

Draft 3/14/15

LIFE
IN
THE
SLOW
LANE

By Carol M. Levin

2014-2015

Life in the Slow Lane

I guess with all that is currently happening, I'm beginning to, or actually probably have begun, transitioning to *Life in the Slow Lane*.

This is proving to be a completely unfamiliar phase of my life. It seems I've always been self-motivated to be busy, active and doing things. Except for, of course, when I began sleeping all winter long. Since taking wintertime anti-depressants for SAD (seasonal affective disorder), I was able to regain living a normal life all year around especially in Vermont. It is still better than moving to the southern parts of the country during the winter months. Lately, it's not so much sleeping all the time, but everything is starting to take so much longer to do. It is now just around Thanksgiving of 2014.

I suppose that this can be the start of my new journal, which hopefully will help me try and figure it all out. I've gotten myself "let go" by the most recent home care agency that I worked for. "They" decided that they only wanted full time P.T.s and eased both Abby and me out of their staffing as part-time physical therapists in home care. We had been the long-term part-timers, and then they got two new full time younger people who didn't seem to mind being told what to do, even though they're professionals in their own right. One, I'm not sure is going to stay, as I'm not getting good reports on the street about her attitude already. So why not keep me on staff as a per diem? Maybe I ought have sued for age-discrimination, but I'm not the litigious type. It appears they didn't like the independence of per diem employees who can work "at will" and within certain parameters (of time and distance).

Both the beginning of my physical therapy career and the end of my physical therapy career were both traumatic. While I was still in physical therapy school in the Pittsburgh area, I got a position at the Salk Institute of Rehabilitation in New York City. After graduation while I was packing to leave to NYC, I got a letter saying there was a freeze on positions at Salk Institute and they could not hire me "at this time". I was devastated! All my education and work I did getting to this point and now that I've graduated, I didn't have a job. This was in the fall of 1963. I had graduated from Thiel College in June, and the DT Watson School of Psychiatry in October.

One of my professors at the P.T. school suggested I contact the director of Rehab at New York State Rehabilitation Hospital (now known as the Helen Hayes Hospital) in West Haverstraw, NY. The director was a colleague of hers, and thought he might be interested in hiring me. I traveled there, had the interview, got the tour and was hired there as a staff physical therapist.

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That probably was quite fortuitous as I was able to accomplish and learn far more there than I would have at Salk, a far more famous facility. I'm sure they would have many more rules to adhere to and might not be interested in any new ideas from any "newbie". The administration at the hospital in Haverstraw gave me considerable leeway to experiment. I started an evening recreational swimming program in the full sized in-house pool for patients and staff. I made a 16mm movie about *Life as a Quad*, following one of my patients through his paces at the hospital, and then transitioning home. I took patients to the World's Fair near New York City. And I was able to do a lot more activities than I would have been able to do at the Salk Institute. All of which provided a richer first job experience than I would have otherwise had.

At the hospital, I worked with a bunch of folks who went skiing on winter weekends in upstate NY and Vermont. So with nothing else to do, I learned how to ski and went with them. Not only that, I discovered Vermont and what a wonderful a place it is. I moved to Vermont in 1974 and have been here ever since. It so matches my personality; it's general beliefs and ethics. And I have had the opportunity to live most of the time here in the country, about 10 miles from Brattleboro, a very interesting community in Southeastern Vermont.

Back to 2014, leaving home care physical therapy was just about as traumatic as losing my very first job before it begun. However, since it's fifty years later, and I've learned a lot about life, I'm adjusting to just moving on to the next thing. At one point I had another traumatic episode of having to give up a dream, when someone told *me* "*The Chinese symbol for "Crisis" is made up of two other symbols; one is "Danger" and the other is "Opportunity"*".

That allowed me to learn to move on to the next phase of my life. Even though this latest loss of job, the loss of income has pushed me to realize that my financial position is much more precarious than I realized. Even the part-time physical therapy work along with my social security I had enough funds to meet my current expenses, and now I don't. I truly miss seeing patients, for whom I felt good about being able to help with their independent function and safety at home.

In the meantime to stabilize finances, I've sold my share of Mom's house to my brother Edward, which will give me a buffer financially at least for a while. My siblings are counseling me to sell the house in Guilford because I can no longer afford it, especially with Reuben still

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living here and expecting me to support him. They want me to rent a 1 BR apartment in Brattleboro (to be closer to services).

After my abrupt termination, my left hip was beginning to get worse from the arthritis, so I decided that it might be a good time to get that hip replaced. Two years earlier I had the right first one replaced end of the year Richard died in 2012. Sisters Susan and Harriet helped me through the first one, as they did the second time around.

It's still hard to process that Richard has been gone three years. If he had lived, he would be 80 this past February (2015). It became quite apparent when there was talk of Mal being 80 this February. Mal and Richard were birthday twins, so he too, would be turning 80. Somehow in my mind he's stuck at 76, which is how old he was when he died February 15, 2012.

This past summer Mal has had her own health issues, and is now home with her adult children helping her out. She seems to be improving and I'm trying to stop over periodically. I did take her a rollator walker that I borrowed and used and did some limited walking with her with that walker, which is especially good for outdoors, as it has a seat, so the person can rest periodically.

I have to remember to return the rollator walker to Jennifer, as it actually belongs to a friend of hers who is currently not using it. I used it for both of my hip surgeries, and while I was recovering from this last surgery, my right knee started acting up, which proved to be worse than my repaired left hip. One cortisone shot allowed me to go on, but I'm still aware that the right knee is deteriorating, as the x-rays noted. This was a surprise I hadn't expected, as I've never had knee pain before. Also my left elbow hurts some, especially when pulling up on the stairway banister when ascending the stairs. These are all signs of sliding into Life in the Slow Lane for sure.

I am going down to the basement several times a day to "do wood" which is to update the fire in the wood furnace and to continue stacking the wood that was thrown in the basement this past fall from where it was dumped outside by the bulkhead. Jim and a bunch of his friends got all the wood in from outside and got a lot of it stacked, but the last bunch of wood still needs to be stacked in the basement as it's in and below the bulkhead.

I've been using the time between getting the fire started or restarted, to making sure it's roaring, to stack the remainder of the thrown-in

wood. I'm at least stacking five pieces minimally, or up to 20 pieces, depending on how I am feeling. There is a step stool down there that allows me to sit and rest and watch the fire (with the bottom draft open until the fire really roaring), which I can then close and go upstairs confident that the fire will continue to warm the house.

The motor that allowed automatic draft manipulation died, and a new one will cost \$400. But in the meantime, I've figured out how to manage it. It seemed that in the "old days" folks managed it without the fancy motor system and upstairs thermostat (to regulate the dampers to open and close appropriately) that I could figure out how to do manage the stove without it, and it seems to be working. By just waiting it out and making sure the fire is really going before closing the bottom damper tightly seems to let it coast at a reasonable temperature for a decent amount of time through the rest of the house.

I was 73 on my past birthday in December 2014, not that it should be a limiting factor on activity as I see it. But maybe things will prove me wrong. I do have an appointment with the Memory Clinic in Bennington, a screening test for memory loss/dementia, as Reuben keeps telling me I have "old-timer's disease". I'm doing Lumosity daily (or almost daily) on the computer, and my memory activity scores continues to run lower in the memory category than in the other sections (attention, speed, _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____). Most are up to or above 50-75% as compared to other folks my age, but the memory section continues lagging behind in the around 30%.

Which reminds me of a patient I was seeing on Myrtle Street in Brattleboro. She was in her mid-90s, and had fallen the past winter and broken her hip. It was now late spring and the weather was nice, so we went outside to do more walking, which she loved to do. We walked down to the end of the block and on the way back, I asked her how she was doing? "Fine", she said, but "I always feel so tired". I responded that "That's interesting, as my husband, who is 76 is complaining that he's tired all the time now too. "She stopped, turned, as I was walking behind her slightly and said " 76 years old! "He's just a baby!" I guess it is all relative to the reference at hand. She and her husband had run neighborhood grocery store about 4 blocks away, which her family still operated. Prior to her fall, she walked nearly every day over to the store and back from her daughter's home, in which she has been living for the past 10 years. She did agreed, when

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I asked her, if she could be one of my role models, which I have been collecting, especially since my own mother died five years ago.

Over the years I often heard from my home care P.T. patients "Everything is so slow, it takes me so much time to do anything". As a flippant much younger person, I would say "are you in any hurry?" or "do you need to be in any hurry?" and they would all usually say "No". Then I would suggest " then just take you time and to it (whatever it was they were doing) safely." Now I see they were teaching me about "*Life in the Slow Lane*".

When my youngest child was born, a friend gave him a rabbit doll and the book *The Velveteen Rabbit* by _____. My very favorite part of it was as follows. And now I see how that it really relates to folks "who become Real" as they move into *Life In the Slow Lane*.

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT



He said, "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

Slowing Down in the Slow Lane

Everything takes more time, getting up out of bed, taking a shower, getting dressed, going down and up the steps to the basement, making the fire (now that we don't have the automatic opening device) you have to let the fire in the firebox get raging, and then just close all the doors, and call it good. Even walking outside, I now need my boots on with the grippers so I don't slip. Since I've loaned the borrowed rollator walker to Mal, I am using the cane to walk to the mailbox especially with snow still on the driveway. It even takes more time to take out the garbage (although collecting the internal trash on Sundays throughout the house on Sundays while house cleaning really simplifies the take out activity on Tuesdays. Also remembering which Tuesdays are the recycling days as well, although in the winter I only take out the plastic and tin cans container, as I take all the waste paper downstairs for the wood furnace to use as fire starter. In the summer, I do put out the non-personal paper with recycling and stockpile personal paper downstairs for the winter.

The mail wasn't in when we got back from town today (Reuben didn't have any gas to get his Trailblazer started) and I got to stop by the computer store to get the computer fixed (it froze in a particular frame). The lovely young lady at the computer store, just 'fixed it' so I was a happy camper knowing that the computer wasn't broken, and I wouldn't lose the MS word work I had been doing. Reuben was in a good mood this afternoon, not as grumpy as in the morning after I told him he couldn't take my phone with him. All kinds of threats and machinations. He didn't say anything all afternoon about the fact that I put the bed back in to position in his room and made it up. He had previously undone the work that Harriet and I did that last time she was here. Even after the Pancakes helped me get it back into position, he stacked it up like in a storage locker. However, he seems content to leave it in the proper orientation and arrangement as it is now. A small miracle. He is now off to work at the diner. Reuben is still living with me and he is 26 years old. Constantly talks about moving out, but still are here.

I found someone had posted on Facebook the following by Jose N. Harris. "There comes a time in your life, when you walk away from all the drama and people who create it. You surround yourself with people who make you laugh. Forget the bad, and focus on the good. Love the people who treat you right, pray for the ones who don't. Life is too

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short to be anything but happy. Falling down is a part of life, getting back up is living.”

Also found out Peter D. is in the hospital. It was on Paula’s Facebook with a note when I asked where? She responded that he was in Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. So goes our December birthday party, as Peter is in the hospital, Mal is home recovering from a stroke. I guess Doris and I are the lucky ones. Also more and more people I know (recently mostly former patients) are in the obituary listings. Come February 15th, it will be 3 years since Richard died. Somehow it doesn’t seem that long. Since Mal will be 80, Richard would have been 80 also, if he had lived. Why he got cancer is still an unknown, especially amyloidosis from multiple myeloma that affected mostly his swallowing and his heart, which is what finally failed. Mal and Richard would have celebrated the 25th Birthday Twins party but he died about a week before the event. Someone brought a birthday cake for Mal to the funeral reception. And we all got to sing Happy Birthday to her. They were both going on 77 in a few weeks. We, then, considered the reception as the annual party, and cancelled the original scheduled party nearer their birthdays on February 28.

I’m finding I’m thinking more about what to take with me when I sell the house, in terms of furniture, supplies, and so forth. I guess I’ll plan to sell it next spring/summer/fall. So I have the winter to get it all organized, gone through, gotten rid of stuff and everything I need to do to be able to show it and move when we get someone interested in purchasing it. I hope it sells well. I had hoped to have 5 years more, but actually I suppose I’m not unhappy about worrying about wood another winter. Getting it, getting it in the basement and stacked, doing the fire a couple of times a day. But going up and down the basement steps has given me exercise for my legs, although I feel that they may never be as good as before. I guess this is all part of the living life in the slow lane, and having to get used to it.

Last week I had three medical appointments – mammogram, podiatrist and eye doctor for an annual checkup. Yes, I do need new lenses, but will get them in my current frames that are still OK (saving me about \$300). Even so, the exam is billed to Medicare, but the new lenses will be about \$300. This week it is the psychologist who I see monthly. And of course weight watchers every Tuesday night. I’m still trying to get Reuben to see a psychologist for his mental health issues (had a working diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder while he was seeing the psychiatrist during his high school days)

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Even thinking about what to do takes effort, and it's almost like I have to write everything down, so I don't forget it. Sometimes I mark things off as DONE, although sometimes I forget. I've stopped bringing things forward that I didn't do, as it becomes overwhelming with too much to do, certainly much more than could ever be done in one day. So I'm letting some things slide, which isn't my normal nature.

Thinking about selling the house in the spring-summer-fall is inspiring me to think about how to speed up cleaning things up, going through stuff that needs sorted, where to give it away, sell it, find a home for it, etc. And then there is the issue about deciding what to keep for when I move to a new place, probably in town, and most likely a rental. Then I won't have to have to deal with plowing, lawn mowing, building repairs, and a space bigger than I need. I also envision, selling the house after Cindy leaves, and possibly moving over to the attached (to our house) apartment, and either paying rent, or using a discounted rent for a specified time for a cheaper sale price. It does have a washer and dryer, and all the appropriate appliances, and room to move around and some very limited storage. Cindy will be leaving mid-summer when Sebastian is out of school. He is a senior this year at BUHS, and she's talking about moving back to Maine, where she's got family.

I could sleep in the little bed room, have a living room and office area in the "L", have the eat-in kitchen, see nature from all of those spaces, and put the TUAT and storage stuff in the back/big bedroom which I could close off and not heat during the winter. That way I wouldn't have to change my address much (apartment #3 instead of #1. And there is a wood stove, and a propane heater, with propane cooking and hot water. And window quilt curtains for nighttime, especially winter. Somehow that appeals to me as far as a living space, but it would depend on who buys it. Also Reuben occasionally mentions, "After Cindy leaves, I can move over to the apartment". Fat chance.

I could offer \$50,000 deduction on the cost of the house, for me to live there rent-free for 5 year, or essentially \$10,000 per year (\$9600 at \$800/month). Or I could move to a place in town, and spend the bulk of my social security on \$800-900 rent, giving me about \$500-\$600 for the rest of the month. Which reminds me to call Social Security, as they increased the money they are taking out, due to the PT work and sale of the house next door from 2013 records. And this year I won't have either. Something to think about.

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In the meantime I have a long list of things to do today, so I might as well get my shower out of the way, but maybe do up the wood furnace (in the 1940s Sam Daniels woodstove) first.

Next Installment of Life in the Slow Lane

I know everyone has a finite time to live, but dying is hard. Jerry and I went to visit Mal at her home, and she's doing very well with help from her son Tony and some help also from her daughter Leslie and son Mike. She is making incredible improvement. I made *Arozz con Pollo* (chicken and rice with vegetables) and took it in the pan wrapped up in one of my heavy-duty sweaters, and it was still when we arrived several hours later (I had a meeting before I picked up Jerry). Mal lives in Putney, which is about as far north of Brattleboro, than we are in West Guilford/Green River area of Guilford.

Doris is truly frazzled. Jessie came to relieve her so Doris could go to the bank, the post office, etc., etc., and what she needs is about 2-3 days of solid sleep. Reuben asked when I told him about the visit with Peter, "is he going to die"? I forgot to tell Doris that Peggy Leo died at the Holton Home where she has been living for the past several years. Her granddaughter Melissa did a benefit performance there recently. She is an apparently well-known actress. Actually Doris might be aware of it, but I can't believe she's reading the newspaper recently.

It was fun visiting with Jerry, who is still recovering from his "4 performances in 3 1/2 days". I don't know how he did it. He did Thursday, Friday and Saturday night performances, and a Sunday afternoon performance. Performances Thursday and Saturday were "Marx in Soho" by Howard Zinn and Friday and Sunday performances were Marx: the third coming, that Jerry wrote.

He's now fully retired from Marlboro College, after nearly 40 years teaching sociology. He'll be going out to California for the winter and staying with his sister. He did a lot of his European tours on January break from college. His manager and girlfriend are living in Jerry's house. Wayne who used to live there now has Parkinson's disease and is at Hilltop House (now called Bradley house, used to be called the Baptist Home. It seems we're all deteriorating. Is that part of learning to live in the slow lane?

I met with Ann this morning and we had a good review of what's going on, with me, and everyone among my immediate surroundings.

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She said I seemed calmer and more settled, and we discussed my feelings about selling the house, which I'll probably have to this coming year. I do have a lot of work to do to get it ready. I'd like to start with upstairs, bringing everything down, and closing off the attic room, after giving it a good cleaning. If Reuben wants to still sleep up there, he can move the mattress in the hallway area, once all the stuff is out of there and I'll lock and close off the attic (big room) area.

Reuben asked me to take him in to town to work tonight, so I'll have to go back in a couple of more hours to pick him up around 10:30pm. I told him there would be no running around afterwards, just straight home. I wish I could get started on a real project, and get some of it done. But I'm really so tired after today's running around.

First I went to Ann's, met Sarah who bought the winter tires from the Legacy which I had advertized on Craig's list, then picked up Jerry, and stopped at the Putney Coop to pick up some homemade multigrain bread and Jerry got Russian Tea cookies for desert. I brought lunch, including the main dish with yogurt as a condiment, as well as seltzer water. We added the bread and Mal had butter. Everything was eaten, including the cookies. Mal was there as well as her son Tony, her daughter Leslie, and her boarder Larry. And there was Jerry and I. Then Mal and I with Tony and Larry did some P.T. things, mostly with walking with the wheeled walker and practiced transfer safety, while Jerry took his after lunch nap. Mal is making amazing progress, including using both hands for eating and able to get into the bathroom and go by herself, with the help of the grab bars that Tony put in.

Then Jerry and I went to the local hospital to (sort of) visit Peter and Doris, but Peter was mostly sleeping, as he apparently didn't sleep at all last night. And so we talked mostly to Doris in the small waiting room. After Jessie arrived, Jerry and I left. I then dropped him off at his house. I told him I'd call him again when I go to see Mal again next week. Wednesday, next week is going to be difficult as I have the Coalition board meeting in the morning and a Guilford Gazette meeting from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at the Guilford Country Store. Both of which I have work to do to get ready for them. Oye Vey. It's all on the "to do" list for tomorrow.

Home all day –

Brattleboro Savings and Loan checking and savings accounts
PNC Bank checking and savings accounts

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US Airways-get tickets to PA with some credit for ticket from September – Call them (and find the sheet of which flights on Dec. 24 and return Dec 31).

Solar Store-Find someone to do the Friday and Saturday after Xmas so I can go to BV. (Clay said he'd do it.)

Guilford Gazette update spreadsheets and do additional mailing to new leads.

Solar Store financial update and printing of updates

NECNP – minutes last meeting, and agenda for this meeting, including sending out attachments with agenda.

Finish sorting out In-Box on my desk.

Somehow this doesn't look like a Slow Lane list. And is probably totally unrealistic to consider getting it all done in one day. I guess I take what's left to the Solar Store Friday and Saturday to work on. I'd like to work on housecleaning and getting more stuff in the house "dealt-with" on Sunday, and next Monday and Tuesday, but I know I'll have some of these done before next Wednesday with the Gazette and Coalition meetings coming up.

Anyway, I'm now in the recliner, nothing interesting on the PBS computer list. Anyway, I feel like I'm falling asleep, but know I have to go in at pick up Reuben when he calls (some where about 10:30pm). Maybe I'll read for a while – just finished several climate change books and a book about nuclear testing in Utah. All serious and some very nasty stuff. Now I have Amy Tan's *The Hundred Secret Senses*, which I know I've read before but not for many years, so I am reading it again.

Dreams that may be related to Life in the Slow Lane

Last night I had the strangest dream.... (Wait! Doesn't that sound like a song I know?) It is, and it does. I've been having the strangest dreams recently about all sorts of things, but last night was one I kind of pretty vividly remembered.

We were out on an adventure program with kids/adolescents/etc. There were a group of PT students that had about 4 teachers/instructors for about a dozen kids and I was one of the instructors. There was also another bunch of kids, all boys who were younger, about 50 of them, with two teachers/instructors, so of course they were all way out of control for mostly lack of supervision.

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We were all climbing up a mountain range and generally having a good time being outside. Somehow it seems as if it were spring, but must have been early spring as we ran into a ledge that started an enormous run of packed snow downward (must have been on the north side of the mountain and it seems as if I recognized as have seen it or known about it before). I decided that I was going to "ski" down on it with my sneakers on, and then spent an inordinate time trying to put them on, but the laces kept breaking. I had to find ingenious ways to keep them tied and functional. It seemed to take a very long time and then, just as I was ready to start down, "they" called the whole thing off as it was getting dark and we had to go back the way we came. I was so frustrated, and then the phone rang, so I had to wake up. What was that all about???

I had talked with Ann this past week about feeling frustrated when doing things and running up against a wall, and doing better about letting things go, resting, taking a nap, changing projects, etc.

Another weird and frustrating dream. I was visiting a new photovoltaic installation, a huge urban system that they were in the final days of installation, so folks were still working at finish it as well as tweaking the system. I stayed over night and there was so many people around, that I finally found a small space on the floor in the hallway to squeeze in on the floor to get another couple of hours of sleep). When I was ready to go, I had rented an EV and needed to fill up with fuel. I went to all the area gas stations in sight of the PV system and no one knew if I was to use the red fuel, the straw colored fuel, or the green fuel. I felt so frustrated having to deal with such unknowing folks who were all in the shadow of the new PV system. I really hate having to deal with professionals or service people who either are or act stupid. However, once I woke up I realized it was an EV and didn't need any fill up gas fuel, it was an electric and just needed plugged in to the electrical service. Dah!! Now I feel stupid.

Several days later now, and I have had two more very profound dreams, but if I don't write them down right away, and I don't remember them. Which is the case in point right now, not remembering things. Sometimes I get confused about what's in dreams and what's in real life when I get to thinking back on something that happened or didn't happen

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A really scary early morning dream of loss of (my) skills. I was at a festival with Richard, and found out at the last minute that Richard was to give a workshop, and I was trying to write down our cell phone numbers for Teresa, but I think it was supposed to be Virginia, because I think he festival was in NY state. I tried over and over again to write down the numbers, and I kept messing up, either it was the paper wasn't right, or the writing utensil wasn't right or I wasn't right. I kept having difficulty writing some of the numbers, and kept writing a 4 for one of the 802 numbers. I was so frustrated, and besides I couldn't find Richard. (Of course he died almost 3 years ago now – on Feb 15th). I don't think I'll read Stephen King any more. I found a book of his upstairs and decided to read it, and I read the first two stories in "Just After Sunset" the last story (chapter 2) just before I went to bed. So I'll now take the book to the used bookstore and see if he wants to buy it or I'll pass it along to Good Will. The stories are just a little over the edge for me. I do like to read mysteries, but not the gory stuff he apparently writes. I've got enough stress in my life; I don't really need any body else's drama.

Richard was in my dream last night, but again that is not so surprising, as it is Feb. 10th and he died three years ago on Feb. 15th.

Actually in the week before February 15th, he's been in many of my dreams this week. Mostly quietly sitting in the background, and not participating in the activity of the dream. Some dreams were solar related, some were folk music festival related, some were strange, some were less strange, but there he was, in the background of all of them.

Feb. 15, 2015 – today I found in two separate boxes that I was sorting were two presences of Richard.

One was the card from Atamaniuk Funeral Home. It has a sunset over water on one side, and his photo on the other side with the following text: ***In Loving Memory of Richard F. Gottlieb, February 28, 1935 to February 15, 2012.*** And then below was a poem I chose from their selection:

*Right now I'm in a different place,
and though we seem apart,
I'm closer than I ever was...
I'm there inside your heart.*

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*I'm with you when you greet each day
and while the sun shines bright.
I'm there to share the sunsets, too,
I'm with you every night.*

*I'm with you when the times are good
to share a laugh or two.
And if a tear should start to fall...
I'll still be there for you.*

*And when that day arrives
that we no longer are apart,
I'll smile and hold you close to me...
forever in my heart*

The other thing I found was the Brattleboro Reformer from 2/23/15 that has on the front page the following headline with a color photo of Richard.

Community says farewell to solar Pioneer Gottlieb

Chris Garofolo, Reformer Staff, wrote the article. It's a wonderful article with interviews with Clay Turnbull, Alex Wilson and me, and some material taken from the obituary, which appeared in the Saturday, February 18th. The funeral and burial was on Friday, Feb. 17th, but at the time the newspaper couldn't take an obituary on Thursday for the Friday paper. Many of the local people didn't know about Richard and the funeral until Saturday's paper came out. At the time it was quite frustrating. Now I'm just sorry many of the local people were left out of the loop. Alex Wilson, who was following us by Caring Bridge put the information and schedule out on the solar network, so all the New England Solar people knew and came to the funeral.

I still find it hard to realize it was three years ago. Time passes quickly when you're having fun, working hard, dealing with a challenging young adult, or being pressured to downsize and move to a smaller, less expensive living situation.

Another Dream

A rather frantic "busy" dream from last night, I was in NYC having a medical evaluation. They took me through lots of places and through lots of tests. I worried about where my purse was, and they finally brought it to me, as where I left it in the waiting room was next door

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to mall entrance, and I didn't want anyone to steal it. The doctor gave me the summary and said I have Lupus that popped out of nowhere. I got the following by google-ing "lupus".

Some of the most common lupus symptoms are:

- Extreme fatigue that doesn't go away with rest
- Joint pain, stiffness, and swelling in two or more joints
- Fever over 100°F
- Muscle pain
- Hair loss
- Skin sores and rashes (which may occur in a butterfly-shaped pattern across the cheeks and nose)
- Nose or mouth sores (usually painless)
- Skin rashes after sun exposure

I talked to the doctor about my two hip replacements and he seemed to not be concerned with them, or didn't remember seeing them on the X-ray. For me, it wasn't even presenting these symptoms, but his giving me the diagnosis and me looking up the symptoms. In a way all of which apply, but haven't been really too much of an issue. I have heard of Lupus before, but never applied it to myself. There are lots of resources in Google, if I want to explore it more.

Then I was on the phone (payphone) frantically trying to reach Judy B. who lives in upper Manhattan and couldn't reach her, I was trying to find out her exact address to find out which bus to take, knowing she lived somewhere off of Broadway but somehow I kept thinking of the Saw Mill River Parkway, which actually goes somewhere else. In the meantime there was a folk festival happening nearby, which I got diverted to prior to the phone call, but didn't find anyone I knew, even though it was an urban version of the Philadelphia Folk Festival, but with some indoors and some outdoors. While I was on the phone, a family came by and I directed them to the festival, especially the children. I knew Mom and the rest of my family was waiting at Judy's for me, and that I was very late it getting back.

Never did find which bus to take and was still on the payphone when Colt came in and woke me up to go outside.

An Earlier Dream

This reminded me of another dream I had where I could run really fast and then fly at low altitudes (Inside, down stairs, up stairs, and over traffic outdoors, and generally around wherever I want wanted to be. People couldn't figure out how I did it, and I didn't know either, only that I could do it. I've had the flying dream before, but mostly going down stairs, without touching the stairs.

Day-to-Day Living Life in the Slow Lane

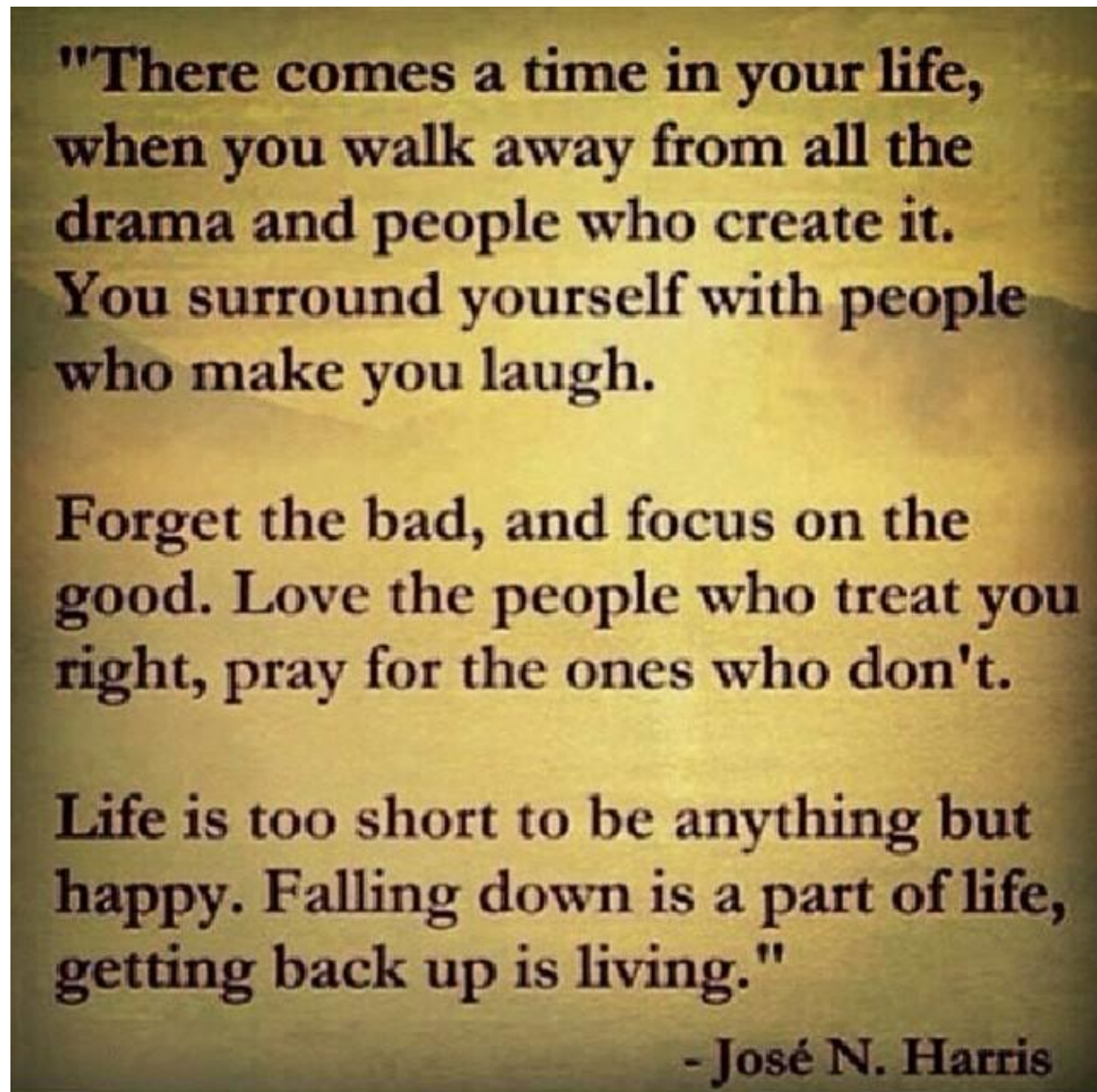
I'm really focused on working all day in the office today, as well as intermittently eating, going to the bathroom, putting the dog (and cats) outside and then letting them back in, and going up and down the basement to update the wood furnace, when it starts cooling off.

Today I've mostly tackled Guilford Gazette (with ads coming in from a mailing I did about 10 days ago, and a reminder email that I send out today. Also I will send notices to another twenty or so likely candidates for ads for the upcoming issue in February (with the deadline being January 1). I've done a little work on the Solar Store and have made some headway on getting the inbox cleaned out. I also went through all the email on both accounts and responded appropriately as well as trashed appropriately. I still have a lot to do, and it's 5:30pm.

Reuben goes to work soon. He got pissy before and stacked his furniture up like storage, and I told him that was childish. If he wants to store his stuff, he needs to move it out to the shop, but as long as it's in the room, he will leave it down, and reasonably arranged. He did do some laundry today though, and otherwise stayed out of my face. I still have to tell him that he "HAS to clean up upstairs, or I will clean it up for him". Then he asks me if I want to start a fight. He had me take him to and from town (since he doesn't have much gas and wanted to go to the bank (but wouldn't buy more milk for himself), but I told him I have too much work to do to drive him around today, so he drove into town earlier himself with his car. Why am I still taking care of a 26 year old? That doesn't seem like it should be in the plan of winding down to walk in the slow lane especially with one who is still so needy. I'm trying to work out how to encourage him to be more independent, although it seems as if he should have figured this out already himself. It's really hard when he says "there's nothing wrong with me" and

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refuses to go to a psychologist or a psychiatrist for lots of anti-social issues, thought problems, mood swings, and other things that get into his way for normal function. He so wants to be normal, and I can't figure out how to help him deal with his dysfunction without him owning up to it.



A good thing today is that I got a lovely card from my best friend growing up in Pennsylvania. On the front was a picture of her and her husband, their two children and their spouses and the four grandchildren, two from each family, at the celebration of their 50th anniversary this year. I was her maid of honor and she wrote on the

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card reminding me that the wedding we celebrated together was 50 years ago. Wow! Talking about some time passing, a half a century.

My sister and I were communicating by email and she says to throw away all of her grade school memorabilia from the early 1960s when she "goes", and I'm trying to encourage her to give it all to the Rostraver Historical Society. Her idea was "why bother?" But I told her someone even 50 years from now, might be very interested in her 2nd grade report card. "Look, they wrote it by pencil/pen, and used paper! Really cool!"

I also arranged to go to the old family homestead from December 24th to December 31st. Sister Paula and Nephew Michael and his family, Anula and kids Rohan and Kiki "my name is Annika" will be there. I told Reuben that I was going. Paula will be there for two weeks, but will pick me up at the airport, and I go back the same afternoon she does. Our planes leaving are about one and a half hours apart. Mine leaves first, so she'll have some reading to do. That was the best I could do. USAir is the only one with non-stop from Bradley to Pittsburgh, and they now have only about one non-stop flight a day.

I hate changing planes and it would have been cheaper to go Southwest and change in Baltimore or Washington or Philadelphia or where ever their eastern hub is. But it takes all day, and the nonstops take about 1-½ hours of flying. I will have to leave here very early like 3am to get to the airport and do security for a 6am flight on Dec. 24. Maybe I can go down the night before and stay at Harriet's. She's much closer to the airport, and I wouldn't have to get up so early. And maybe I can leave my car at her house and not have to pay the weeklong parking fee.

Things that go Fast in the Slow Lane

The first thing that starts to happen is the urinary tract becomes fussy. In the old days (or actually days when I was younger), I could get a feeling of "having to go" but that meant I could go anytime in the next bunch of hours or even at the end of the day, when I got a break or whenever I got around to getting there. When you reach a certain mature age like I am now, I now have to really pay way more attention, as when I feel I have to go, I have to go right away immediately. Or bad things will happen when I sneeze, cough, move in a different position or even just stand up. I see why we're back to

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pads, and it's not for menses that stopped years ago. There is sometimes so little control any more. The motto now is "When you gotta go, you gotta go NOW!" There is no waiting until the end of a chapter, or to finish the last dish, or even tie up a conversation on the phone. Better now immediately than sorry late (and have to clean up the mess). Pretty disgusting but real topic of events.

Public transportation takes on it's own schedule, which now seems way faster to me. They don't wait for the slow folks. They are on a schedule and they have to keep on it, even if you're within sight. So I'm finding I have to give myself even more time to be there ahead of time, since it takes me so much more time to get there. Buses, trains, planes. The only exceptions are friends who are taking you somewhere. They are generous with their time to come and get you and they make sure you get to where you're going. That we all may keep some good friends around for sanity.

Even though a single day occasionally may seem to be long, time generally is passing way more quickly, or so it seems to be. There is now snow on the ground, and just very recently we were all putting in the gardens (oh, yes, that was back in May). Well from May to December, if you look on a calendar, is seven, count them, seven months! Where did all that time go? And what happened in between? I remember picking flowers, washing a few dishes, someone cutting the lawn, wood being delivered, and about one or two very hot days, and about a day's worth of leaf looking, but that's not seven months! What was going on in the meantime?

Is it true what my son is saying to me? "Maybe you have old-timer's disease?" I don't think so. It's soon to be 2015 and that's 100 years since the 1st World War, which was way before I was born. My mother wasn't born until 1916 and my Dad would have been about seven years old at that time. They are both gone, and my Dad still seems 67, the age he was when he died. Mom passed just a month before her 93rd birthday, so we were with her when she got older.

Time has a very funny quality. A minute (60 seconds) may seem like nothing (when you're reading or quilting or having an interesting conversation). Or it may seem like an eternity (when the P.T. is asking you to stand on one foot without holding on and asking you to "not

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lose your balance". Or even trying to cross a street and the "walk" sign goes off and you're only mid-way across the street. There is some amount of adapting to the real and apparent limits of the availability of time.

I'm at the Solar Store today, and so far we've had one customer. I opened it at 10am and now it's 4pm, so where did the time go? I have gotten a few things done, but nowhere near what's on my list to do while I'm here.

My mother once said; when you turn 65, change all your regular providers – doctor(s), lawyer, dentist, accountant, tax preparer, hairdresser, and so forth. Her rationale was that if you're turning 65, they're all about the same age as you are, and will be soon be planning to retire. So change them ahead of time, so you're not stuck if something acute happens to them and then you won't have a lapse of time before finding a replacement.

What to Un-learn in the Slow Lane

Since one is born, there is always a push into learning new things and progressing to a higher level. Moving your body, standing, walking, learning words, talking, climbing, socializing, taking responsibility, sharing, and all the things when you start school from kindergarten through whatever level one chooses to complete post high school. There is a goal of doing better, being more independent, taking more responsibility, taking care of others, creating, and continuation of learning more and more.

In the process of moving into the slow lane, there are things now that I'm finding that you have to start un-learning. Multitasking is at the top of that list, as it gets too confusing, too complicated and one ends up not doing really any of the tasks well. So stepping back, and beginning to appreciate doing one thing at a time. Richard (and Garrison Kieller, of A Prairie Home Companion) used to call it "momentism". Doing and appreciate what you are doing in the moment. And move on from there.

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It's really like breaking things down to simpler tasks, whether it's putting on your socks and shoes, talking on the telephone, reading a book, talking with another person. Apparently this un-learning is harder from some of us than others. For me, it's profound. I used to be able to do practically all of those things at the same time and live to tell about it, and even think it was normal.

I feel like my roll in life has been to get as much done as possible in the shortest time it takes, so that the overall accomplishments seem either profound or satisfactory, depending on one's viewpoint. I'm probably my hardest critic, unless I'm working for someone who is incompetent. Then I have to revert to Eleanor Roosevelt's view on the subject " No one can make you feel inferior without your permission". I have very little use for critical people. Supportive creative suggestions go a long way with me.

I am currently involved in the Sunnyside Solar Store – basically two days a week, awaiting remuneration for my time and energy. We opened September 2013 and this year has seen a significant growth, which is good. Richard would be pleased and amazed with the profound growth of the industry, and how much photovoltaics is out there now, even in Vermont.

It's in the old Chelsea House Folklore Center barn, so it's like 360-degree return to my old haunts. We're renting the front half, and Dave is here Wednesdays and Thursdays, and I'm here Fridays and Saturdays. Which is where I am today. So I better get back to doing the Solar Store work of bookkeeping, which is what I do here when we have no customers. We're open from 10 to 6 those four days, or by appointment. It's now almost 1:30pm and there have been no customers in today as of yet.

It's probably the weather, as we're having what the forecasters like to call " wintery mix" which is part snow, part rain and part freezing rain and sometimes part hail all resulting in a mess to travel in. I did shovel the ramp and put salt on it, so it's mostly clear now as we're in the rain portion of the "mix". There is a pellet stove in the store, and my work area is right in front of the stove. "No Dah" as is modern day slang. Especially when it's 50 degrees in the barn and 30 degrees outside.

What's Next in the Slow Lane?

I've been focusing all day on the New England Coalition work for the meeting on Wednesday morning, taking strategic breaks throughout the day, and did get the November minutes finished and sent, and the agenda for this upcoming meeting. And it has taken me all day. I did go out in the morning to get the paper and take out the mail to the mailbox.

And much later in the afternoon went out to get the mail. I wore my boots with cleats in the morning but didn't feel like changing my shoes to boots in the afternoon and I took it VERY slowly with my cane. We had "Wintery Mix" yesterday which means it snowed and then it rained and then it was in the twenties last night, so everything is pretty icy. I had to watch very carefully, both where I was stepping and what my cane was anchored to. I'm sure it would have been more prudent if I had changed to my boots (which will sport the cleats all winter long) and change back to the shoes when I came in. But I didn't feel like taking the time to do it. And I made it OK, and it was daytime. I wouldn't do it in the dark, because the visibility isn't very good, although we just went through the full moon, and even with clouds, it's not nearly so dark at night as otherwise. And yes, we do not (thank goodness) have streetlights in the country where we live. The most we have are motion sensor lights that come on when you near the doorway. PV charges ours so we know it will always work.

Right now if you walk where it is snow, there is slightly more traction. But it's not always like that. Sometime the snowy parts are pure ice and you have to walk where someone else has walked before. That's when you get the ashes and spread them fully around where you plan to go. And we've got lots of ashes right now. There are two buckets up here, and the big barrel downstairs. You have to make sure you're going into a metal barrel at first to accommodate any hot embers. You don't want to start a fire in the basement outside of the wood furnace!

On a warmer day, when the wood isn't burning, I will need to put some furnace cement on in various spots on the stove, as you can see the orange color from the burning wood through some spots. I have the furnace cement container downstairs and just have to find the spatula that is around here somewhere, to use to put the cement in place.

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I still have a lot of sorting and cleaning up to do. Many piles of paperwork have accumulated on the kitchen counter. And lots of throw away paper on the floor by my desk as it's overflowing from the box it's supposed to be in. I feel like I'm doing a newsletter, or a workshop, or a calendar listing, or preparing for an NEC meeting, which is, in fact, what I am doing.

I'll get it all cleaned up tonight, and take it back down to the basement, the scrap paper, that is. I'll get the 2014 papers sorted and organized and plan to bring the 2013 binder back from the office with me when I go in for the meeting. I did mostly finish up the Guilford Gazette stuff, again for the Wednesday meeting with them in the late afternoon.

Depends on the weather what I will do in between the two meetings. Maybe I can go visit Mal in Putney, and then call her son Tony, who is now backing in California, with a report. I already asked a friend to go to the annual (40th year) Noel Sing We Clear at the Latches Theater, but he didn't take me up on it. I wonder if Mal would be up to an evening event, I could take her and bring her back, giving her caregivers an evening off. We'll see how it all pans out.

Reuben is now off to work, so we'll see how much I can get done in the next 3-4 hours. I've really had to concentrate on staying focused, but I'm not exhausted, surprisingly. On some days I could be.

Focus, Focus, Focus on NEC paperwork, and see if I can get to a good conclusion. Let's hope I don't get any long telephone calls. My siblings tend to call me most every day, and talk for at least an hour. It's good to hear from them, and I'm glad they are concerned, and it's a nice visit, and actually it does give me a chance to sit with my legs up, if I can find the portable. But then, sometimes it's hard to get back to what I was doing. Also the wood furnace calls, so maybe I'll do that first. I guess it's gotten cooler, as the oil furnace (backup) has just gone on. It's generally set of 50 degrees, but maybe Reuben turned it up, rather than to go down and stoke the fire and add wood.

I remember when we were growing up in Western Pennsylvania, that Mom would set a timer that we could only talk on the for a maximum of 10 minutes (for local calls). For long distance calls about 2-3 minutes. Now with cell phones, there is no extra charge for long distance calls, so talking an hour is no big deal financially. Depending on your phone agreement, you may be using minutes. But most people have a standard plan; you have an allotted amount of bulk minutes to use or not to use. So it seems more like free minutes taken

individually. Most people I know, including myself, never use all the minutes on my bulk plan. Even landline programs have gone the way of advertizing free long distance, included in your monthly fee for use.

It's another rainy mix day today, so I'm home doing home chores and working in my office, mostly working on personal book-keeping and figuring out what is what, and getting everything organized. I kind of like book-keeping, because no matter what, the numbers are the numbers, and they mean discrete things, and if you add them, subtract them, multiply them or divide them, they are always the only right answer. There is no chance of them being different on different occasions. If you are correct, they are correct. No "if, ands, or buts" about it. It is never sort of right, the answers are always right, if indeed you've done the right things, and not made a mistake.

Winter living *Life in the Slow Lane*

This winter looks to be a repeat of last winter, with only very isolated days and sometimes just moments of picturesque Vermont looking winters.

"Wintery mix" seems to be the current mode of weather, and it's really quite challenging to deal with. It snows, it rains, it snows, it's freezing rain, and then it's in the 20s overnight, which makes everything like a skating ring. The road crews try and keep up as much as possible, but the temperature changes so frequently, I'm not sure they know what to do. Whether to plow, to sand, to salt, to lay more gravel because the roads have become muddy like in the spring, it is a changeable task and decision, almost momentarily at times. . They do, however, make a supreme effort all through the days and nights. Whatever we're paying them through our local taxes, it's worth it. They do such a good job, and they always wave to you when you pass them on the road, or if you're out getting the mail from the mailbox.

To say the least, driving and certainly walking, become much more challenging. Cleats or as some people call them grippers, stay permanently attached to my boots all winter, even though going to Brattleboro where it tends to be warmer, and the sidewalks are all cleared and dry. It's snowing now, and I'd much rather have real snow than any of the "wintery mix". At least when it stops, you move it, and it stays put until the next time it snows. It doesn't melt because it's raining, and freezes to ice, when the temperature drops. Snow is at

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least the white fluffy stuff that you can make snowballs with, or build a snowman, or ski or snowboard on, or "ride" as they say on the mountain, for snowboarding.

All this with knowing you has to take more time with everything. Although I think having been here nearly 40 years, we all learn that everything has to slow down in the winter. It seems that those who don't seem to learn are the skiers who come up from CT or NY on the highway are always traveling too fast, and are the ones that are very often off the side of the road waiting for a tow truck to rescue them. You have to go slow in the winter, that's just the way it's always been. Mother Nature rules, and you just have to accommodate. I guess this has been our long-term lesson in slowing down, for those who have always lived here, or who have lived here a long time. You learn to work with the weather. Enjoy "snow days" (they are like unplanned mini vacations) and I've gotten to feel cheated if we don't have at least one or two during the winter.

We're now past Ground hog day and it's been snowing for two days. The first part of a three-part storm was yesterday and we only got a couple of inches, which wasn't too bad. Storm two is occurring now and it's basically been snowing all day for now what must be up to 4-5" and still snowing. The Brattleboro Contradance at the Stone Church has been cancelled due to the weather, so I have the evening here. Reuben is waiting to be called for his shoveling snow job. He did fix dinner sesame chicken with broccoli but the chicken was frozen, then thawed in the refrigerator for a while, and was pretty tough, about which Reuben wasn't too happy with. It looked pretty, complete with Chinese sauce sesame seeds, which he had asked me to get a shopping or two ago. I guess I'll just hang out tonight, but will have to wait to see PBS Masterpiece Theater and PBS Masterpiece Mystery after midnight on my computer. Because Reuben is watching basketball on TV. It's really only just after 5pm, but it's dark out. And <weather.com> says it is 18 degrees in Brattleboro. I'm sure it's a little colder here in Guilford, as we tend to be generally cooler than Brattleboro because we don't have pavement and brick buildings to hold the heat. It's nice in the summer when it's 5 degrees cooler in Guilford, but we don't appreciate it as much in the dead of winter, as if it's 18 in Brattleboro, it's more like 13 degrees here. At least it's nice fluffy snow and looks as if it will stay snow. The "wintery mix" apparently is along the northern PA border, through NJ and onto NYC and Long Island. Just got to dress warmly and wear good footwear.

Occasionally I find my foot catching on something and feel like I'm going to trip, so being very careful where you walk, and slow down

you're speed, so that you're body won't be propelled forward if you do stumble or trip, and you have time to recover before you actually fall.

Of course, there are always examples of how people (and animals) look at winter – the proverbial half full or half empty glass. Eeyore of the Winnie the Pooh books, gives his two sense which is obviously looking at the glass that's half full.



“It’s snowing still,” said Eeyore gloomily.

“So it is.”

“*And* freezing.”

“Is it?”

“Yes,” said Eeyore. “However,” he said, brightening up a little, “we haven’t had an earthquake lately.”



Memory Issues with Life in the Slow Lane

A funny thing about memory, sometimes it gets in the way of functioning. Yesterday, in the morning, I thought it was Tuesday. It wasn't until I went out to get the paper, that I found out it actually was Wednesday. And by now it was 9:45 am, and I was to be at a meeting at 10:30, telling everyone to be there by 10am to help set up, so we could get the meeting going by 10:30am sharp. Well I was late, and they were just starting to get set up by 10:30am when I arrived. So the meeting didn't get started until 10 minutes to eleven. I had another meeting at 5:30pm, and fortunately I had all the paperwork for both meetings in my "ready to go" spot in the kitchen. The weather was messy, and traveling was slow, and after the meeting I went to Keene to get a Micro-Cell (it was only raining by then), and then to visit Mal in Putney, and then tracked down Peter at Thompson House. And then went to the 5:30 meeting at the Guilford Country Store. I completely forgot about being at the Solar Store by 1pm to cover for David while he went and made a site visit on Cow Path 40 in Marlboro.

I have made an appointment for an assessment visit with the Memory Clinic in Bennington for January. I've been a bit worried because my scores in the various sections on Lumosity have been consistently all above 50% of others my age, but in the low 30% in the memory category. My overall rates have been going up, since I started doing it 4-5x a week, with some small ups and downs along the way, but memory has always lagged. Reuben constantly reminds me I have "old timers disease" because I don't remember all the ramblings he talks about, which for the most part, especially lately, I've been tuning out because it's just so much garbage. He'll also bring up stuff from years ago, that I'm supposed to remember.

I read a wonderful book about 10 years ago "Where did I put my glasses?" which talked about normal memory issues with aging, differentiating it from dementia memory loss. It included many cues for remembering things, many of which I still use. I should get that book again (from the library) and read it again. It's probably time to do so as, after yesterday, a bit disconcerting about getting the days mixed up, and forgetting what I had scheduled/committed to do.

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I did make an appointment at The Memory Clinic in Bennington for their free assessment. And I passed with flying colors, as they said my results were "negative", meaning no problem. There were some things I was stumped by, like counting backwards by 7 from 100. I could only get to 93, and then 86 and they no further and it took me about 5 minutes to get to that point. I also "lost" items when given 3-5 words to remember at 5 minutes and 15 minutes. But most of it was really easy, like giving me directions and having me physically do things. I did have to retell a story immediately after she read it and then again 20 minutes later. They'll send the report to Dr. Burtis and to me. But it mainly it's age related issues and not dementia. So Reuben can stop telling me I have "old-timers" disease. She did recommend the Memory Prescription Book by Jeffery Small, which I can get used on Amazon for the price of \$0.01 plus \$3+ shipping. I have to figure out about paying for the other books I got recently, as they put it on an Amazon card, and I need to find the paperwork to send in the amount that I already owe them.

Getting Rid of Stuff while learning to live

Life in the Slow Lane

Having lived in the same house for the past 35 years, we've accumulated a lot of stuff, which we moved in with and accumulated along the way. Now the kids of mostly have gone, what is one to do with it?

I always told people that our house was decorated in "Early Relative", as essentially all our furniture came from elderly relatives – My mom's house, my Aunt Ula's apartment, Esther's apartment and the Gottlieb summer home on Fire Island.

Both Richard and I were recyclers, which follow to a probably more negative degree The Three R's: **Reduce**, **Reuse** and **Recycle**.

There can always be a reuse for almost everything. So in the long run, we've become essentially hoarders, "what if we need this for something else?" So then it's to say, we have a lot of stuff we no longer need or use.

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I did have two-yard sales the summer after Richard died. The first was fairly successful but somehow there were still lots and lots of stuff left. And we didn't even put out much from the house. Then, after the second less successful yard sale, I called Renew Salvage and they picked up lots of stuff with a box truck, and there was still lots of stuff left over.

The Diamondstones had a fire, and lost nearly everything except themselves and the dogs as they all got out OK. He's still having junk cars towed away, although most of them are now gone. I don't know what's going to happen with the property, but I guess the town might incorporate it as flood plan, which they survived somewhat, than not long afterwards had the fire. I really don't want to have to go that way to off things.

I do have a booth at Twice Upon a Time, a consignment shop, where we pay for our booths, and they now take a small percentage on the sale of everything, which is new. I now finally, years later, have a great spot, and are doing better than I have ever done. But it's still mostly the task of moving things along to others who might want them.

My line of getting things out of the house is:

1. Give things to people who we think could use it or might like it. Books, jewelry, dishes and so forth.
2. For specialty items – I search out buyers who might be interested, such as things with original signatures, original art work, higher end jewelry, etc. who want to pay money for it because it has some monetary value to someone.
4. Sell things in my Twice Upon A Time booth, which is a lot of what I have been doing lately.
5. Give it to local agencies who can use it, such as decent clothes and bedding to the homeless shelter, torn sheets and towels to the Humane Society, art supplies to daycare centers, craft materials to the adult day program and nursing homes.
6. Give it to Good Will in Hadley. I used to take things to a local store Experienced Goods, which is a fundraiser for Community Hospice, which is a great organization. But they have kids doing community service either from the high school, where this is a graduation of 10 hours a year for 4 years of community service. And they're instructed to go through the boxes, while you stand there while

they decide what might be good for their store. And then you have to take away everything that they don't want. I don't want to stand there and tolerate what some teenybopper might think is "cute". So I've started taking mostly my boxes to Good Will.

7. Put it in the regular recycling (cans and bottles, and paper in the summertime). All our paper is used in the winter to use as fire starter or re-starter material for the wood furnace. The ashes from the wood furnace are used in the winter for slippery spaces in the driveway, and then at the winter, the rest goes into the compost pile.

8. Call the metal recyclers for everything metal, such as cars (we had to get only two of 10 taken by the metal recyclers (sold the rest), but they also take all sorts of other metal that we collected for them and take it to the scrap yard either in MA or NH.

9. Then there is the burn pile, which is appropriate for just a limited number of things, mostly yard cleanup but sometimes a limited amount of other things, which are too big for the wood furnace. We usually burn the burn pile once a year in the early spring, while things are still pretty wet, and not much is growing around it.

10. And last but not least, is throwing things in the regular trash, which does accumulate some. I'm finding that I end up putting the trash barrel(s) out just every two weeks, on the day of recycling, when I put out the bin with cans and bottles. We used to have to take the recyclables into town but now our local trash person picks it up.

This is what I am now spending most of my time in the slow lane doing these days. Paring down so by spring or summer I can put the house on the market, although it might take me two years to get it all done. Some how it takes a lifetime to collect it all, and then you have only a couple of years, if that, to get rid of it. It's been wonderful living in this house, the land and countryside is beautiful. It seems awkward to think of living anywhere else, but I know I'm going to have to.

Someone just told me that they read, "You spend the first 50 years getting stuff, and the next 50 years getting rid of stuff".

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I also now have a box to bring down the stuff from the trunk upstairs, which Reuben wants to have, and that's fine with me. I have a trunk as well, which has been downstairs for a while, originally in the kitchen under the bay windows, and now is in my back bedroom.

More Transitions while Living Life in the Slow Lane?

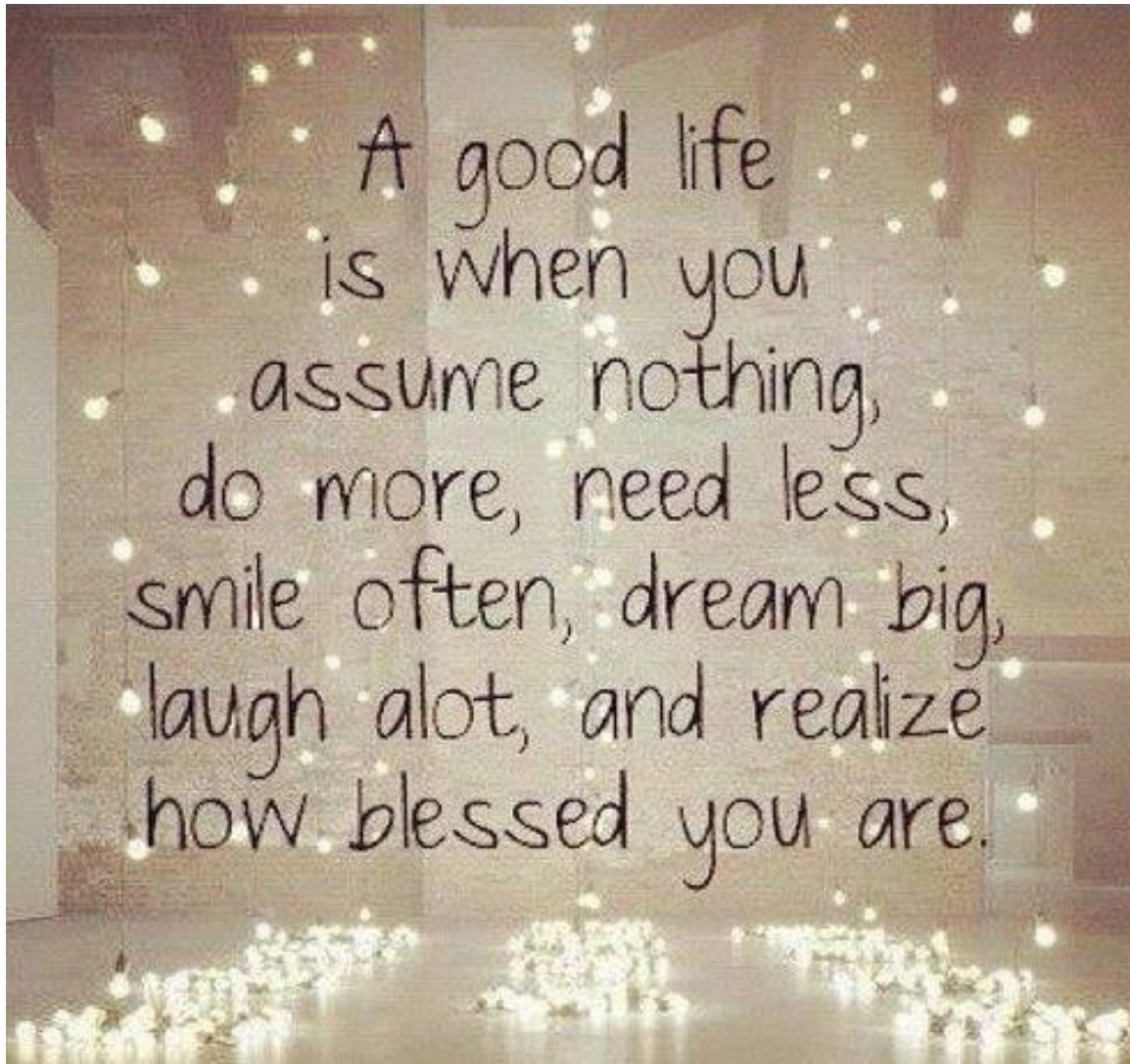
Actually emotionally I don't actually know what's next in the Slow Lane, at least for me. All I'm realizing that it is a process. I can see what happens to older people and have learned of the physical issues that happen through my long-term work as a physical therapist in home care. I can describe some of the physical issues I've encountered with patients, with my parents and other older relatives, and now with some of my colleagues and siblings. But there is an extremely important emotion issue, that, I have no clue about.

Most people don't seem to be very happy about it. I've come across only a few people who really embrace this new phase of their lives and they probably also did so with other phases of their lives. I latched on to those folks and made them my role models. I don't know if I can do it as smoothly as they appear to be doing or have done. Of course, that is my wish but the more physical limitations that occur or might soon occur, frighten me in a way that I didn't think was possible. I guess it's all about control, and when you lose control of your own body and well-being, then there is a huge sense of loss of self engendered power to participate significantly in life's activities.

I just met up with Julie, the PTA I worked with during my last tenure with one of the local home health agencies. She said there is a lot of upheaval at the agency, and the good PT is taking the director's position and having a baby in the spring. The mediocre PT is bumbling along, and Julie is commuting to St. Albans for a full time PTA position until at least February, as they gave her no work at the local agency. She goes up, stays the week, and comes back on weekends. Quite a haul as it's at least a 4-hour drive each way. I guess you do what you need to do. Since they "let me go" in June, I let all my PT licenses expire (VT, NH, PA and previously MA and NY). As I didn't expect anyone to call me, especially I heard from no one when I sent out the letter saying I was available. I guessed that was the end of that. But maybe I should renew at least my Vermont license, in case the home care agency calls me for per diem work, which is all I wanted in the first place. Although now I'm so busy, that I don't know if I have time

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to do it, but could certainly use the money, especially with Reuben still around. I'm trying to "wind down the house" and pretty much have to keep up that focus as it looks like I'll only have the winter to do that, unless I postpone selling the house for another year.



Going out to a concert during Life in the Slow Lane

Last night I had two tickets to "Noel Sing We Clear" for it's 40th year of its performance by John Roberts, Tony Barrand, Fred Breunig and

Andy Davis (and apparently originally included Will Fielding, who recently passed away from cancer, after moving to California to be closer to his children and grandchildren). I asked Mal whether she'd like to go for a night out to perk up her spirits. She was overjoyed and excited to go. There was no weather, and the roads were clear, and after figuring out that her wheelchair didn't easily fold up, we switched everything from the way back to the back seat. And her unfolded small w/c fit perfectly in the way back.

Break for a time to go get the trash and recycling out before the trucks arrive, as it is Noon already.

Back to going to the concert: Larry, the caregiver and Leslie, her daughter and Peter (Leslie's significant other), were there and Peter helped her out in her wheelchair and assisted rearranging the stuff.

It's a good thing Mal is tall and has long arms, as she could reach the overhead (under the top of the door opening handle), and between that and pushing up on her wheelchair, which held the door open, and then reaching for the door handle on her right, was able to do the transfer on her own, while I "spotted" her.

Once we got to Brattleboro, after going down the interstate, I went down Williams Street, planning to cross over to Frost Street which becomes Flat Street reaching to the corner of the Latches Hotel and Theater. From Elm Street on down on Flat Street, there were no parking places on the street, but lo and behold, the very last real parking place, just in front of the Latches building, was waiting for us and available. Just perfect for us!

So I got her w/c out and set it up, and again she was able to grab hold of the overhead, reach the door handle with the wheelchair bracing the door open, and with "spotting" did just fine with the transfer. So we closed up the car, and tootled up to Main, took the right and went right in the Latches Theater. Since the inside entrance is a long sloped floor up, we continued past the line until we reached the flat surface. Folks there didn't mind our cutting the line, and were generous. We already had our tickets; so waiting in purchase tickets line was irrelevant, which was good, as it was on the slanted part of the floor.

We looked around, first on the right, and then were escorted to the left, where there was a formal w/c seating place. I had thought that we could get a far isle seat and she could sit in a regular theater chair, but the far isle wasn't wide enough with the columns to pass with the w/c.

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We saw many people who know Mal and made a big fuss about her being out for her first non-medical outing. The place was packed. I hope everyone who wanted to come could get in. I ultimately saw a few "saved" (by others) seats, that didn't get filled. But the balcony was full, and after intermission, I think a bunch of those people came down to fill the empty seating on lower part. I had an isle seat, saved as the "companion seat" for those accompanying the person in a w/c.

Great for taking photos, although unless I stood up to take pictures, which I didn't, I did get people's head in the picture that were in the first 5-6 rows of the center left section. For the Mummer's play, it seemed the camera went to video so I have that climax on video. But did get some photos as well, I think, unless it was on video the whole time. (I don't know how to change it from one to another). It will be a lesson for another day. At the end of the Mummer's play, some state legislator people declared Noel Sing We Clear a "Vermont Treasure", signed by the governor.

When the concert first started and Jon Potter introduced the group, there was a standing ovation for them. And Tony said, "Well, we might as well just go home now".

Intermission we made it to the bathroom, where we both partook. People in line were so generous in letting us in. And there was a handicapped stall with grab bars, so between the two of us, Mal didn't fall, either to or from the toilet, which was a huge relief.

Gradually we made our way back, again visiting with many people who knew her or knew me, or knew both of us.

Second half was great, interesting, sing along, and amazing. Tony seemed to be getting uncomfortable in his wheelchair, but did very well. For an end piece they brought on Fred's daughter, Tony's daughter and Andy's son to join them in a piece. It's interesting that both Fred and Andy have Down's syndrome girls, who did not participate on stage, but both were at the concert.

Generally people were so great and gracious. The audience for the show wanted to be there. Someone on stage said (I think it was Andy), said he wanted to meet the rumors head on - 1. That this was their last tour and 2. That the show will go on forever. And that the public could make up their minds about which was more true.

This concert did seem like a swan song to me. Not unlike Pete's last concert at the Clearwater Festival. We (the audience) knew that this would be his last concert there. The lady next to me was actively

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crying, and there was a pall over the audience of multi-thousands that we just watched something very significant. I later saw Pete perform again at Toshi's memorial service at the Ethical Society in NYC. And then he died by the time the following season came.

We waited until many of the people emptied the hall, as we were quite near the up front, and then went out, back to the car and drove back to Putney on Rt. 5, hoping to see some houses decorated. I forgot that there aren't really that many houses on Rt. 5 between Pepsi in Brattleboro and the Sunoco Station in Putney.

Peter came out to help us unload, and took Mal into the house. Great evening for both of us. We were both exhausted and were respectively glad to get home, and to bed. But we did it!

Working at Home in the Slow Lane

I love working at home; there is so much to do. Some of it is unwinding (cleaning up, getting rid of stuff, going through old paperwork). And some of it is creating (for NECNP, Guilford Gazette, Solar Store, BAJC, answering phone calls, emails, answering mail, doing personal book-keeping, preparing items for my consignment booth and other stuff I'm involved in). That's not even considering the pet brigade, both dog and cats, have to go out and in, all day long. And of course there is the general house cleaning and maintenance.

It's generally pretty quiet, as Reuben sleeps most all day – as he works basically second shift. There are whole days I'm involved in the outside world in person, driving hither and thither as well as going to meetings, working on my consignment booth at Twice Upon a Time, and getting together with folks in various forms. Some of that is still pretty invigorating but sometimes exhausting. Maybe it's better I'm not actually working (except for the extra money issues).

Humor about *Life in the Slow Lane*

*James and Sandy sent me a very **funny card** today (complete with graphics) for my upcoming birthday.*

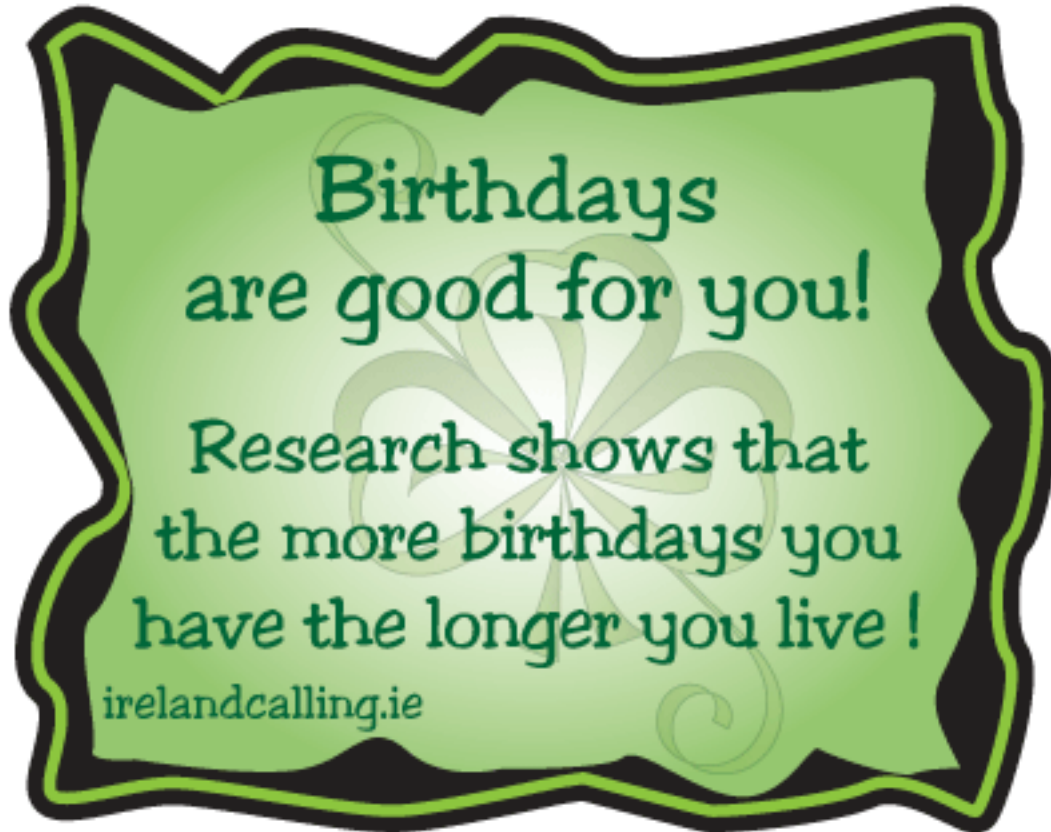
An elderly woman called 911 on her cell phone that her car had been broken into.

"They've stolen everything! The radio, my dashboard compass, even the steering wheel!!!"

The dispatcher responded, "Stay calm, a police officer is on the way"

Minutes later, the officer arrived and radioed in. "Disregard that last call...she got in the backseat by mistake."

Another year older? Stay calm and have a great birthday!



And today, I also got in the mail a book I had previously read from our local library. Recently I had ordered from Amazon for a mere \$.79 plus shipping. I plan to share it around to family and friends, after re-reading myself. It was great first time around, and I'm sure it will be great for me this second time around, while acknowledging that I am moving in the Slow Lane.

Where did I Leave my Glasses? *The What, When, and Why of Normal Memory Loss* by Martha Weinman Lear. The cover picture is of a lady looking askance with the glasses on top of her head.

A patient gave me the following list of things that she received from someone (anonymous) that purports to tell you when you are getting old.

HOW TO KNOW YOU'RE GROWING OLDER

1. Everything hurts and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work.
2. The gleam in your eyes is from the sun hitting your bifocals.
3. You feel like the night before, and you haven't been anywhere.
4. Your little black book contains only names ending in M.D.
5. You get winded playing chess.
6. Your children begin to look middle aged.
7. You finally reached the top of the ladder, and find it leaning against the wrong wall.
8. You join a health club and don't go.
9. You begin to outlive enthusiasm.
10. You decide to procrastinate but then never get around to it.
11. You're still chasing women, but can't remember why.
12. Your mind makes contracts your body can't meet.
13. A dripping faucet causes an uncontrollable bladder urge.
14. You know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions.
15. You look forward to a dull evening.
16. You walk with your head held high trying to get used to your bifocals.
17. You turn out the light for economic rather than romantic reasons.
18. You sit in a rocking chair and can't make it go.
19. Your knees buckle and your belt won't.
20. You regret all those mistakes resisting temptation.
21. After painting the town red, you have to take a long rest before applying a second coat.
22. Dialing long distance wears you out.
23. You're startled the first time you are addressed as "old timer".

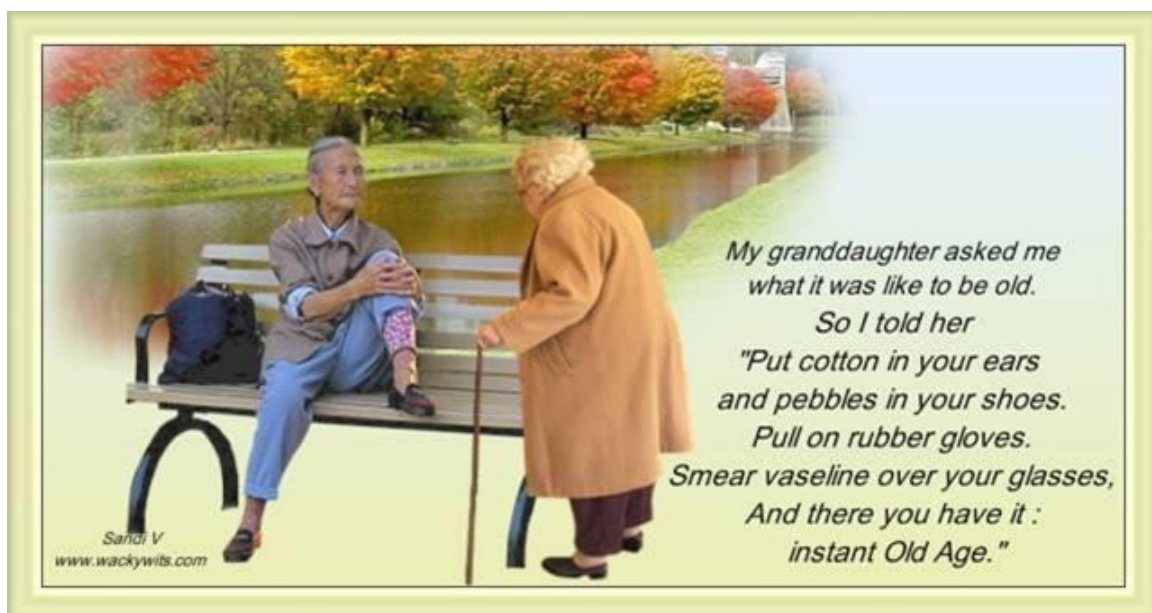
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24. The best part of your day is over when your alarm clock goes off.
25. You burn the midnight oil after 9 p.m.
26. Your back goes out more than you do.
27. A fortuneteller offers to read your face.
28. Your pacemaker makes the garage door go up when you watch a pretty girl go by.
29. You have too much room in the house and not enough room in the medicine cabinet.
30. You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.

Some are really funny, some are a little sad, but my favorite is #28, as visually, it is very funny.

I have greeting card in my collection of cards, which I'm shy about actually sending to anyone, as I'm afraid of insulting him or her. Front page (with color graphics) – "I was going to get you a Delux Birthday Card, with all the Bells and Whistles – Toot! Toot! Clang! Clang!"
"Second page (no graphics and black and white) – "But, at your age, you probably couldn't hear all that stuff anyway! Happy Birthday!"

"Instant Old Age"



"My granddaughter asked me what it was like to be old. So I told her 'Put cotton in your ears and pebbles in your shoes. Pull on rubber gloves. Smear Vaseline over your glasses, and there you have it: instant Old Age'." (From Facebook). www.wackywits.com, Sandi V.

Interesting quick look to the future, but it seems much more gradual than that. It generally seems to moves along more slowly. Over the past 10 or so years, I've been getting annual or every other year hearing tests. Gradually my hearing report is moving downward on the print out report. I'm now in the low (about as low as you can go) range, and the last visit came with recommendations to considering hearing aides. About 5 years ago Richard and I decided we couldn't talk to each other (or at least hear each other) if we were in different rooms (of the house). So we started making a point of talking to each other in the same room even if it meant going to whatever room the other was in, to carry on a conversation. Our house is relatively small and we had many years of just hollering from room to room. No longer as he had the nerve to pass on almost three years ago. I still talk to him, but mostly in my mind. I'm sure he hears me now, through some alternative medium, or it's just my comfort to know he's always in my heart, and I have his moral support when I need it.

WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY MOTHER

No, I didn't write this, but many things I can relate to and probably said to my kids as well. A friend sent it to me via email.

1. My mother taught me **TO APPRECIATE A JOB WELL DONE**
"If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning."
2. My mother taught me **RELIGION**.
"You better pray that this will come out of the carpet."
3. My mother taught me about **TIME TRAVEL**.
"If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week!"
4. My mother taught me **LOGIC**.
"Because I said so, that's why."
5. My mother taught me **MORE LOGIC**.

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"If you fall out off that swing and break your neck, you're not going to the store with me."

6. My mother taught me **FORESIGHT**.

"Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident."

7. My mother taught me **IRONY**.

"Keep crying, and I'll give you something to cry about."

8. My mother taught me about the science of **OSMOSIS**.

"Shut your mouth and eat your supper."

9. My mother taught me about **CONTORTIONISM**.

"Will you look at that dirt on the back of your neck!"

10. My mother taught me about **STAMINA**.

" You'll sit there until all that spinach is gone." (for me it was white milk)

11. My mother taught me about **WEATHER**.

"This room of yours looks as if a tornado went through it."

12. My mother taught me about **HYPOCRISY**.

"If I told you once, I've told you a million times. Don't exaggerate!"

13. My mother taught me the **CIRCLE OF LIFE**.

"I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."

14. My mother taught me about **BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION**.

" Stop acting like your father!"

15. My mother taught me about **ENVY**.

"There are millions of less fortunate children in this world who don't have wonderful parents like you do." (don't have anything to eat, so finish your plate).

16. My mother taught me about **ANTICIPATION**.

"Just wait until we get home."

17. My mother taught me about **RECEIVING**.

" You are going to get it when you get home!"

18. My mother taught me **MEDICAL SCIENCE**.

"If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they are going to get stuck that way."

19. My mother taught me **ESP**.

"Put your sweater on: don't you think I know when you are cold?"

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20. My mother taught me **HUMOR**.

"When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."

21. My mother taught me **HOW TO BECOME AN ADULT**.

"If you don't eat your vegetables, you'll never grow up."

22. My mother taught me **GENETICS**.

"You're just like your father."

23. My mother taught me about **ROOTS**.

"Shut that door behind you. Do you think you were born in a barn?"

24. My mother taught me **WISDOM**.

"When you get to be my age, you'll understand."

25. And my favorite: My mother taught me about **JUSTICE**.

"One day you'll have kids, and I hope they turn out just like you".

Actually Mom said, "I pray that you are blessed with a child just like you." I got one. She has powerful prayers.

Author unknown.

And of course, there is
"When I'm 64" by John Lennon and Paul McCartney

When I get older, losing my hair, many years from now,
Will you still be sending me a Valentine, birthday greetings, bottle of
wine?

If I'd been out 'till quarter to three, would you lock the door?

Will you still need me, will you still feed me, When I'm sixty-four?

Hmm-----mmm-mmmh.

You'll be older too. Aaah, and if you say the word, I could stay with
you.

I could be handy, mending a fuse, when your lights have gone.
You can knit a sweater by the fireside, Sunday mornings, go for a ride.
Doing the garden, digging the weeds, who could ask for more?

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Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm sixty-four?

Every summer we can rent a cottage in the Isle of Wight, if it's not too dear. We shall scrape and save.

Ah, grandchildren on your knee, Vera, Chuck and Dave.

Send me a postcard, drop me a line, stating point of view.

Indicated precisely what you mean to say, yours sincerely wasting away.

Give me your answer, fill in a form, mine forever more.

Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm sixty four?

Sent to me by my brother James and his family, yes, on my 64th birthday! (which was now 11 years ago) and I used to think that 64 was so old when I was in my 30s when this song was popular.

Using Social Media & the Internet while Living Life in the Slow Lane

We're very much in a different technological place than we were even just a few years ago. I can remember when home computers were just coming available. Richard took a course, and then we went out to buy one. It seemed that since I was the one doing most of the typing, I transitioned fairly easily to word processing and eventually in to using google to look up and find things, and eventual the social media area of facebook. I'm not sure how many "friends" but quite interesting things keep coming up. As well as keeping track of what everyone is doing, occasionally someone posts an interesting something or other.

Recently I ended up taking a survey that someone posted: I forget what it was titled, but it had multiple-choice questions, about 10-20. It was to figure out if you think like a man, or think like a woman. The person who posted it said that he or her came up with 50%-50%. I kind of like doing surveys, so I was game:

My report: (or as they listed "Your Result"): "You think 30% like a man and 70% like a woman! (No dah!). I am a woman, not a man. *But* even more striking "they" had something very nice to say about me, although "they" never met me.

"While you're definitely more than happy to consider things objectively and can easily understand those who think this way, you'd much rather just follow your gut instinct. You're a highly communicative

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person and always try to find the solution, which works best for everyone. You excel in creative tasks and enjoy working in a team. Your self-confidence comes directly from your achievements and this helps to give you your grounded, down-to-earth nature"

This is the nicest thing anyone has said to me in a long time, even if it just comes from a computer, who never met me before, just because I answered some questions. I'm just happy that someone (even if it's a computer) has something nice to say to me. Somehow it counteracts all the negativity that my wayward son puts out about how awful I am, and that I never get anything right. Maybe I should post this on the refrigerator. Maybe when I clean it out (soon), which when I take all the stuff that is posted on the refrigerator and start anew.

I guess I won't spend too much more time thinking about it, as the house is getting cool, and it's time to go "play" with the wood furnace, and get the fire going again. I got 6 cords of wood this winter, it's all in, and it's really quite good wood this winter, at least compared with last year's delivery (a different person). It was a bit more expensive per cord this year, but as "they" say "you get what you pay for".

I just saw a cartoon that maybe I can scan in, as it's fairly visual. It was from the local paper and is titled "PICKLES" by Brian Cane.

1st scene – An older person is standing behind a young person who is looking at her computer saying "Hee, Hee". The mother or grandmother says "What's that you're chuckling at, Sylvia?"

2nd scene – The girl turns around and says, "Oh, it's just a little video I posted. I hope you don't mind."

3rd scene – The older woman bends down and looks at the computer with the girl (with some surprise marks around her head).

4th scene – The older person is sitting on the sofa talking to a friend or another older relative and says "Don't dance to the oldies in front of young people with cell phones if you don't want to be recorded".

March 8 at 8:44pm - Judith Reichman (friend of Robin Zegge) wrote:

(No, I don't have Alzheimer's disease)

" I only have halves-heimers disease"

Commercial Traveling Living in the Slow Lane

By plane from Hartford to Pittsburgh.....

Learning to Live with Constant Losses in the Slow Lane

Sometimes there are big losses, like when Richard died nearly 3 years ago. Or my Mom died 5 years ago. Or my Dad died almost 40 years ago.

Then, there are lots of little losses, like when my ear lobe became infected and I had to take out my pierced earrings knowing that I probably will no longer be able to wear cute little earrings again, as the hole will most likely close up after the infection clears. Or I can't hear a speaker in an auditorium even with a PA system. Or you can't get the car to start regularly, and know you'll have to go to the mechanic. Or someone tells you a joke, and you're pee leaks out when you're laughing.

And of course there are lots of in-between losses, which seem to be occurring much more frequently. When you're growing up, things you seem to think you need, which are really things that you might want and can't get right away. Or losses that you abandon by not choosing a particular path, since you have chosen another path.

This became apparent to me many years ago. I was in Colombia with Project HOPE working as a physical therapist while they still had the refurbished hospital ship and went yearly from port to port. I had been with them the year before to Nicaragua, and both tours were extremely interesting, useful in my personal growth as a young person and clearly making a person-to-person difference in world health and politics.

My dilemma at the end of the second tour in Colombia was I was faced with a five choice decisions.

1. To go with the ship, Barco HOPE, to Shri Lanka, it's next tour. Somehow I thought the language was French, and only years later found that it had been an British protectorate, before their independence.
2. To stay in Colombia on the Project HOPE for the extended land program.
3. To go to Europe to travel a bit between finishing with Project HOPE and getting a job in the U.S.
4. To go to California, as it was the late-1960s and that's where it was all "happening"!! (The only P.T. job I could find was at the VA Hospital in Oakland). I had a PT affiliation at the VA hospital in Pittsburgh as part of my clinical affiliations, and I hated it. No one was in a hurry to do anything, there was so much lack of motivation with both staff and the patients, it drove me crazy.
5. To go to Philadelphia, where I did have a real job offer, but decided "who would ever want to go to Philadelphia?".

I couldn't figure out why with so many great choices, that I was sad and somewhat depressed. It wasn't until much later in my life, I realized that by choosing one, I lost the opportunity for all the rest.

Before leaving Colombia with the ship, I had decided that I would go to California, even without a job. But later at home in Pennsylvania, before I left for California, decided to take the job in Philadelphia, which proved to be the best choice I could have made in the long run.

It is frustrating to be constantly faced with consistent ongoing losses, as trying to drive at night when it becomes more difficult seeing in the dark, especially when faced with super bright lights coming toward you. Or going up and down stairs much slower and usually with having to hold on to the banister or wall, or taking longer to get into and out of a car, or difficulty walking a smooth gait after sitting for a while. Of course, once you get started, then you can, usually, get a normal gait. But then, that's still a far cry from skiing down the hill even at moderate speed that at one time seemed so easy. It's the need of putting cleats on your boots, just to walk to the mailbox, to keep from falling over, walking only about 100 feet.

I did give away my skis before my first hip replacement, and then wondered why I did after the hip surgery. But then my other hip started acting up, and even before that one was fully healed, finding

my opposite knee acting up. I can still remember the thrill of going down the slopes but doubt I'll be doing any more skiing in the rest of my lifetime. I've been trying to resume contra dancing, but I feel so clumsy and not at all smooth, I feel it is disservice to my partner and the other dancers, to be on the floor and trying to regain that skill. Maybe taking tickets will be all I can do successfully.

And of course, there is the question of whether I can still afford to keep my house in Guilford. So I'm giving away, throwing away, selling items at the consignment store. And the thought of selling the house and land in Guilford is somewhat overwhelming, but certainly reasonable if I want to continue to be able to live independently.

I am reminded of the old Irish saying

*That one has the **ability** to do what is possible*

*The **patience** to accept was is not possible*

*And has the **wisdom** to know the difference.*

The idea of having chronic and continuing losses is profound. One of Mom's most difficult times was when she became the leaver of both her family (of which she was one of 13, 9 who lived to adulthood), and my Dad's family of 5, and of most of all her friend and colleagues. She cried when her friend for many many years, Florence G., died.

That was only the second time in my life I saw my Mom cry. The first time was when she was taking the roast out of the oven in the old kitchen (before the renovation) so I was about 6 or 7, and the pan slipped throwing the roast on the floor, just as my Dad was to arrive home from the office for dinner.

Don't put your Hands in the Firebox
and other things that it is probably not wise to do while moving
into the Slow Lane

1. For starters it's not good to put your hands in the wood stove firebox especially when the wood is burning. It's way better to use metal tongs or a metal shovel, as we're not as swift in moving when we move along the Slow Lane. It's not a great idea to put your hands in the firebox to adjust the wood generally, but we all do it. But it's now especially important not to put your hands in, even if you think it's just for a second.

2. Don't go out if there is ice on the ground unless it's truly an emergency. And if you have to go out, use grippers/cleats on your boots. When there has been some snow, then lots of rain and then freezing weather (below 10 or 5 degrees), all that wetness freezes into solid ice. You can use the wood ash (or sand) to help, spreading it on the path in front of where you are walking, wear grippers on your shoes, and have a gripper on your cane if you use one. But better yet, wait until the weather is better. Falling is not a great option because you can get hurt, and that's no fun at all. Our bodies are not so resilient as they once were.

3. You might not any longer want to walk up or down stairs carrying things. It's much better to hold onto a banister, and put things you need to carry in a container with a large sling and wear it on your body if it's not too heavy. If it is more heavy then put it into a box, and if you're going up, hold on to the banister, and then take a step up, and then stop and lift the box to the next step, and hold the banister and take another step, etc., etc., etc. Going down it is even more important not to carry things, as the additional weight could propel you down. It's important to hang on to the banister. If the items are heavy enough to be in a box, then use the banister and go down backwards, holding on to the banister and taking one step down, and then moving the box down, everything done at one step one step at a time and holding on to the banister with each step down.

4. Don't drive without studded all wheel drive snow tires in the winter where there is snow and ice, especially if you live on a dirt road. If it applies, you'll know why this is extremely important. If it doesn't apply to you, you'll probably not be able to even appreciate why it's even on the list, so just count yourself lucky. And no, I don't wouldn't want to move to Florida, and would much rather deal with the weather than move there.

5. Don't run, unless you really have to. Walking is good, fast walking is OK, running becomes less predicable, as our balance becomes less reliable. Running, especially if you're not used to running, makes our bodies more tippy and falling becomes more predictable. You don't have to be afraid of falling, you just don't want to set yourself up to fall, if it is not necessary. In the Slow Lane, everything takes more time, so you just need to learn to live with it. Cross the street at cross walks. If there is a light, wait until the light tells you to cross. If there is no light, make sure there are NO cars coming in either direction. If it's at dusk or in the evening, or if it's raining, be sure to wear white or light clothing, and maybe wear a fluorescent piney (you can get these at the sports stores). You've got to make sure cars see you well ahead of time, and the driver does not have to say "Whoops" if he/she knocks you over.

6. Don't climb trees or ladders, even if you've done it all your life. One day, My mom announced to me one day, that she doesn't climb the ladder to change the light bulbs unless someone is in the house. I reminded her that if someone is in the house, let that person climb the ladder, as most likely he or she is at least 20 years younger than she was at the time (mid-80s). Mom can "spot" the person, if she wants to be useful, or hand them the light bulb when needed. But I asked her to stay off ladders, yet another loss of independence

7. In the grocery store, don't climb up on the lower shelf to reach something on the top shelf. Look around and wait for an altitude enhanced person to walk by, whether it be a store employee or customer, it doesn't really matter. Just ask them to "please

reach this". 99.9% of the time, they are happy to do it, even the taller kids. Actually I've never been rejected with this request. There are two regular items that seem to be always on the top shelf, and I used to just stand on the bottom shelf to reach it, but now understand why it's no longer safe to do this.

8. If you start to find that you're mostly always driving over the middle line in the road, especially a narrow road, or if you bump over the side walk curbs in town when driving in town, you may want to re-assess your driving skills. Take the AARP senior driving course to help you decide when it's no longer safe for you to be driving. I got my license when I was 16 and have been driving forever. I live in the country, 10 miles from town and cannot ever see myself not driving. However, I know there will come a time that it will be no longer safe to drive. Also be sure to have your eyes checked yearly, and make sure you don't have glaucoma, cataracts or macular degeneration which all can affect your vision.

Role models

This is a Letter to the Editor that I wrote in 2006 (January 19th) to the Brattleboro Reformer, the local daily newspaper.

Dear Editor,

Today in Joyce Marcel's column, which I always enjoy reading, she said "Role models are hard to find".

Maybe that's true if you're looking for famous people, but right here in Windham County there are plenty of wonderful role models. Women, who although may be in their older years, are still very much contributing to their community, their neighborhood, their families. They show vitality and interest in the world around them, both locally and globally. They are actively participatory in their environment in both a personal and community sense.

Draft 3/14/15

As a traveling physical therapist with the local home care agency for the past twenty years, I have met many of these women – right here in Brattleboro, also in Marlboro, Newfane, Dummerston, Putney, Brookline, Vernon, Guilford and Halifax. Because of confidentiality issues, I can't publicly name them, but they are all special to me in providing insight and ideas for aging gracefully and productively. I thank them all, now that I, too, am in my "Beatles" year ("will you still need me, will you still love me, when I'm 64").

Carol Levin, Guilford, VT

And of course my Mom, **Margaret Levin**, who lived to almost 93, who may not be publically famous, except within her family and her community and who taught me loads about living and doing well at any age as well as leading by example. She lived independently as a woman, valued education and had strong individual thought and strong support for family integrity. She and my Dad, **Herbert J. Levin** who died early (67) raised seven of us to have good values and the ability to things we need to do for our families and for others.

Draft 3/14/15



My mother and me at a restaurant in Western Pennsylvania.

Draft 3/14/15



My siblings and me with Mom – Front row: Carol, Margaret, Ruth
Back row – James, Susan, Harriet, Paula and Edward in front of the
back side of Mom's house in Pennsylvania in August 2006.

Draft 3/14/15

Two other within my own circle of Family and Friends are my husband **Richard Gottlieb** (who died of cancer at age 76) and his colleague **Charlie Hall** who is still going at 84? Solar and Renewable Energy , taking care of the planet, and being self sufficient was important to both of them. This is a photo from SolarFest-Vermont.

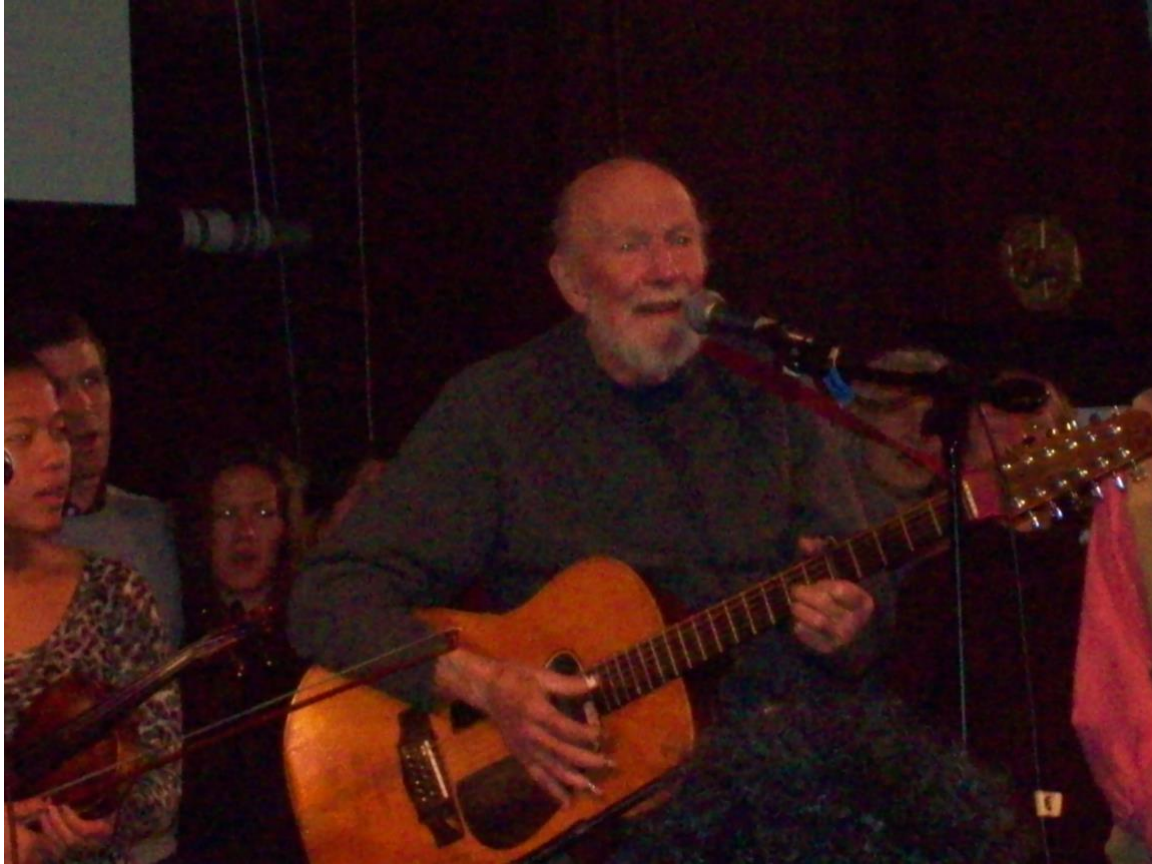


Richard Gottlieb and Charlie Hall at the Sunnyside Solar, Inc. booth at SolarFest in Tinmouth, VT 2010.

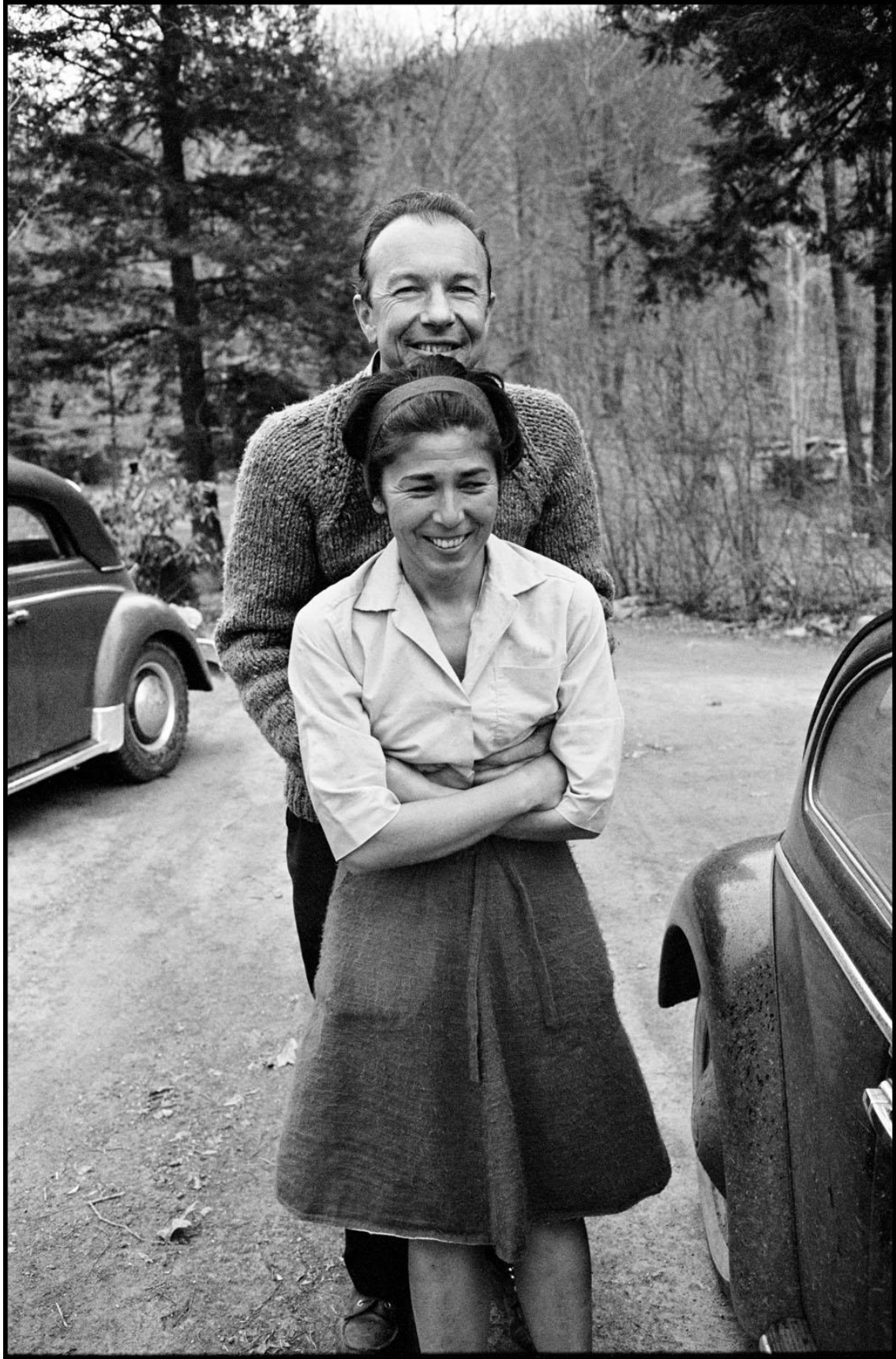
And there are also some of the more prominent people who are role models as well:

Pete and his wife Toshi Seeger, who were two of the most incredible people who not only lived long, but also did well at all phases of their lives. Pete taught us how to take care of ourselves, our communities and the world, with his music and stories and constant energy and insight.

Draft 3/14/15

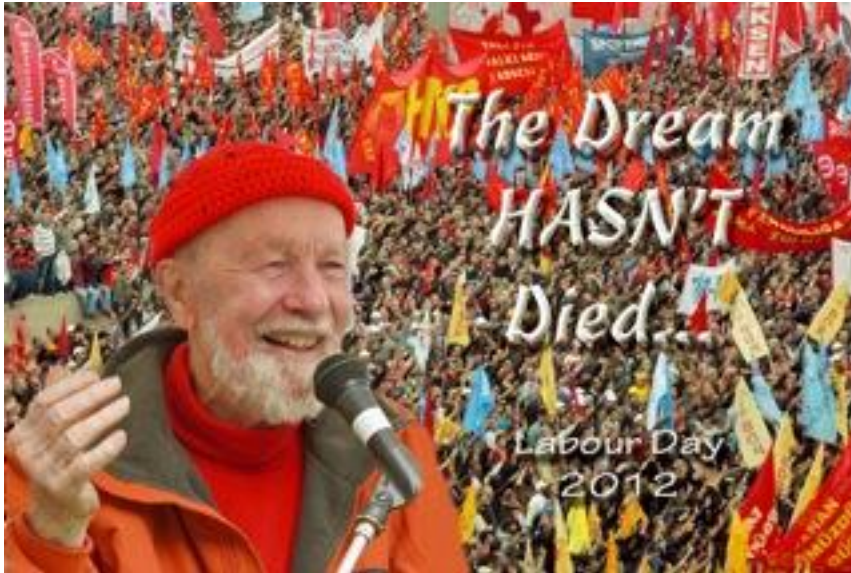


Pete Seeger performed at his wife Toshi's memorial when he was 94. He died the following winter. His music and energy lives on in all of us who were fortunate to know and love him.



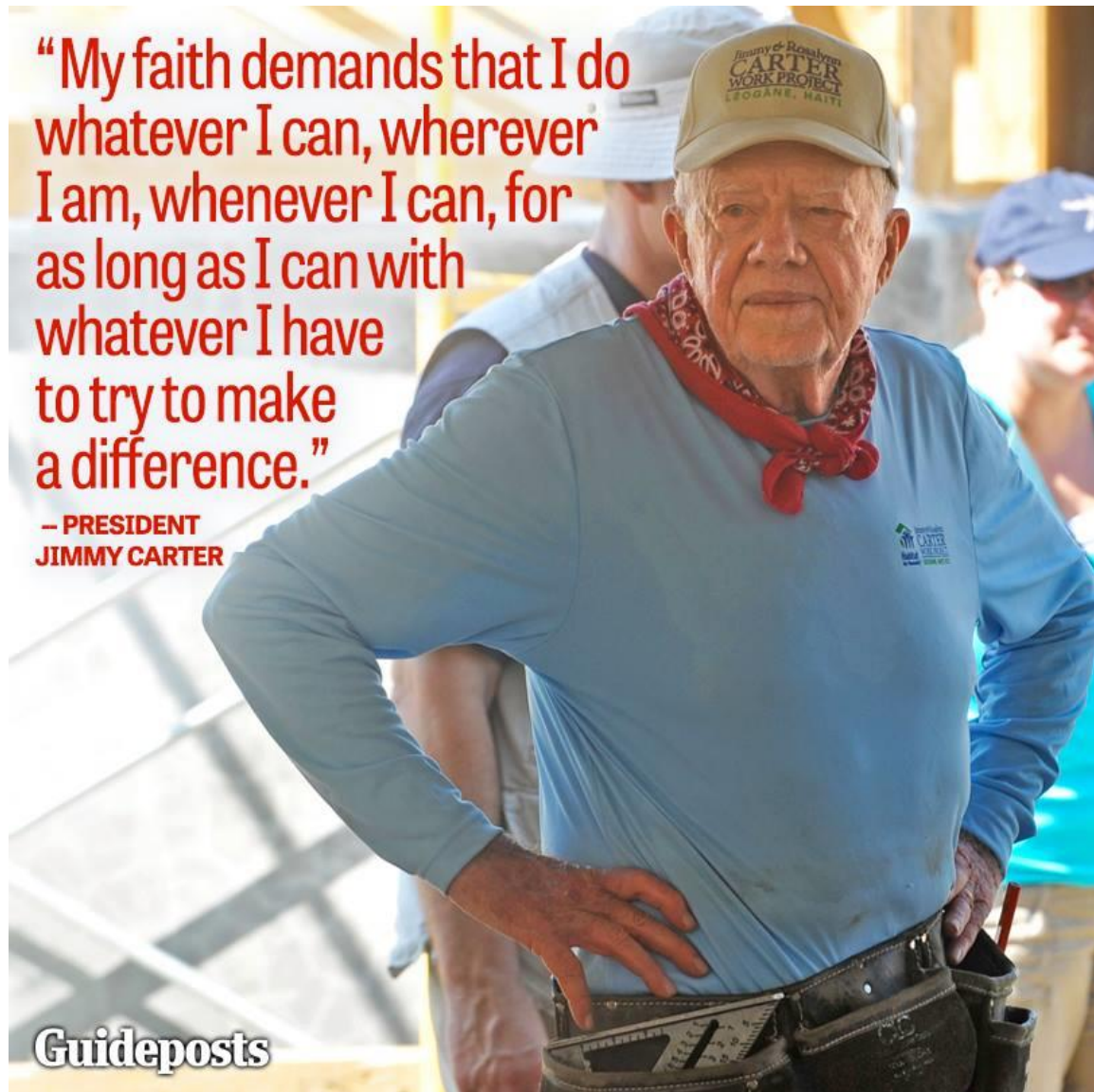
Draft 3/14/15

A young Pete and Toshi Seeger, the two stalwarts of the folk music and story telling world. They certainly personified **"Think Globally and Act Locally"** with their lifetime of activities.



One of my favorite photos of Pete at age 92, with the remarkable sense of worth and drive to improve the world.

Others have lived well as they gained long lived ages and some of their take on old age.



These following photos and and things these folks say about aging are certainly interesting. From the movie *Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*.



The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel / Fox Searchlight Pictures

“ It’s the rudest word in my dictionary, ‘retire,’ And ‘old’ is another one. I don’t allow that in my house. And being called ‘vintage.’ I don’t want any of those old words. I like ‘enthusiastic.’ ”

*– Judi Dench, 80, in
The Hollywood Reporter*



The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel / Laurie Sparham / Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

“ I think I've been lucky to be the right age for some marvelous films. I was right for *Calendar Girls*, right for *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*. Had I been any younger, I wouldn't have qualified. You just have to make the most of now. ”

– Celia Imrie, 62, in *The Guardian*



“ On maturity: I haven't quite got there myself. ”

– Richard Gere, 65, in *The Guardian*



“ I don't tolerate fools and they don't tolerate me. You're trying to say that I'm – what everybody says, they always seem to think that I'm scary. And I understand that totally. Old people are scary. And I have to face it. I am old and I am scary. And I'm very sorry about it but I don't know what you do. ”

– Maggie Smith, 80, on 60 Minutes

Downsizing when Moving, and/or Moving into the Slow Lane

I have a cut out word that I found somewhere **"Simplify"** that I have pasted up on my dresser mirror.

In preparation for possibly selling my current house which Richard and I have had since 1979, there is, I'm finding, so much to go through.

Someone is reported to have said "You spend the first 50 years accumulating things and the next 50 years getting rid of it". And that's what I'm finding now

I'm now actively sorting and trying to get important things boxed up in the banker's boxes that Harriet brought to help me get started at least in organizing – I now have 9 boxes organized and/or started – Carol's Journals and Date Books (1 box), Richard's box (1 box), Family Photos (3 boxes), Sing Out! Magazines (1 box), Postcards (2 boxes), Family letters (1 box).

Reuben just helped me down with a full shelf of family photos from the top shelf in the living room above my blue work desk, so that probably will be another two boxes. As soon as I get room in the front bedroom which will become the office and sorting/storage room – I'll move the boxes that are marked there.

Reuben and I did switch rooms, he moved his things upstairs (again), and helped me move my bedroom stuff to his the other first floor bedroom, and my former room has become my office (on one side of the room), and the rest of the room dedicated to be the sorting room .

I'm now switching to work at my desk (Sunnyside Side Solar Store end of year books, Carol's end of the year books, New England Coalition get the agenda out for the February meeting which will be Feb 18th at 5:30pm at the office.

Last week and this week are pretty dedicated to getting home stuff and desk stuff done. The following week is pretty busy out and about with meetings, appointments, and other reasons to be on the road.

Draft 3/14/15

James asked me about how many boxes I have and if I do 2-4 boxes a day, it will take a month to get through these boxes, as there is about 50 or so boxes, that doesn't count three cupboards, two downstairs and one upstairs, that haven't been emptied, as well as both eaves along the roofline and front and back sides of the upstairs which also has many more boxes.

I'm making progress, Harriet has come up from MA and helped me a couple of times, and with her imputus, we've really made some good progress, especially in the throw away mode, mostly of financial papers: checks and statements that are from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and now we're at 2015, which I'm basically only keeping the annual tax returns from all the various endeavors, and configurations – Chelsea House Folklore Center, Carol and Richard, Margaret Levin (VT), Reuben , and Carol. – all in the same banker box under folder divisions per year since 1970s. It's amazing how much I've kept.

It's good going piece by piece between the papers as I've found some gems – a passport, Reuben's original social security card, early school photos of Reuben and most precious is a button that we made with our button maker with Mom (Grandma) riding on a camel in Israel. Reuben's response when I showed him - "this is Grandma riding on a camel!" He only knew her in her older years, and seemed truly amazed. So it's now in the family photos box, which certainly need to be sorted again, by families, by chronological age, by activity, by event, etc. I'm sorting now, somewhat, as I go along, and have sent the first batch of photos out – Ruth, James, Paula, Harriet (gave her hers), Edward and Susan and also Michael and Daniel Kuetemeyer. I have nearly 30 boxes either full (in the shop) or partially full (in the sorting room).

Draft 3/14/15



Now what? Or What's Next in the Slow Lane?

I haven't been writing as much lately, just slowly becoming more aware of the dynamics of this adventure into the elder years. And appreciating what others are saying that seems meaningful to me.

In the new Guilford Town Meeting Report for 2014 – (town meeting is coming up the first Tuesday in March):

In Guilford, VT from July 1, 2013 to June 30th, 2014 - 13 babies were born and 13 people died (with the average age of 68 1/2) or as calculated: (with five in their 80s, and two 79 years old)
 $85+82+84+87+88+40+30+86+50+47+53+79+79 = 890$ years old divided by 13 people = 68.5 years average person in Guilford who died this year. I saw all those folks in their 80s, and said great, I have another 10-15 years, but then felt discouraged when the average came out as younger than my current age of 73. I feel like I'm biding my time and hopefully have a gain on it.

Reuben is still looking for a job, and costing me between \$20 (minimum) to \$70 a day, which I can well not afford, with trying to pay all the other bills to maintain this home. He has his car running now, and mine started up to move when the plow driver came. We had another 4-5" of snow last night, and a beautiful sunny afternoon.

Draft 3/14/15



The amaryllis is blooming with four flowers on one stem and another bud stem is coming up. The bulb was a present from Henry and Elizabeth this past holiday season. I've decided not to go to Building Energy 15 as my car has been too unreliable, and I'm feeling too poor. Although Henry and Elizabeth take very good care of me when I'm there. I had volunteered to work with Janice K. but called NESEA and Janice and told them I was bowing out. My car intermittently not starting is un-nerving and getting towed from Brattleboro is a whole lot easier than getting towed from Boston, who has had over 7 feet of snow this winter, way more than we have. They still are doing a lot of digging out.

It's now almost the end of February and Mal's family is having a birthday party for her next Saturday at 1pm at the Putney community center. She will be 80 years old, which means Richard will also be 80 if he had lived. I really feel now that it was the nuclear plant in Vernon that did him in with the Strontium 90 leaks which caused the bone marrow cancer, multiple maloma. I'm including as follows my letter to the NRC which I presented at last Thursday's meeting.

2/19/15

Draft 3/14/15

NRC Meeting on Decommissioning, Quality Inn, Brattleboro, VT

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen – My name is Carol Levin, and I'm from Guilford, which is within the 10 miles zone from Vermont Yankee.

My husband, Richard Gottlieb, died February 15th, 2012 from a bone cancer disease, multiple myeloma, with a secondary more devastating soft tissues disease caused by the multiple myeloma, amyloidosis that affected Richard's swallowing mechanism and his heart. The damage to his heart is what proved fatal when his heart stopped on that day after Valentine's Day.

We have been over the years big supporters of the localvore movement, buying and eating and drinking many products grown here in Windham County and the tri-state area.

When it was announced that Strontium 90 was found in the wells at the VY plant, I did some research and found that it's main effect was that it is calcium seeking toxic that gets into the ground and ground water, and then through grass and other plants that animals and humans eat, it gets to human bone tissue.

Although I'm not absolutely certain, but highly suspect that the effects of Strontium 90 probably caused of my husband's cancer. We drank milk, ate vegetables, fruit, cheese, chicken, meat, yogurt and ice cream, all grown and produced locally. The major work force impacted by this particular kind of cancer are workers in the oil refinery business, but Richard lived in southern Vermont for nearly 40 years and was in the solar energy business.

I urge all who are involved in this nuclear plant to decommission as soon as possible, and remove and remediate all the toxic materials in the ground, in the ground water and in the aquifers under the property and the buildings, both inside the buildings and in the ground under them.

Two recommendations I have are:

1. The dry cast containers now being considered in a "temporary location", but most likely they will become permanent. They need to be treated and secured now as if it were a permanent right away so no harm comes to the community if they are disrupted. .

2 .In 60 years from now, none of us here in this room will be alive to deal with this closed and toxic nuclear plant and its surroundings. We have absolutely no projection on what the economy might be in 60 years from now. **So please use the funds that are available to decommission this nuclear plant NOW.**

Carol Levin, 1014 Green River Road, Guilford, VT 05301 - 802-254-4670
clevin@sover.net

Draft 3/14/15

PS: I think it would be very prudent for the VT Department of Health to do a retrospective study of the students, teachers and staff who have been at the Vernon School since Vermont Yankee opened, right across the road from the school. This would be to see the impact of cancers on their lives, which I project to be significantly higher than in a normal population. *(to meet the short speaking time, I eliminated this paragraph from the onsite presentation, but spoke to Bill Irwin, VT Dept. of Health.)*



The last photo taken of Richard and Carol, as it was the weekend before he died on Wednesday, February 15th, 2012. He was still walking (sometimes with a walker), he was always cold, even though we had the wood fire burning in our Sam Daniels Furnace, and he was

Draft 3/14/15

still cheery, for the most part. He was frustrated that he couldn't really smile because of the amyloidosis but he has a hint of a smile here. Solar friends (Alex and _____) came to visit that day, and one of them took this photo with my camera. We had moved the red lift chair recliner in the kitchen to in front of the dryer to make it easier for him to visit with folks sitting at the table. And we still had our holiday cards still all up. They go up for Thanksgiving, then Channukah, Christmas, my birthday (Dec. 25) , Reuben's birthday (Jan. 19) and Richard's birthday (Feb. 28), and they come down the first day of spring (Mar. 21). That was our tradition.

We used Caring Bridge www.caringbridge.org for communication with friends, relatives and colleagues, and it worked very well for us. I could put on the day to day issues, doctor visits, how he was doing, etc. daily and when people called or came to visit, we could do just that, "visit" and not have to repeat every gory detail with every single person. We felt we had tremendous support for people who participated read the blog and wrote us back. I read the daily sheets from friends and relatives to Richard and he was comforted, and we didn't feel abandoned.

Memories in the Slow Lane

Lebanon School – Girl Scouts, Laurel Camp, Trips with the Family
Rostraver High School – school, band, chorus, skating, dances in Collinsburg
Thiel College & D.T. Watson School of Physiatry – completing dream to be a P.T.
NY State Rehabilitation Hospital – physical therapist
Project HOPE – Nicaragua and Colombia – physical therapist
West Nicetown Tioga Community Health Center–Temple University–Peru–P.T.
Philadelphia – Philadelphia Folksong Society and Philadelphia Folk Festival
Vermont – Chelsea House, Richard Gottlieb, Guilford, Esther Gottlieb, Rosy's
Herbs and Spices/Rosy's Herb Garden, Sunnyside Solar, Inc., Reuben Gottlieb,
Kenny/Kevin Styles, Home Care Physical Therapy (VNA/VNH and Bayada)
Sunnyside Solar Store, Inc.

Memories make up an important value and remembrance in one's life. Since I'm a pretty visual person, many of my memories are triggered by photos, of which I take a lot.

Draft 3/14/15



Carol Margaret Levin, first born to Herbert J. Levin and Margaret M. Levin – 1942



Carol and cousin Clara Ann with "Baba" (maternal grandmother)

Draft 3/14/15



Carol found a barn in Vermont - for the Chelsea House Folklore Center (1974) and for the Sunnyside Solar Store. (2013)

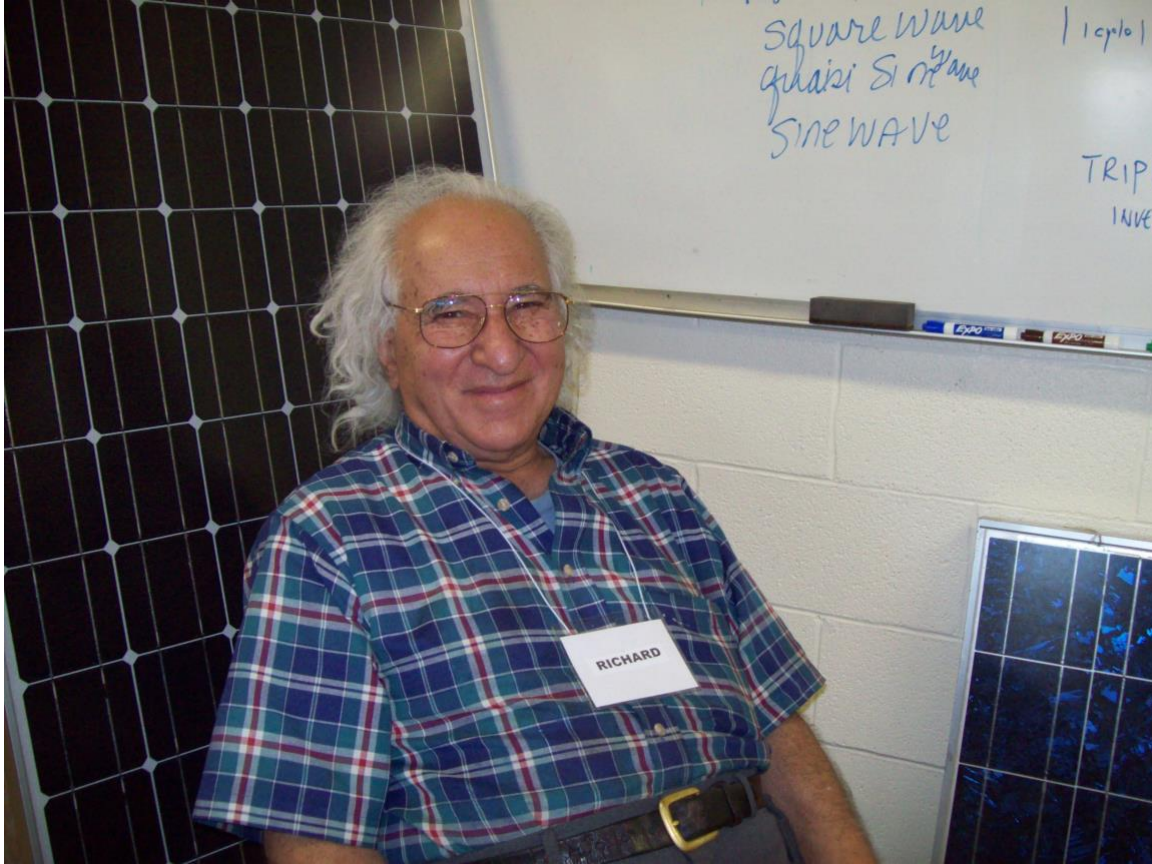


1978?? Song Swap at the Chelsea House Folklore Center. Carol in red dress at the left, sewing a quilt.

Draft 3/14/15



September 14, 1979 - A new bride. Carol married Richard J. Gottlieb at the Chelsea House Folklore Center.



Draft 3/14/15



Carol and Reuben in Pennsylvania at the family homestead - August 2012

Draft 3/14/15



Carol and Richard in BV with the yard sale. Year _____?

Draft 3/14/15



Carol and Richard on the Sloop/Clearwater date 2010



1990? Tera, Kristen, Reuben, Holly (sitting) Kevin, Mike, Dan

(standing)

End of Life Planning while Moving into the Slow Lane

I guess one thing that has become apparent, is that many of us are heading for *Life in the Slow Lane*, and there is time for end of life planning. The State of Vermont has a nifty booklet that makes it relatively easy, once getting over the fear of “planning equals demise”. No, it’s actually that demise will happen whenever, and it’s just better to let those who are left behind a map of what you want to do with everything and how you want to manage the events. You can go through a lawyer or not, especially with the state “Advanced Directives” booklet. A will (for material things and who gets what) is useful and important and makes the most sense to go through a lawyer, as well as planning the executor. The Advanced Directives is more for if you fade out over time and become un-alert, who is to make the decisions based on health management decisions you have specified.

My brother James sent this at first shocking, and eventually interesting chart from Medicare data – on the how many years we (my siblings and I) might expect based on _____years of data. It is only an estimate, but based on averages.

Social Security Life Expectancy Calculator:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/oact/population/longevity.html>

As of March 2, 2015

<u>Name</u>	<u>Current age</u>	-	<u>Years</u>	<u>Age</u>
Carol	73 and 2 months		14.9	88.1
Ruth	71 and 5 months		16.3	87.7
James	67 and 6 months		17.3	84.9
Paula	65 and 9 months		21.0	86.8
Harriet	62 and 10 months		23.6	86.4
Edward	60 and 10 months		22.8	83.7
Susan	59 and 9 months		26.3	86.1

Draft 3/14/15



2012 – Ruth, Carol, James (sitting), Paula, Edward, Susan, Harriet (standing)

**It's been a great life, and I wouldn't have wanted to trade it for anything.
Thanks guys and gals for your ability to manage togetherness apart.**

Draft 3/14/15



21,705 words – 83 pages