



# SARASOTA BAY CLUB'S **SCOOP**

May June 2024

News of the Residents - By the Residents - For the Residents

## SBC is Off to the Races



**Best Dressed Man**  
**Congratulations Burt Herman**

**Best Dressed Couple**  
**Congratulations John & Mary**  
**Deckro**





**Top Left: Best Dressed Woman: Darby Adair;**  
**Top Right: Best Dressed Woman: Sandra Burkin**  
**Bottom Picture: Mary Beth Goldbold, Laurel Cohen, and Funniest Hat: Gerry Swormstedt**  
**Not Shown: Most Creative Hat: Lois Geller and Best Overall Hat: Fiona Lohrisch**





## The Cat That Kept Going Home

By: Carol DeChant, Unit 1120S

Stripey kept vanishing after we moved. Our former neighbor Mrs. Billings would call Momma to say, “She’s back,” often before we even noticed the cat was gone. It was difficult enough for our family to find each other in the new five-bedroom house, amid all those high-ceiling rooms with their massive sliding pocket doors.

How does she find her way back to the old house? the adults kept saying. Yet even at age nine, something in me sympathized with the cat’s need to keep padding all the way back, only to yowl when she found strangers in our old bungalow.

There was plenty for a cat—or a child—to explore in the new neighborhood. Ours was one of only three houses high up in the center of Thompson Bend over the Des Moines River. The O’Dea brothers and wives had lived in the two houses to the north forever. At the south end, a huge gully had housed shacks for ice storage since the turn of the century. Now my sisters and I grabbed tree branches and swung our way down into the woodsy ravine, crunching acorns under our shoes as we ran to the river, an adventure all the more enticing because it was forbidden.

I wandered through our new house, awed by stained-glass windows that ascended the wall by the carved cherry staircase. Forty years earlier the Gordon girl had been married here; her groom had worn his World War 1 Army uniform. “Can’t you just see a bride coming down this stairway?” Momma would say, “They don’t make houses like this any more.”

Kathleen and I continued to share a bedroom because we were afraid of the dark in the new house. Even in our old tiny bungalow, nighttime shrieks from the alley spooked us, though we knew they were just tomcats. Now, alien nocturnal creatures squeaked and hooted from the gully—could they come in our window? The house itself shuddered at night—were those groaning and creaking sounds monsters creeping up the staircase?

We didn’t envy Harriett for now getting her own bedroom, even if it had the most spectacular view, with a window even in its closet. As if a kid who still slept in a crib could appreciate that. Such a baby—she whined every morning that butterflies bothered her at night. Momma kept telling her it was only a dream.

Did fear creep into that house right at the beginning? Or did it start when Momma discovered that bats were coming down the bedroom fireplace after dark—flapping into Harriett’s crib?

In our old neighborhood, no one locked houses or cars. Even the tramps who carved phone poles to mark the homes that gave food were not considered dangerous, just hungry. Our new next-door neighbor, Mr. O’Dea, told Dad he slept with a gun under his pillow, which made us as afraid of him as of the robbers he feared. A caretaker for the older O’Dea brother’s wife told Momma she found a lump in the pocket when she was ironing old Mrs. O’Dea’s dress. She was horrified to discover it was a dead canary. Did the old lady kill it or find it dead before stuffing it in her pocket? Within a year, the elder brother climbed the dome inside of the Iowa State Capitol and jumped to his death. Such terrible things never happened back on East Twelfth Street. Can a house be a home when you don’t feel safe in it?

We were different, too, in the big new house. Dad was spending more time at work. Depression descended upon Momma along with menopause. We girls tiptoed around the house, trying not to disturb her and unearth other troubles. Dad bought a rifle and mounted it on the wall over the fireplace, the first real gun we’d ever seen. Was he becoming like the O’Dea brothers? Can houses remodel people?

Mrs. Billing would make cinnamon rolls to celebrate my coming back to visit. From her warm, yeasty smelling kitchen, I could look out the window to her rock garden where Stripey had her kitchens. Outside was the

## The Cat Who Kept Going Home Continued

sidewalk where Dad taught me to ride a two-wheeled bike, to the corner where Sarah Nass told Kathleen and me the truth about Santa Claus. In the new neighborhood, we were the only kids. No one shouted “Oly, oly oxen free” or “Trick or treat.” No kick-the-can or lemonade stands or Red Rover.

In a few years Kathleen and I became teenagers who met our friends on the phone and no longer cared about such childish things. When Mrs. Billings called, I didn’t want to visit an old lady who didn’t even have a TV set. The “new” house had become home.

The Swansons bought the house from our family in 1962, and she lived in it until she was moving to a retirement community. She had three grown daughters, so had understood our need to visit when in Des Moines with spouses and children:

“Kathleen and I shared this room, with a radio between our twin beds.”

“This was Harriett’s room where the bats came in.”

“Dad paneled this basement room so we could have high school friends over to dance.”

“This is where I’m from.”

Like Stripey, I’ve padded back to the old home, the birthplace of so many stories—on foot or in memory. The old neighborhood has changed and so have I. But high up there on Thompson’s Bend, it offers a clear vista where I’ve been and where I am seventy some years later, at Sarasota Bay Club. On a clear day I might even see places I hope to get to, and a bit of that old fear of change is triggered, along with the hope that if I fall, I’ll land on my feet.



### HARRY BELEFONTE

By: Carol B. Green, Unit 321

The Harry Belafonte Show here at Sarasota Bay Club featuring Michael Mendez of the Black Theatre brought back a flood of memories. In 1953, there was a show on Broadway “John Murray Anderson’s Almanac. It was a musical review starring Billy DeWolfe and Hermione Gingold. My grandmother took me to the show and I loved it. It was the first time I saw and heard Harry Belafonte. He came on stage singing two songs that I remember. They were “Hold ‘Em Joe” and “Mark Twain.” I was a fan for life.

The next time I saw him was a memorable (and educational) performance at the Forest Hills Tennis Stadium. He made it clear that although he could perform there, he could not play tennis at the stadium because he was black. He picked up a tennis racket and pretended to be playing tennis and discussed the racism he and others were experiencing. He also introduced South African performer Miriam Makeba. She was a South African singer, songwriter, actress, and civil rights activist. She was perceived to be a threat to the South African government and was the first South African performer to be exiled.

I followed him as he succeeded in movies and music. I went to his shows whenever I could. The last time I saw him perform was in Denver at the Paramount Theatre in 1978. He was angry at the racism he saw Blacks experiencing. He talked about it during the show. Did it hurt the performance.? YES! Could I blame him? NO!

He was a master entertainer and I remained a fan. I loved the Michael Mendez show, but he wasn’t Belafonte. Belafonte was magical.

# No Goodbye's Just Until We Meet Again

By: Bib Grossman, Unit 324S

It could all go back to my earliest childhood. I've had a hard time "letting go". I hate "goodbyes" of any kind. People, and even things that I cherish become lifetime commitments. I don't mean that I love everything and everyone in my life but once it has become a part of my world, I seem to get stuck. I suppose it accounts for a lot of my hangups - my interest in family history, loving old pictures and family stories, my near obsession with family relationships and my not being able to part with old toys and old memories. The constant holding on, saving, reviving the past and yes, mourning past relationships, and even lost things. I thought as I matured and had more experience, I would learn to better deal with this, but as I age it only seems to grow worse. Each time we have moved we have had the inevitable struggle to "get rid of the junk". Junk being, of course, all my precious collections and memorabilia and "not so artifacts". Life would be so much simpler, if less interesting, if I could just let go.

But death, death is ever so much tougher. They say you live on as long as you live in someone's memory. By this measure, I am probably responsible for keeping a whole cemetery full alive. Not only do I remember our relationship and caring (or not caring) for each other, but I can hear their voices and the sound of their laughter. For some, I know, it's time to let them go and let them rest in peace. I keep working on it.

Now as I reach the final stage of life, I realize that this life-long pattern has not changed. I have carried my childhood, my girlhood, and all the rest of it right along with me. At age 98, I am still trying to organize, eliminate and bury the junk. Not making too much progress. In fact, as people around me depart this earth, I find myself rescuing some of their treasures to hold on to. One more treasure and reminder of our time together. I promise myself to STOP!

**I guess it is about time to face reality and learn to say goodbye and thanks for the memories.**

## What Do I want from Life?

By: Helen Shaw, Unit 307N

What is it I want from life?

Am I am the center or at the outer edges

If at the center

Does that mean I control all strife

Decide who I am and what I will be

Master of my own universe

Going forth with strength

Going forth with purpose

Or if I am at the outer edges

Do I only fold into myself

Close my eyes, squeeze into a ball

And just bounce from place to place

No direction

Aimlessly drifting

Saying, what will be, will be.

What is it I want from life?

To leave a footprint strong

That will not be washed out by the tide

Or to be a whispery presence

Without substance

Is it better to be remembered

Or never thought of at all

And in the end

Does it matter

What I want from life.



## In Memory of Ilse Hecht.....

By: Burt Herman, Unit 809N

March 11, 1938, German troops invade Austria and came to Ilse's door and the Weitzman's felt compelled to leave. During World War II, thousands of Jews and others, found refuge in Albania, Europe's only Muslim country where BESA, an ancient honor code, saw all as guests. Ilse and her family were among them while waiting for papers for the U.S.

On March 6, 2024, I had the privilege of interviewing Ilse at an SBC Wednesday evening social. How fortunate it took place when it did, as Ilse passed away two months later on May 8<sup>th</sup>.

Regardless of one's understanding of the overall tragedy of World War II, it's personal accounts like Ilse's, that humanize the facts.

How fortunate we were to have Ilse as our neighbor for many years. May her memory be a blessing.

A year ago, the Albanian government unveiled plans to establish the "Besa Museum" in the capital Tirana, to honor Albanians who sheltered and saved Jews during WWII and to celebrate Jewish life in the once-isolated Balkan state. "Besa", the Albanian word meaning "promise" or "trust", and refers to a traditional concept of giving promise to entrust or protect something or someone...a code of honor dating back centuries. This simple idea saved an estimated 1,800 lives during the Holocaust. We learned during Ilse's presentation that Besa was a blessing for her and her family during WWII.



## ILSE

By: Bib Grossman

Another day has passed since you left us—a day of tearing—and a day of tearing. So many memories of good times and bad.

Your funny stories about the King of Albania softened your memories of the Holocaust you lived through.

You lived through the horror of war, but turned those nightmares into the beauty of your art and the fullness of your heart.

You surrounded yourself with things of beauty as if to deny the past. The view out your window, the works of artists, both visual and written—hundreds of well-loved books, lovely jewelry, lovingly chosen and always flowering orchids.

Though your disabilities limited your movement, your mind and memories never failed you—what a blessing not only to you but to those around you.

I became your confidant—you became my friend and between us we got through our days of old age with some grace and a laugh or two. My days will be lonelier. I miss you already while you are onto the next adventure. Hopefully pain free and at peace. Your Loving Friend, Bib.

# AGAINST ALL ODDS

## Against All Odds

By: Burt Herman, Unit 809N

At a recent SILL lecture, General Honore suggested that it was an accident if you were born in America. It got me thinking that it was an accident if you were born anywhere. That it was against all odds.

So how did we get here?

Earth had to form from the sun's protoplanetary disc about five billion years ago. Then we had to cool down.

As for where we're going, the afterlife is why for millennia, prophets, writers, poets and theologians conjured up visions of a land of pleasure and plenty waiting for us when the inevitable happens...when the lights go out.

So, am I supposed to imagine the amorphous, abstract concept that when immortality on earth doesn't work out, paradise is awaiting?

But before I can think in these terms, how was it possible that I could come to be in the first place? To be one of about 7.3 billion humans.

The odds of my becoming me were incalculable.

Just imagine the odds of my mother and father meeting and dating and staying together long enough to have me. Just those odds alone were off the charts.

But before that could take place, their forebears had to avoid all the diseases, wars and natural disasters that plagued humankind over the eons.

Fair to say that the odds of me being me, and not a different person are incalculable.

These incredible odds had to happen over and over, and over again...over every generation...all the way back to the beginning of life on planet earth...all the way back to single cell organisms.

So here's the gist of my essay and why it is so significant.

The odds of me being here with you, are estimated by my math whiz grandson to be about 500 quadrillion to one.

So you gotta admit, it's something to consider when deciding if you like my essays.

After all, they are against all odds.

“ You only  
live once, but if  
you do it right,  
once is enough.  
~ Mae West ”



## A Spring Arrival in Colorado

A picture narrative by David Kotok, Unit 528S

Today we'll take a break from the turmoil in the world and describe a brief trip called "a spring arrival in Colorado". So, here are a few words and some photos I've taken to help tell the story.

I'll skip most of the Denver area except to say that it was good to have lunch and catch up with Mike Englund (Action Economics) in Boulder. We discussed our forthcoming book; Mike is a co-author. More about that in future missives as the book nears completion (finally). Stay tuned for The Fed and the Flu.



The journey really started in Salida. It's in Chaffee County (about 20,000 county wide population) and about 3 hours scenic drive from Denver, except it was cloudy, rainy, snowy, sleeting, and a traffic tie up on a country road. Salida is the county seat. It is famous for the Sangre de Cristo Mountains which Paul Simon sang about (1983) in "Hearts and Bones."

A sudden snowstorm hit. That made the drive to Summit County over Fremont Pass (11,319 ft.) and thorough Leadville treacherous. Leadville, CO is the highest incorporated city in America (10,192ft.).

So, an extra night in Salida offered this morning greeting in the Hampton Inn parking lot.



**Here's what the mountains and local black angus looked like two days before the storm.**



**Better late than not, we made it safely to Summit County at 9000 ft. and the blue river Valley. We had these views of snow capped mountains.**

The first trip wading into the Blue River was a delight. My guide Luke was enormously helpful as the river flow is up to 300 cubic feet per second (CFS) and rising as the snow melt runoff is beginning. For reference, a September rate is closer to 100-150 CFS.



**Luke and me with a cooperative rainbow and a friendly brown trout. In fly fishing lingo, I used a 4x tippet and a very small midge taken down a foot or two by a “copper John”. The fish ignored the copper John.**



**Back at the house we had some visitors. And our neighbor took us standing on the deck looking at them. Two young bulls with the beginning of the rack of horns. They were unafraid.**



9000 feet, snowcapped mountains (picture page 8), blues sky (some of the time) morning temp 25-35 or so. Afternoon 60. Sun strong and warm when it is shining. A million stars.

As the saying goes “The life is hard in the mountains.”

**Happy Spring!**

# Momma's Enchanted Supper

By: Carol DeChant, Unit 1120S

In 1953, Ezio Pinza was singing the love song “Some Enchanted Evening,” Kathleen and I were new to public school, and Momma decided to find a husband for our physical education teacher.

Miss Gertrude Thompson would be invited to our home where “across a crowded room”—in this case, across our dining-room table—she would see not one but two handsome strangers. Both men would adore her, as everyone did. She could have her pick.

Best of all, Kathleen and I would get to see it happen. We'd be the first to tell everyone at school that we'd been there., where Miss Thompson fell in love. At sixteen and fourteen, Kathleen and I were giddy. This was right out of the movies! Romance! Intrigue! The surprise of love!

The cast: our P.E. teacher, a high-spirited blond with dimples. All the girls wanted to be like this lively Swedish beauty, who'd returned to school in September with a summer tan and hair streaked from sunshine and chlorine. She was fun and funny, so different from the nuns who'd taught us before we went to Amos Hiatt Junior High. Except that she was also unmarried, which Momma would remedy.

The good-looking bachelors were George and Bill, men in their early thirties who rented rooms at our grandparents' home. Grandma qualified them—as only a landlady can—as hardworking, clean living, and well bred. The director of this romance, and hostess of the dinner party, said it was best not to inform the cast of the exact nature of the drama they would enact. Everyone would be too self-conscious, she reasoned.

Momma herself was nervous, as were all of us in on the secret. I don't recall the dialog that night, but Momma's habit of peppering everyone with food questions during a meal would no doubt have played out like a 33 record at 78 rpm.

“Is this gravy too salty?”

“Is the pot roast too stringy?”

Momma liked to call food by its brand name:

“Don't you want some of this Welch's grape jelly on your corn bread?”

“Would you like a dollop of Kraft Miracle Whip for your Jell-O?”

I imagine that my sisters and dad and I were silent throughout the meal and that the guests provided Momma with a reassuring chorus of “No, no it's delicious.” “So good.”

Not knowing the ways of public school it didn't occur to Kathleen or me to wonder if it was unusual for teachers to be invited to a student's home for supper. Nor did we wonder if Bill and George had speculated while driving over about why their landlady's daughter had extended a dinner invitation to her parents' roomers, but not to her parents.

We only knew that we were a small part of a grown-up plot, that this was how marriages happened. We understood that the real drama had nothing to do with the questions about whether we wanted Hershey's topping or Planters Peanuts or both on our Furnace (the odd name of our dairy) Ice Cream. We knew we were both audience and co-creators of a more exciting romantic mystery than any Hollywood had produced:

Would Miss Thompson pick Bill or George?

George was the lucky man. Two years after the dinner, he and my sister Kathleen became engaged; they married the same month she graduated from high school.

Our children loved this story: how all the adults were surprised by love even as they tried to engineer it. We tell them that the difference in age between George and Kathleen threw all of us off the track: When he was fighting at Utah Beach in World War II, she'd just entered kindergarten. Our children were surprised that there was a difference in their ages—after fifty years of married life, it has long since evaporated.



## MOMMA'S ENCHANTED SUPPER CONTINUED

Bill lived at Grandma's for several years, then eventually moved out to marry. We lost track of him. Ms. Thompson became Girls' Adviser and Assistant Principal before she retired. She died of cancer in 1990 at the age of seventy-three, beloved by generations of colleagues and students. She never married.



### Imagine the Joy

By: Norma Cohen, Unit 310N

Four great-grandkids; can you imagine the joy?  
The newest is a six-week old baby boy.

The feeling of holding an infant is like no other in the world  
It brings me back to the days of my own baby girls.

And in a blink, the years have flown  
Five grandchildren born and now completely grown.

Three of whom have children of their own  
A one year old girl, big smile on her face,  
She already knows she's the one to put these guys in their place.

Two sweet boys of three and four are playing with toy trucks all over the floor  
(I wonder what life holds for them,) these kids that I adore.

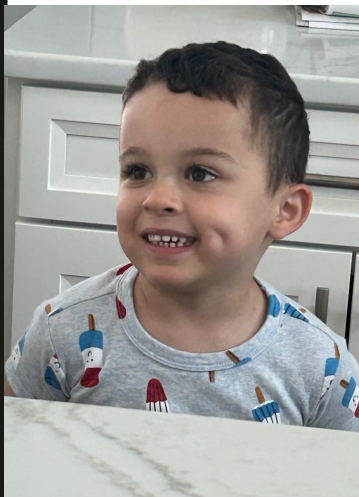
A growing baby boy swells the tummy of another  
My grandkids are prolific, making babies one after the other.

I'll be back in August to see baby number five  
And I'm so very grateful to be mobile and alive.

I will get together again with this very noisy crew  
And turn off my hearing aids when it starts to sound like a zoo.

But make no mistake, I love them all, even as toys around the room are flung  
To quote my clever mother, little kids are for the young!

**Pictures provided by proud Grandmother!!**



# 185 Years? And Counting?



Nancy Schlossberg and Richard Olin celebrated their birthdays at the Sarasota Art Museum . Nancy celebrated ninety-five years and Richard celebrated ninety. Family surprised them with purple hoodies noting the cause of celebration...a combined 185 years of Happy Birthdays.

## *A Poem in Honor of Nancy Schlossberg and Richard Olin, June 15, 2024*

By: Linda Albert, Unit 209

We've gathered together, all dressed up and fancy,  
To honor the birthdays of Richard and Nancy.

One hundred eighty-five years between them combined,  
As inspiring a couple as you could find.

They met as neighbors, part of the Ninth Floor North Gang;  
She the Transition expert of major fame,  
While he could fix everything and art was his game.

A gift of Epoxy from daughter Pam  
Opened inside Richard a creative dam.

With Nancy teaching him about liminal spaces,  
Richard's clever art was off to the races.

Andrea sent her dad home-cooked food, with plenty to share,  
Then if Nancy needed company to watch TV,  
Richard was there.

A friendship was blossoming; it was plain to see.  
The stars were aligned, it was meant to be.

Who cared he was addicted to cargo pants, and dis-paraged socks

While she wore the most stylish of trousers and beautiful frocks?

Cupid's arrow had aimed straight into their hearts.  
What a perfect transition; what glorious art!

They've weathered Covid, and pacemakers, and falls in the Bay;

They've shared weddings and births, memoirs, art sales, vacations,  
Deep conversations, and plays.

So, let's raise a glass, send our wishes in flight  
That they reap many more years of love and delight.





## Birthday Wishes

By: Bib Grossman, Unit 324S

The birthday for two, what could be sweeter.  
In these lovely surroundings, nothing could be neater.

The day started out stormy, but soon the sun broke through.  
So that it could be fine, for me and for you.

Now that we are all gathered, decked out in our best.  
To wish Nancy and Richard many more years of the best.

The best of what life after 60 has to offer –  
Good health, good appetite, good friends and pleasant dreams

Now that you've mastered growing older together, let's show off your  
skills

With travel and dining and good times with family and friends.

You're off to a good start, now show us the way  
to have fun on this journey and enjoy every day.

Know not every day is fun, we've all lived long enough to know,  
but it's how we've made the best of things and that is where you've shone.

So happy birthday, both of you and each of you, we love to see you shine.  
Much happiness in the years ahead.

We do look to you for leadership, so strike up the BAND!  
We'll all be close behind you. It's a brand new year starting right NOW.

So happy birthday Nancy and Richard.  
Hope we'll all be here to celebrate again with you next year.

**CHEERS** to our cutting-edge couple, Nancy and Richard. Living Apart Together.

Let's talk about Nancy.

As brilliant as she is beautiful,

Nancy has written numerous books on transition. If you're in trouble with your life and need some fresh direction, Nancy's your girl.

Now imagine living down the hall from Michelangelo or Picasso or wait! Richard Olin, the master of whimsy with his merry menagerie of quirky characters.

Blessings and love to this talented pair. Long may they create and share with us.

By: Lucia Blinn, Unit 912N

## A FEW WORDS ABOUT THRIFT

By: Margo Howard, Unit 901N

To be thrifty can imply different things. In the flattering sense it refers to someone who is wise with money. As a pejorative, it can be code for “tighter than a tick,” to use a wonderful old-timey expression. When an acknowledged rich man is thrifty, he is frugal. When a seeming bag lady dies with lots of bucks in the bank, she is nuts. One might say that booty is in the eye of the beholder.

The verdict of people who observe popular culture is that ostentation is back in style, having taken a powder in the 90's. But paradoxically, thrift is “in” again, too. Parents are interested anew in teaching children the value of money; newspapers and magazines run articles about how to do it. Consumers compare prices and specs to make sure they are getting the best deal. And sometimes concern with thrift is a tip-off that someone is really rich and the money is old. Funny thing, money. It is an aspect of life about which most people are a little neurotic, one way or the other. Money, by its very nature, lends itself (no pun intended) to people using it to act out. “Retail therapy,” for example, is a spending spree born of either unhappiness, boredom, disappointment, or mania (wild spending being one of the first signs, actually). Conversely, depriving oneself of something easily affordable is a kind of expiation. And of course socially ambitious people never wish to be seen as thrifty.

My late mother was a breathtaking example of someone in whom great extravagance and quirky parsimony could live very comfortably together. No stranger to acquiring things in multiples, she could not bear to discard a stamp that had somehow made it through the canceling process unscathed. (I must mention, here, that she was Ann Landers, pre-Internet, and got thousands of letters daily from readers of the 1900 papers that carried her column. And she wrote seven days a week.) She compulsively felt the need to salvage these negotiable instruments. Receiving thousands of letters a day certainly positioned her to act upon this impulse. My mother understood that her eccentric responses to money came from having been a Depression era kid. Many people from that period apparently shared her outlook. Even for those who went on to achieve material wealth, penny-pinching always found strange ways to come out.

But back to the stamps. Not to try to rescue them was, to my mother, wasteful. This led her to experiment with various techniques for separating stamp from envelope so that it could be reused ... with glue. (She preferred Elmer's.) As Mother wrote to me in a letter, she had discovered the secret: tea. Don't soak the stamp in water, she advised; use tea. For a while, the girls in her office were charged with liberating the eligible stamps *until* the bravest among them finally said, “Eppie, we're not doing this anymore. It is a federal offense.”

Everyone knows the old saying, “Money talks,” and the cost of a gift *always* has something to say. While we're advised not to look a gift horse in the mouth, nowhere is it written that we can't try to decipher what the horse is saying. When thrift is exercised in gift buying, it is so noted by the recipient. When EXTREME thrift is used, e.g., “regifting” (recycling a gift you received and didn't like/want/need) it is often regarded by the recipient as ... well, cheap. It is not so much that one man's meat is another man's poison as it is that one man's poison is another man's poison.

In the realm of gift-giving the degree of “thrift” -- or lack of it -- can say a lot. A present that appears lavish or generous can actually be a means of showing off; expiating guilt; or forcing the recipient to feel beholden. Or, the gift may be expensive but convey NO thought. (Think having a secretary make the selection.) And of course “thrift” can get one into trouble. I actually knew a man who gave his wife a galvanized trash can for Valentine's Day. In addition to this being a relatively inexpensive gift, it was one that could also be considered “useful,” ergo not wasteful, always a sign of the thrifty. The only thing I can think of that would have been worse is a bathroom scale.

One activity of the thrifty is comparison shopping. Apparently, I never properly understood this concept. Many years ago I spent the summer in Truro on Cape Cod. The fishmonger would appear every Saturday morning in the parking lot of the post office. The first time I went I bought lobsters (of course) and then bumped into a close friend who had a house there. I raved and raved about what a great buy the lobsters were.



## A FEW WORDS ABOUT THRIFT CONTINUED

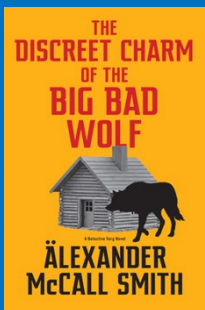
“Are you crazy?” he asked. “This guy ought to wear a mask and hold a gun.”

“But it’s so much cheaper than a restaurant!” I responded.

“Margo,” he said with resignation, “that is not how we comparison shop.”

And that was the way I learned I was thrift-impaired. Some people, however, are wonderful at it. In the old days they would drive around from store to store (or phone up) for the best price; but now the internet makes that a breeze. So possibly the issue is really time versus money.

I’ve decided that an affinity for -- or an aversion *to* thrift must be an innate thing. One can try a little harder to lean in one direction or the other, but in the end, when it comes to money, one’s approach is almost a personality quirk. So in sum, you can bet your bottom dollar that a penny saved is a penny earned and a fool and his money are soon parted, but to coin a phrase ... buck up.



### The Discreet Charm of the Big Bad Wolf

By: Mary McGrath, Unit 925S

Alexander McCall Smith is a prolific author with a variety of titles in different settings. This is the fourth in his Scandia series featuring detective Ulf Varg of the Department of Sensitive Crimes. An unusual crime comes before the department, a house owned by a pork producer has been stolen, taken right off its foundation. Ulf is also dealing with a new lady friend who suggests a cochlear implant for his dog Martin. Martin is deaf but does read lips and is a big part of the story. This is a fun light hearted read with some tongue in cheek scenarios that can offer a chuckle along with a cast of characters that add to the tale.

### TREE LEAVES

By: Mario Sparagana, Unit 801N



I have in my yard a leaf-laden stately oak.  
During Fall, its brilliant leaf colors do astound.  
In Spring its foliage serves as a glorious cloak.  
Winter is near so the leaves will soon be earthbound.

In late Winter only the skeletons of trees remain.  
Our oak loses its leaves in Winter weather.  
For this loss, the season’s cold is to blame.  
When a freeze arrives the tree leaves wither.

During Winter, I wait for Spring to arrive  
So that life can return to our tree once more  
The plant in the sun’s rays will thrive  
And recover the foliage that it once bore.

It is Spring, leaf-buds begin to sprout.  
It won’t be long before leaves appear.  
Normal leaflets will soon return, I have no doubt.  
Revival of our oak appears to be near.

It’s Summer now and our tree is in full flower.  
It roused from slumber and regained its leaf head-dress.

Now our tree is thirsty, it awaits a rain-shower.  
We will relish the oak until its leaves vanish.

## **The Black Skimmer Nesting Colony on Lido Beach, June 1, 2024.**

Deftly snapping fish from lakes, rivers and lagoons with their uniquely adapted bills, skimmers are highly appropriately named - they do, literally, skim the water surface as they hunt. There are only three species of skimmers in the world; however, the family is widely distributed. Primarily black and white with a brilliantly colored red bill, the Black Skimmer, of which there are three subspecies (or races) is found only in the New World. The North American species inhabits the ocean coasts; the two South American species are almost exclusively riverine.

The nesting colony of Black Skimmers on Lido Beach is going great guns! Yes, there are chicks! The skimmers have crowded by the hundreds into this nesting colony; it is a fantastic sight with all kinds of interesting activity. There are skimmers returning with fish seeking a mate with which to copulate as part of the courting ritual. Aggression is high during this period of territory establishment and egg laying, and both sexes engage in disputes over space and mates. Vertical flights and aerial chases are common. There also are adults bringing fish to the new hatchlings. And of course there are the ever-present Laughing Gulls seeking to mob the returning skimmers to steal their fish. Crows are constantly patrolling the colony looking for opportunities to snatch eggs or chicks from the watchful, but often hapless parents. It is a very dangerous environment for new hatchlings. If they wander too far from their own nest they are likely to be attacked by non-parental nearby adults (infanticide). Note that there also is a lot of activity lower on the beach with birds seeking heat relief and cooling off at the water's edge. And what about the sudden, for no apparent reason, flight of all of the birds in the colony, only to have them all return a couple of minutes later.



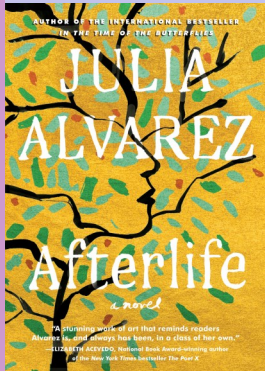
*Images by Lou Newman, Sarasota, Florida, USA. June 1, 2024*

*Thank you to Lou not only for his photos but for the education he gives on the species.*



# A Good Read

Book Review by: Carol Green, Unit 321S



## “Afterlife”

By Julia Alvarez by Carol Green, Unit 321S

The title triggered my initial interest in this book.. I saw someone reading it and thought it was a spiritual book. It turned out to be otherwise. I guess titles can be deceptive.

This is the fourth book that I have read by Julia Alvarez. Starting back in the late 1990's, I read “Yo” (meaning I), “How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents” and “In the Time of Butterflies”. Julia Alvarez is an educated American woman, born in NYC of Dominican heritage. She is the recipient of the Pura Belpre award for her writing.

The principal character in this book, Antonia, is also an educated woman, born in USA, of Dominican heritage. Antonia has been an English professor and is recently retired. At the beginning of the book, she is dealing with the recent death of her husband. He was on the way home to celebrate her retirement when he dies in an auto accident due to an aortic aneurysm. Throughout the book she is dealing with his death. The dual weights of the loss of her career on her retirement and the loss of her husband is a life changing pair of events with which she is trying to cope. She questions how she will create an afterlife without him?

Another crisis enters her life that she must deal with at this moment. Antonia is one of four sisters. She planned to celebrate her upcoming birthday at her sister Tillie's home in Chicago with her sisters. All are educated professionals. Suddenly her older sister (nicknamed Izzy) disappears enroute to the reunion and celebration. Youngest sister, Mona, a therapist, believes Izzy is bipolar and presents danger to herself. Finding Izzy supersedes any celebration. Dealing with Izzy's mental illness presents a challenging scenario in the book.

Yet another challenge enters her life. A neighbor employs undocumented workers. Mario, one of the workers, has a major dilemma. Antonia is called on to help because she speaks Spanish. Mario expects his girlfriend, who has crossed the border illegally, to come to Vermont, where they live, to marry and be with him. She turns up very pregnant and not by Mario. He rejects her. Antonia finds herself concerned about the welfare of the teenage girl and her forthcoming baby. This is an added complication in her life that she does not want.

Because of all of these issues, Antonia asks a question all of us have had to deal with in our lifetimes. Conflicting dilemmas exist. Antonia has to ask who is the most important to me right now? Am I important? Do I give that power over to others? This is a story of the resolution of this ever-present dilemma. It is done by means of conflict resolution.

Antonia wants to move on with her life. This is a credible tale based on real life issues. The reader is drawn into the plot along with its believable characters. If the subject matter interests you, I recommend the book.

PS: This review was submitted for publication before the SBC Book Club discussed the book.

# POETRY

## Turtles and Koi Fish

By: Herb Snyder, Unit 307N

Myrtle the Turtle is married to Yertle  
 And she is very fertile  
 She swam to the land  
 And buried her eggs in the sand  
 Hawks flying high  
 Her nest did spy  
 So they did dive  
 To eat her babies alive  
 But some survived  
 Reaching safety  
 They slowly crept out to sea.

Years later  
 Myrtle and Yertle retired  
 Wanting some place warm not cool  
 Their choice was the SBC Koi pool  
 Where each day  
 For a while  
 The Koi pond was empty  
 No Myrtle, no Yertle sitting on rocks  
 Koi fish gone  
 It seemed so wrong  
 But Jeffrey waved his magic wand  
 Koi fish are back in the pond.  
 Fish are small and hard to see  
 So people stare on bended knee.  
 Alas Myrtle and Yertle have left the place  
 Two new turtles have taken their place  
 I recently saw one  
 Sitting and basking in the sun.

## Life, Love & Song

By: Shirley Fein, Unit 402N

Life is a blank canvas  
 It can take you anywhere  
 go slow, go steady, be determined  
 Make happy memories along the way.

Only you are in charge of your trip through life.  
 Drink in the mysteries of nature.  
 See the beauty of an early sunrise.  
 Enjoy the kaleidoscope of sunset colors.

Life shines so can all of us.  
 Embrace your happiness.  
 Do not worry about tomorrow,  
 Enjoy the day you have.

Sing the song of life and nature,  
 Hear the music and dance,  
 Happiness is around every corner,  
 Blend love with your song.

Floss your brain,  
 You will find dignity, joy and warmth,  
 The treadmill of life will help you move forward -  
 Happiness is your goal.

**"If you haven't got any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble."**

Bob Hope





## May June 2024

### Name

### Apartment

Hutchinson, Robert

110N

Jacobs, Francine

404N

Kauffman, Mark & Irene

1027S

Trotta, Nancy & Carmen

114N

### A Note to Scoop from Claire Smith

I just finished reading the latest edition of Scoop. What a delight! What education! What a feeling of warmth—and all of it for ME.

During my nine plus years at SBC, I have looked forward to each edition and enjoyed reading all of them but was moved to write a letter such as this one.

Thank you one and all for enriching my already full life at SBC.

Claire Smith, Unit 926S

Thank you Claire for the note. It was shared with all who contribute to each Scoop edition.



We also welcome your contributions to future issues of SCOOP at any time! Please place your articles in Lynne's mailbox located in the North or South Tower Mail Room.

Scoop Editorial Staff: **Lynne Minguez, Production**

**Linda Albert , Shirley Fein, Audrey Sharp and Janice Ellison**