal on the 65 inch LCD screen was totally crisp and we even had closed captioning translating from British to American. The technology truly was amazing. Remember the black and white TVs of the 1950s with rabbit ears and snow?

The first order of business was to get the coffee dripping. Then we had to launch the blog to capture all the most important detail.

The weather in Windsor was very un-British. The couple had a marvellous sunny day and the ladies were able to wear short sleeves and hats that did not blow away in the wind. The splash of colour was spectacular.

David immediately picked off the Welsh accent of BBC announcer Huw Edwards. David went to high school in Newport, South Wales for a year before emigrating to Ottawa.

There was a five hour time difference between Windsor and Toronto. When Louise took Maisie for a short break at 06:20 Louise reported that Toronto had rain and was cold.

Weather: Toronto 49F to 52F rain Louisville 69F to 80F cloudy

NYTX: David took three minutes and 32 seconds to do the Saturday big one. Louise cracked it in two minutes 32 seconds.

About 08:00 the BBC signal from PBS Buffalo faded so we switched to CFTO out of Toronto. The video feed was the same, only the commentary varied.

When Meghan Markle married Prince Harry they became the Duke and Duchess of Sussex.

We watched until 08:20 when the horse-drawn landau transported Meghan and Harry through the streets of Windsor.

We then uploaded all the photos we had taken of the ceremony shooting the LCD screen. We picked a couple for the album.

Louise thought Amal and George Clooney could've stolen the show. What a handsome couple they are! The fashion parade of celebrities was lots of fun for Louise. The church was decorated in the best tradition of English springtime gardens: all fresh green and white flowers. The bride was dressed in a gorgeously simple silk dress. Her look was purely simple in that her makeup did not appear to exist. Louise looked at every possible moment of the telecast and found no women dressed in any way like any others, very amazing.

David went down into the basement to try to get rid of decades-old indispensable junk. It is quite incredible how long it is taking to clear things away.

By noon the strain of Royal watching and junk chucking was beginning to tell.

But, while David is no Royalist, believing that the Governor-General is all Canada needs, it was nice to see the Commonwealth come together in a “feeling good” day for Harry and Meghan.

The media had been tightly controlled: gone were the paparazzi sticking their long lenses and microphones in everybody's faces. Of course it was an artificial “make believe” story where incredible wealth pretended to be the people's norm.

For lunch, Louise had some chicken salad while David was treated to Montreal Smoked Meat.

We went for a neighbourhood walk about 15:00 hrs, even though there was still a sprinkle of rain. After that we read our books and had a conversation in our favourite living room.

Supper was a simple Thai shrimp dish. After today's Royal Wedding at Windsor, what could “Bailey and Scott” possibly do to top that? David fell asleep so he never found out, but Louise persisted through three episodes till the end of Season 4. Gill was able to retire: Janet has a new romantic interest, and Rachel might assume the SIO position and find her old romance in revival.

Sunday May 20th 2018

We got up late having had a long day on Saturday.

Weather: Toronto 58F to 63F cloud Louisville 68F to 90F part cloud
NYTX: Louise did it in one minute and 10 seconds. David gave up.

CBC: Stephen Fry “The British monarchy is a 'preposterous' concept, according to Fry, but he makes the case that it continues to survive because it plays a useful role to 'keep the politicians in place'. I'm an imperialist — in other words, not a rationalist. I think if it works, it's very foolish to get rid of it, even if it's unreasonable. He adds that countries like the U.S. could benefit from a similar arrangement, to temper the ambitions of elected politicians.”

Yesterday's pageantry causes one to realize the importance of ritual and romance in life. The crowds gathered around Windsor and the millions of viewers on television were treated to a restrained and controlled-to-the-nth-degree celebration of a version of the 'Green World' of ritual and romance. Such beauty and joyous celebration became for moments yesterday part of the mythos of everyday life, lifting everyday life to a higher level of participation, if a totally vicarious one. Irrational? Preposterous? But aren't we mortals more irrational and preposterous than not?!?!?

The NYT had an interesting piece about how the British monarchy has become a matriarchy. David and Louise felt that Queen Elizabeth looked grim throughout the wedding yesterday and can't help but wonder about that. Louise thinks there might be unpleasant, residual echoes of the Diana phenomenon. The media have not made many comparisons, but they are there to be made.

David continued his dumping program. The aim was to get an old PC running inadequate Windows XP cleaned up enough to recycle. He took out three hard drives with a huge amount of imagery and documents. The carcass will be recycled. The huge cathode ray tube monitor was very heavy compared to the modern LCD screens.

David finally had to admit that he was not going back to Antarctica and that he could donate his cold weather gear to charity.

Louise got into an artistic mood and spent some time in her studio pushing paint.

We had spring rolls for lunch.

In the afternoon the eaves trough cleaning guy showed up and did the lawn mowing man. They were both taking advantage of the unforecast sunny weather.

While David held the fort, Louise walked Maisie in the neighbourhood.

We watched some WNED travel TV programming on Montreal. Then we saw rugged travel in Bolivia. David had visited La Paz Bolivia, coming in from Cusco, Peru, but had not done the more rugged venues in Bolivia as featured in the travel show.

Supper was a baked pork chop with baked sweet potato and a green balsamic salad with sliced strawberries and blueberries.

We were into Season 5 of “Bailey and Scott”. It covered some pretty grim material. The lightness has gone.