

## Monday May 28th 2018

It was foggy when we woke at 05:55 hrs. At weigh-in David had lost ten pounds since April 1<sup>st</sup>. This was incontrovertible truth that Louisville has heavier air than Toronto. Louise has lost zero pounds. It appears that her pounds are unduly attached to her.

Weather: Toronto 62F to 86F sun Louisville 70F to 80F T-storms and part cloud

The first heat event of the season has prompted Environment Canada to issue a special weather statement for most of southern Ontario. A warm and humid air mass is expected to move into Toronto and the GTA on Monday, pushing the daily maximum temperature into the low 30Cs.

NYTX: David one minute and 54 seconds Louise stalled and flamed out with only one letter being the cause of her insufficiency.

For the second time David was in short sleeves for the Dawn Patrol. There was a heady scent of lilac perfume in the air. The lilacs have been superb this year. Not only the lilacs, but everything else. The fiddle head ferns are displaying more vigorously than usual; all the bulbs, the same; and we won't be surprised if the peonies aren't more spectacular than ever.

After a light breakfast David went back to the Sistine Chapel to work with Michelangelo. They had a squabble over artistic interpretation. The little powder room project has taken on gigantic proportions in David's life. He has been challenged in these ways before, but never at this age. The thought that this what we used to call 'little remodel' could be done by others, by hiring it out, has now evaporated. Once again David has realized the stark reality that every little project imagined in tranquility looms large in stark reality. And that somehow the ball has landed solidly in his court.

After breakfast we made plans to visit No Frills and the LCBO. We did a lot of grocery shopping but we struck out at the LCBO. We were looking for boxes to pack stuff for Louisville – we learned that all the boxes get taken over the weekend – do not visit on Monday.

Back home, David got into his working outfit and continued to plaster and sand. Then he switched to vacuum cleaner to suck up the sanding dust.

At noon we broke for grilled cheese sandwiches with Moishe's coleslaw and dill pickles.

Then, the world-famous inferior decorating firm of D&L started putting the primer paint on the walls, and just about every other surface, of the Powder Room. It was right out of “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer”. Louise said earlier that she wanted to paint today. Well! Paint she did.

By 14:30 we had covered the walls with primer and were tired. Neither of us like painting of this sort. If this keeps up we are going to have to retire.

It was a scorching 82F by 15:00 so we did two things. First, we gave up any idea of an afternoon walk. Second, for the first time this year, we turned on the central air conditioning.

David settled in to read Patrick O'Brian's “The Yellow Admiral”, his 18th nautical novel about Captain

Aubrey and his physician friend Stephen Maturin. Louise had a snooze.

Supper was steak, sauteed mushrooms and onions, asparagus, a rice dish inspired by Louise's Indian acquaintance of lo! many years ago and broccoli.

On Netflix we watched the story of the backroom boys who ran the Apollo program. These very talented individuals pulled off some incredible feats, the most telling being the rescue of Apollo 13.

## **Tuesday May 29th 2018**

### **CAT Scan**

We trundled the old Powder Room toilet to the curb at first light. As we put out the Garbage and Green Kitchen Waste bins, Digby, the male Cairn Terrier, came by to inspect the toilet. We enjoyed a chat with him and his person. He is one fine-looking Cairn.

Weather: Toronto 72F to 76F sunny    Louisville 73F to 86F cloudy  
NYTX: David two minutes and 11 seconds. Louise one minute 47 seconds.

Louise took Maisie and David for a stroll and met up with Bowser, the Leonberger. Bowser's person was grouching about an unpleasant encounter with a neighbour. Bowser is a gentle giant, but man-oh-man is he giant! People who don't know, dislike, or are frightened of dogs do not want to encounter, on any terms, such dogs living across the street from them.

Back home, Louise had cold cereal with frozen blueberries for breakfast, but David had to fast. We set the thermostat on air conditioning as we were too late the day before.

Louise read an essay in the NYT that caused her to think again about the NASA men from 40 or so years ago who accomplished incredibly demanding work and met challenges never met before by human beings and their humble backgrounds and educations. The NYT piece by David Brooks called into question today's change of standards and ways of educating the chosen people of the 2000-something Meritocracy. Brooks determines finally that the meritocracy is missing many needs of our society, mainly the need for an ethos of working for a higher good in civil awareness. One of the men in last night's NASA film summed up his realization of their brilliance saying that what they were able to do made what they did an accomplishment as a sum much greater than its parts. Perhaps a parallel thought? Or a Contrast? Or the more things change, the more they stay the same? Ca plus change . . .

The City garbage truck took the toilet at 08:30 – amazing. David had visions of the old throne sitting there for weeks.

At 10:25 we drove to the Diagnostic Imaging Centre of Scarborough General Hospital at 3030 Birchmount. David had a appointment at 11:45 to determine whether his gall bladder needed to be removed.

We were 15 minutes early for registration. However, like just about everything these days, there were delays. At one point the PA announced a “Code Blue” in room 1234. Code blue: An emergency situation announced in a hospital or institution in which a patient is in cardiopulmonary arrest.

David finally got into the CT Scan about an hour later than forecast. He felt like he was being posted through a doughnut hole as the machine sliced and diced him. As the technician explained, a CT scan, also known as computed tomography scan, makes use of computer-processed combinations of many X-ray measurements taken from different angles to produce cross-sectional (tomographic) images (virtual "slices") of specific areas of a scanned object, allowing the user to see inside the object without cutting. All the technician would say was that he had seen the gallstones.

As we left the hospital there were several police cars parked at odd angles suggesting they had arrived in a hurry and simply abandoned the vehicles. We wondered whether the Code Blue announcement and the apparently hastily abandoned police cars might be connected.

David was quite hungry by the time the procedure was finished as he had not been allowed to eat anything since supper on the evening before.

While procedures under the Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan are free, other than the enormous slice paid through taxes, the parking cost \$16 – think of it as a co-pay, Louise opined.

On the way home we stopped into Home Depot to pick up some more painting supplies. David had not previously known the wonder of Purdy brushes.

For lunch we had the other half of the panini from the day before.

About 16:00 a lovely lady with a Cuban accent dropped by to talk to Louise about house cleaning services.

A bit later we went out on the sunlit back lawn to take a photo of Louise with her lilac. Then we took Maisie for a short walk in a shaded area.

CBC: Authorities say a Tesla sedan in autopilot mode crashed into a parked police cruiser in Southern California.

We cooked up Louise's recipe for spaghetti sauce. David was C-in-C (chopper in chief).

Later we turned to Netflix to start *How I Met Your Mother* an American sitcom that originally aired on CBS from September 19, 2005, to March 31, 2014. The series follows the main character, Ted Mosby, and his group of friends in New York City's Manhattan.

### **Wednesday May 30th 2018**

We were a bit slow getting started.

Weather: Toronto 62F to 76F mostly sun Louisville 77F to 80 F cloudy

NYTX: There were technical difficulties. David got it, but he kept getting dumped so a proper time could not be recorded. Louise flamed out again!

As we stepped out for the Maisie Meander a huge sewer sucker roared down to the south end of our street. It then proceeded northwards stopping at each street drain and making a sucking, howling sound

– most annoying.

Two helicopters were doing an area search. We wondered if yesterdays' police cars and the helicopters were tied together. If we were writers, we could come up with a great story connecting these events.

Maisie found a doll that a kid had thrown out of a pram. She thought it was a new toy and carried it for a few hundred yards before abandoning her baby. Probably it needed a diaper change.

Louise prepared fried eggs in a nest for breakfast, with a side of sliced strawberries and thawing blueberries.

BBC: ABC TV network cancelled comedian Roseanne Barr's sitcom after she posted a racist tweet likening an African-American former Obama aide to an ape. [Unfortunately, the 'culture' behind that tweet is still very much alive in the US]

David got out the silver and polished it. It is quite silly the way we hide away our best stuff and only use it on special occasions. Given our age, every day is a day to celebrate.

David continued trying to find “goodies” to donate to Cerebral Palsy.

We had a special guest for lunch today. Louise tried out her PCBs, which were a success.

In mid-afternoon we did a walk with Maisie, but it was a bit too warm.

After the rather large lunch, we really did not need any more food. Instead, we both had a long snooze.

We watched several episodes of “How I Met Your Mother” (HIMYM). It is harmless drivel that gets one ready for bed. David had been trying to pick out the Canadian in the series. It turned out to be Cobie Smulders from Vancouver, British Columbia. Cobie has yet to utter any distinguishing Canadianism.

### **Thursday May 31st 2018**

At dawn it was heavily overcast. We saw a forecast of rain starting at 07:00 hrs. So, we grabbed a big golf umbrella and went out the door at 06:20 hrs. As it was cool, Maisie put the pedal to the metal and charged around the circuit. This gave Louise a distinct advantage as she was being towed by a sled dog. David was lumbered with the heavy bumper chute just to slow him down. We got home without getting wet.

Weather: Toronto 69F to 79F showers, T-storms    Louisville 73F to 89F T-storms.

NYTX: David cracked it in one minute 18 seconds    Louise was faster at one minute 14 seconds

Louise prepared Eggs Kejriwal for breakfast – a spicy start to the day. The 07:00 rain started at 08:30 hrs. It was a gentle, warm rain – just what we needed to refresh the plants in Louise's Corner.

The Ontario election is one week hence. Fifty-two per cent of voters who indicated they were voting for the NDP said they were doing so not in support of the party and its ideas, but because they disliked

the other choices "even more." Forty-nine per cent of PC voters and 42 per cent of Liberal voters had a similar response.

Louise was happy to see the Part II article that she was waiting for in her NYT online. It is about a cold case murder for which it is thought that an innocent man has been imprisoned for forty years. Because scientific ways of assessing forensic evidence have changed radically over these years and because a few people have never been satisfied with the way the case was handled, there is serious inquiry yet to be done. Part II goes into the lack of scientific investigation, but ends again without exonerating the prisoner who is now 77 years old.

While Louise got caught up on the NY Times, David went down to the basement Powder/Sauna Room. First he used duct tape to put an old shower curtain up against the tile wall to keep debris from falling into the vanity sink.

He had found a square yard of plaster board in the furnace room, leftover from the computer room he had built in the basement about 28 years ago: that would form the basis of the ceiling repair. Using his newly acquired jab saw, he ripped out the old ceiling plaster board to square things off and to expose enough ceiling joist to nail up the new board. It was very tiring as all the work had to be done over the head.

At one point the old ceiling board had sagged due to the water it absorbed. David remembered an old Egyptian Engineering trick. He had an eight wooden board left over from a framed door installation. He wedged the board up against the sagging ceiling board and started pounding the bottom end on the floor until the ceiling board lifted. He then secured the elevated mass using drywall screws.

By then the worst part of the job was over and it was time to clean away the debris before it got tracked all over the house. This is probably the biggest takeaway from the 1977-78 Ottawa renovation. Always clean up as soon as practicable.

By 12:30 all the cavities in the ceiling of the basement powder room had been filled using plaster board or the same thickness sheet foam. The latter was much easier to shape around curved shapes.

In the meantime, Louise had been up in her atelier straightening out the female cardinal, whose comb refused to come out correctly. While that paint was drying, Louise was sketching a new canvas.

BBC: The US is to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from allies in Europe and North America. The US said a 25% tax on steel and 10% tax on aluminum from the EU, Mexico and Canada will start at midnight on May 31st. The move immediately triggered vows of retaliation from Mexico and the EU, which called the tariffs "protectionism, pure and simple".

CBC: Canada is countering the United States' move to slap punishing tariffs on steel and aluminum imports by imposing dollar-for-dollar tariffs of its own on everything from steel products to maple syrup.

Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland said Canada is hitting back with duties of up to \$16.6 billion on some steel and aluminum products and other goods from the U.S. — including beer kegs,

whisky, toilet paper and "hair lacquers."

She and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made the announcement at a press conference hours after U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross confirmed the United States is following through on its threat to impose tariffs of 25 per cent on imported steel and 10 per cent on imported aluminum, citing national security interests.

In the afternoon a professional painter came over to apply the colour coat in the Powder Room. A second coat was applied on the base boards behind the toilet so that the new toilet could be installed on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Meanwhile David's yard was cut and trimmed to a fare-thee-well! It looks marvellous now! The little new bed is settled and appears to fit in its place as if meant to be.

Meanwhile, David investigated the technique of plastering a ceiling on the Web. He found the gypsum he needed at Home Depot. Key was the discovery of the big wide steel trowel he had last used in the down stairs computer room. David was now confident that the downstairs powder room/sauna would be completed by the weekend. [Structurally that was correct – but it took until the middle of the next week until the cosmetics were completed.]

BBC: Campaigners have renewed calls for a dedicated medal to be awarded to Bomber Command veterans. Almost half of the 125,000 personnel serving with Bomber Command lost their lives in World War Two. Those losses included over 10,000 Canadians.

For supper Louise prepared coconut shrimp with rice cooked in coconut milk with almond nuts.

After supper David glued in the critical tile to cover the water pipe that had burst in the basement powder/sauna room. Concurrently, Louise took Maisie for a short walk as it was still too warm.

Of course we went back for more HIMYM. It is mindless, but harmless.

### **Friday June 1st 2018**

David was awake at 04:00 going over the work that still needed to be done. It would appear that David's brain was stuck in Reno Mode.

He also emptied more extraneous travel bags from the travel closet. He had always searched for the best take-on bag and never found it. The excess will go to Cerebral Palsy.

Weather: Toronto 66F to 83F mostly cloud    Louisville 68F to 86F showers & cloud

At 05:45 David took up a freshly brewed cup of coffee to his Sleeping Beauty.

We went out for a walk at 06:20 and, contrary to expectations, it was quite sunny. We got some photos of various types of iris that had just emerged along with cultivated columbine.

After a breakfast of cold cereal and sliced strawberries, the weather clagged in and became gloomy.

The morning project was to install the new toilet in the main floor powder room. David picked up one point in the instructions that he had missed before. Once the new toilet was seated on the wax doughnut sealing it to the sewer pipe, the bowl of the toilet needed to be filled with water to provide a seal against sewer gas. He had a bucket of water standing by for just that purpose.

However, when the wax ring was in place David lifted the toilet onto the bolts protruding from the floor, only to find the bolts were too short. We looked everywhere for the old bolts – when the man who looks after the house arrived, the bolts were just where he had left them – under the vanity.

Bolts in place, and using a double wax doughnut, the bowl was lowered and the nuts tightened down carefully. Then the tank had to be pre-bolted and that sub-assembly dropped onto the bowl. Louise had to help David with a flashlight it was impossible to see the opening. Once in place the water supply was the next obstacle. David got down under the bowl and the tank and it took great effort to force the flexible water pipe to bend as required. Finally, it was in place and then David needed Louise's assistance to extricate himself. The tank top came next – dead easy – finally, the lid was simplicity itself to put on and it had a neat feature that allows the whole top to be slid off for cleaning.

[Note: This is the last toilet that David is ever going to install.]

Louise came up with a simple tuna salad for lunch. Matched with ginger ale, it was a perfect light repast.

Louise had an appointment with her Hair Twister in Pickering at 13:30 hrs. When David dropped her off he went on to the Pickering Home Depot for some “Man Time”. The store layout was quite different from the Home Depot he frequents in Scarborough. He finally found the spackling and the white ceiling vent he needed to continue his work on the basement powder/sauna room. He wanted to stay longer but mad fork lifts operators with piercing reverse warning noises drove him away.

[Note: The white ceiling vent has no purpose other than to allow warm air into the cavity where the copper pipe froze last winter.]

David picked up Louise at 15:00 hrs. We drove over to Ashley's to find a mirror for the newly remodelled powder room. No such luck.

Back home Louise took Maisie for a short walk in steamy 81F weather. As she stepped out into the front garden, there was Peter Rabbit munching away. Caught in the act, he looked as guilty as a Kentish lad caught scrumping apples.

Then we both turned to our books – both British naval themes. Louise was reading about Captain Bligh and The Bounty, while David was still with Captain Aubrey blockading the Napoleonic domain.

It was not long before we both ran out of gas and snoozed.

Supper was warmed up spaghetti and a fresh green salad.

We needed HIMYM as a soporific. But, it was losing its appeal

## Saturday June 2nd 2018

David was awake by 04:00 but resisted the temptation to rehearse plastering the downstairs powder/sauna room ceiling. By 05:00 David was wide-awake and all he could think of was how he was going to avoid making a mess in the basement. He concluded that he should wear a shower cap and that the solution was to dump small patties of mud onto the centre of the wide trowel and ease that up onto the ceiling.

David went down to make coffee at about 05:30 hrs.

Weather: Toronto 60F to 68F cloudy – 73% humidity Louisville 70F to 88F mostly cloud - 98% humidity – ugh!

CBC: Following Trump's March announcement, the base price of aluminum on the London Metals Exchange, which had been trending downward, suddenly shot up 30 cents from 90 cents per pound to \$1.20, and remained as much as 15 cents higher in the months that followed. It rose again on Thursday's news that allies' tariff exemptions would end.

"Trump wrote a cheque for \$600 million to Canadian aluminum producers," said Jorge Vasquez of Harbor Aluminum in Austin, Tex., who has served as an adviser to both the U.S. International Trade Commission and the Canadian Trade Tribunal.

In effect, Trump's actions transferred more than half a billion dollars from the U.S. economy to Canada's since March.

[In Texas they call it “Shooting Yourself in the Foot”]

We were out the door at 06:25 for a cool but brisk walk. Actually, it was very much stop and go as Maisie was in a sniffing mood. We saw two rabbits along the way – they just looked at us with idle curiosity. We were back home by 07:00 feeling like we had enjoyed a good workout.

We decided on waffles for breakfast. The Commander-in-Chief of Maple Syrup warmed up a batch in the microwave.

Just before breakfast David trundled a spare bookcase to the curb. It weighed a ton being solid wood.

Wikipedia: The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II as sovereign of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon took place on 2 June 1953, at Westminster Abbey. [David's mother took him by train to London to watch the coronation parade. They found a spot at Hyde Park Corner – it was the first time David had seen Mounties when the RCMP mounted contingent rode past.] David still has the 1953 commemorative mug given to all school children by the Kent County Council.

It being Saturday, the bed was stripped and the first batch of laundry started

The first step in the basement project was to spread the drop sheet (aka old shower curtain) over the sink and floor. Then using a combination of power drill and stab wallboard saw, David followed the template/outline of the heating vent that he had glued to the roughed-in ceiling. After cleaning up the

debris, he got ready for “mudding”.

When David opened the half gallon tub of plaster he got a surprise – it was pink and he was expecting white. Then he remembered a small project at Louise's house where the Pink Panther first made its appearance. He hoped it would turn white as it cured - it did.

After about an hour, working over his head, his upper body was aching. So, everything was closed up while he had a tea break. By now he had found yet another job he never wanted: a plasterer-- and hopes never to do again.

After another 45 minute hour session, without touching a drop, David was totally plastered. Doing a ceiling is like standing under a lamp standard where all the seagulls line up to relieve themselves - ( they don't call it the limelight for nothing).

The next step was to wait – the thing that David does not do very well. Once the base layer had thoroughly dried out, David intended to add a bit of water to the remaining pink goo and then trowel on a final thin top coat that would be easier to draw horizontally to achieve a finished look.

For lunch Louise had leftover spaghetti and salad, while David had Montreal Smoked Meat on a toasted hollowed out Costco bun with Moishe's coleslaw and a pickle.

Louise was so into her book on Captains Cook and Bligh that it was hard to get her attention. Louise owned a copy of this book , but somehow misplaced or mis-loaned it. The book is written by Caroline Alexander, whose mother was colleague with Louise lo those many years ago and briefly at Florida State University. Caroline was a classics major at FSU at that time. She was selected to be a Rhodes Scholar in the late 70s.

Louise lost track of that part of her life until sometime in the early 80s, while living in a far outpost of Eastern North Carolina she found Caroline again. One afternoon The New Yorker was delivered, and as she was wont to do, Louise began her customary reading, cover-to-cover. As was often the case, certain articles had no appeal on the surface, but Louise had learned that often these articles proved to be fascinating. In this case, the article was about Burma, that is a writer travelling in Burma for the purpose of writing this piece. After three or four paragraphs, Louise was hooked and quickly looked at the byline, only to see that it was Caroline Alexander!

Since that time, this brilliant and enterprising woman has made her way as a writer of serious nonfiction dealing with widely diverse subject matter. The Bounty is the story of the aftermath of the famous mutiny, how the mutineers were brought to trial and how history has kept this story alive.

Bowing to the need for rest, David got back to Captain Aubrey.

The afternoon view from the Family Room out into the ravine was wonderful. The greenery was lush and soothing. With 64F and a gentle breeze, it was all very nice. In fact, better than being at a summer cottage. Much better!

David happened to notice that the bungee cord holding down the deck awning was frayed. He went out onto the deck to tighten up the cord and it came apart in his hands. Remembering a neck strap from

an old radio control transmitter, it was hooked up in place of the bungee. Perfect.

Mid-afternoon we went for a brisk walk. It was cool, but lovely.

Dinner was a pork chop topped with fresh green beans cooked in a sauce made of shallots, cream, and dry mustard and a baked sweet potato.

We tried to find “The Americans” on Netflix – it must be only in the US. Then we watched “Turn” for a bit – about spying during the Revolutionary War – too bloody—the violence somehow made the telling totally soporific. Louise shuts her eyes at times so that she won't see the blood and guts, but in cases like this, she falls asleep at the moment her eyelids drop. We settled for a movie with Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin - “It's Complicated”. That was a good one featuring a gorgeous house and garden in the country near Santa Barbara, California.

### **Sunday June 3rd 2018**

We did not get up until 06:30 and David slept past 04:00 – must be out of Reno Mode.

We went walking at 07:00 and it was cool with a stiff breeze. Fortunately, we had our light jackets. In the ravine the phlox were blooming and a bit later we saw the Beauty Bush. So, we have marked the start of June as the real start of summer – regardless of what the calendar says.

Weather: Toronto 58F to 63F rain Louisville 73F to 82F mostly cloud  
NYTX: Louise got it in 48 seconds. David conceded defeat.

After a simple breakfast, we started working on the inside of the house. David took on the upstairs vacuuming while Louise became a window washer. The second day of laundry was underway as concurrent activity.

By mid-morning we were both aching and broke for tea and coffee. The house is really looking and smelling a lot fresher since the major declutter campaign was launched.

CBC: Facebook wants its users to send them their naked photos. The social network is rolling out the measure to crack down on revenge porn, the non-consensual sharing of explicit images. The catch is you need to share those photos with the company first. [One more reason to never go anywhere near social media.]

Louise opened her Beauty Salon and David's much of David's hair went into the bathtub.

We had spring rolls for lunch.

We were taking the day off so we went back to our books until the mid-afternoon walk. The shies were threatening so we simply walked to the south end of our street. We stopped to chat with a neighbour. A house that had been rented to a bunch of construction workers was ready for demolition in a few days. That is one way to get rid of undesirables.

No sooner had we got home than it started raining – timing is everything.

For supper Louise served up Chicken Marsala and a salad.

Netflix was not even worth reporting.